

about the spending bill before us this week. How will billions spent on school snack programs and repairs to the Smithsonian Institution stimulate the economy? How will \$3 billion being spent for a prevention and wellness fund stimulate the economy?

It is clear that this spending package has become a one-stop shop for every item on a spending agenda—a massive, unprecedented spending bill aimed to bypass the normal appropriations process and subsidize a broad range of existing and new government programs. We must do better, and together we can do better to create jobs.

A targeted stimulus package of tax relief and assistance for small businesses would fuel this Nation's entrepreneurial spirit and help private industry and individuals create jobs. Our focus should be on growing the American economy and not on growing an already massive government.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

LAND OF ENCHANTMENT

(Mr. LUJÁN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. Speaker, New Mexico is known as the Land of Enchantment because of our people, beautiful landscapes, clear skies, and fresh air. My district is home to millions of acres of Federal lands and countless natural resources—resources that create opportunities and challenges.

One challenge my district faces is water availability and allocation. Water projects on either side of the State have been long planned, and now may come to fruition. As someone who tends to the acequia, the ditch on our small family farm, I know the importance of water to rural economies across America.

Land, water, and sustainability are not only fundamental to life in my State, they are fundamental to rich cultures and traditions that make New Mexico great, like acequias and land grants, which are an essential part of the rural economies of my district.

Let us work together in protecting New Mexico's rich culture and traditions.

RESIGNATION FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation from the House of Representatives:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING,
Washington, DC, January 26, 2009.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER, I am writing to resign my position as the United States Representative for the 20th District of New York

effective Monday, January 26, 2009. Governor David Paterson of New York has selected me to fill the vacancy left in the U.S. Senate by Hillary Rodham Clinton's resignation to become our Secretary of State. My letter of resignation addressed to the New York Secretary of State is attached.

It has been a great privilege for me to serve the constituents of New York's 20th District in the House of Representatives for the past two years. I hope to build on the work I began in this district, to help all of the people of New York.

I also want to thank you, Madam Speaker, my colleagues in the House, and in particular the New York Congressional delegation. I am so grateful for my time in the House, for and the honor working with so many outstanding Members. I look forward to continuing our work and collaboration to build a better New York and a better America.

Thank you and God bless,
KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND.

Attachment:
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING,
Washington, DC, January 23, 2009.

Hon. LORRAINE CORTES-VASQUEZ,
Secretary of State, Department of State, Washington Avenue, Albany, NY.

DEAR SECRETARY CORTES-VASQUEZ: This letter is to inform you that effective immediately, I resign my seat in the United States Congress in order to assume my duties as United States Senator.

Very truly yours,
KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 5(d) of rule XX, the Chair announces to the House that, in light of the resignation of the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the whole number of the House is 433.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 7 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1730

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California) at 5 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:30 p.m. today.

NATIONAL DATA PRIVACY DAY

Mr. WELCH. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 31) expressing support for designation of January 28, 2009, as "National Data Privacy Day".

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 31

Whereas the Internet and the capabilities of modern technology cause data privacy issues to figure prominently in the lives of many people in the United States at work, in their interaction with government and public authorities, in the health field, in e-commerce transactions, and online generally;

Whereas many individuals are unaware of data protection and privacy laws generally and of specific steps that can be taken to help protect the privacy of personal information online;

Whereas "National Data Privacy Day" constitutes an international collaboration and a nationwide and statewide effort to raise awareness about data privacy and the protection of personal information on the Internet;

Whereas government officials from the United States and Europe, privacy professionals, academics, legal scholars, representatives of international businesses, and others with an interest in data privacy issues are working together on this date to further the discussion about data privacy and protection;

Whereas privacy professionals and educators are being encouraged to take the time to discuss data privacy and protection issues with teens in high schools across the country;

Whereas the recognition of "National Data Privacy Day" will encourage more people nationwide to be aware of data privacy concerns and to take steps to protect their personal information online; and

Whereas January 28, 2009, would be an appropriate day to designate as "National Data Privacy Day": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the designation of a "National Data Privacy Day";

(2) encourages State and local governments to observe the day with appropriate activities that promote awareness of data privacy;

(3) encourages privacy professionals and educators to discuss data privacy and protection issues with teens in high schools across the United States; and

(4) encourages individuals across the Nation to be aware of data privacy concerns and to take steps to protect their personal information online.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Vermont.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WELCH. I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Vermont?

There was no objection.

Mr. WELCH. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support today of House Resolution 31, introduced by Representative

PRICE of North Carolina. This resolution correctly identifies the importance of data security in all of our lives. Particularly, as we continue to incorporate Internet use into our daily lives and routines, it's vital that we focus on the need to protect the sensitive information that is transmitted over the Internet.

Over the past few years, as we all know, we have seen numerous and troubling incidences involving data breach that compromise private information. That includes credit card numbers, bank statements, Social Security numbers, and health records. According to the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, over 250 million records containing sensitive personal information has been subject to security breaches since 2005. We know we have got to protect security if we are going to have the advantages of electronic transmission of records.

Just last week, it was reported that another data breach involving credit and debit card information potentially exposed tens of millions of consumers to the risk of fraud. These incidents underscore the need for vigilance in protecting the privacy of sensitive information.

At this time, Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the author of the resolution, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE).

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. I want to thank the gentleman from Vermont for yielding, and for his good work in bringing this resolution to the floor.

I am here as the lead sponsor, among many sponsors, of House Resolution 31, supporting the designation of January 28 as National Data Privacy Day. In the last 10 years, the Internet has become the preferred carrier of communication in our society. Electronic communications dominate workplaces, and are increasingly prevalent in commerce, in interactions between the public and government at every level, and through social networking sites on the Internet.

While we have realized incredible efficiencies and other benefits from new electronic technologies, those technologies have also raised challenges for protecting the privacy of personal and proprietary information. If we are going to fully realize the potential of electronic communications, we must address these challenges, and that is what H. Res. 31 is all about.

Fortunately, we are off to a good start. On Wednesday, privacy professionals, corporations, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, and students across the Nation are already planning to come together to raise awareness and underscore the importance of data privacy protection as part of National Data Privacy Day.

Academic institutions such as the Wharton Business School, Arizona State University, Santa Clara Law School, and Ohio State University,

have planned events and panel discussions on a broad range of data privacy issues ranging from information security best practices to data privacy issues at public and private institutions of higher education.

One of the major focuses of Data Privacy Day will be to educate teenagers about the importance of online privacy. An estimated 55 percent of American teenagers with access to the Internet use social networking Web sites, and an even greater engage in real-time information sharing through instant messaging, cell phone text messaging, and chat rooms.

While pre-teens, teenagers, and young adults are often the most sophisticated and skilled Internet users—we all know that—many are too often neglectful of their personal safety online. Young people who are participating in online social networking should be made aware of the dangers of failing to protect their personal data. They need to know that not everyone on Facebook or MySpace is a friend.

On Wednesday, educators and privacy professionals across the country will lead discussions with young people to raise awareness about online privacy to promote safe use of the Internet and to help them learn about how to protect the privacy of their personal data.

I am especially proud of events in North Carolina surrounding Data Privacy Day. This week, the Carolina Privacy Officials Network will host panels on consent policy options in health care, information security breaches, and off-shoring of data. At the Sanford Institute of Public Policy at Duke University, representatives from Intel, the Institute for Homeland Security Solutions, the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security, the Provost's Office at Duke University, the Duke Center for European Studies, the Center for International Studies, and the Triangle Institute for Security Studies, will gather with officials from the United States Departments of State, Justice and Homeland Security, as well as the European Commission, to discuss issues surrounding the protection of national security and privacy.

Madam Speaker, H. Res. 31 underscores the importance of data privacy protection and expresses support for the designation of January 28, 2009, as National Data Privacy Day. I want to thank the Members who cosponsored this important resolution, and members of the Energy and Commerce Committee, Chairman WAXMAN, for moving H. Res. 31 to the floor today. It's a resolution that has good bipartisan support. I appreciate that support, and I urge my colleagues to support the measure.

Mr. WELCH. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I am also pleased that our data privacy resolution could

be considered on the floor today, and I would like to thank, obviously, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, for introducing this important resolution, as the lead cosponsor on the Republican side. I am glad to be able to support it. As well as Chairman BARTON from the Energy and Commerce Committee; Mr. MARKEY, the former chairman of the Telecommunications Committee; and, Mr. RADANOVICH, who will speak later, for their support as well.

My colleagues, this resolution supports the designation of January 28 as National Data Privacy Day. As ranking member of the Communications, Technology, and Internet Subcommittee, I am especially concerned about the challenges that all of us face today protecting the privacy of personal sensitive information.

Most of our work product and personal records are now, obviously, digitally stored, as well as transferred. The timesaving convenience of instantaneous communications means we all rely heavily on the Internet and the latest state-of-the-art technology in our simple daily interactions. And, more often than not, all of our electronic communications leave behind a digital fingerprint that opens the potential for abuse if the information is in the wrong hands.

That is why it is pertinent that we, as representatives of the American people here in Congress, take the simple initiative to draw awareness to the importance to protecting sensitive personal information, including financial and health records, from misuse and theft.

Consumers must be vigilant in protecting their data. They have a personal responsibility, and they must be cautious with whom they do business with. Likewise, we must continue to ensure that legitimate businesses which collect and store U.S. consumer personal data will respect the privacy of those consumers at all times and employ the necessary protections to safeguard that data.

Data security is not a new issue. We examined this problem related to data breaches in the Energy and Commerce Committee as far back as the 109th Congress that were spurred by breaches at data brokers affecting millions of our citizens. We learned that State laws created numerous notice requirements that were to inform the customer of these breaches, but it is unclear, Madam Speaker, how many data breaches occurred before those laws took place.

The problem continues to affect countless Americans every year. In fact, there are estimates of data breaches since 2005 that indicate that as many as 251 million records have been exposed or compromised. That is due to these breaches.

The result is often credit card fraud or, worse, identity theft, which can require time, money, and energy from consumers to repair their good name and, obviously, restore their credit history.

Furthermore, universities all across this Nation have had names, photos, phone numbers, and addresses of their students and staff compromised or stolen. Sensitive technology companies such as Science Applications International Corporation and Boeing have also had data security breaches. Breaches have also occurred in large financial institutions such as Bank of America and Wachovia Bank.

Also, in the private sector a single stolen computer at Ford Motor Company exposed the names and Social Security numbers of 70,000 current and former employees, and hundreds of hospitals have had the personal information of their patients compromised.

Breaches are pervasive in government agencies such as the IRS, the Federal Trade Commission, the FDIC, the State Department, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Department of Justice and Energy, and the U.S. Navy. Of course, the list goes on.

Clearly, the resolution we are considering tonight is timely. Just last week we were reminded again of how pervasive this problem is with the announcement of Heartland Payment Systems, a credit card processor, that over 100 million personal records were compromised. This could be, to date, one of the largest known security breaches in our Nation.

Thus, Madam Speaker, highlighting problems such as this to Americans will increase their awareness and encourage them to exercise more diligence and care in protecting their personal information today. So I thank my colleagues for their support and recognition of the importance of data privacy and the benefits of designating January 28, 2009, as National Data Privacy Day, and I look forward to generating support in my home State of Florida for this important initiative.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WELCH. I am the last speaker on my side, and I will continue to reserve.

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. RADANOVICH).

Mr. RADANOVICH. The capabilities and, in some cases, the failures of modern technology, have brought the issues of data privacy and data security into the lives of all Americans. Whether it be at work, in health, in finance, or online generally, we all must be concerned about the unauthorized access to personal information, access which could put our livelihoods and, in extreme cases, our lives even at stake.

The Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection has received testimony over the years about corporate data breaches that have damaged people financially as well as heard heartbreaking stories of stalkers stealing or buying personal information. As the new ranking member of the subcommittee, I am particularly concerned about these issues.

Just last week, we got reports about the hacking of the New Jersey-based

credit card processor, Heartland Payment Systems. This company processes more than 5 billion transactions a year, involving tens of millions of credit card numbers, and someone was able to break into their system and monitor these transactions.

This is just another example of how all of us must be aware of the security of sensitive information. Furthermore, not only must individuals be careful with their information, but the businesses which we entrust with that data must guard it as if it were their very own.

I want to commend Mr. PRICE and Mr. STEARNS for bringing this resolution before us today, and I want to thank Mr. BARTON, Mr. WAXMAN, and Mr. DINGELL for their continued efforts to address this issue. I want to lend my support to their efforts to educate the American public about ways to protect their personal information.

I look forward to continuing to work in this Congress to ensure the proper security of data and appropriate notice to consumers when their information is lost or revealed and there is significant risk of damage, financial or otherwise.

I fully support the goals and ideals of the National Data Privacy Day on January 28, and I urge all my colleagues to join in this effort.

□ 1745

Mr. STEARNS. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WELCH. Madam Speaker, I want to thank Chairman PRICE and Ranking Member STEARNS for this excellent resolution. It draws attention to the importance of privacy protections by supporting the designation of January 28, 2009 as the National Data Privacy Day. It seeks to inform the public of data privacy concerns and urge them to take steps to ensure that their own private data is secure and accounted for. In that vein, State and local governments, as well as schools, are encouraged to educate citizens about data privacy. I thank the Representative from North Carolina for authoring this resolution.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, H. Res. 31 seeks to protect the personal interests and information of men and women across the country who exchange personally identifiable information across the Internet. I salute my colleague, Representative PRICE from North Carolina, in his efforts to designate January 28, 2009, as "National Data Privacy Day."

It is our duty and obligation to protect those victims of the exploitation of their personally identifiable information who often face a difficult and arduous process of cleaning up their credit records. These innocent victims, who may be an aging grandmother attempting to retire from over 30 years of labor as a housekeeper, or a young man who balances three jobs and is seeking a college loan, will be left to face lengthy investigations by credit card companies, financial institutions, and law enforcement agencies, while these cyber-criminals take minutes or less to destroy a name-sake that has taken years to build.

TEXAS PRIVACY EFFORTS

Texas seeks to perform its part through the Texas Business and Commerce Code, which bolsters the security of personally identifiable information, with respect to an individual who is the owner or operator of a computer, including first name or first initial in combination with last name; a home or other physical address, including street name; electronic mail address; a credit or debit card number; a bank account number; a password or access code associated with a credit or debit card or bank account; a Social Security number, tax identification number, driver's license number, passport number, or other government-issued identification number; or any information if the information alone or in combination with other information personally identifies the individual.

DATA PRIVACY

According to the Privacy Rights Clearing House, since February 2005, more than 100 million records containing personal information have been subject to some sort of security breach.

Data privacy concerns exist wherever personally identifiable information is collected and stored—in digital form or otherwise. Improper or non-existent disclosure control can be the root cause for privacy issues. Data privacy issues can arise in response to information from a wide range of sources, such as: healthcare records, criminal justice investigations and proceedings, financial institutions and transactions, biological traits, such as genetic material, residence and geographic records.

The greatest challenge that we face in data privacy is to share data while maintaining a high level of protection amongst personally identifiable information. The ability to control what information one reveals about oneself over the Internet, and who can access that information, has become a growing concern over the ability for emails to be stored or read by third parties without consent, as well as the possibility of web sites which are visited collecting, storing, and possibly sharing personally identifiable information about users. For many reasons, individuals may not wish for the revelation of personal information such as their religion, sexual orientation, political affiliations, or private activities.

The economic crisis that our country is faced with today calls for an elevated guard of our financial information, as identity theft and a multitude of cyber-crimes are on the rise. Information about a person's financial transactions, including the amount of assets, positions held in stocks or funds, outstanding debts, and purchases can be sensitive. If criminals gain access to information such as a person's accounts or credit card numbers, that person could become the victim of fraud or identity theft. Information about a person's purchases can reveal a great deal about that person's history, such as places visited, persons contacted, products used, as well as activities and habits.

National Data Privacy Day provides for an international collaboration, and a nationwide and statewide effort to raise awareness about data privacy and the protection of personal information on the Internet and will call for government officials from the United States and Europe, privacy professionals, academics, legal scholars, representatives of international businesses, and others with an interest in data privacy issues to work together on this date to

further the discussion about data privacy and protection.

CONCLUSION

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the promotion of the protection of personal information and data by designating January 28, 2009, as "National Data Privacy Day," which will endorse the safeguard of personal information online and affects all of us.

Mr. WELCH. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 31.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. WELCH. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

HONORING THE HEROIC ACTIONS OF THE PILOT, CREW, AND RESCUERS OF US AIRWAYS FLIGHT 1549

Mr. COSTELLO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 84) honoring the heroic actions of the pilot, crew, and rescuers of US Airways Flight 1549.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 84

Whereas US Airways Flight 1549 took off from LaGuardia Airport in Queens, New York, on January 15, 2009, bound for Charlotte, North Carolina, and lost engine power shortly after takeoff;

Whereas Captain Chesley B. Sullenberger III and First Officer Jeffrey B. Skiles recognized the need to land the plane quickly and sought out the Hudson River as the best option to avoid populated areas;

Whereas Sullenberger and Skiles displayed quick thinking and skillful control of the aircraft, setting the plane down in a controlled landing in the water;

Whereas flight attendants Sheila Dail, Doreen Welsh, and Donna Dent of Flight 1549 reacted swiftly to prepare passengers for impact in a minimal amount of time;

Whereas local ferry boats, official police boats, and U.S. Coast Guard crafts were able to reach the airliner quickly and rescue the passengers and crew from the near-freezing water;

Whereas Dail, Welsh, and Dent evacuated all 150 passengers onto the awaiting U.S. Coast Guard, ferry boats, and official police boats within minutes;

Whereas even as the plane began sinking in the Hudson River, Sullenberger remained in the plane surveying the aisle twice to make sure all passengers had gotten out safely before he exited the aircraft; and

Whereas due to the heroic efforts of the flight crew of Flight 1549, and the rescue boats, all 155 passengers and crew survived, without serious injury: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) applauds the skill, quick thinking, and bravery of Captain Chesley B. Sullenberger III and First Officer Jeffrey B. Skiles;

(2) commends the quick response by the flight attendants Doreen Welsh, Donna Dent, and Sheila Dail of Flight 1549 to prepare passengers for impact and rapid evacuation; and

(3) praises the quick response from the boats, first responders, and private citizens that arrived at the scene to aid and rescue passengers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COSTELLO. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Res. 84.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. COSTELLO. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 84, a resolution honoring the heroic actions of the pilot, crew, and rescuers of US Airways Flight 1549.

I want to thank my colleague, Mr. CROWLEY, for introducing this resolution. LaGuardia Airport is in the congressional district represented by Congressman CROWLEY, and he has represented that district for some time. I know that he is very proud of all of the men and women whose actions resulted in a safe outcome for everyone. It is truly remarkable and a testament to all involved in the emergency landing and rescue that all passengers and crew got out safely, without serious injuries or death.

On January 15, 2009, US Airways Flight 1549 was departing LaGuardia Airport for Charlotte, North Carolina and, within minutes, lost engine power. Captain Chesley Sullenberger III and First Officer Jeffrey Skiles realized the seriousness of the situation, and immediately sought a safe place to land.

The Hudson River was their only option, and these two pilots, as well as flight attendants Sheila Dail, Doreen Welsh, and Donna Dent, worked together to prepare the 150 passengers for the emergency landing. The crew did an excellent job on the controlled landing in the Hudson River. The flight crew and flight attendants did exactly what they were trained to do, and they did it superbly.

This incident demonstrates the importance of training and preparation, showcases the skill of our aviation and first responder workforce, and reinforces the importance of consistent vigilance and oversight of our aviation safety.

I also want to commend the emergency crews in New York City who

reached the crew and passengers in record time and immediately began rescue operations.

Again, we honor the crew, passengers, and emergency responders involved in US Airways Flight 1549, and I urge my colleagues to strongly support H. Res. 84.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PETRI. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

I would like to just begin by commending and thanking the chairman of our Aviation Subcommittee for giving all of the members of the subcommittee an opportunity to meet some of the people who were involved in this, what could have been tragic, and turned out to be a heroic day, on February 24 when we have tentatively scheduled a subcommittee hearing to meet and find out what worked, what didn't work, and what could be done even better in the future.

But I certainly on this day rise in support of the resolution before us, House Resolution 84, honoring the heroic actions of the pilot, crew, and the rescuers of US Airways Flight 1549.

Like so many flights leaving New York's LaGuardia Airport on January 15, 2009, US Airways Flight 1549 pushed back late from the terminal with passengers ready to get to their destination in Charlotte, North Carolina. What happened next was anything but normal.

Shortly after takeoff, the airplane, carrying some 155 passengers and crew, unexpectedly struck a flock of large birds, causing both engines to fail.

Captain Chesley B. Sullenberger III, a veteran pilot with decades of experience in both the commercial airline industry and the United States Air Force, was forced to ditch his aircraft in the icy cold waters of the Hudson River.

That every person onboard the flight survived the dual engine failure and the aircraft's controlled ditch into the frigid waters of the Hudson River is an extraordinary testimony to the hard work of all aviation safety personnel. I applaud the quick actions of pilot and crew alike, and commend their actions as critical to the survival of all 150 passengers.

Also to be commended are those who so quickly responded to rescue those precariously balanced on the wings of the sinking plane. Indeed, even after surviving impact of a skillfully executed ditch effort, survivors of this accident still face the perils of hypothermia in the cold waters of the Hudson River. The quick action of police, Coast Guard, ferry operators, and other first responders ensured the survival of all involved in the accident, and their efforts are to be commended.

The robust training programs within the airline industry, Federal Aviation Administration safety oversight efforts, as well as the equipment improvements by aircraft manufacturers, all contributed to the survival of those aboard Flight 1549.