



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 155

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, MAY 4, 2009

No. 67

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 4, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DONNA F. EDWARDS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

GUANTANAMO BAY'S UYGHUR DETAINEES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, it is my understanding that President Obama's decision regarding the release into the U.S. of a number of Uyghur detainees held at Guantanamo Bay since 2002 could be imminent.

The New York Times, ABC News and other news outlets have reported that the President will soon release these terrorists into the United States, yet this Congress has not been briefed on this decision.

Let me be clear, these terrorists would not be held in prisons, but they would be released into your neighborhoods. They should not be released into the United States. Do Members realize who these people are?

There have been published reports that the Uyghurs were members of the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement, a designated terrorist organization affiliated with al Qaeda.

Releasing the Uyghurs is a matter of grave concern, a matter which prompted me to send a letter to the President last Friday detailing my reservations about any course of action that could pose a threat to the American people.

In my letter I called on the President to declassify all information about the capture and detention of the Uyghur detainees, including a threat assessment for each detainee who would be released in the U.S.

The American people, Madam Speaker, deserve the facts about these detainees and the risk they potentially pose to our communities.

Following the precedent that the administration set in declassifying the Office of Legal Counsel interrogation memos, they have a moral obligation to the American people to declassify all relevant information related to the Uyghur detainees.

This administration has already shown that it has no qualms about releasing selected classified documents. The White House cannot just pick and choose what classified information it deems worthy of releasing. It cannot have it both ways. It shouldn't release information that conveniently makes their case without making information with profound national security implications available to the American people.

After learning that this decision was imminent, I requested briefings from a number of relevant agencies, but all the agencies have told me that our Department of Justice is now preventing

them from speaking to me directly on this issue. So much for being open. So much for disclosure.

Is the Attorney General preventing agencies from answering Members' questions? Is this a political decision being made by Eric Holder, the Attorney General?

This is not the transparency and accountability the President promised, nor is it the open and constructive relationship they claim they want with Congress. This is, at best, a poor judgment and, at worst, a dangerous hypocrisy.

Is the administration intent on keeping Congress and the American people in the dark about critically important national security issues?

Madam Speaker, I have criticized both Republican and Democratic administrations for actions that I believe undermine the safety and the security of the American people.

I have not received responses to two letters to Attorney General Holder on the transfer of Guantanamo Bay prisoners. The first letter was dated March 13. The second letter was dated April 23. And I will submit them for the RECORD. They still have not answered the letters. My office has been told by the White House that some of the questions I have asked cannot even be answered.

When Attorney General Holder appeared before the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations subcommittee, he poignantly said he would not play hide and seek with the information. What are they now trying to hide from the American people?

The Attorney General is slow-rolling the information as terrorist detainees are potentially going to be released into the United States.

According to an L.A. Times article published last week, "The Homeland Security Department has registered concerns about the plan," among other government agencies.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H5065

Information I have received indicates that the Uyghurs may be more dangerous than the public has been led to believe.

Just last night, 60 Minutes had a disturbing segment which touched on the radicalization of the Guantanamo Bay detainees. The story indicated that in Saudi Arabia alone, of 117 men returned from Guantanamo, 11 have shown up again on Saudi Arabia's most wanted terrorist list.

Any intelligence assessment of the Uyghurs must take into account not only their previous training at terrorist camps but their potential subsequent exposure to the likes of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind of 9/11 who took pleasure in the beheading of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl.

I say to this administration, the American people have a right to know all the facts, and I fear personally that expediency is clouding their judgment, which is inexcusable after we saw what took place on 9/11.

The stakes are simply too high for this administration to reasonably think that the American people should simply take their word that these men pose no security threats. I call on the Obama administration to declassify and release all the information that they have available so the American people can make a judgment.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 1, 2009.

Hon. BARACK H. OBAMA,
President, the White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: It is my understanding that your decision regarding whether to release a number of Chinese Uyghur detainees held at Guantanamo Bay into the United States is imminent. I have grave concerns about this action, which I believe could directly threaten the security of the American people.

Information I have received indicates that the Uyghurs may be more dangerous than the public has been led to believe. I write today asking that you declassify all intelligence regarding their capture, detention, and your administration's assessment of the threat they may pose to Americans, prior to any decision to release them. The American people deserve to have all the facts about these individuals before they should be expected to tolerate their presence in our communities.

I believe your administration also has an obligation to explain to the American people how you will monitor the Uyghurs' activities should they be released in the U.S. Additionally, all state and local law enforcement should immediately be notified of your intended decision, provided a threat assessment of the released Uyghurs, and informed of the federal government's plans to monitor their activities once released.

Following the precedent you have set in declassifying the Office of Legal Counsel interrogation memos, you have a moral obligation to declassify this critical information. The American people cannot afford to simply take your word that these detainees, who were captured training in terrorist camps, are not a threat if released into our communities.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,
Member of Congress.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 23, 2009.

Hon. ERIC H. HOLDER, JR.,
Attorney General, Department of Justice,
Washington, DC.

DEAR ATTORNEY GENERAL HOLDER: My letter of March 13 indicated my concerns about bringing enemy combatants from the detention facility at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to the United States. I understand that the president has given you the task of determining the release, transfer or prosecution of these detainees. I noted your recent comments on how this is the most challenging aspect of your job as attorney general and I respect the difficulty of your position.

But as I have learned more about these detainees and received additional information from terrorism experts, I remain extremely concerned that transferring these combatants to locations near large civilian populations would place an overwhelming burden on the court system and endanger public safety.

The detainees currently held at Guantanamo Bay are some of the most dangerous individuals in the world who have openly dedicated their lives to killing Americans. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed was the architect of the 9/11 attacks and took pleasure in beheading Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl. Ramzi Binalshibh was identified as one of the planners of 9/11 and was supposed to be one of the hijackers until he was denied entry into the United States. Walid bin Attash is believed to be the mastermind behind the bombing of the U.S.S. Cole in Yemen in 2000. These individuals are responsible for planning the deaths of thousands of Americans.

Guantanamo Bay also houses combatants who were detained after actively trying to kill U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. From news reports I have read, it appears consideration is being given to allow these detainees rights that go beyond protections offered U.S. military personnel by the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Giving such rights to the men listed above greatly concerns me.

Earlier trials of terrorists in the U.S. demonstrated the necessity for extraordinary security resources that would be needed if some of those at Guantanamo are transferred here. Newsday and the Buffalo News reported that during the 1995 trial in New York of Omar Abdel Rahman, the mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, terrorist confederates of El Sayyid Nosair, another World Trade Center bombing planner, were plotting to break him out of Attica State Prison in New York. In the same case, court tapes show that conspirators provided each other assurance that, in the event that some were captured, the others would work to free them. In addition, during the 2000 trial of Mahmud Salim, one of the terrorists accused of the 1998 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Kenya, he stabbed New York prison guard Louis Pepe in the eye during an escape attempt. Al Qaeda saw the rights given to its members to meet with counsel as an opportunity to carry out a violent escape attempt. Mr. Salim was one of the original followers of Osama bin Laden and the highest ranking al Qaeda member held in the U.S. at the time.

In addition to trying to escape from prison, al Qaeda members have communicated with confederates while in prison. It is my understanding that El Sayyid Nosair was involved in plotting the 1993 World Trade Center bombing while in custody in Attica State Prison. In addition, Osama bin Laden has publicly credited Sheikh Abdel Rahman with issuing the "fatwa" that approved the 9/11 attacks while he was in federal prison, de-

spite the high security confinement conditions imposed on him. It also emerged later that, with the assistance of his lawyer, Rahman was continuing to send instructional messages to the Islamic Group, his Egyptian terrorist organization.

In 2004, NBC News reported that, despite their incarceration in maximum security conditions, convicted World Trade Center bombers were communicating by mail with terrorists in Madrid, Spain. There would certainly be strong reasons to believe that detainees currently held at Guantanamo Bay—who are known to have rioted and grossly abused prison guards—would use their access to counsel and investigators in order to convey messages to their allies.

It took federal prosecutors eight years in the 1990s to try 29 defendants charged with terrorism-related crimes as a result of attacks on U.S. property and interests abroad. The detention facility at Guantanamo Bay currently holds almost 10 times that number. If it took eight years to prosecute 29 individuals, how long will it take to transfer and prosecute over 200?

How is the Justice Department responding to the fact that prosecutors, judges, and juries in recent terrorism trials, and their families, have required government protection measures, sometimes for many years, at great cost in manpower and to our security budget? Has the Justice Department estimated the cost of providing enhanced personal security for trials yet to come?

I am also concerned about the extra costs that will be incurred in preparing prisons and courthouses for possible trials. I understand that the courthouses in which prior terrorism cases were litigated and the prisons where defendants were held had to be "hardened" to accommodate terrorism prosecutions and the attendant threats they entail for participants and the public. Can you provide me with what the cost was for these upgrades? Has the Justice Department considered what the cost will be for upgrading facilities for detainees who may be transferred to the civilian court system.

I am also concerned about the precedent that the standards set in *Boumediene v. Bush*, the Supreme Court case regarding al Qaeda operative Lakhdar Boumediene, which granted habeas corpus rights to Guantanamo detainees, would set for future cases. In his dissent in this case, Justice Antonin Scalia raised the issue that if enemy combatants currently housed at Guantanamo Bay are given habeas corpus rights, the same rights would have to be given to any combatant detained where the U.S. military conducts operations. Recently, Justice Scalia's admonition has proved prescient as a federal judge in Washington ruled that Boumediene's grant of habeas corpus rights now extends to Afghanistan.

The process in deciding where the detainees will ultimately be housed and under what means they will be tried should be transparent so the American people know who is making these important decisions. I believe that the Justice Department should meet with those who lost loved ones in the 9/11 attacks as well as the families of service members who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan and ask for their perspective on the fate of these detainees, especially those who played a lead role in carrying out the attacks.

If you are convinced these combatants must be transferred to the United States, I believe an isolated part of the country away from population centers would be a better choice. As your department continues to consider plans for these combatants, I ask that you please address these issues as well as the questions I asked in my earlier letter. I also have these additional questions:

1. The trial of Zacharias Moussaoui in Alexandria, Virginia, lasted over four years due

primarily to the judge's belief that the due process standards applicable in civilian trials required more disclosure than the Justice Department believed was required and safe to provide. I understand any appeal to the 4th Circuit Court could take up to an additional year per trial. Considering that a federal appeals court in New York just recently decided an appeal in the embassy bombing case—more than a decade after the attack and eight years after the trial—how long does your department envision civilian legal proceedings for Guantanamo detainees taking?

2. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, Mohammed al Qatani and Ramzi Binalshibh have been linked directly to the September 11, 2001, attacks and appear far more culpable than Zacharias Moussaoui. Will the Justice Department seek the death penalty for detainees such as them? If so, does the Justice Department think seeking the death penalty would lengthen each trial, and, if so, for how long?

3. Will the defense attorneys for these combatants be given access to classified evidence that would inevitably lead to legal challenge and possible consideration by the Supreme Court, adding more time to trials?

4. If terror suspects are brought into the civilian system for trial and they insist on representing themselves, would the Justice Department allow them access to all discovery, including classified national defense information?

5. Will defense attorneys be allowed discovery on all such evidence and be allowed to challenge its admission in court? Would this require allowing defense attorneys to enter combat zones to view evidence?

6. Will U.S. service members who collected evidence on the battlefield be forced to leave their duties in theater and return to the United States to give testimony in open court?

7. Will military personnel be required to have training on how to legally obtain evidence and preserve the chain of command needed to make such evidence admissible in court?

8. Will every combatant be given full legal rights and will these rights also be given to combatants detained in the future?

9. The system of military tribunals for these combatants was designed to avoid the difficulties inherent in civilian trials. If the military is trusted to run a system of justice good enough for members of our armed forces, why is it deemed insufficiently fair for these detainees who have openly stated they are "terrorists to the bone?"

10. If these combatants are transferred to the U.S. Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, how will the trials of other defendants in that court be affected?

11. If regular defense attorneys are not allowed to meet with clients at the jail facility in Alexandria due to increased security associated with these combatants, is the Justice Department concerned that those cases could be delayed to the point where those defendants have grounds for appeal?

12. The Moussaoui trial took a heavy toll on the prosecution team and I would be concerned that extended trials for numerous combatants could overwhelm the legal staffs. Do you have a plan for addressing how prosecution teams will work?

13. Are you concerned about the safety of the legal staff and the jurors who are assigned to these cases and have steps been taken to ensure their safety and the safety of their families?

14. Has the Justice Department considered establishing a separate court similar to the FISA court where judges would be assigned these cases on a rotating basis?

15. Has the Justice Department considered consulting with military experts, U.S. Mar-

shals and other law enforcement officials before determining the safest place to house these detainees?

16. Have you consulted with the families of the victims of 9/11 as well as the families of the service members killed in Iraq and Afghanistan as to how these detainees should be prosecuted? If not, will you direct your staff to do so?

17. Will the Justice Department provide the Appropriations Committee with the costs for the security measures necessitated by the terrorism cases of the 1990s and the Moussaoui case?

18. The Congress has received your FY 2009 supplemental request, seeking \$47 million for some ongoing DOJ activities. But the majority of the funding, \$36.4 million, is for activities related to the closure of the Guantanamo detention facility. Can you tell the Appropriations Committee what exactly the department is doing related to Guantanamo, and what you are proposing to do in the future with the requested supplemental funding?

19. I understand that you have created three task forces to implement the executive orders regarding Guantanamo Bay. How many individual detainee cases must be reviewed and disposed of?

20. Can you provide a list of possible outcomes from these task forces, such as transferring detainees to their home countries or detaining them indefinitely without trial?

21. For any detainees released to third countries, what assurances are you seeking from those governments in order to minimize the risks of recidivism?

22. You have stated that the issues related to closing Guantanamo Bay represent your biggest challenge. If the task forces conclude that the risks associated with civilian trials in the United States are too dangerous and costly, will you recommend to the president that the closure of the detention facility be delayed?

23. Beyond the supplemental request, what other post-Guantanamo requirements will there be?

I realize that your department has numerous issues to address before Guantanamo Bay is closed and all the combatants housed there moved. As the Justice Department continues to consider the disposition of these combatants, I think it is important for Congress to play an active role. As my previous letter stated, I take Congress's oversight role seriously and believe that Congress must be consulted before any of these combatants are moved to the continental U.S.

Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,
Member of Congress.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 13, 2009.

HON. ERIC H. HOLDER, JR.
Attorney General, Department of Justice,
Washington DC.

DEAR ATTORNEY GENERAL HOLDER: President Obama recently issued an executive order to close the detention facility at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and decisions must now be made regarding how and where to house the 250 suspected terrorists and enemy combatants held there.

I was particularly concerned to read in the March 7 Washington Post that some of these detainees may be tried in and housed by the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia (Eastern District of Virginia) or the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York. Their presence so close to large civilian population centers raises serious questions of security and logistics for any region forced to accept these detainees.

I do not—and would not—support the transfer of any prisoners presently being detained at Guantanamo Bay to any facilities in Virginia and have joined Virginia colleagues Reps. Randy Forbes and Eric Cantor in introducing legislation (H.R. 1186) to prohibit prisoners at the Guantanamo Bay detention facility from being transferred to federal prisons or military bases in Virginia.

I take seriously the responsibility of congressional oversight, especially in matters with national security implications. In 1998 I authored legislation that created the National Commission on Terrorism. Unfortunately, it took the horrific events of September 11, 2001, for the recommendations of the commission to be taken seriously. I have traveled to Sudan five times and seen evidence of the terrorist training camps used by Osama bin Laden in the 1990s.

The first bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993 was treated as a routine criminal case by the Clinton administration when there were clear indications from Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman that terrorism was the intent of the bombing.

Furthermore, the individuals currently at Guantanamo Bay are members of the same organization that bombed the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania as well as the USS Cole in Yemen.

The March 11 Washington Post detailed how a detainee recently released from Guantanamo Bay is now the operations commander of Taliban forces attacking U.S. and NATO forces in southern Afghanistan. There also have been news reports that 61 of the detainees that were processed and released from Guantanamo Bay were recaptured fighting American forces. If those individuals were deemed safe to release from custody yet returned to terrorist activities and killing Americans, what does that say about how dangerous the detainees still at Guantanamo Bay must be?

I was also troubled to read that five Guantanamo detainees described themselves as "terrorists to the bone," and stated in a court filing that they describe their role in the 9/11 attacks as "a badge of honor." These dangerous individuals simply cannot be transferred anywhere near large civilian populations.

As the ranking member on the House Appropriations Commerce-Justice-Science Subcommittee, I am particularly concerned about the complexities of bringing any of these enemy combatants to any installation, military or civilian, close to U.S. civilian populations. Regardless of where these detainees are confined, I would appreciate your detailed response to the following questions:

1. What steps has the Justice Department taken to assure the security of the surrounding population if such violent combatants are confined and tried in urban areas?

2. What precautions will be taken to ensure that the detainees do not escape?

3. Is the Obama administration concerned that the presence of these detainees will invite attacks from ideological followers in an attempt to set them free and, if so, what precautions are being taken to prevent this scenario?

4. How will the detainees be transported to the courthouses?

5. What type of security cordon will be in place if detainees are transported on local highways?

6. Has the Justice Department considered the traffic disruptions associated with road closures around federal courthouses and local jails during the trials of these individuals?

7. If the detainees are flown to any location, will they use military or commercial airports?

8. If commercial airports are used, will terminals have to be evacuated to ensure security?

9. What will be the security perimeter around federal courthouses and will local residents and businesses be forced to move or close to ensure security? If so, for how long?

10. Will Metrorail stations in close proximity to the U.S. Courthouse in Alexandria be closed?

11. Will the Westin Hotel, approximately 200 feet from the courthouse, and the Patent and Trademark Office, approximately 250 feet from the courthouse be evacuated?

12. Has the Justice Department considered the impact such detainees will have on local prisons, such as the city jail in Alexandria, where federal defendants are often held during trial?

13. Will prisoners in local jails have to be moved to provide a secure location for housing these combatants, and, if so, who will bear the costs associated with their transfer?

14. Will there be an extensive list of rules and regulations given to local and state officials regarding the housing and trial of these suspects? If so, will a copy of the regulations be made available to state and local officials as well as members of Congress?

15. Will state and local law enforcement officers be required to assist federal officials and will the federal government compensate those agencies for the use of those officers' time?

16. What costs will be associated with the trial and what portion, if any, will be borne by state and local governments?

17. Has the Justice Department consulted with the Defense Department regarding its ability or willingness to house these detainees?

18. Do a set of protocols for transferring and housing these individuals exist, and, if so, will you make it available to members of Congress?

19. What discussions regarding these detainees, if any, have administration officials had with the commanders of the Naval Station Brig in Norfolk, Virginia; the Marine Corps Base at Quantico, Virginia, or any other military installation in the contiguous United States, Alaska or Hawaii?

20. Has the administration or the Department of Defense had any discussions with Naval commanders regarding the possibility of transferring detainees to U.S. Naval vessels either in U.S. territorial or international waters?

21. Has the administration had any discussions with the warden of the Administrative Maximum prison facility in Florence, Colorado, regarding the difficulties surrounding the housing of Zacharias Moussaoui and how other prisons might be affected by housing similar detainees?

22. Has the administration had discussions with any of the detainees' country of origin regarding their willingness to accept custody?

While I understand that the Eastern District of Virginia and the Southern District of New York have successfully held the only trials to date of terror suspects, I remain extremely concerned that adequate thought has not been given to the extensive security, financial and logistical costs associated with the transfer of any of these individuals to civilian court districts. State and local officials, as well as the citizens of northern Virginia, will face many challenges and dangers with these combatants housed in the Eastern District of Virginia.

I look forward to receiving your responses to these concerns. Best wishes.

Sincerely,

FRANK R. WOLF,
Member of Congress.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair

declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 36 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LARSEN of Washington) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Eternal God and subsistence of all life, though Your people walk in the valley of darkness, they move and act without fear, for You are with them.

You lead us to restful pastures and revive our downcast spirits, and You give us comfort.

Help us to be attentive to Your call and follow in faith, for You are our hope and our strength.

Anoint the leadership of this Nation with the oil of gladness and bring us to Your eternal banquet, where we will dwell in Your house forever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. FLEMING) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. FLEMING led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, May 1, 2009.

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

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on May 1, 2009, at 10:04 a.m.:

That the Senate passed S.615.

That the Senate agreed to without amendment H. Con. Res. 104.

Appointments:

Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of the American Latino

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

LORRAINE C. MILLER,
Clerk of the House.

DARIUS GOES WEST

(Mr. BARROW asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARROW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a special group of young men who are making a difference by drawing attention to Duchenne muscular dystrophy. DMD, which is usually detected in small children, is a debilitating and ultimately fatal affliction, usually taking its victims' lives in their early 20s.

Darius Weems was diagnosed with DMD as a small child, and he will be 19 years old later this year. His brother, Mario, died at that age from the same disease.

Because of his condition, Darius never left his hometown of Athens, Georgia, for the first 15 years of his life. But just before Darius' brother, Mario, died, Mario's friend, Logan Smalley, made a promise to Mario to look after Darius when Mario died. After Mario died, Logan did more than that; he made Darius a star.

Four years ago, Logan Smalley and 10 other college friends decided to take Darius on a road trip from Athens, Georgia, to Los Angeles, California. Along the way, they met people who shared Darius' illness, and they documented handicap accessibility throughout the country. Logan directed a documentary film of that trip, "Darius Goes West," starring Darius and the rest of the crew.

Today that documentary is on track to sell 1 million copies, with the lion's share of profits going to fight DMD. I'm pleased to report that there is a copy of "Darius Goes West" in every middle school and high school in the United States.

DMD is not a contagious disease, but the sense of hope and purpose that Darius and his friends possess is infectious, and I'm proud to commend Darius and the rest of the "Darius Goes West" crew for their hard work, and for giving literally millions of people a reason to care.

LOUISIANA STUDENTS OF THE YEAR

(Mr. FLEMING asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FLEMING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate three outstanding students from my district.

Randi Layne Adams of South Beauregard Elementary in Beauregard Parish was named student of the year. She is actively involved in 4-H and community service projects, including efforts targeted at recycling and gardening.