

wholeheartedly support the formation of an Afghanistan/Pakistan Study Group in the hope that it will help to turn the tide of this war and lessen the number of casualties as well.

I, too, have a deep respect and confidence in Gen. Petraus and would not want my comments to be construed as being critical of the leadership of our military. I have no formal training in political science or history so please accept these comments as simply the perspective of an American mother with children glad to serve our country.

God bless you and give you wisdom as you serve in the leadership of our country.

Sincerely,

* * *

PS It meant so much to see my sons receive a standing ovation when introduced during last weeks luncheon. It is these very Lance Corporals, Corporals and Sergeants who are almost daily listed among the casualties. My son, * * *, remarked that listening to your speech "restored his faith in the republic". Thank you again for recognizing their service.

HONORING THE LAJKONIK SONG AND DANCE ENSEMBLE

HON. MIKE QUIGLEY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the thousands of Polish-American constituents residing in the 5th District of Illinois, I rise today in recognition of the 20th Anniversary of the Lajkonik Song and Dance Ensemble. For 20 successful years, the Lajkonik Song and Dance Ensemble has promoted Polish folk culture and history to constituents of Polish and non-Polish decent alike.

Founded in 1991—under patronage of the Polish National Alliance Group 3241, and belonging to the Holy Trinity Polish Mission—Lajkonik has had the opportunity to flourish to an influential organization and cultural asset to the City of Chicago.

The Lajkonik Ensemble has performed in various locations in Chicago; some include the Chicago Cultural Center, Taste of Chicago, Daley Plaza, Chicago Public Libraries and Millennium Park, among others. Additionally, Lajkonik has traveled the Midwest and also represented the Chicago Polish Community at the International Folk Dance Festival in Rzeszów, Poland on four occasions.

Though the event focuses on Polish traditions, Lajkonik also reaches out to the American population to promote and encourage all people to learn about Polish culture, to support and appreciate it. The performances consist of different Polish regional folk songs, dances and colorful authentic Polish costumes.

Sunday, May 29th, 2011 marks the 20th Anniversary of the Lajkonik Song and Dance Ensemble. All the community support and time volunteered by numerous individuals have made two decades possible and hopefully many more anniversaries to come. The 20th Anniversary celebration will be held at the Copernicus Cultural and Civic Center consisting of hundreds of children performing in a Gala Concert displaying regional costumes, folk dances, songs, and other performances.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize this exciting day on behalf of my 110,000 Polish

American constituents. I congratulate all those who contributed their time and passion of preserving the Polish culture toward another successful celebration.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent for votes in the House Chamber yesterday. I would like the record to show that, had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 254 and 255 and "no" on rollcall vote 256.

RECOGNIZING KEITH LEWINGER ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RE- TIREMENT FROM THE FALLBROOK PUBLIC UTILITIES DISTRICT

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the honorable public service of Keith Lewinger as he retires as General Manager of the Fallbrook Public Utilities District (PUD) of California.

After graduating from the University of Cornell in the early 70's, Mr. Lewinger worked for the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts, the Irvine Ranch Water District, and the Otay Water District. Mr. Lewinger proceeded as General Manager for ten years at Otay which is one of the largest water districts in San Diego County.

In 1999 Mr. Lewinger joined the team at the Fallbrook PUD which contains approximately 8,000 water and 4,000 sewer connections. After 12 years of committed leadership, Mr. Lewinger has established a solid foundation for the Fallbrook PUD and has been instrumental in the area's resource management efforts.

Previously a member of the Governor's Recycled Water Task Force, Mr. Lewinger also represents the San Diego County Water Authority on the Metropolitan Water District Board of Southern California. Additionally, he serves on the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA's) Board of Directors as Vice-Chair of Region 10, has been Chairman of ACWA's Water Reclamation and Reuse Committee, a member of the California and National Boards of Directors of the WaterReuse Association including President of the California Section of the WaterReuse Association, and a member of the American Water Works Association's (AWWA's) Water Reuse Committee.

It is an honor to recognize Mr. Lewinger on the occasion of his retirement after nearly three decades of contributions to the resources community. Mr. Speaker, I ask you to please join me in recognizing Mr. Keith Lewinger's dedicated service to the Fallbrook Public Utilities District and the state of California.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR STRENGTHENING SAFETY STANDARDS FOR OFFSHORE BLOWOUT PREVENTERS AND EMERGENCY SHUTOFF EQUIP- MENT

HON. JAY INSLEE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker. I rise today to once again to introduce the Offshore Drilling Safety Improvement Act.

As we rapidly approach the one-year anniversary of the catastrophic Deepwater Horizon oil spill, which killed 11 workers and dumped hundreds of millions of gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico, we must confront the fact that Congress still has yet to pass comprehensive safety reform for offshore oil drilling. A year after toxic sludge drenched the Gulf beaches, communities are still suffering from economic ramifications of the loss of tourism and fishing.

Last year, after numerous congressional hearings and months of hard work, the House passed the Consolidated Land, Energy, and Aquatic, CLEAR, Act, a comprehensive approach to make sure American jobs and coastlines are protected. Among other beneficial improvements, the CLEAR Act included important provisions requiring better technology on blowout preventers and other commonsense safety reforms. Unfortunately, the bill did not make it through the Senate, and over the last few months the House has yet to pass similar legislation.

That is why I am once again, with bipartisan support, introducing the Offshore Drilling Safety Improvement Act. This act strengthens the standards for safety equipment on offshore oil rigs by requiring the use of the best available technology for blowout preventers and emergency shutoff equipment. It will also require the Administration to consider independent and reputable science and expertise when determining appropriate equipment. It is one vital piece of the larger, comprehensive effort to create a regulatory system that protects American jobs, coasts, and communities.

We may never know for sure what exactly caused the disastrous leak but we do know that we must work together to protect our shores and local economies from future spills. Other countries around the world require more comprehensive emergency safety equipment. It is time that, in the places we decide to drill, we are using the best safety equipment available.

A MODEL OF FEDERAL/STATE CO- OPERATION ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, one of the most troubling inconsistencies in our political dialogue is the one in which many conservatives argue on some issues that the Federal Government must be respectful of states' rights and not intrude on the prerogatives of the States, but, on the other hand,

when any significant group of businesses is offended by regulatory actions at the State level, that one national federal standard is necessary.

This has been particularly the case in the area of financial regulation. In 2004, under President Bush, the Comptroller of the Currency—a holdover from the Clinton administration to make this somewhat bipartisan—preempted all state laws regulating the activities of national banks. This cancellation of a variety of State consumer protection laws contributed to our national crisis, because many of the States would have prohibited the kind of irresponsible loans to people who could not afford them, which contributed to our financial crisis. In the Financial Reform bill last year, we restored the status quo that existed before 2004, in which the Federal Government had the power to prevent inconsistent and excessively intrusive regulation, but did not seek to prevent the States from taking steps to protect their citizens from abuses.

In fact, sensible public policy recognizes a role for both the Federal Government and the States in this area, and I am very pleased—but not surprised—that Elizabeth Warren, on behalf of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, created a financial format, and the Presidential Initiative Working Group of that National Association of Attorneys General recently announced an agreement on principles to govern their joint activities in this area.

Mr. Speaker, as this agreement shows, consumer protection is an area where Federal and State policies can and should be coordinated to the benefit of our citizens, and the conflict that some have tried to foment between Federal and State activities in this area is based not on any commitment to federalism, but rather on a desire to hinder effective financial regulation in the service of those businesses that would prefer to work unhindered by any such rules.

Elizabeth Warren, Assistant to the President and Special Advisor to the Secretary of the Treasury on the CFPB, and North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper, who is President of the NAAG, in announcing this important agreement, make this point clear.

Mr. Speaker, the need for there to be Federal/State cooperation in consumer protection—and the fact that this can be done in the context of a healthy and vigorous financial system, and in the true spirit of American federalism—is not only important in itself; it provides a model for how we can work together in appropriate regulation in other areas and I ask that the statement announcing this agreement from the U.S. Treasury Department Office of Public Affairs be printed here.

U.S. TREASURY DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 11, 2011
CONTACT: CFPB Public Affairs, (202) 435-7454

CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU AND NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ATTORNEYS GENERAL PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE WORKING GROUP RELEASE JOINT STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Consumer Bureau, State Attorneys General Partnership Will Help Better Protect American Consumers of Financial Products and Services from Unlawful Acts and Practices

WASHINGTON—The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) and the Presidential Initiative Working Group of the National Association of Attorneys General

(NAAG) today announced agreement on a Joint Statement of Principles, the first step in forging a new partnership between federal and state officials to protect consumers of financial products and services.

Elizabeth Warren, Assistant to the President and Special Advisor to the Secretary of the Treasury on the CFPB, highlighted the agreement in her remarks at the NAAG Presidential Initiative Summit today in Charlotte, NC.

“I anticipate that our cooperation will have a profound effect on the consumer financial markets,” Warren told state attorneys general and others gathered at the summit, according to her prepared remarks. “Together, we can pose a greater deterrent to unscrupulous financial services providers. We can protect more consumers, and we can ensure that more institutions follow the rules.”

“People are hurt every day by unfair financial products,” said North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper, who serves as President of the NAAG. “This agreement will put more cops on the beat to protect consumers and businesses that are doing the right thing.”

The Joint Statement of Principles was developed to advance three goals shared by the CFPB and state attorneys general to ensure protections for consumers of financial products and services: protect consumers of financial products or services from unlawful acts or practices; provide clear rules that improve the marketplace for consumers and remove unfair competition for the benefit of law-abiding businesses; and find ways to promote understanding and address concerns raised by consumers about financial products or services as efficiently and effectively as possible.

In the Joint Statement, the parties agree to:

Develop joint training programs and share information about developments in federal consumer financial law and state consumer protection laws that apply to consumer financial products or services;

Share information, data, and analysis about conduct and practices in the markets for consumer financial products or services to inform enforcement policies and priorities;

Engage in regular consultation to identify mutual enforcement priorities that will ensure effective and consistent enforcement of the laws that protect consumers of financial products or services;

Support each other, to the fullest extent permitted by law as warranted by the circumstances, in the enforcement of the laws that protect consumers of financial products or services, including by joint or coordinated investigations of wrongdoing and coordinated enforcement actions;

Pursue legal remedies to foster transparency, competition, and fairness in the markets for consumer financial products or services across state lines and without regard to corporate forms or charter choice for those providers who compete directly with one another in the same markets;

Develop a consistent and enduring framework to share information and to coordinate enforcement activities to the extent practicable and consistent with governing law;

Share, refer, and route complaints and consumer complaint information between the CFPB and the state attorneys general;

Analyze and leverage the input they receive from consumers and the public in order to advance their mutual goal of protecting consumers of financial products or services; and

Create and support technologies to enable data sharing and procedures that will support complaint cooperation.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SERGEANT PETER HART

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to the life and legacy of Sergeant Peter Hart, a soldier and New York City Police Officer, who served in the American Civil War.

Sergeant Hart will be remembered for valiantly leaving New York to join in the defense of Fort Sumter in January 1861. Major Robert Anderson, Commander of Fort Sumter, had served with him in the Mexican American War. As tensions between the North and South increased, Major Anderson's wife requested Sergeant Hart join the defense of Fort Sumter. Early in the morning of April 12, 1861 the first shots of the American Civil War rang out. By afternoon the shelling had knocked the American flag from the flagstaff flying over the fort. Sergeant Hart proudly retrieved the fallen flag, climbed up the flagstaff and successfully reattached it. His refusal to allow the flag to lie torn and tattered serves as a symbol of the unwavering spirit of all Americans who defend our Nation in the Civil War.

I offer my recognition of Sergeant Peter Hart on the 150th anniversary of the start of the American Civil War. Sergeant Hart's courage not only inspired the brave men at Fort Sumter. His patriotic spirit and devotion to our Nation continues to inspire Americans today.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, because of business in my District yesterday my return to Washington, D.C. was delayed and therefore I was unable to be on the House Floor for rollcall votes 254, 255 and 256.

Had I been present I would have voted: “yea” on rollcall vote No. 254; “yea” on rollcall vote No. 255; and “yea” on rollcall vote No. 256.

CONGRATULATIONS, CONGRESSWOMAN DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, ON YOUR NOMINATION AS CHAIRWOMAN OF THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today to congratulate my friend, colleague, housemate and homegirl—Congresswoman DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Last week, she was nominated by President Barack Obama as the first female Floridian to serve as the Chair of the Democratic National Committee, a highly coveted honor. For almost two decades she has done nothing short of inspire, lead, and succeed.