

etched stars and colored tiles and replicas of some of the many famous posters that we see today.

The park will also have the “compass rose” that was known to be very famous back at that time at the Roosevelt naval base where they would fly from one section to another and that would be their focal point. Adjacent to the compass rose is a quiet garden, a memorial to the men and women who served in the military, noting the inscription: “All Gave Some, Some Gave All.”

When we think of Rosie the Riveter, it's also been an inspiration to many of us. I see our Speaker who is sitting here now tonight, and I think of some of the things we have had where we have really valued what those women did and how they have inspired us today.

At this particular location, we will have three flags that will be flown. One will be a U.S. flag that is actually being flown today. We will have a California flag and then a local flag as well.

I call on my colleagues to take an opportunity to study and reflect and think about all the important stories that made this country so great. And we certainly couldn't leave out the Rosie the Riveters in World War II who began for many of us and why we stand here today.

□ 1730

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes. (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GRAYSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GRAYSON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FRANKS of Arizona addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AMPHIBIANS: CANARIES IN THE COAL MINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Madam Speaker, it wasn't many years ago that coal miners relied on a small bird, a canary, to signal that conditions were toxic. The canary in the coal mine would become sick before the miners, who would then have a chance to either escape or to put on protective respirators.

Today, our ecosystems face dire threats. Toxic gases, chemicals and the exploitation of our natural resources have jeopardized our air, water, lands and the wildlife that inhabit our ecosystems. The telltale sign? The frog, the “canary in the coal mine” of our natural environment, is sick.

Today, nearly 33 percent of amphibian species are threatened, and estimates of species extinctions over the past several decades number in the hundreds. Losses of these species result from the usual suspects, land-use change, overexploitation and disease.

Why all the emphasis on frogs? Aside from the fact that these animals regulate their local ecosystems and control populations of insects that spread disease, they are important to our human health as well. Findings point the way toward new drugs for fighting diseases such as cancer and HIV/AIDS. Scientists have reportedly found chemicals that are naturally produced in the skin of various frog species that can kill the HIV virus.

But these medicinal tools are disappearing at astronomical rates. That should tell us something. A frog's skin is relatively thin and permeable to water, so frogs are directly exposed to pollutants such as coal ash and environmental radiation. In addition, their eggs are laid in ponds and other bodies of water where they absorb chemicals.

The frog, the canary in the coal mine of our natural environment, is first in line in an environmental pollution war, a war the frog is quickly losing. If we don't heed this call, much like the miners who relied on their singing canary, we are destined for illness and, ultimately, shorter, unhealthier lives.

Sadly, this degradation of human health and quality of life is already happening across the country. Colstrip, Montana, is home to the second-largest coal plant west of the Mississippi. One boxcar-full of coal is burned every 5 minutes. The burning coal creates sodium, thallium, mercury, boron, aluminum and arsenic, which is pumped out of the factory and into the air.

The chemicals that aren't pumped into the air are caught in the factory scrubbers and then dumped with coal ash into giant settling ponds. These ponds are shallow artificial lakes of concentrated toxicity which leach this poison into wells and aquifers. The sludge flows into the surrounding towns and countryside, bubbling up against foundations and floorings, cracking the floor in Colstrip's local grocery store. Ranchers in eastern Montana are now suing the plant for damages. Noxious water, they cite, is the only liquid that fills their wells and stock ponds.

James Hansen, a renowned climate scientist, says Colstrip will cause the extinction of 400 species. But Colstrip burns on. Why? Because we have no national energy plan and because there are currently no federally enforceable regulations specific to coal ash. This lack of federally enforceable safeguards

is exactly what led to the disaster in Tennessee, where a dam holding more than 1 billion of gallons of toxic coal ash failed, destroying 300 acres, dozens of homes, killed fish and other wildlife and poisoned the Emory and Clinch Rivers.

From Tennessee to Colstrip and across the Nation, the story is the same. We have no national conservation plan, no national energy policy, no regulatory reinforcement powers. And the biggest environmental disaster the country has ever faced, the Horizon Deepwater oil spill, has not propelled us any further toward passing a cap-and-trade bill through both Chambers. Senator REID said they were sidestepping a cap-and-trade bill for oil response legislation, but we haven't seen that either.

Worse, as we mark 40 years of cleaner air under the Clean Air Act, it is heart-breaking that we must now fight to protect this monument law from attack. Some in Congress are considering weakening this landmark law, seeking to bail out polluters who continue to lobby for loopholes and giveaways that put Americans' health and safety at risk.

We are poisoning our ecosystems, our animals and, yes, our frogs. We are poisoning our families, our communities, our Nation and our entire world. If we do not heed this canary song, we will only have ourselves to blame. And by the time we take notice, it may be too late.

CHAIRMAN SKELTON BIDS FAREWELL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARNAHAN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) is recognized for 30 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to express my gratitude for the honor of serving in the House of Representatives and to share a few thoughts as I prepare to leave this distinguished body. About this time 34 years ago, my wife, our three boys, and I were surrounded by scores of well-wishers organized by my friend, Bob Welling, as we boarded a train at Warrensburg, Missouri, to travel to Washington, D.C. Shortly thereafter, I was sworn into Congress. I arrived eager to tackle the problems of the day and represent the people of the Fourth Congressional District. It was a political highlight for me.

The Roman orator Cicero said that “gratitude is the greatest of all virtues,” and I'm grateful to so many people. First, I'm extremely grateful and appreciative to the residents of Missouri's Fourth Congressional District whose votes allowed me to serve as their Representative in this House for 34 years. Representing the fourth district has been a tremendous privilege.

I also want to thank my family whose support made it possible for me

to serve in Washington, Susie, my late wife, my three wonderful sons and my lovely, understanding and supportive wife, Patty.

I want to thank my friends and mentors in Congress. I can't name them all, but I want to particularly single out the great Missouri legislators, Congressman Dick Bolling, who helped me land a seat on the Armed Services Committee, Congressman Dick Gephardt and Congressman Bill Emerson who were my carpool partners and my great friends. I leave with enormous respect for all those Members who worked their hearts out to help people at home and to help steer our country's path while performing their constitutional duty.

A special thanks to our Speaker PELOSI for her kindness and thoughtfulness through the years.

My colleagues from Missouri have been fantastic.

Finally, I want to thank my dedicated staff, past and present. The talented people who have worked in my Missouri offices, my Washington, D.C. office, on my Small Business Subcommittee staff and on the staff of the House Armed Services Committee, are the unsung heroes who get the business of government done. I can't thank them enough for being part of my staff and serving the American people so very well.

I have led a charmed life in many ways; but as a youngster, I learned that a person's life can change forever in an instant. After contracting polio, I was fortunate to receive treatment at the Warm Springs Foundation in Georgia. Polio affects each person differently; but at Warm Springs, patients learned valuable lessons about life—never let illness define you, never be limited by the expectations of others, never give up, and never stop working. By applying the belief that nothing is impossible if you work hard, thousands of Warm Springs alumni, including myself, have led happy and productive lives.

And it is no coincidence that three patients between 1947 and 1950 at Warm Springs became Members of this body—Jim Schuer of New York, Bo Ginn of Georgia and myself.

Growing up I was inspired by my father's runs for statewide office and for Congress, and also by his service as Lafayette County prosecuting attorney. I had just completed my own term as Lafayette County prosecutor and was practicing law when President Harry Truman called to ask me to consider running for Congress in 1962. In 1976, I decided to run for Missouri's Fourth Congressional District seat. I have been on the ride of my life ever since.

□ 1740

It is a great honor to serve in the U.S. House. This House is filled with principled public servants who work hard to give voice to the needs of voters back home. Members of Congress bring the theory of representative de-

mocracy to life every time they participate in House business, and every time they listen to the hard-wrought concerns of their neighbors.

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I aspired to become chairman one day. Serving as chairman is undoubtedly the high point of my political career. The HASC family of Members and staff is very special. Members of Congress lucky enough to serve on this committee have traditionally worked in a far less partisan atmosphere than on other committees. Article 1, section 8 of the Constitution grants Congress the obligation to raise and support armies and to provide and maintain a Navy. All Members approach this important work very seriously, with the goals of protecting our Nation's security and also doing what is right for our men and women in uniform and their families.

American politics through the ages have frequently been rough and tumble, and at times some might even say mean. But to my mind, national security transcends politics. In the realm of national security, we must make the effort to work together in a bipartisan way, to stand before our allies and the world as a united front, to strengthen our Nation's defenses under the banner of consensus.

As chairman, I have always sought to maintain this bipartisan atmosphere, and I hope that culture instilled by many HASC chairs who served before will carry on under the able leadership of the new chair in the incoming Congress, Congressman BUCK McKEON. I am confident it will.

Throughout our country's history, the Nation has experienced many challenges. We have had economic crises, agricultural hardships, military engagements, and Members of this body responded to each one as it came along. I am proud to have been a Member of the House of Representatives, and I will always cherish my service here.

I leave with some anxiety for the future, however. In the past, this body has worked best after great debates, when men and women of strong principles have met and compromised on those difficult issues, which at the time could render us asunder. But through meeting in the center and solving the problems of the day, our country benefited. It was able to progress.

As a result of the last election, the center has been holed out, and more Members will represent extreme points of view, which is likely to make meaningful compromise difficult, if not impossible. Once again, our system of government and our citizenry will be tested, and the outcome will determine, borrowing the eloquent words of President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, "whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure."

When returning Members and new Members arrive in the Capitol for the

new Congress in January, they will confront enormous challenges as they work to chart the course of our country in the days ahead. These challenges include the economy and jobs, health care, education, to name a few. But I implore our citizens and our leaders not to forget that we are a Nation at war. Unless our government protects our national security, none of these other important issues can receive the attention they deserve.

National security must be our number one priority. I believe all Americans' good intentions support the troops and their families. But those intentions must be reflected in action, and Congress bears the Constitutional responsibility to fulfill this sacred duty.

My greatest concern is that a chasm will develop between those who protect our freedoms and those who are being protected. I have often talked about what I perceive to be a civil-military gap, a lack of understanding between civilians and the military that has grown in the era of an all-volunteer force. For those not in uniform or connected to the military in some way, it is easy not to relate to our servicemembers' difficulties as they deal with the trials of war and combat, multiple deployments, family separations, missed birthdays, and other sacrifices too numerous to mention.

As a Nation, we must strive to narrow that gap and bring our citizens together. United we stand, divided we fall. The men and women in uniform who form the backbone of our security cannot devote their all to protect us if we fail to provide what they need to perform their missions, stay safe in the field, and take good care of themselves and their families at home. Keeping America safe demands a national commitment to maintain military readiness. During my time in Congress, the United States has been involved in 12 conflicts, some large and some small. If the future is anything like the past, conflicts, natural disasters, and other crises will frequently pop up without warning. Preparedness is essential.

Today's forces are the latest in a long line of sentinels of freedom. Our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines must have no doubt about the high value we place on their service. Our commitment to our servicemembers and their families will also help the next generation understand that these patriotic volunteers are critical to the survival of our Nation. To protect America's future, we must inspire the next generation to join the noble service of these ranks.

I have always considered each young man and woman in uniform as a son or daughter. They are national treasures and their sacrifices cannot be taken for granted. They are not chess pieces to be moved about on a board. Each and every one is irreplaceable. Issues of national security and war and peace are too important to lose sight of the real

men and women who answer our Nation's call and do the bidding of our Commander in Chief.

You can't do the job as a Member of Congress for so many years unless you love it, and I do. It is a labor of love. And to paraphrase my fellow Missourian, Harry Truman, I have done my damndest every single day. I will forever be grateful for the trust Missourians have placed in me through the years and for the opportunity to serve Missouri's Fourth Congressional District, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the United States of America.

As I leave this House, these lines from Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem "Ulysses" express my feelings very well:

Much I have seen and known; cities of men

And manners, climates, councils, governments . . .

And drunk delight of battle with my peers . . .

Some work of noble note, may yet be done . . .

Come, my friends,

Tis not too late to seek a newer world.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for this time.

HONORING CONGRESSMAN IKE SKELTON

(Ms. PELOSI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to sing the praises of a great man, Chairman IKE SKELTON. We all heard his beautiful address to us, and in it he started where his heart is, with his family, expressing his love for his family, his appreciation for his staff, his respect for his colleagues, his admiration for our great country.

I am so pleased that we have been joined by Senator CLAIRE MCCASKILL, coming over from the Senate side to make the respect for Mr. SKELTON bicameral, and that we are joined by Congresswoman JO ANN EMERSON, making that support bipartisan, as well as being joined by so many Members of the Missouri delegation, and that you, Mr. CARNAHAN, are in the chair for Mr. SKELTON's presentation. I know we will be hearing from our distinguished majority leader Mr. HOYER, but I think it is important to note that EMANUEL CLEAVER of Missouri is here, LACY CLAY of Missouri is here, and other Members, Chairman MILLER, chairs, colleagues, new Members, senior Members—that is how Mr. SKELTON is regarded and respected in the Congress of the United States.

□ 1750

He made his speech the way he served in Congress, surrounded by friends, admired by all, on both sides of the aisle, on both sides of the Capitol. He began by talking about his family, and he ended by talking about our men and women in uniform, which are like sons and daughters to him.

He has always taught us that, as President Kennedy said, We'll pay any price, bear any burden. Mr. SKELTON said to us over and over again, as he did this evening, that protecting the American people is our first responsibility. Our young men and women in uniform make us the home of the free and the land of the brave, and we can never forget that. They have no greater champion in the Congress than the chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

I know I speak for every person in this Chamber when I say, Mr. SKELTON, thank you for your leadership for our country. It is an honor to call you colleague. Thank you, Mr. SKELTON.

HONORING CONGRESSMAN IKE SKELTON

(Mrs. EMERSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't try to tell a little bit more of the story that our beloved friend and colleague IKE SKELTON started. It kind of started all back about in 1980 for my family with IKE when my late husband, Bill, and he drove in to work every single day, and the stories that I learned both from Bill and IKE, because I used to then take IKE in after Bill, and every Thursday now that we come in with prayer breakfast has been, for me, a remarkable experience because of what I have learned from our colleague IKE SKELTON, both from history and also an understanding of the great love that he has for our wonderful State of Missouri.

His commitment and his dedication have been extraordinary, and he has been, for me, not only a real hero but also someone whom I have tried very hard to learn from. You have set an example, IKE, that is impossible for anybody else to meet; but certainly you have been a role model for me and so many others before me, and I just want you to know how important you are not only to me, to how important you were to Bill, to Tori and Katharine and to Ron and Sam and the rest of the kids, IKE. But more importantly than that, you have been special for our country.

You are what every Member of Congress should want to be, and that is a man of great courage, a man of great fairness. You have shown me and others how important it is for us to be civil to one another, how we should talk to one another, and I hope that the example that you have set will continue on in this great body. You will be sorely missed, and we really love you.

HONORING CONGRESSMAN IKE SKELTON

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, IKE SKELTON is my brother. He and I are both

Sigma Chi's. There's a lot of misinformation and misapprehension about fraternities and sororities. Sigma Chi was founded by seven individuals, one of whom was a gentleman named Jordan, and the Jordan standard requires of those who pledge that fraternity to live by certain standards. Those standards are what we would expect of all of us and hope for all of us.

I have been a member of that fraternity for over half a century. No Sigma Chi that I have met has been more faithful to meeting the standards of conduct and character and courage and fidelity to purpose than my brother IKE SKELTON.

IKE SKELTON is the father of a Sigma Chi and the son of a Sigma Chi and the grandfather of a Sigma Chi. Is that correct, IKE? I think I have it in order. But IKE SKELTON has been a colleague in this Congress. IKE SKELTON, as Mrs. EMERSON said and as Speaker PELOSI said, and as others will say, is the quintessential example of what the American public would hope all of us would be. He's thoughtful, a great intellect, faithful, patriotic, and he teared, of course, as he mentioned the troops, the men and women who serve this country in uniform, the men and women who have had no greater advocate than IKE SKELTON of Missouri, the men and women of our Armed Forces who have had no greater advocate in terms of not only the quality of their lives, their housing, their health care, their benefits, but also the assurance that they had the best technology that was available to make them not only as effective but, as importantly, as secure and safe as they could possibly be.

IKE SKELTON is a good and decent man who has served his country extraordinarily well. He quoted the Tennyson poem, "Ulysses." What a wonderful poem. He didn't quote the end of it, which is essentially that Ulysses, then old, Telemachus, the king, left to his son the duties of being king and brought his band of brothers together to go forth to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

There is no doubt in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that IKE SKELTON will continue to be an extraordinarily faithful citizen of this country, an unswerving supporter of those in uniform, of our Armed Forces, and of our national security, and one who will uphold the highest standards that this institution would hope all of its Members maintain, and he will continue to strive to seek to find and we know he will not yield. But in not yielding on principle, he will be faithfully courteous and respectful of others, as he has been every day on this floor, in his committee, and in the hallways of our offices.

His late wife was named Susan. My oldest daughter is named Susan. Susan Skelton, in the spring of 1981, came to Bowie, Maryland, and knocked on doors, and the doors opened and she said, I would like you to vote for STENY HOYER for Congress. I loved Susan. We lost Susan a few years ago. She was