

and in the marketplaces that brought us to where we are today with the crisis we are facing.

Now, this is something that was not unpredicted and not unforeseen. Our own administration came to this Congress in 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005, in their budget requests and elsewhere, making pleas to this Congress to try to put in some regulation. "World-class regulators" is what they called them. Secretary Snow came to the Financial Services Committee and made that request and said we should have regulation. However, we were thwarted on every front. The current chairman of the Financial Services Committee was one who stood and said we should not do so.

I went back and looked into what the record of this was in 2005 to see what my position was on it and to read what I said on it. At that time in 2005, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) suggested that we could begin the process of reining in the GSEs so as to avoid systemic risk in this country with regard to them and avoid a future crisis. He put in an amendment to the bill to provide and to prevent systemic risk.

I came down to the floor to support the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) in his amendment. At that time, I said that I rise in support of this legislation which strengthens the language with regard to portfolios and GSEs. I indicated that GSEs claimed that they are shock absorbers. This line is somewhat ironic today. The GSEs claimed back in 2005 that they were shock absorbers to the system and that one of the main reasons that Fannie and Freddie claimed they should not have portfolio limits was that they provided a stable means of support for the residential financial market in times of crisis. How ironic that they were claiming that they could be of help in a time of crisis when, in fact, they are what have now brought us to this time of crisis.

Back in 2005, Fannie's CEO, Dan Mudd, testified: "Our mortgage portfolios allow us to play a shock-absorbing function for the finance system during times of potential difficulty." Well, there is no function that they're serving now except that they are causing the difficulty.

This week, they said Freddie's president, Eugene McQuade, was quoted as saying: "The enterprises provide a source of stability to the market, mortgage, finance system."

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to conclude by saying that the problems that the GSEs have brought us to today—although we were warned by the administration and although many saw it and many people from this side of the aisle—were because of the failure to implement those regulations on a timely basis. We'll discuss this further at a later date.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

UP-ARMORED HUMVEES AND THE PROTECTION OF AMERICAN SOLDIERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thought it might be appropriate at this time, when all of our focus is on the financial crises, to remember that we have just now passed the defense bill out of the House. It is awaiting passage in the Senate. At this time, we have Americans fighting in two theaters of action in Afghanistan and in Iraq, and their protection is paramount to the people of the United States, to this body and, of course, to the Armed Services Committee.

I thought it might be appropriate to talk about the precedent that has been established by the Armed Services Committee and by some great staff people on the Armed Services Committee who have helped to ensure that more Americans are protected earlier than they otherwise would have been in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We just passed the House bill in very difficult circumstances under the great leadership of IKE SKELTON. His staff director, Erin Conaton, is doing a wonderful job, and the minority director, Bob Simmons, is also doing a wonderful job. With their guidance and with the team of staff members behind them and helping them, we managed to get a very complex bill through the House floor very quickly.

Back in 2004, we were seeing the roadside bombs increase in Iraq, and we started to see increased casualties WIA, wounded in action, and KIA, killed in action. We were seeing those increased figures flowing out of that combat theater as the insurgents placed more and more bombs along the roadside.

We moved very quickly on the Armed Services Committee to get as many armored vehicles, up-armored vehicles, known as up-armored Humvees, into that theater as possible. In 2004, we looked at the plan, the blueprint, to get the 7,000 up-armored vehicles over there very quickly so that soldiers and marines in places like Mosul and Tikrit and Fallujah could have up-armored vehicles. We thought that that schedule took too long and that we saw those 7,000 vehicles coming into country around the end of the year in 2004.

So our great staff director, Bob Simmons, who had been an industrialist, who had been a CEO of an aerospace company in San Diego and who had known how to move components and how to move people quickly to get a product finished, went to the Army and asked them why their schedule was as long as it was. They said, you know, we think the driving factor here is the steel. Our schedule for receiving the steel is such that it's not going to be until the end of the year when we get these up-armored Humvees, these protective vehicles, into theater.

So Bob Simmons said, "Why?" like any good CEO. They said it was the steel production.

So he went to the steel companies, and he asked them, "Why can't you put on more shifts and get this steel produced earlier and get it out to the Army and get those Humvees over there?" They said, "You know, we don't think we can get another shift on here, and we don't think that the unions will help us here or will comply with adding another shift to the time schedule."

So Mr. Simmons said, "Let me talk to the union leaders," and he sat down with the union leaders, and our great staff director talked to them about what was happening in Iraq. They said, "You know, we have kids in Iraq, and we'll put on another shift, and we'll get that steel out."

As a result of this, we accelerated the steel to the Army and to the Humvee makers, and we got those Humvees up-armored with more steel between those roadside blasts and those marines and soldiers inside those vehicles. We got those 7,000 Humvees into theater 7 months ahead of time.

I want to just say, Mr. Speaker, that it's a blessing to have those honest brokers—those great staff members like Mr. Simmons—and like his great team. I'll just mention a couple of them who worked this issue. John Wason was one of our great team members. Jesse Tolleson is another one. Steve DeTeresa is another.

You know, Steve DeTeresa with his team, in working with Lawrence Livermore and in working with DARPA, actually moved the first heavily armored trucks into Iraq, some 130 trucks that were double-hulled, that had two layers of steel and that had a layer of an inch and a quarter of what we call E-glass on the inside of that steel. I've seen some of those trucks that were hit with massive IEDs, with massive roadside bombs, and I've read letters back from the people who drove those trucks, saying, "Our lives were saved because of the steel on those trucks." To my knowledge, none of those 130 or so trucks that were directed to be built by the Armed Services Committee were ever penetrated by fragment from roadside bombs.

So thanks to Mr. Simmons and to his great team and to all of his wonderful staff folks on the Armed Services Committee.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCHENRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HOLT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SHERMAN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SCHIFF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HONORING CONGRESSMAN JOHN PETERSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it's a rare privilege for me to rise here tonight.

As the senior Republican in the Pennsylvania delegation, I have certain opportunities and certain obligations. The one that I'm exercising this evening is one that I am particularly pleased to do, not without a certain reluctance, because I'm rising to honor a colleague of ours who is retiring and who has done a great deal for the State of Pennsylvania.

I have known Representative JOHN PETERSON, really, since 1981. JOHN PETERSON came to this body in 1996, and he has served with distinction for the last 12 years, but when I first knew JOHN PETERSON, he was then a member of the State House. He had been elected in 1977. He was recruited by local Republicans as the obvious choice when that vacancy occurred, and I first knew him as one of the most energetic members of the State House within the district of my boss and mentor who was then serving in the State Senate.

When Senator Kusse retired in 1984, again, JOHN PETERSON was the obvious person to succeed him into the State

Senate. There, JOHN PETERSON became known as one of the authorities on rural health care and as one of the strongest advocates for transportation improvements in western Pennsylvania.

So it was an obvious thing in 1996 when Congressman Bill Clinger decided to retire that JOHN PETERSON was an obvious but not an uncontested candidate for that seat. After a vigorous primary, which included some fairly famous names, JOHN PETERSON won the Republican primary, and went on to win a convincing election in the fall.

My colleague JOHN PETERSON has made a great mark on this institution in 12 years.

When he came to the House, he, rather rapidly, established himself as an advocate for rural issues, not only in western Pennsylvania but all over the country, and he has always been a prominent member of the Rural Caucus. Surprisingly, for a member of a delegation from one of the States, from a Commonwealth that was one of the original 13 colonies, he has also been a leading member of the Western Caucus because of the infinity of the issues within his district with western concerns.

Perhaps one of the great distinctions about JOHN PETERSON is his representing one of the largest districts, if not the largest district, east of the Mississippi. He has brought an extraordinary energy to the job of representing a district that runs from the Titusville area, in my neighborhood, all the way down to some of the farthest bedroom communities within our State capital area.

JOHN PETERSON, after a term in the House, naturally gravitated to a higher assignment, and he was selected by our party to be a member of the Appropriations Committee.

I have to tell you he has served there with extraordinary distinction. Early on, he has become an advocate and an expert in rural health care, and he has played a particularly critical role in increasing Medicare reimbursements for many rural health care providers.

As the individual who has represented the area that covers the Allegheny National Forest, one of the gems of our national forest system, he has become a strong advocate consistently for that area and for its potential to be an economic driver as well as a source of natural beauty in the region. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, he has been a strong and consistent advocate of resources for the Allegheny National Forest and for recreation in the region.

He has also been recognized as one of the strongest advocates of rural economic development, particularly in western Pennsylvania but particularly with a focus on job training. He has played consistently a critical and active role in encouraging local economic development organizations to develop a regional outlook and to become effective advocates across county lines.

He has been a strong advocate in this Chamber of a pro-growth energy policy, and it was JOHN PETERSON who before most other Members of this body had focused on the issue, and he became a strong and consistent advocate of opening up new opportunities for drilling within the United States to reduce our energy dependence.

It was JOHN PETERSON who repeatedly brought up within the Appropriations Committee, in the face of opposition from some Democrats and also from some Republicans, legislation to open up the Outer Continental Shelf for drilling, initially for natural gas but also for petroleum.

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JOHN PETERSON, before most people in this Chamber saw the critical importance of this issue as a way of driving down prices in the United States, became a strong advocate of addressing this issue head-on in lifting the ban that had been created by both Congress and the executive branch on drilling.

And I think it is a great tribute to him and, as he retires, must be a great source of satisfaction to see that this Congress has not continued that ban. This, I realize, is a controversial issue, but the beauty of my colleague is he's been able to engage people on both sides of the aisle on this issue and in a way that has even reached out to many people who he has initially disagreed with.

I, myself, have never seen my colleague more engaged than on the issue of tolling Interstate 80. I partnered with JOHN PETERSON just last year when this issue came up in this body in the wake of a decision by leaders in Harrisburg in our State capital and by the Turnpike Commission to attempt to toll the length of Interstate 80 utilizing a pilot project provision embedded in our Federal law. I had the privilege of seeing firsthand JOHN PETERSON's advocacy and his energy as he aggressively engaged both State officials and, ultimately, our U.S. Department of Transportation.

I must say the fact that we have recently received a decision from the U.S. Department of Transportation that effectively bars the tolling of Interstate 80 is a great tribute to his advocacy and also his ability to work with people like me and others to make the case.

JOHN PETERSON has decided this year to retire. I think that is a tribute to the love he bears for his family above everything else. But he leaves behind him a truly remarkable record as a public servant, as someone who's made his mark first in the State legislation, now in this body, someone who has always retained the vision and the inventiveness that comes from having been a small business man.

It's been a great privilege to serve with JOHN PETERSON, and my distinguished colleague from Pennsylvania will very much be missed. Certainly if there were ever a solution to the energy crisis, it would be to tap into his