These counties competed against 750 participants from more than 300 communities in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, who were all vying for this unique distinction.

This award is well-deserved, as these communities have dedicated themselves to fostering a healthy, safe, and caring environment for our young people. I share this vision and am deeply honored to once again have the only two localities in West Virginia recognized located in my district.

I pledge to continue my work to make the communities in the Third District a healthy and nurturing environment for our children, by supporting legislation and programs that will keep our children safe. Last year, I supported full funding of both the Drug Free Communities grant program and the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program against the budget cuts recommended by the administration. These programs make a visible difference in our communities and are invaluable when it comes to preventing and reducing substance abuse, particularly with our teenagers and young adults.

While these programs are effective, it is by far not the end of our work. As the folks of Mercer and Monroe counties can attest, we must not waver from our commitment to our youth. As much as we accomplish, we must strive to do better.

West Virginia native and renowned author Pearl S. Buck once said, ''If our American way of life fails the child, it fails us all.''

These are words to live by, words that Mercer and Monroe counties have once again proven they are living by everyday. I again commend the entire community—the teachers, the civic leaders, the parents, and the children as well, who are all so very bright—for the hard work they have done and continue to do.

I encourage other communities in the Third District and across West Virginia and our Nation to follow the fine example set by Mercer and Monroe Counties in showing what it means to keep America's promise to our young people. As the Alliance for Youth said, ''It is our hope that these 100 Best inspire communities across the country to create environments where children and families have boundless opportunities.''

PROTECT AMERICA ACT OF 2007 EXTENSION

SPEECH OF

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 29, 2008

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 5104, the Protect America Act Extension, which will extend the authorization for the administration's warrantless wiretapping program for another 15 days. I voted against the Protect America Act when it passed in August 2007 because I believe it violates the Constitution and undermines Americans' fundamental civil liberties. Today, I cannot support extending this unconstitutional program for another 15 days.

The Protect America Act (PAA) abandoned the protections of Americans' rights and freedoms that were the hallmark of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), which became law in 1978. FISA was established in response to past abuses of electronic surveillance by Administrations who justified wiretaps under national security concerns. Surveillance was to be subjected to court oversight, where warrants would be required if an Administration sought surveillance of Americans.

We live in a dangerous world and we must protect our country from terrorist attacks. However, commitment to the rule of law, consumer privacy, freedom from unwarranted government intrusion, and our system of checks and balances should never be sacrificed to accommodate an Administration determined to expand its own powers. Instead of extending the PAA for another 15 days, we should be modernizing FISA to accommodate new technologies while requiring that surveillance of American citizens is always subject to court oversight and in compliance with the 4th Amendment. This is the only way to protect America and American freedoms.

SEMPER FI!

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 12, 2008

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, it's no big surprise to me that the peaceniks out in Berkeley, California don't know the first thing about peace, but their latest attack on the real proprietors of peace has stirred up a firestorm. Just in case you haven't heard, the city of Berkeley passed a resolution telling the local U.S. Marine Corps recruiting station that is was ''not welcome in the city and if recruiters choose to stay, they do so as uninvited and unwelcome intruders.'' Mayor Tom Bates said, ''The Marines don't belong here, they shouldn't have come here and they should leave.'' The city of Berkeley has even issued a permit for the radical anti-military group ''Code Pink'' to use the parking spot once reserved for the Marine Recruiting Station. Code Pink has parked a panel truck displaying ''peace at any price'' type statements in front of the recruiting office.

Well, let me remind Mr. Bates that he enjoys the rights and freedoms known only to Americans because the Marines are here. And as for me and the rest of the freedom loving Americans, we hope they never leave. These defenders of democracy deserve better than Berkeley's arrogant disapproval. Berkeley's deplorable anti-Marine city leaders must still have a 60's peacenik hippie mentality that world peace can occur by sitting around smoking dope and banging on the tambourine.

Life in la-la land is all daisy chains and braids, but it's just not reality. Reality is that freedom doesn't come free. Twenty-four of America's finest from my 2nd Congressional District area in Texas have given their lives defending freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan. Seven of them were Marines. Their bravery, dedication, and patriotism will not be tarnished by the foolish words of a few. Their sacrifice will never be forgotten by their friends, their family and freedom-loving peoples throughout the world.

Berkeley's latest onslaught of the Marines is just another attack in a long history on our country. It is against Federal law to willfully obstruct the recruiting or enlistment service of the United States. American taxpayer money should not be used to support those cities that break our laws. Berkeley should lose all Federal funding for their smug denouncement of the Marine Corps. Patriotic Americans should not subsidize cities that tell the Marines to ''get out of town.''

Now, I am a fierce proponent of the First Amendment protecting freedom of speech. The city of Berkeley can bash the Marines in their resolutions, but freedom of speech is not free of consequences. And the consequences should be loss of Federal funds appropriated to the city.

I believe that we must respect those that afforded us those rights and hold them in the highest esteem for their sacrifices. And like it or not, it is the U.S. military that has always been on the front lines to defend the liberties of all Americans, even the hippies in Berkeley.

February 19th marks the 63rd anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima. The month long battle against Imperial Japan resulted in 26,000 U.S. casualties, mostly young Marines. The quiet riverbank of the Potomac is home to the Iwo Jima Memorial. It is a solemn reminder that the Marines are ''always faithful'' to the United States of America. Joe Rosenthal took his famous photograph of five Marines and a Navy Corpsman hosting Old Glory above Mount Suribachi. Of the six flag-raisers in the Memorial, three were killed after the stars and stripes were raised above the volcano. One was Harlan Block from South Texas.

The Marines go where others fear to tread, and the timid are not found. They fight for all American values, including the rights of people in Berkeley to say what they want. But the few—the noble few—the proud—the Marines deserve the honor, respect, and thanks of a grateful Nation.

Ronald Reagan best summed it up when he said, ''Some people spend an entire lifetime wondering if they made a difference. The Marines don't have that problem.'' And as for the unwelcome Marines out in Berkeley: send 'em all to Texas! We'll have a parade, fly the flag and the high school band will play the Marine Hymn. Oooh Rah! Semper Fi!

And that's just the way it is.