

In addition to these important reforms, the Oversight Committee is pursuing a broad-based approach to deficit reduction and budget savings. The Committee's actions include direct oversight of agencies to improve and address inefficient practices that would result in over \$19.4 billion in budget savings. The Committee also has advanced legislative reforms to strengthen the internal watchdogs at government agencies, improve the investigative and auditing arm of Congress, empower federal workers to fight fraud and waste without fear of retaliation, improve government efficiency by facilitating the sale of surplus federal real property, and save hundreds of millions of tax dollars by expediting the transition of government-wide telecommunication services. These efforts are described below.

HOLDING AGENCIES ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OVER \$19.4 BILLION IN COST SAVINGS REFORMS

At the request of the Oversight Committee, Inspectors General from across the government identified improvements and efficiencies in government operations that would result in over \$19.4 billion in savings to the federal budget if fully implemented. As the country begins to recover from the economic crisis, the American public should have confidence that agencies will be held accountable for taking any actions necessary to recover such significant savings of their hard-earned tax dollars. The Oversight Committee will monitor implementation of each of these IG recommendations. The Committee will require agency heads to report back on the steps they are taking to recoup these savings for the U.S. taxpayers, to provide a timeline for the realization of these savings, and detail any administrative or legislative action needed to bring about these savings and efficiencies.

STRENGTHENING THE IG COMMUNITY

The Oversight Committee is also taking legislative action to promote better and more efficient government. This September, the Committee plans to bring legislation (H.R. 5815) to the floor of the House of Representatives that will better equip Inspectors General to fulfill their statutory mission of rooting out waste and fraud in the federal government. The legislation complements and strengthens the Committee's ongoing oversight efforts in this area. The legislation will require corrective action by government agencies to address IG cost saving recommendations. A statutory mandate will remove the bureaucratic inertia and barriers that too often slow or thwart agency efforts to tackle inefficiencies that account for billions of dollars in unnecessary spending every year. The legislation will also provide IGs with the tools they need to conduct complete and thorough investigations of waste, fraud, and abuse in government contracting. Collectively, the reforms in H.R. 5815 will strengthen the authority of IGs so they can better fulfill their important mission of fighting waste and protecting the interests of the taxpayers.

IMPROVING THE GAO

During this Congress, the House of Representatives passed legislation (H.R. 2646) sponsored by the Oversight Committee that will strengthen the authority and effectiveness of the General Accountability Office (GAO). The GAO helps inform the Congress, Executive agencies, and the public about areas and programs within the federal government that are performing well, and those that need to be improved or are vulnerable to waste, fraud, and abuse. GAO audits pro-

vide reliable assessments as to whether the taxpayers are receiving full value from important government programs. H.R. 2646, which is awaiting action in the Senate, will increase the effectiveness of GAO by ensuring that GAO is not unnecessarily restricted in its efforts to secure necessary information in the course of performing its auditing and investigative functions for the Congress.

EMPOWERING FEDERAL EMPLOYEES TO COMBAT WASTE, FRAUD, AND ABUSE

The Oversight Committee is committed to advancing H.R. 1507, the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2009, and is currently negotiating with the Senate on this essential reform. Similar legislation was passed as part of the Recovery Act in the beginning of the Congress, but was unfortunately stripped out in conference with the Senate. The government should make every effort to ensure that tax dollars are not misspent or vulnerable to waste, fraud, or abuse. Federal employees at financial and other agencies throughout the government are often the first to witness abuses or illegality that presents a risk to the taxpayer. They are in a position to call attention to waste in government operations because they see what is happening inside our government on a day-to-day basis. Providing strong protections for those who disclose misconduct helps to promote a more accountable and transparent federal bureaucracy. Importantly, the legislation also extends strong whistleblower protections to employees of government contractors.

FACILITATING SAVINGS THROUGH SALES OF REAL PROPERTY

Last September, the Oversight Committee favorably reported H.R. 2495, the Federal Real Property Disposal Act. This legislation would encourage the sale of surplus federal real property by allowing the General Services Administration to use its funds to prepare unneeded properties to be reported excess. It would also allow agencies to retain the proceeds from the sale of surplus real property. These measures would implement recommendations by GAO, which has stated in its High-Risk Series that the funding needed to prepare property for disposal and some agencies' inability to retain sale proceeds have been longstanding barriers to the sale of surplus property. The language of H.R. 2495 is being added to S. 1510, the United States Secret Service Uniformed Division Modernization Act, and the Oversight Committee is currently negotiating with the Senate on final language for the bill.

SAVING TAX DOLLARS BY EXPEDITING THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS TRANSITION

The delay in transitioning government-wide telecommunications services from the General Services Administration's FTS2001 contract to Networx has resulted in the loss of approximately \$22 million a month. At the current pace, those losses could total between \$300 million and a half-billion dollars in unrealized cost savings by May 2011. The Oversight Committee held a hearing on this issue in May 2010 and will continue closely monitoring and working with the General Services Administration, the Office of Management and Budget, and individual Agencies to expedite the transition to Networx. In addition, I am planning to introduce legislation requiring agencies to complete the transition to Networx before the current FTS2001 bridge and crossover contracts expire in May 2011. If enacted, this legislation would eliminate the need for the General Services Administration to enter into any additional bridge contracts.

I look forward to continuing to work with House leadership, the other Committee

Chairs, and the Members of this body as we take steps to eliminate the deficit, and promote government that best protects the interests of the U.S. taxpayers.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HATCH ACT NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION PARITY ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 15, 2010

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Hatch Act National Capital Region Parity Act. This bill would remedy an omission in federal law that treats District of Columbia residents who work for the federal government differently from their federal colleagues in the Washington metropolitan area. This omission is another remnant of the days before the District of Columbia was a self-governing jurisdiction. This bill would give the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) authority to designate the District of Columbia similar to other local jurisdictions so that federal employees who reside there may take an active part in political management and political campaigns for local partisan elections. Under the Hatch Act, OPM only has authority to designate Maryland and Virginia localities in the immediate vicinity of the District, or towns in which the majority of voters are federal employees, as exempt from the Hatch Act's prohibition on federal employee participation in local partisan elections. Currently, federal employees residing in 47 Maryland localities, 15 Virginia localities and 12 other localities across the United States are permitted to participate in local partisan elections.

OPM's authority to exempt certain localities recognizes that, if large numbers of residents in a jurisdiction are federal employees, much of a locality's population would be denied the opportunity to participate in local affairs. When the Hatch Act was passed in 1940, the old Civil Service Commission (CSC) was given authority to exempt federal employees living in Maryland and Virginia localities near D.C. because large numbers of residents of those localities were, and continue to be, federal employees. However, CSC was not given the same authority for the District of Columbia, even though a large number of residents were, and continue to be, federal employees, probably because D.C. did not have local elections until the Home Rule Act of 1973.

This bill is part of our ongoing mission to wipe away all the disparate treatment of District residents left in federal law. Our related pending bill, the Hatch Act Reform Act (H.R. 1345), which the House passed last year and is now on its way to the Senate floor, would permit the District of Columbia, the only local jurisdiction where local government employees are under the federal Hatch Act, to enact and operate under its own local Hatch Act, like other jurisdictions in the United States.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the District of Columbia as a self-governing jurisdiction by supporting this bill.

RECOGNIZING THOMAS E. PUGH
ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE
JOHN HEINZ REHABILITATION
CENTER IN WILKES-BARRE,
PENNSYLVANIA

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 15, 2010

Mr. KANJORSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask you and my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in recognizing Thomas E. Pugh on his retirement from the John Heinz Rehabilitation Center in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Pugh was born in Hunlock Creek, Pennsylvania in 1942.

A lifelong resident of Northeastern Pennsylvania, Mr. Pugh graduated from Northwest Area High School in Shickshinny, Pennsylvania before attending the Pennsylvania State University where he majored in English.

Mr. Pugh served in the United States Navy during the Vietnam War.

For the past three decades, Mr. Pugh has worked at the John Heinz Rehabilitation Center in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, part of the Allied Services network of health care and service organizations that provide rehabilitative, vocational, home care, and residential services throughout Northeastern Pennsylvania.

John Heinz Rehab specializes in inpatient rehabilitation services, particularly in the areas of brain injury, injured worker recovery, and pediatrics.

After almost thirty years working at John Heinz Rehab and Allied Services, Mr. Pugh will retire as Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer.

Mr. Pugh's exemplary work at John Heinz Rehab over the past few decades has been recognized throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

In 2009, Mr. Pugh received the Individual Distinguished Service Award from the Pennsylvania Association of Rehabilitation Facilities.

This award recognizes an individual who, "by an unusual act or by a significant history of service, has made a substantial contribution to the development of rehabilitation facility or has a marked impact on both the quality and quantity of services provided by rehabilitation programs."

Throughout his career, Mr. Pugh has also consistently donated his time and efforts throughout the community.

He has served on the boards of the Greater Wilkes-Bane Association for the Blind, the Luzerne County Community College Foundation, the Northwest Area School District, and the Arthritis Foundation, where he was honored as "The Community Leader of the Year" in 2006.

Mr. Pugh has also devoted his time to assisting local veterans, and has been a strong advocate for children suffering from autism and learning disabilities.

Mr. Pugh currently resides in Hunlock Creek, Pennsylvania with his wife, the former Christine Cummings. They have four children, Jennifer, Sarah, Rachel, and Matthew.

Madam Speaker, please join me in recognizing the remarkable career of Mr. Thomas E. Pugh. Over the past three decades Mr. Pugh has devoted himself in many ways to improving the lives of the residents of our community.

IN HONOR OF THE OBAMA WAY
COMMITTEE

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 15, 2010

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the efforts of a remarkable group of citizens in my Central California district. They are gathering today to commemorate our nation's historic election, nearly two years ago, of its first African-American President. No American could remain unmoved by this great historic watershed. That is particularly true in the California Central Coast Community of Seaside.

Seaside grew up as an Army town, the neighboring community to Fort Ord, one of the U.S. Army's largest training and operational bases for much of the 20th Century. That alone would have made Seaside much like any other Army town across the country—except that Fort Ord was the first Army facility to desegregate following President Truman's 1948 executive order. So while the home states of many prominent Army bases remained gripped by segregation, Fort Ord and its surrounding communities became a magnet for African American soldiers to serve and later to retire. As Seaside's first lawyer, my father, the late State Senator Fred Farr, represented many soldiers who wanted to avoid reassignment to a southern state post because they had married a white or Asian woman during their time in the service and could not return to a State where that marriage was illegal.

So the election of an African-American child of a mixed marriage holds a special symbolism for a community that grew out the same hard fought tradition of multi-racial tolerance. Which brings me to the efforts of this remarkable group of Seaside community members.

Following the election, the idea arose that Seaside should rename one of its primary thoroughfares in honor of President Obama. An informal committee of volunteers took the idea and worked through the intricacies to municipal administration. A full name change posed significant challenges to the businesses and residents who had invested in the Street's traditional name. A compromise was reached. So this afternoon Seaside community members and elected leaders will gather to give Broadway Avenue the honorary designation of 'Obama Way' in recognition of our Nation's historic election of its first African-American President. To my knowledge this is one of the first such street designations in the United States in honor of the President, though I am confident that many more will follow.

In closing, I formally recognize those leading citizens who played the central role in this small, but remarkable achievement. They include the Chairman of the Obama Way Com-

mittee LTC(R) Morris McDaniel, former Seaside Mayor Don Jordon, his wife Alice Jordon, former Councilmember and MPUSD Trustee Helen Rucker, the Rev. H.H. Lusk, Ruthie Watts, Kathy Badon, Sandra Lackey, Yolanda Grumble, and Carlos Ramos. Madam Speaker, I know that I speak for the whole House in commending them for their community service.

PROCLAIMING SEPTEMBER 15TH
LITERACY AWARENESS DAY IN
WHEATON, ILLINOIS

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 15, 2010

Mr. ROSKAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize September 15th 2010, as Literacy Awareness Day in Wheaton, Illinois, in the heart of my Congressional District.

Literacy Awareness Day is an initiative of the non-profit group Literacy DuPage. Literacy DuPage reaches over 30 communities in DuPage County. The group's mission is to change the lives of future generations by providing one-on-one English literacy tutoring for adults. To celebrate Literacy Awareness Day on September 15th, participating Wheaton businesses will donate a portion of their sales to help fund the group's literacy programs.

Today, we join together to celebrate Literacy Awareness Day and the growth and continued good works of Literacy DuPage.

Madam Speaker and Distinguished Colleagues, please join me in recognizing September 15th as Literacy Awareness Day in Wheaton, Illinois, and in wishing Literacy DuPage continued success.

TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF K-9
SERGEANT THOMAS "TOMMY"
ALEXANDER

HON. RODNEY ALEXANDER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 15, 2010

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of K-9 Sergeant Thomas "Tommy" Alexander, a brave and dedicated Rayville police officer, who was fatally shot in the line of duty on September 11, 2010 at the age of 57.

Alexander was a devoted husband and father of two as well as a faithful community advocate. In addition to his duties as an officer, he shared his talent of cooking to help local churches raise money and lent his time to the local high school by taking tickets at games and making travel arrangements for the football team. A lifelong friend said it best as he described Alexander as a "selfless man, who had God in his heart."

I extend my deepest condolences to those he leaves behind. Words cannot express the depth of the loss felt by his family, friends and community he loved to serve.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to recognize the service and sacrifice of Tommy Alexander. He was a remarkable example to us all, and today, I salute him.