

company and its founder so special is that Nelson is not just focused on running an economically successful company, but doing so in a responsible way. The company specifically focuses on using natural resources responsibly, thereby saving both water and energy with its innovative products.

If one drives through my home district of eastern Washington, you can't help but spot some of Nelson's products at work. These innovative irrigation systems are helping to produce food for an expanding global population. In fact, Nelson recognizes the importance of their innovative products not just helping feed a growing population, but improving the quality of life for countless people throughout this country and the world.

Madam Speaker, with such innovative, dedicated, and sincere entrepreneurs as Bart Nelson helping to expand the irrigation products to new levels, I am confident that both eastern Washington and the United States can look forward to a future of world-class innovation and prosperity in the agricultural industry.

HONORING THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RINGLING BROTHERS CIRCUS

**HON. TAMMY BALDWIN**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 8, 2009*

Ms. BALDWIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the 125th anniversary of the Ringling Brothers Circus and to recognize the role of both the Circus World Museum and the Wisconsin Historical Society in the preservation of circus industry history. The Ringling Brothers Circus has become a celebrated national entertainment enterprise based in Baraboo, Wisconsin, while the Circus World Museum and Wisconsin Historical Society have developed an impressive collection of circus artifacts and knowledge.

The Ringling Brothers Circus rose to prominence under the leadership of several Baraboo area brothers, eventually becoming one of the most successful entertainment enterprises in American history. This circus has contributed to the economic and cultural vitality of Wisconsin since the Ringling brothers gave their first performance on May 19, 1884. Though Chas, Al, John, Alf, and Otto Ringling launched their small business with less than \$100 in assets, these five Baraboo natives went on to purchase the world famous Barnum and Bailey Circus. The organization continued to grow, exhibiting the unique talents and showmanship of this Sauk County family for hundreds of audiences across the country. Combining their passion for performance with an entrepreneurial spirit, the Ringling brothers created one of the longest-running entertainment enterprises in the world. The work of the Ringling brothers and the success of their circus provide impressive examples for ambitious performers and business people everywhere. I am proud of the group's contributions to both the state of Wisconsin and to audiences throughout America.

Over the past half century, the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Circus World Museum have become stewards of circus industry memorabilia and information. Baraboo is home to one of the largest collections of his-

torical circus artifacts in the world, and the Circus World Museum's Robert L. Parkinson Library and Research Center has become the world's foremost research facility for circus history. With objects dating back to 1793, these organizations are leaders, both on a local and national level, in the preservation of circus materials. By maintaining the documents, objects, and knowledge base associated with the circus, the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Circus World Museum have conserved a valuable aspect of our national heritage. The Historical Society's work on behalf of the Ringling Brothers Circus, as well as the circus industry as a whole, serves as an ideal example of its dedication to the local communities and to the enrichment of society through historical preservation.

The citizens of Baraboo can be proud of their city, and its role as the first home to the "Greatest Show on Earth." Since its inception, the Ringling Brothers Circus has cultivated a reputation for excellence in entertainment, while the Circus World Museum has set the standard for circus history preservation. I therefore commend Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus for its sustained contributions to the national circus industry, as well as the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Circus World Museum, for their dedication to circus history and research.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AUTHORITIES AND CORRECTIONS ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

**HON. PAUL TONKO**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 7, 2009*

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, as a new Member of Congress, I have spent this year actively seeking opportunities to offer constructive legislative proposals on issues important to my constituents and to the Nation. I have been honored to sponsor measures dealing with improving highway safety and fostering research and development for alternative energy.

In addition to my other legislation focused on energy and transportation safety, I also directed my staff to contact the National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee because the protection and preservation of our parks, heritage areas, forests and public lands are of vital interest to me and the people I represent.

The committee informed me that the National Park Service needed legislation to deal with a number of technical concerns facing the agency, and I was honored to act as the sponsor.

H.R. 3804 includes 10-year reauthorizations for two important advisory boards, the National Park System Advisory Board and the National Park Service Concession Management Advisory Board.

The National Park System Advisory Board was first authorized in 1935 and advises the NPS Director and the Secretary of the Interior on matters relating to the agency, the National Park System, and programs administered by the NPS, including the designation of national historic landmarks and proposed national historic trails. A full, 10-year reauthorization of

the Board is critical to maintaining the excellent management standards set by the National Park Service.

The Concession Management Advisory Board was established by the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998. The seven-member panel advises the Secretary of the Interior and the National Park Service on matters relating to the effective management of concessions in units of the National Park System. Reauthorization of this Board is important to ensure that the lodging, transportation, dining and other services provided to park visitors are of the very highest quality.

H.R. 3804 also raises the ceiling for the popular Volunteers in Parks program from \$3.5 million to \$10 million. Volunteers, of course, are not paid, but many receive reimbursement for travel costs or other small expenses. Our national parks simply could not function without these volunteers, and the VIP program is really the least we can do to repay their enormous contributions.

At the request of the National Park Service, H.R. 3804 changes the designation of the Martin Luther King, Junior, National Historic Site in Atlanta to the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park, to better reflect the size and complexity of the unit.

The bill also makes several minor boundary adjustments that will allow the National Park Service to cooperate with other sites near the U.S.S. Arizona Memorial to make ticketing easier for visitors and makes technical corrections for six provisions in the omnibus parks bill from earlier this year.

Finally, H.R. 3804 will strengthen law enforcement in our national parks by increasing and standardizing penalties for violations of park laws.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this bill so that our Park Service can move to a more stable future.

THE HEALTH CARE REALITY CHECK ACT

**HON. EARL BLUMENAUER**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 8, 2009*

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am proud to introduce the Health Care Reality Check Act of 2009.

It has become clear that some of my colleagues in Congress lack proper perspective on the urgency of health reform because, ironically, as Members of Congress we enjoy some of the best health security in the world through our government-administered health care:

All Members of Congress are eligible—and most participate in—the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program, which provides all Federal employees with a Government-negotiated insurance exchange that is subsidized by their employer: the Federal Government;

Almost 150 Members of Congress qualify for Medicare, a single-payer Government insurance plan;

The 121 Senators and Representatives who served in our Armed Forces are eligible for the "socialized" health care we provide for all veterans; and

Members who aren't veterans can avail themselves to a similar "socialized" program—

the Attending Physician in the U.S. Capitol, for an annual fee of around \$500.

These Government-run health programs have successfully provided countless Senators and Representatives with life-saving medical treatments, but as we all know, most Americans don't have this kind of protection.

Members of Congress should not have access to taxpayer-funded healthcare when they are actively denying these very people quality care of their own.

Congress needs a reality check.

In 2007, before the economy collapsed, 42 percent of all adult Americans under 65 were either uninsured or underinsured. Our dire unemployment rates and escalating health care costs have only made this situation worse. Today half of all American families delay seeking medical treatment because they have such a tenuous health insurance situation. Many of my colleagues do not fully appreciate the plight of 50 percent of our population, but we can help them understand.

Until health reform is enacted, Members of Congress should get to experience the tender mercies of our fragmented, complex, and exploitative health care system. My Health Care Reality Check Act terminates all government-administered health benefits for Members of Congress until comprehensive health reform is signed into law: no more Federal Employee Health Benefits Program, no Medicare, no VA, no attending physician in the Capitol.

Instead, Senators and Representatives may self-insure or they can rely on a spouse's company having employer-provided insurance, thus tying them—like millions of Americans—to the employment of a family member. Some will need to buy health insurance on the private market, exposing them to legal discrimination based on age and gender.

By personally dealing with rescissions, pre-existing condition exclusions, the fine-print of insurance contracts and the gaps in coverage from weak consumer protections maybe my colleagues can better grasp the urgency of our health care crisis.

If our own health security were linked to the success of health reform for all Americans, we will have a bill enacted within weeks, guaranteed.

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#### INTRODUCING LEGISLATION ADDRESSING WORLD WAR II AND THE DEPORTATION OF JEWS AND OTHERS TO CONCENTRATION CAMPS

**HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 8, 2009*

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speakers, I am pleased to join my colleagues Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN and Congressman JERRY NADLER in introducing bipartisan legislation that addresses a horrific period in world history: World War II and the deportation of millions of Jews and others to concentration camps. This bill would affect French railroad companies, which took more than 75,000 Jews from France to concentration camps during World War II, less than 3 percent of whom survived. Under current law, these foreign entities are immune from legal action. Specifically, the bill provides plaintiffs the right to

seek damages against the French National Railway (Societe Nationale des Chemines Fers Francais—SNCF) in Federal Court for its transportation of French and other Jews to Auschwitz as well as its supply of personnel to facilitate the transportation and the assessed charges per person. The French Government claims immunity from legal action due to the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act, yet the FSIA was passed 30 years after the action causing the damages for which the plaintiffs seek. The bill allows the plaintiffs to sue regardless of the strictures of the FSIA.

Nothing will ever make up for the unthinkable atrocities undertaken by Nazi Germany and its sympathizers during World War II, but every bit of justice is important. No perpetrator or accomplice of the Holocaust should ever go unpunished. This bill allows some measure of closure for those who have suffered for far too long.

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#### FIRST GLOBAL MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON ROAD SAFETY

**HON. ROBERT WEXLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 8, 2009*

Mr. WEXLER. Madam Speaker, as a founding co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Global Road Safety, I rise today to praise the highly encouraging efforts and outcomes of the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, which took place in Moscow, Russia, on November 19 and 20, 2009.

This important conference was the result of a five-year effort by a global community of stakeholders from multilateral and bilateral institutions, from governmental and nongovernmental organizations, and from academia and civil society. These groups are dedicated to raising international awareness and to mobilizing a global response to advancing road safety.

Hosted by President Dmitry Medvedev and the Russian Federation, this conference brought together transportation ministers, health ministers, non-governmental organizations, and experts from across the globe and reflected a growing understanding among nations to seek opportunities to cooperate on tackling one of the world's most severe problems today—the epidemic of road crash deaths and injuries.

The statistics for this epidemic are staggering: 1.3 million people are killed annually on the world's roads and 50 million more are injured. The number of deaths each year is the equivalent of 10 jumbo jets crashing every day, and the toll is continuing to increase dramatically. At the current rate of growth, road crashes will be the fifth leading cause of death overall by the year 2030, and the first leading cause of death for children aged five and older by 2020, rivaling the top and often more well-known global health epidemics.

Road crashes do not discriminate by age, class, gender, race, or nationality. Nor do they respect the bounds of geography. In the United States alone the death toll is an estimated 44,000 people annually, and road crashes have become the leading cause of death among Hispanics under 34 years of age. Meanwhile, in some African countries, up to half of all hospital surgical beds are occu-

piated by road crash victims, while in others the fatalities rank second only to HIV/AIDS.

Along with the unfathomable human cost of road crashes, there are also grave economic costs to individuals, families, and communities. It is estimated that road crashes cost \$518 billion globally each year. In developing countries, road crashes have a dramatic impact on their fragile economies, costing an estimated \$100 billion, and often exceeding the total amount received by these countries in development assistance. Furthermore, road crashes place a preventable strain on first responder services, health care services, and health insurance services, as many victims require extensive, and expensive, critical care, as well as follow-up care and rehabilitation. In countries where a primary bread-winner is killed or injured, or must care for the injured, this can destroy livelihoods and devastate communities.

The First Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in Moscow addressed each of these issues, as well as many other key components of the road safety epidemic, in an intensive two days of plenary sessions and panel discussions during which high level delegates from various nations and organizations shared experiences, ideas, and best practices.

I would like to commend the U.S. delegation, which included representation from the Department of State, the Department of Transportation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other partner state and federal agencies, for its robust participation and high level representation throughout the Conference. As the first global forum for road safety, this conference was truly an historic event. I am pleased that the U.S. delegation took a strong leadership role in addressing U.S. road safety goals and objectives, as well as in working constructively with the Conference to establish new benchmarks for best practices and road traffic injury prevention, as announced in the Moscow Declaration.

The Moscow Declaration reinforces governmental leadership and guidance on road safety, sets regional casualty reduction targets, and offers a new framework for international cooperation on global road safety. It declares the decade 2011–2020 as the “Decade of Action for Road Safety” with the goal of stabilizing and reducing the forecast level of global road deaths. Finally, the Declaration encourages the U.N. General Assembly to assent to the goals and policies it proposes.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work of all those who helped make the First Ministerial Conference on Global Road Safety a success. I applaud the Russian Federation for taking the initiative of hosting this critical conference in Moscow. I would also like to congratulate the U.S. delegation and other participants from around the world for having demonstrated a promising commitment to the important goal of reducing road deaths on a global scale.

I and the rest of the Congressional Caucus on Global Road Safety look forward to maintaining a fruitful dialogue with the Russian Federation, other governments, the international NGO community and other organizations, with the aim of finding further ways to improve road safety, and I am hopeful that the Congress as a whole will continue to do so as well. Finally, I encourage the Obama Administration and the American delegation to continue their strong leadership in ensuring that