

I commend Royal Caribbean for their rapid response to this tragedy and the much-needed assistance and aid they have provided. Furthermore, I would like to express my support for their dedication to long-term rebuilding of Haiti.

Although many found it controversial, I believe that Royal Caribbean's decision to continue to dock at Labadee was the right decision. If the cruise line had bypassed Haiti, it would have worsened an already devastating situation. By continuing to bring guests to Labadee, Royal Caribbean kept Haitians working and brought tourist dollars to the country at a time when Haiti's already struggling economy was at a complete stand-still. This commitment to keeping the Haitian economy going is truly admirable.

I thank Royal Caribbean for their exemplary service to the people of Haiti, not simply in providing emergency aid in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, but in their 30 years of work in Haiti and in their commitment to ensuring a sustainable recovery.

HONORING CHARLTON BOYD

**HON. JOHN FLEMING**

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 12, 2010*

Mr. FLEMING. Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate and honor a young student from my district who has achieved national recognition for exemplary volunteer service in his community. Charlton Boyd of Shreveport is today being named one of the top two youth volunteers in Louisiana for 2010, in the 15th annual Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. This is an extraordinary honor; more than 21,000 young people across the country were considered for state-level recognition in this year's program.

Mr. Charlton Boyd of Shreveport is being recognized for being one of the top two youth volunteers for 2010 by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, a nationwide program honoring young people for outstanding acts of volunteerism. The awards program, now in its 15th year, is conducted by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals, NASSP.

In light of numerous statistics that indicate Americans today are less involved in their communities than they once were, it's vital that we encourage and support the kind of selfless contribution this young citizen has made. People of all ages need to think more about how we, as individual citizens, can work together at the local level to ensure the health and vitality of our towns and neighborhoods. Young volunteers like Mr. Charlton Boyd are inspiring examples to all of us, and are among our brightest hopes for a better tomorrow.

The program that brought this young role model to our attention—The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards—was created by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals in 1995 to impress upon all youth volunteers that their contributions will inspire other young people to follow their example. Over the past 15 years, the program has become the nation's largest youth recognition effort based solely on community service, and has honored nearly 100,000 young volunteers at the local, state and national level.

Mr. Charlton Boyd should be extremely proud to have been singled out from the thousands of dedicated volunteers who participated in this year's program. I heartily applaud Mr. Charlton Boyd for his initiative in seeking to make his community a better place to live, and for the positive impact he has had on the lives of others. He has demonstrated a level of commitment and accomplishment that is truly extraordinary in today's world, and deserves our sincere admiration and respect. His actions show that young Americans can—and do—play important roles in our communities, and that America's community spirit continues to hold tremendous promise for the future.

PERSONAL STATEMENT ON REMOVAL AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 2499

**HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 12, 2010*

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I would like the RECORD to reflect my desire to be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 2499, the Puerto Rico Democracy Act of 2009. Due to H.R. 2499's placement on the Union Calendar, I am unable to officially remove myself from this legislation according to the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives.

RECOGNIZING THE 189TH ANNIVERSARY OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE

SPEECH OF

**HON. SCOTT GARRETT**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 9, 2010*

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, as a member of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Affairs, I am proud to congratulate the nation of Greece on its upcoming celebration of the 189th anniversary of independence. It's been one hundred and eighty-nine years since Greece obtained freedom from the oppressive Ottoman Empire.

On March 25, 1821, the Greek people rose up against Ottoman oppression and declared their independence. The Greeks had been under occupied rule by the Ottoman Turks for over 400 years. After years of war and negotiations, Greece was finally recognized as an independent nation in 1832.

As the birthplace of democracy, Greece has shared numerous self-government efforts across the world, including here in the United States. America's Founding Fathers were inspired by the political experiences and philosophies of ancient Greece in writing our Constitution and founding our representative democracy. Today, Greece is again a thriving democracy and an example of self-determination for other nations.

Greece has long been one of the United States' closest allies. Greece fought alongside America in every war of the 20th Century and continues to offer strong support in the current war on terrorism.

I am honored to cosponsor H. Res. 1107 which recognizes the 189th anniversary of the independence of Greece and am pleased that

this bill is being considered by the House of Representatives today.

I would again like to congratulate Greece for celebrating such a momentous occasion. This anniversary is a time to remember the sacrifices of the past, to take pride in your nation, and to look ahead to a future of promise.

INTRODUCING A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES REGARDING THE POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES ON WILD ANIMALS AT THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 12, 2010*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the policy of the United States on wild animals at the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

CITES was created in 1973 to regulate international trade in endangered species to ensure that it does not threaten their survival. Launched with a few signatory nations, CITES has now 175 parties that have an international obligation and responsibility to protect our planet's endangered animals and plants. Adherence to these protective measures has proven to have benefited the conservation of animals and plants worldwide.

Unfortunately, more and more species are at risk of extinction and international trade, both legal and illegal, has exacerbated the dangers. International wildlife trade is estimated to be worth billions of dollars a year and to include hundreds of millions of live plants and animals and derived products such as food, leather, fur, ivory, and timber. Such high levels of exploitation of and trade in wild animals and plants, together with other factors such as habitat loss, are capable of bringing some species close to extinction.

Between 1979 and 1989 more than 600,000 African elephants were killed for their ivory, cutting the continent's population in half. Nevertheless, poaching has continued with an estimated 38,000 elephants killed annually and 23.2 tons of poached ivory seized since 2007. As sea ice declines, polar bears will not be able to adapt to a terrestrial-based life resulting in increased mortality, reduced reproduction, increased human-bear conflicts, and overall drastic decline of populations. Bobcats keep being poached for their skins. Several sharks are being severely depleted with declines as high as 99 percent in some areas as a result of the high demand for their fins and meat. Overfishing, increased consumer demand and inadequate enforcement of infractions have led to historically low populations of bluefin tuna.

This month, CITES' signatory nations will meet for the 15th Conference of the Parties to review the status of species in danger of extinction and establish trade restrictions. The

conference will consider proposals offered by several countries to either enhance protections of endangered species or to remove or downlist some animals from the endangered species listings and reauthorize international trade. Several countries which benefit from trade of animals' derived products, such as elephants' ivory, sharks' fins or bluefin tunas' meat, are putting economic interests before wild animals' survival, risking to bring species close to extinction. This is unacceptable.

My resolution will help preserve many endangered animals by urging CITES to accept proposals that protect these species and oppose those proposals that put them in greater danger.

Madam Speaker, the United States has a moral obligation to protect endangered species and their natural habitat. Wild animals are a very important part of our commonly held natural resources and contribute to the diversity and stability of our environment. We must continue to maintain a balanced and healthy ecosystem that allows for the coexistence of both human beings and the world's most incredible species.

I urge my colleagues to join me in protecting wildlife and environmental conservation across the globe by supporting this important resolution.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. TIM MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 12, 2010*

Mr. TIM MURPHY OF PENNSYLVANIA. MADAM SPEAKER, ON ROLL CALL NO. 108, HAD I BEEN PRESENT, I WOULD HAVE VOTED "AYE".

#### AFGHANISTAN WAR POWERS RESOLUTION

SPEECH OF

#### HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 10, 2010*

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam Speaker, as the tragic events of September 11, 2001, demonstrated, the continued existence of the Taliban and terrorists in Afghanistan poses a threat to the security of the American people. We need to be eliminating those who are organizing to strike at the American people.

That is why we can't afford to "double-down" on a bad policy that infringes on the ability of our troops to successfully execute their mission. Using the men and women of our armed forces to secure ground subjects them unnecessarily to risks that we should not be taking.

Several of my colleagues have stated that to end this conflict would fail to honor those who have fought and died in Afghanistan. Yet, we all acknowledge that there isn't a single American soldier who has laid down his or her life for this country that isn't a hero.

Instead, I think of families like that of Kyle Coutu. Kyle was 20 years old and had just graduated from William E. Tolman High School last June, when he was killed on February 18, 2010, in the Helmand Province dur-

ing combat operations. How many more mothers like Melissa Coutu will have to bury their son or daughter? For how much longer will we ask America's youth to risk their lives for the people of Afghanistan?

Rather than put our troops in harm's way, the best way to honor them is to take care of them when they return home, ending veteran homelessness and unemployment, and fully funding veterans' health care, particularly for the treatment of mental health and PTSD.

Additionally, with limited resources, we can't afford to continue a mission in Afghanistan that doesn't move us forward. There are places around the world, like the Horn of Africa, where our commitment and resources could be put to a greater good. More importantly, every dollar spent in Afghanistan is a dollar that can't be invested here at home to invest in our children's education, rebuild our country's infrastructure, and create jobs for American workers.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 12, 2010*

Mr. LARSON OF CONNECTICUT. Madam Speaker, on March 11, 2010, I missed roll call votes 102, 103 and 104. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on all.

#### BANKRUPTCY JUDGESHIP ACT OF 2010

SPEECH OF

#### HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 10, 2010*

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4506, the Bankruptcy Judgeship Act of 2010, will authorize the appointment of additional bankruptcy judges into the courts.

Personal bankruptcy filings have increased by 32 percent in 2009 due to the recent economic downturn and skyrocketing unemployment and home foreclosure rates. This unprecedented rise has put an increased strain on the legal system to respond to bankruptcy claims. This is the first piece of legislation that addresses the judicial problems caused by the economic turmoil of the past two years.

The U.S. Judicial Conference, whose membership includes the Chief Justice, provided the basis for this legislation which will create 13 new judgeships and make 22 currently temporary judgeships permanent. The bill will pay for these new appointments by increasing the cost for corporate bankruptcy.

The passing of H.R. 4506 would relieve considerable strain on the nation's bankruptcy courts through matching the increased workload with an expanded judiciary. American law exists to encourage economic growth and facilitate new business. The ability for the law to respond effectively and fairly is paramount to the turnaround of the country's economy.

#### OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

#### HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 12, 2010*

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Madam Speaker, today our national debt is \$12,575,479,490,348.47.

On January 6, 2009, the start of the 111th Congress, the national debt was \$10,638,425,746,293.80.

This means the national debt has increased by \$1,937,053,744,054.67 so far this Congress.

This debt and its interest payments we are passing to our children and all future Americans.

HONORING WASHINGTON STATE REPRESENTATIVE SHARON TOMIKO SANTOS

#### HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 12, 2010*

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Washington State Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos for receiving the 2010 Desjardin Financial Literacy Award.

The Desjardin Financial Literacy Award, given by the Credit Union National Association, annually recognizes one State lawmaker for their exemplary leadership and legislative efforts in the field of financial education.

Financial literacy is a crucial skill for all to have in today's society, from balancing a checkbook to budgeting for retirement. This skill allows us to make wise decisions about our finances and our financial future. The earlier that our youth attain this knowledge, the more successful and prepared they are later in life.

In Washington State, financial literacy training supports the goals of Washington's Basic Education Act. This Act seeks to provide students with the skills necessary to "understand the importance of work and finance and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future career and educational opportunities."

Washington State Representative Santos has exemplified the effort to provide financial literacy opportunities for our youth statewide since being elected to the Washington State House of Representatives in 1998. Representative Santos led the campaign to establish the Financial Education Public Private Partnership (previously the Financial Literacy Public Private Partnership) in 2003, as well as to secure public funding for the project.

The Partnership works to increase students' financial education, provide financial education information for school districts, and provides financial education instructional materials. Additionally, the Partnership has grown because of Representative Santos' enduring support and her legislative work throughout the years.

The work of Representative Santos stands as a model for all States in the effort to promote fiscal responsibility and literacy. I commend her for her efforts and congratulate her again on this tremendous achievement.