

In addition, the visa lottery program is by its very nature discriminatory. The complex formula for assigning visas under the program arbitrarily disqualifies natives from countries that send more than 50,000 immigrants to the U.S. within a five-year period, which excludes nationals from countries such as Mexico, Canada, China and others.

The visa lottery program represents what is wrong with our country's immigration system. My legislation would eliminate the visa lottery program. The removal of this controversial program will help ensure our nation's security, make the administration of our immigration laws more consistent and fair, and help reduce immigration fraud and opportunism.

S. 386, THE FRAUD ENFORCEMENT  
AND RECOVERY ACT OF 2009

**HON. JOHN S. TANNER**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 7, 2009*

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 386, the Fraud Enforcement and Recovery Act of 2009, particularly language strengthening the provisions of the False Claims Act. At a time when the U.S. Government is spending hundreds of billions of dollars to jump start our faltering economy, we need to reassure the American people that we will have a "zero tolerance" approach to fraud. It is important that we honor taxpayer dollars as if they were our own.

In January of this year, the House passed H. Res. 40, which I sponsored. This resolution, now part of the House rules, requires each House committee to conduct at least three hearings a year on the topic of waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement in the agencies under the committee's jurisdiction. It puts in place a systematic mechanism for regular oversight.

S. 386 complements and parallels the intent of H. Res. 40, with key provisions to bolster the False Claims Act. The False Claims Act was first signed into law in 1863, as President Lincoln sought to combat fraud against the United States during the Civil War. It allows private individuals to bring lawsuits on behalf of the United States, in order to recover funds that were wrongfully obtained through fraud. In 1986, the statute was amended.

In the 20-plus years since the False Claims Act was last amended, however, many federal courts around the country have misinterpreted and weakened the statute, making it more difficult for private citizens and the government to expose and prosecute fraud against the United States. Today, as our country is in the midst of two wars and faces the worst economic crisis that most of us have ever lived through, fraud against the government is again on the rise; the time has come to strengthen the False Claims Act once more. S. 386 does just that.

Mr. Speaker, the False Claims Act is the Federal Government's most effective tool to combat fraud. At a time when additional government funds are exposed to potential fraud, the American taxpayers need to be assured that their money is not being mismanaged.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and reaffirm their commitment to the American taxpayers.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNI-  
VERSARY OF THE VILLAGE OF  
OAK LAWN, ILLINOIS

**HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 7, 2009*

Mr. LIPINSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Village of Oak Lawn, Illinois as it celebrates its centennial. Throughout its history, the Village of Oak Lawn has strived to embody the best qualities of its residents, and in doing so has served commendably as a great place to work, shop, raise a family, and retire.

Beginning with its first settler in 1842, the Village of Oak Lawn has prospered through the years. Symbolic of the ever-expanding United States, 1881 saw the laying of the railroad tracks that connected the area to the world. The railroad and the subsequent railway stations, telegraph office, and post office laid the groundwork for a population that grew to include churches, schools, and 300 residents by the early 1900's. Oak Lawn's growing population, coupled with concerns about autonomy from the City of Chicago and the promise of a much-desired gas pipe, motivated the Village to incorporate in 1909. The hard work of the men and women of Oak Lawn led to the development of a fire department, library, park district and more schools by the mid 1940's. Village population boomed to 27,000 by the 1960's, only to have Oak Lawn rocked by a major tornado in 1967. Undeterred by that devastating event, Oak Lawn grew to its current size of 57,000 by the 1970's.

Today, the Village of Oak Lawn is a successful, bustling community well-positioned to continue its prosperity in the 21st century. The Village employs 400 people in an official capacity and boasts a fantastic parks system, a state of the art library, and over 300 acres of parks and recreational facilities. Oak Lawn's excellent education system lays the groundwork for the success and development of future generations, boasting many excellent public schools and five Catholic grammar schools. Advocate Christ Medical Center and Hope Children's Hospital are located in Oak Lawn, providing some of the most acclaimed pediatrics, cardiology, surgical services, oncology, women's services and emergency medicine in the area. And the Children's Museum in Oak Lawn serves countless children from across the region who come to learn, grow, and have fun.

From the first resident in 1842 to the current 57,000 residents, citizens of the Village of Oak Lawn have shown grit, determination, and a commitment to excellence and have continued to grow a vibrant community in suburban Cook County.

I am proud to have in the 3rd District of Illinois such a strong example of what makes the United States great. May these first one hundred years be only the beginning. I ask my colleagues to rise with me to recognize the history and achievements of the residents of Oak Lawn as the Village celebrates its centennial anniversary.

HONORING DANIEL AND KIM  
IRWIN FOR THEIR WORK WITH  
THE FAISON SCHOOL—AUTISM  
CENTER OF VIRGINIA

**HON. ERIC CANTOR**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 7, 2009*

Mr. CANTOR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Daniel and Kim Irwin and their work with the Faison School—Autism Center of Virginia.

This month Mr. and Mrs. Irwin were honored with a CARE Award honoring the significant contributions they have made in the education of America's youth. Their dedication to children with autism and to the Faison School can be seen in their ongoing professional growth and the tremendous success of their students.

Dan and Kim both started at the Faison School over 5 years ago. During this time they both obtained teacher certifications, board certifications in behavior analysis, and even master's degrees. Over the course of this time they became engaged, then married, and are now expecting their first child.

The Irwins have been an integral part of the school's growth and have helped to teach many children with autism to become successful learners, better communicators, and independent thinkers. In fact, the work they are doing goes a long way in making a difference in the lives of children with autism.

Madam Speaker, I ask you to join me in congratulating the Irwins and wishing them all the best in their future.

INTRODUCTION OF THE VETERANS  
HOME LOAN IMPROVEMENT ACT  
OF 2009

**HON. EARL BLUMENAUER**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 7, 2009*

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the bipartisan "Veterans Home Loan Improvement Act of 2009" along with Reps. BOB FILNER (CA), SUSAN DAVIS (CA), KURT SCHRADER (OR), GREG WALDEN (OR), PETER DEFazio (OR), DAVID WU (OR), RON KIND (WI), STEVE KAGEN (WI), AL GREEN (TX), and DON YOUNG (AK). Together we represent each of the states that would benefit from an expansion of the Qualified Veterans Mortgage Bond program.

This program was originally created after World War II to promote homeownership among our returning troops. Together, our states offer veterans mortgage loans at more favorable interest rates as a reward for their service to our nation. As part of a comprehensive review of veterans' services in the state of Oregon, the Oregon Governor's Veterans Task Force recommended a further expansion of this highly effective program.

This Act is based on one particularly timely recommendation to expand eligibility for our state programs and bring affordable mortgages to an additional 264,000 veterans. I look forward to continuing to work on behalf of Oregon and the nation's veterans to ensure that we provide the best possible quality of care and service.

## TUCSON CITIZEN

**HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 7, 2009*

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the Tucson Citizen which is closing after 138 years.

The Arizona Citizen was founded in 1870, by John Wasson, a newspaper man from California, with help from Richard McCormick, the territory's governor and later territorial delegate to Congress. In 1976, Gannett Co., Inc. bought the newspaper and changed its name from the Arizona Citizen to the Tucson Citizen.

The closure of the Tucson Citizen is a great loss for the community of Southern Arizona. As the state's oldest newspaper, the Tucson Citizen has been a part of Arizona's history. During its existence, the Citizen reported on Arizona's biggest stories, among them the 1881 gunfight at the OK Corral and the 1934 arrest of bank robber John Dillinger.

The Tucson Citizen has been a place that Tucsonans turned to for local news. The stories published reflected the diverse community and the stories that impacted multiple generations.

Losing the Tucson Citizen is losing a piece of history and losing a bit of family.

For the past several decades, the Tucson Citizen has been a family affair. Many a reporter, assignment editor and publisher worked in the same newsroom as their previous relatives. This newspaper worked hard to connect our present with our past and another voice will be lost when the doors finally shut forever.

From the beginning, there have been individuals dedicated to keeping the public informed, communities educated, and discourse alive and well. Throughout its existence, the Tucson Citizen has worked to provide our community with accurate information. A desire for good journalism is vital to fostering a more enlightened public. I ask to recognize the Tucson Citizen for its contribution to Southern Arizona.

## TRIBUTE TO MR. KEVIN COOK

**HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON**

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 7, 2009*

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Kevin Cook, former Clerk of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, who recently retired after ten years of honorable service for the U.S. Congress and over thirty years of service with the federal government. During my time serving as a Member of this Subcommittee, I had the distinct pleasure of working with Mr. Cook and benefiting from his knowledge and counsel on budgetary, policy and oversight matters.

Mr. Cook devoted his career to serving in the federal government and spent almost three decades working for various federal agencies and for Congress. Mr. Cook started his career as a geologist for the U.S. Forest Service before spending over 20 years as a hydrologist, water resources planner, project

manager and physical scientist for the Army Corps of Engineers. Mr. Cook came to the House of Representatives in 1998, where he served as Science Advisor and Counsel for the House Energy and Commerce Committee and then as a Professional Staff Member, the Majority and then the Minority Clerk for the House Energy and Water Development Subcommittee on Appropriations, where I had the honor of working closely with him.

As clerk for the Subcommittee, Mr. Cook oversaw appropriations for the Department of Energy, the Civil Works programs of the Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation, as well as a number of related agencies. In this role, he oversaw appropriations and conducted oversight of these programs and worked diligently to uphold the interest of the taxpayer to ensure that our taxpayer dollars were spent efficiently and effectively. I was a frequent beneficiary of his guidance and expertise, as I know were the Chairman, Ranking Member and the other members of the Subcommittee.

Madam Speaker, I believe that we owe much of our effectiveness as Members to the hard work and dedication of the staff. Kevin Cook exemplifies the highest ideals of public service and served the Committee and the federal government with honor, integrity and enthusiasm. We will miss his expertise and counsel greatly—his knowledge and understanding of the issues at hand will be difficult to match. Thank you, Kevin, for your many years of service to the federal government, the United States Congress and our nation.

RESTORE BALANCE TO TAX  
TREATMENT OF CHARITABLE  
VEHICLE DONATIONS**HON. WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 7, 2009*

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, in 2004, the Congress enacted changes in the federal tax code intended to address real and perceived abuses related to charitable donations of vehicles. Those changes, while well-intended, have had unanticipated and serious consequences. Over the last four years, charitable vehicle donations have plummeted. The steep decrease in revenue has forced many charities—in my state and across the country—to reduce services to their beneficiaries.

The adverse impact on charities is especially alarming in the context of the recession currently gripping the nation. The economic downturn has exacerbated demand for charitable services. But the changes enacted in 2004 are strangling the charitable contributions on which those services depend.

I have introduced legislation to refine those changes in ways that restore better balance to this provision of the tax code and fulfill the original intent of Congress: to promote charitable donations. Every car and truck donated to charity, moreover, would help stimulate sales of new automobiles—at a fraction of the per-transaction cost of any auto bailout proposal.

Before 2005, a taxpayer could deduct the fair market value (FMV) of vehicles donated to charity. Under Section 170 of Title 26 of the U.S. Code, a donor could claim the FMV as

determined by well-established used car pricing guides, as long as the FMV was under \$5000. However, there was concern that some taxpayers were gaming the system by claiming excessive deductions, and that there was insufficient IRS oversight to detect or police these problems.

In its FY2005 budget request, the Administration proposed reforming the rules governing vehicle donations by allowing a deduction only if the taxpayer obtained a qualified appraisal for the vehicle. However, the Congress rejected that proposal and went much further. The tax code changes included in the American Jobs Creation Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-357) limited deductions over \$500 to the actual proceeds of sale of the vehicle by the charity—regardless of appraised value. Only if the charity actually keeps and uses the car (rather than sells it for the resulting revenue) can the donor deduct its FMV.

The rules took effect for tax year 2005. Today, a taxpayer with an older used car in poor condition can call many charities nationwide to have the vehicle towed at no cost and then claim a \$500 deduction. However, a taxpayer with a newer-model car in good condition has no idea what deduction will be allowed until the vehicle is actually sold. That sale may not occur until months later, forcing the donor to roll the dice on the final deduction amount.

During congressional debate, proponents argued that the changes would not add new burdens on vehicle donors or adversely impact charitable giving. To the contrary, evidence abounds that the changes have seriously disrupted charitable giving and forced many charities to curtail services to low-income beneficiaries.

Two recent government reports have concluded that charitable vehicle donations have dropped significantly since federal tax law changed four years ago. In March 2008, a Government Accountability Office (GAO) study of 10 national charities over the two years after the law changed found that vehicle donations had dropped by 39 percent and that the resulting charitable revenues decreased by 25 percent. In May 2008, the Internal Revenue Service documented that the number of vehicles donated in 2005, the first year after the rules changed, decreased by 67 percent and that their value fell by over 80 percent.

To feel informed enough to decide whether to donate a vehicle, taxpayers need a reasonable degree of certainty about the resulting deduction. Otherwise, alternatives such as a private sale or dealer trade-in become more attractive. This is clearly not what the Congress intended.

The objective of the original 1986 car donation provision in the federal tax code was to encourage charitable donations and to help charities develop new ways to generate contributions. The 2004 amendments have undermined that goal without improving IRS enforcement. As a result, charities and their beneficiaries are suffering.

The change has affected not only the number of donations, but also the quality of donated vehicles. News articles from across the country reflect plummeting donation rates and the precipitous decline in revenue of non-profit community organizations. The news coverage itself has exacerbated the problem. Potential donors concerned about the changes are discouraged further by the perception of the new burdens associated with the amended rules.