

theft is more effective in protecting the public than expanding the power of the federal police force. Federal punishment of identity thieves provides cold comfort to those who have suffered financial losses and the destruction of their good reputations as a result of identity theft.

Federal laws are not only ineffective in stopping, private criminals, but these laws have not even stopped unscrupulous government officials from accessing personal information. After all, laws purporting to restrict the use of personal information did not stop the well-publicized violations of privacy by IRS officials or the FBI abuses of the Clinton and Nixon administrations.

In one of the most infamous cases of identity theft, thousands of active-duty soldiers and veterans had their personal information stolen, putting them at risk of identity theft. Imagine the dangers if thieves are able to obtain the universal identifier, and other personal information, of millions of Americans simply by breaking, or hacking, into one government facility or one government database?

Second, the federal government has been creating proprietary interests in private information for certain state-favored special interests. Perhaps the most outrageous example of phony privacy protection is the "medical privacy" regulation, that allows medical researchers, certain business interests, and law enforcement officials access to health care information, in complete disregard of the Fifth Amendment and the wishes of individual patients! Obviously, "privacy protection" laws have proven greatly inadequate to protect personal information when the government is the one seeking the information.

Any action short of repealing laws authorizing privacy violations is insufficient primarily because the federal government lacks constitutional authority to force citizens to adopt a universal identifier for health care, employment, or any other reason. Any federal action that oversteps constitutional limitations violates liberty because it ratifies the principle that the federal government, not the Constitution, is the ultimate judge of its own jurisdiction over the people. The only effective protection of the rights of citizens is for Congress to follow Thomas Jefferson's advice and "bind (the federal government) down with the chains of the Constitution."

Madam Speaker, those members who are not persuaded by the moral and constitutional reasons for embracing the Identity Theft Prevention Act should consider the American people's opposition to national identifiers. The numerous complaints over the ever-growing uses of the Social Security number show that Americans want Congress to stop invading their privacy. Furthermore, according to a survey by the Gallup company, 91 percent of the American people oppose forcing Americans to obtain a universal health ID.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I once again call on my colleagues to join me in putting an end to the federal government's unconstitutional use of national identifiers to monitor the actions of private citizens. National identifiers threaten all Americans by exposing them to the threat of identity theft by private criminals and abuse of their liberties by public criminals, while diverting valuable law enforcement resources away from addressing real threats to public safety. In addition, national identifiers are incompatible with a limited, con-

stitutional government. I, therefore, hope my colleagues will join my efforts to protect the freedom of their constituents by supporting the Identity Theft Prevention Act.

HONORING BRIAN MICHAEL
BIRCHLER

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Brian Michael Birchler of Kansas City, Missouri. Brian is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1261, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Brian has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years Brian has been involved with Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Brian Michael Birchler for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

TO REAUTHORIZE THE TROPICAL
FOREST CONSERVATION ACT
AND EXPAND THE PROGRAM TO
INCLUDE THE CONSERVATION OF
ALL FORESTS AND CORAL
REEFS AND ASSOCIATED COAST-
AL MARINE RESOURCES

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, today I introduce a bill to reauthorize and expand Rob Portman's landmark legislation, the Tropical Forest Conservation Act. This reauthorization will help developing countries reduce foreign debt and provide comprehensive environmental preservation programs to protect forests and endangered marine habitats around the world.

Since enacted in 1998, Tropical Forest Conservation Act programs have generated more than \$162 million over 10 to 25 years to help conserve 50 million acres of tropical forests in Asia, the Caribbean, Central and South America. But the rate of deforestation continues to accelerate across the globe in all types of forests.

Similarly alarming is the rapid rate of coral reef and coastal exploitation. The burden of foreign debt falls especially hard on the smallest of nations, such as island nations in the Caribbean and Pacific. With few natural resources, these nations often resort to harvesting or otherwise exploiting coral reefs and other marine habitats to earn hard currency to service foreign debt. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 60 percent of the world's coral reefs may be destroyed by the year 2050 if the present rate of destruction continues.

The Forest and Coral Conservation Act will credit qualified developing nations for each dollar spent on a comprehensive reef preservation or management program designed to protect these unique ecosystems from degradation. This legislation will make available resources for environmental stewardship that would otherwise be of the lowest priority in a developing country. It will reduce debt by investing locally in programs that will strengthen indigenous economies by creating long-term management policies that will preserve the natural resources upon which local commerce is based.

This legislation has enormous consequences for the existence of critical ecosystems, the health of our planet and the livelihoods of millions of people across the globe. I am proud to introduce the Forest and Coral Conservation Act with Representative ALCEE HASTINGS (D-FL), which will help preserve the world's most precious natural resources.

RECOGNIZING CONNIE PASQUA-
LINO OF SPRING HILL, FLORIDA

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Connie Pasqualino of Hernando County, Florida. Connie will do something later this year that all of us strive to do, but that very few of us will ever accomplish, celebrate her 100th birthday.

Connie Pasqualino was born June 28, 1909 in Brooklyn, New York. While she was never married and has no children, Connie did make a career in advertising, attending the Pratt Institute of Design in Brooklyn. In fact, Connie said her proudest moment was the day she graduated from school. Following school she went on to work at BBD and O Advertising Company. While she did not pursue a career in design, if she had it all to do over again she would have spent her career as a fashion designer.

As someone who lived in New York for many years, Connie remembers going to see the Pope perform Mass at Shea Stadium. She said that it was raining before he came onto the stage and as he came to the stage, the rain stopped and the sun shined brightly. She described it as a little miracle.

Although she has never met her, Mother Teresa is Connie's second cousin. Once, Connie and her family were going to visit Mother Teresa in New Jersey when she was visiting relatives there, but there was a blizzard and they had to cancel their trip.

Moving with her sister Nancy to Hernando County in 1990, Connie said she made the switch because of the great Florida weather. She and Nancy also lived with their sister Margaret, who was ill and needed extra care, and her nephew Joseph.

Today Connie lives in Hernando County near her centenarian sister, Nancy. She gets the most pleasure out of taking care of and playing with her pet Quaker parrot, named Jade. Connie's advice to young people is to listen to their parents' advice and get a good education.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join me in honoring Connie Pasqualino for reaching her 100th birthday. I hope we all have the good fortune to live as long as her.

HONORING JEFFERSON HIGH
SCHOOL OF CONCEPTION JUNC-
TION, MISSOURI

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize the outstanding achievements of the students, teachers, administrators, parents, and patrons of Jefferson High School and the Jefferson C-123 School District. Jefferson High School was named a 2008 No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School of the year.

Madam Speaker, in order for Jefferson High School to receive such a prestigious national distinction, they were required to score in the top 10 percent on the State of Missouri's assessment test. I would like to make a special note of Jefferson C-123 School District Superintendent Rob P. Dowis and Jefferson High School Principal Tim R. Jermain for their commitment and leadership to the students of Jefferson High School.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join me in applauding the outstanding achievements of Jefferson High School. It is an honor to have a high school like Jefferson in the Sixth Congressional District of Missouri that strives for educational excellence. We wish them many more years of success.

SITUATION IN GAZA

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, the State of Israel has a right to defend its territory and its people from attack, whether that attack emanates from another sovereign nation, or, as in this case, from a terrorist organization that seized control of Gaza in a bloody putsch 18 months ago.

Hamas clearly chose to escalate its conflict against Israel by unilaterally declaring an end to the ceasefire that was implemented last June and launching a large-scale rocket attack on Israeli population centers. The Israeli government exercised great forbearance in the weeks prior to the formal breakdown of the ceasefire, which Hamas was already violating repeatedly, and had the international community more strongly condemned these attacks and taken action to stop them, the current Israeli offensive may have been unnecessary. But, Hamas bears ultimate responsibility for provoking this attack and for putting 1.5 million Palestinians in harm's way—a fact that Arab leaders from Egypt to Saudi Arabia have noted.

Along with millions of Americans, I grieve the terrible loss of life of innocent Israelis and Palestinians. Hamas's decision to fire rockets from populated areas and Israeli strikes on those targets have resulted in many civilian

casualties, and our hearts go out to all the innocents who have suffered.

It is too early to tell if Israel's military actions will quell the threat of rocket attacks from Gaza and shut down smuggling routes from Egypt. The conflict in Lebanon proved how difficult this can be and a strong international effort will be necessary to avoid a recurrence of missile strikes in both theaters. This will require a level of resolution thus far not demonstrated by the international community.

Israel's long-term security can only be guaranteed by a successful peace process that leads to the creation of a Palestinian state living side-by-side and in peace with Israel. President-elect Obama has committed himself to reinvigorating the search for peace and it is my hope that a timely conclusion of the present hostilities will allow the new President to begin these efforts from the first days of his administration.

STOP THE CONGRESSIONAL PAY RAISE ACT

HON. HARRY E. MITCHELL

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, earlier today my colleague Dr. RON PAUL and I were joined by more than 50 Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle to introduce the Stop the Congressional Pay Raise Act of 2009.

As you may recall, I introduced similar bills the last two years, seeking to prevent an automatic pay raise for Members of Congress from taking effect in 2008 and 2009. Unfortunately, despite the support of 34 cosponsors, last year's bill failed to reach the floor. As a result, every Member is now receiving \$174,000 this year, a \$4,700 increase since last year.

Madam Speaker, our economy is in a recession, hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops are fighting overseas, and our national debt exceeds \$10 trillion. Unemployment figures are on the rise, home values are falling, and markets around the world are suffering from a devastating loss of credit and consumer demand. The American people aren't getting a \$4,700 pay raise this year. I do not know how in good conscience we, as their Representatives in Congress, can accept one.

In the last year, jobless rates increased in 49 States and the District of Columbia. Unemployment was up 2 percentage point from a year before. In my home State of Arizona, unemployment rose by over 50 percent, leaving nearly 200,000 workers unemployed.

Compounding the situation, economists estimate that nearly \$7 trillion of investor stock wealth was lost in 2008, and Standard & Poor's 500 and the Dow Jones industrial average experienced their worst years since the Great Depression.

When Members of Congress accept this pay raise, we send the wrong message. We should be tightening our belts along with the men and women we represent. Americans are suffering and instead of feeling that pain, Congress is quietly approving pay raises to further insulate us from it. If you want to know why people hate Washington and feel that it is out of touch, it is precisely because of moves like this.

If we are going to talk the talk of fiscal discipline, I believe we need to walk the walk of self-restraint. I will be donating my 2009 pay raise to charity, just as I did with my 2008 pay raise. I encourage my colleagues to do the same, and join me in stopping the next automatic pay raise from taking effect by supporting the Stop the Congressional Pay Raise Act.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 40, THE COMMISSION TO STUDY REPARA- TION PROPOSALS FOR AFRICAN- AMERICANS ACT

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, today I rise to introduce H.R. 40, the Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act. This 111th Congress marks the 20th anniversary of this bill's introduction. Since 1989, I have believed it to be in the best interest of our Nation to formally address one of our greatest historical injustices.

As evidenced by recent events, the sin of slavery is one that continues to weigh heavily upon us. Following the lead of other churches, the Episcopal Church formally apologized for its role in slavery on October 4, 2008. Florida became the sixth state to apologize for slavery on March 26, 2008, following Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, Alabama and New Jersey. During the internationally renowned Sundance Film Festival, *Traces of the Trade*, a documentary in which descendants of the largest U.S. slave trading family confront this painful history, screened in January of 2008.

Just last Congress, the House passed a slavery apology bill on July 29, 2008, in which the House issued a formal apology for slavery. In recognition of the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade on January 1, 1808, the House and Senate passed legislation creating a commemoration commission, which was signed into law on February 5, 2008, and is currently awaiting funding. Such Federal efforts are significant steps towards proper acknowledgment and understanding of slavery and its implications, but our responsibilities on this matter are even greater.

Establishing a commission to study the institution of slavery in the United States, as well as its consequences that reach into modern day society, is our responsibility. This concept of a commission to address historical wrongs is not unprecedented. In fact, in recent Congresses, commission bills have been put forward.

In 1983, a Presidential Commission determined that the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II was racist and inhumane, and as a result, the 1988 Civil Liberties Act provided redress for those injured by the internment. However, the internment of Japanese Latin Americans in the United States during World War II was not examined by the Commission, resulting in legislation calling for a commission to examine this oversight. Legislation establishing a commission to review the injustices suffered by European Americans, European Latin Americans, and Jewish refugees during World War II has also been proposed.