

strengthen our energy security, we need to invest in intercity passenger rail. Amtrak removes almost eight million cars from the road annually and eliminates the need for 50,000 fully loaded, passenger airplanes each year.

Other countries already make an annual commitment to intercity passenger rail. In 2003 alone, France invested \$10.6 billion in its rail system; Germany invested \$12.4 billion; and the United Kingdom invested \$7.8 billion. Outside of Europe, Japan invests about \$2 billion annually to its Shinkansen and China has launched a plan to spend a total of \$162 billion from 2006 through 2010 to expand its railway system.

These investments have paid off: passenger rail accounts for 32 percent of Japan's transportation market; the Eurostar, the high-speed passenger train operator between Britain and mainland Europe, recently reported a 21.3 percent rise in passengers to 2.17 million between January and March 2008, compared with the same period last year, with a 25 percent increase in ticket revenues. Indeed, you can hardly purchase a plane ticket from London to Brussels or London to Paris because rail service is faster and easier than air service.

H.R. —, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 authorizes more than \$14.4 billion for Amtrak capital and operating grants, state intercity passenger grants, and high-speed rail over the next five years. The bill authorizes \$6.7 billion (an average of \$1.34 billion per year) to Amtrak for capital grants and \$3.0 billion (an average of \$606 million per year) for operating grants. Past inconsistent Federal support has hampered Amtrak's ability to replace catenaries, passenger cars, bridges, ties, and other equipment necessary for Amtrak to provide service. These capital grants will help Amtrak bring the Northeast Corridor to a State of Good Repair, procure new rolling stock, rehabilitate existing bridges, as well as make additional capital improvements and maintenance over its entire network. In addition, the operating grants authorized under the bill will help Amtrak pay salaries, health costs, overtime pay, fuel costs, facilities, and train maintenance and operations. These operating grants will also ensure that Amtrak can meet its obligations under its recently negotiated labor contract.

In an effort to encourage the development of new and improved intercity passenger rail services, the bill creates a new State Capital Grant program for intercity passenger rail capital projects, based on the New Starts transit capital program administered by the Federal Transit Administration. The bill provides \$2.5 billion (\$500 million per year) for grants to States to pay for the capital costs of facilities and equipment necessary to provide new or improved intercity passenger rail. The Federal share of the grants is up to 80 percent. The Secretary of Transportation would award these grants on a competitive basis for projects based on economic performance, expected ridership, and other factors.

The National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, established to develop a national transportation vision to address surface transportation needs for the next 50 years, recommends that the United States establish a high-speed rail network that spans the entire country. The bill authorizes \$1.75 billion (\$350 million per year) for grants to States and/or Amtrak to finance the con-

struction and equipment for 11 authorized high-speed rail corridors. The Federal share of the grants is up to 80 percent. The Secretary of Transportation would also award these grants on a competitive basis.

Many of Amtrak's service routes outside the Northeast Corridor suffer from poor service reliability and on-time performance because of freight traffic congestion. This congestion prevents Amtrak from retaining and attracting new ridership, and increases Amtrak's operating costs. The Department of Transportation Inspector General recently reported that if Amtrak achieved an 85 percent on-time performance outside the Northeast Corridor in fiscal year 2006, it would have saved Amtrak \$136.6 million, or almost one-third of its operating budget. Amtrak is required by law to have preferred access on freight corridors; however, freight railroads do not always comply with Amtrak's access rights. The bill addresses this problem by providing congestion grants to Amtrak and the States for high-priority rail corridors in order to reduce congestion and facilitate ridership growth.

Federal support of Amtrak was cut drastically in fiscal years 2000 and 2001, forcing Amtrak to assume a large amount of debt to stay in operation. Amtrak has aggressively targeted this debt, paying down \$600 million from fiscal years 2002 through 2007. Our bill helps Amtrak to take further steps to reduce its debt, authorizing \$345 million each year for debt service through FY 2013. This funding will allow Amtrak to focus its resources on improving existing services and making additional capital and operational improvements.

Finally, no Federal guidelines currently exist to mediate disputes between commuter rail providers and freight railroads over use of freight rail tracks or rights-of-way, nor is there a standard forum for negotiating commuter rail operating agreements. The bill establishes a forum at the STB to help complete stalled commuter rail negotiations, helping our rail network operate as efficiently as possible.

The Committee is also introducing, H.R. —, the "Rail Infrastructure Development and Expansion Act for the 21st Century", authorizing \$12 billion of tax-credit bonds and \$12 billion of tax-exempt bonds for high-speed rail corridors over the next 10 years. This legislation will be referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and I look forward to working with Chairman RANGEL and Ranking Member MCCREY on this important initiative.

Amtrak and high-speed rail are essential to create the world's preeminent national transportation network.

I look forward to working with Members of the Committee and the House to pass these important bills.

#### SUPPORTING COMMEMORATION OF ISRAEL'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. JOHN J. HALL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 8, 2008*

Mr. HALL of New York. Madam Speaker, I am pleased that I have the opportunity to rise today in strong support and commemoration of the 60th anniversary of Israel. It is an honor to be able to speak on behalf of a country born in the aftermath of tragedy, erected against

formidable odds, and yet has prevailed to become a beacon of hope and an example of the prevailing strength of liberty and freedom.

Israel was not simply established, it was built. It was built through the toil, strife and resolve of the Jewish people and upon the premise of hope—hope that even in the wake of the ashes of the holocaust, goodness can prevail. And indeed, as we commemorate Israel's 60th birthday, we can see that goodness has prevailed.

In many ways, the path of Israel has mimicked that of the United States. It is in no way perfect and makes its fair share of mistakes. However, it is part of the same experiment of democracy, and built upon the notion of a state becoming a light unto other nations. In our century, the partnership between Israel and the United States has conjoined to thwart the existence of terrorism, advance the frontiers of human knowledge, and make an indelible contribution to the human condition.

Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to foster the United States' alliance and friendship with this great nation to join me in wishing Israel a very happy 60th anniversary.

#### IN HONOR OF ISRAEL'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. ALLYSON Y. SCHWARTZ**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 8, 2008*

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 60th anniversary of Yom Ha'atzmaut—Israel's Independence Day, to congratulate the Israeli people on their significant accomplishment, and to celebrate the strong U.S.-Israel relationship.

As the daughter of a Holocaust survivor, I very much appreciate the important role that Israel plays in the world for the Jewish people. On May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was created providing a new homeland and safe haven for those who most recently had survived the Holocaust and for Jews before and since who had been scattered throughout the world after a millennia of conflict, discrimination, and persecution.

I am proud that the United States was one of the first countries to recognize Israel. Today, the U.S.-Israel relationship continues to be strong. And I pledge to work with our trusted ally to pursue a stable and peaceful Middle East, which assures safety and security for the State of Israel.

In the quest for peace in the Middle East, the United States has no stronger partner than Israel. As the Middle East's only democratic country, Israel is an important example for other countries in the region. It has free elections, a free press, and protection of minority rights. It is a strong and vibrant democracy and a trusted friend.

Maintaining a democratic society has not been easy. Israel has endured neighbors that have attempted to wipe it off of the map, and it continues to face threats from terrorist organizations which oppose Israel's existence and seek to disrupt any possibility of a peaceful coexistence for all people.

Even today as Israel seeks security within its borders and peace with its neighbors, radical extremists attack its citizens with daily

rocket barrages. It is crucially important that we stand by our friend and ally, now and in the future.

It is important to note that support for Israel is an issue that Democrats and Republicans here in Congress consistently work on in a bipartisan manner. Our willingness to work together sends a strong message internationally that the United States is committed to our friend and partner, Israel.

Madam Speaker, it is truly an honor to stand by Israel and I know my colleagues join me in expressing Mazel Tov to all Israelis for a remarkable 60 years and wish Israel and its people a safe and secure future.

#### IN HONOR OF MOTHER'S DAY

### HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I wish to honor our Nation's mothers this Mother's Day because they embody the definition of strength, courage and compassion. Mothers are the backbone of American values and vitality and I ask that my colleagues honor the mothers of our Nation on Sunday, May 11, 2008.

The history of celebrating Mother's Day began when Anna Jarvis of West Virginia desired to honor the life of her deceased mother, Anna Reeves Jarvis. In 1908, Jarvis' church honored her mother as the first Mother's Day Celebration and then, in 1910, the governor of West Virginia, William Glasscock, wrote the first Mother's Day Proclamation, which encouraged families to celebrate Mother's Day. Anna Jarvis moved beyond her home State and urged the Federal Government to establish a national day to celebrate Mother's Day. Eventually the Sixty-Third Congress passed H.J. Res. 263. This resolution designated the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. The next day President Woodrow Wilson signed a Presidential Proclamation directing the Nation to display flags on government buildings and homes to show America's love and dedication for mothers.

Mother's Day is a time for Americans nationwide to show affection and respect for the everyday heroines we call mothers, aunts, great aunts, grandmothers and great grandmothers—women of courage and strength that carry our country by raising children and uplifting our families. On May 11th, I urge my colleagues and fellow citizens to celebrate Mother's Day.

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO JERRY GUEDERIAN

### HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to rise today to honor Mr. Jerry Guederian by entering his name in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, the official record of the proceedings and debates of the United States Congress since 1873. Today I honor Mr. Guederian, the 2008 Nevada Micro-Enterprise Small Business Person of the Year.

As a young child, Jerry had a passion for shoes. His passion led him to his studies at the Ars Sutoria Institute in Milan, Italy, where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in shoe design. Armed with skills, determination, and talent, Jerry came to the United States from Switzerland and opened his first Shoe Lab in Los Angeles, California in 1989. His successful shoe repair business led him to franchising his stores throughout Southern California. In 1995, his passion for the business eventually brought him to Las Vegas, Nevada.

Jerry's business success centers around his philosophy of having the best craftsmanship and customer service. Customers are often invited to watch Jerry's well trained cobblers repair their shoes, bag, or luggage through a Shoe Lab 'viewing window'.

Nominees for the Macro-Enterprise Award are judged by an independent panel of small business leaders on a variety of criteria including staying power, employee growth, sales increases, innovations of service, and contributions to community-oriented projects. Mr. Guederian and Shoe Lab excelled in every category.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Mr. Jerry Guederian and his outstanding accomplishments in the Southern Nevada business community and his recent achievement of being named Nevada's 2008 Micro-enterprise Small Business Person of the Year.

#### HONORING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF CHARLIE SCOTT

### HON. DAVID SCOTT

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise to day to acknowledge racing pioneer Charlie Scott, and to express support for his admission into the Georgia Automobile Racing Hall of Fame Association.

Born in Crawford, Georgia, Charlie Scott was the first African-American to drive in an officially sanctioned National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) event, debuting at the Daytona Beach Grand National in 1956. As reported by NASCAR.com earlier this year, "[Charlie] drove a Kiekhaefer Chrysler. When the checkered flag waved, Scott found himself in 19th place, earning \$75 for his efforts." This outing—at Daytona, where NASCAR was born—was a groundbreaking effort and no doubt inspired countless future NASCAR drivers and fans. His illustrious career included races all over the country in motorcycles and other automobiles. He loyally supported the sport throughout his lifetime, and deserves recognition for helping to break the color barrier in automobile racing.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I want to recognize the achievements of Mr. Scott and express my gratitude for his courageous efforts to make racing an inclusive sport from the very beginning.

#### STEM CELL SCIENCE: THE FOUNDATION OF FUTURE CURES HEARING IN THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH, COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

### HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Mr. CASTLE. Madam Speaker, I have been deeply involved in working to expand the Federal policy on stem cell research over the last several years with my friend DIANA DEGETTE, and I am encouraged to see the House Energy and Commerce Committee hold its first hearing on the subject of stem cell policy and the foundation for future cures. I look forward to hearing from the expert witnesses testifying today, everyone from Dr. Elias Zerhouni, Director of the National Institutes of Health, leading scientists, Dr. George Daley of Children's Hospital Boston, and Dr. John Gearhart of Johns Hopkins University, and Weyman Johnson, Jr. who chairs the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, about the ever important field of regenerative medicine. There have been a couple of very exciting developments in the field recently, underscoring the critical role of the United States' scientific community and the need for even more coordinated Federal research.

Announcements from scientists about removing single cells from embryos to develop embryonic stem cell lines, and using human skin cells in ways that offer similar promise as embryonic stem cells, underscores the importance of pursuing all avenues of science that could advance human health.

The recent discoveries are significant, but we must remember that important scientific advances do not always translate to medical advances. It is for this reason that I believe, and scientists agree, it would be irresponsible to abandon embryonic stem cell research, which continues to show the most immediate promise.

My passion for advancing and expanding research on stem cells comes from years of meeting with those who are suffering from diabetes, Alzheimer's, cancer, heart disease, Parkinson's and their loved ones—and from the many scientists I have had met over the years who have hailed the promise of the pluripotency, that is the ability to become any cell in the body, of embryonic stem cells, and the breakthrough of induced pluripotent stem cells, iPS, which are believed to have the same qualities. There is no greater promise for better treatments and potential cures than there is with a strong Federal investment in ethical forms of medical research of all kinds. American scientists should be leading the world.

iPS is a major scientific breakthrough, however many have said the viruses and genes used in the process to create the embryonic-like state of the human skin cells can cause cancer. If the cancer factor cannot be eliminated, and only further research will tell, iPS cells may be better suited for learning more about cancer, for example, or for improving pharmaceutical drugs. So, if it is the case that iPS cells might prove better for some uses and embryonic stem cells better for others, how could we abandon one for the other?