

At home, however, Georgia confronts the unresolved conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In December, I chaired a briefing by the Helsinki Commission that examined the conflicts in the Caucasus, including Abkhazia and South Ossetia as well as Nagorno-Karabakh. I was impressed by the witnesses' expert testimony but concerned by their warning about the possibility of renewed hostilities in this strategically important region.

Despite mediation by the OSCE Minsk Group, the parties seem no closer to a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute than they were years ago. Prospects for settling the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia are even more remote, with Russia having recognized the independence of those separatist regions, where OSCE monitors have also been excluded.

Of course, the U.S. Government has for years been involved in negotiating a settlement of these conflicts, through participation in the Minsk Group and by attempting to move Russia toward a constructive approach in the Geneva talks on Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Washington's efforts have unfortunately not resulted in a resolution of these protracted disputes.

We have seen how quickly so-called "frozen" conflicts can come unfrozen, with terrible consequences. It is my understanding that Secretary Clinton is planning a trip to Georgia. I hope this is a sign that the region will receive a continuing and high priority in U.S. diplomacy.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. MARK S. NEWMAN

HON. GEOFF DAVIS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Mr. Mark S. Newman, the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of DRS Technologies, as he retires after thirty-nine years of dedicated service to the defense industry and our servicemen and women.

Mark's leadership and inspirational concern for providing our warriors with the very best technology this nation can produce has led to the development and fielding of products which have directly saved lives on the battlefield, created enhanced situational awareness and provided superior advantages to our armed forces. He has, for his entire career, sought to place equipment in the hands of our troops that ensured they not only completed their missions, but returned home safely.

Mark joined DRS Technologies in 1973, four years after the company's founding, and was named a director in 1988. After serving many years as the company's Chief Financial Officer, he was named President and CEO in 1994, and in 1995 was elected Chairman of the Board. Under his watch, the company grew from a small specialty electronics supplier to a highly diversified defense technology provider with 10,000 employees—over 15% of whom have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. In short, Mark has built a company that is a true American success story.

In 2005, Mark established the DRS Technologies Charitable Foundation, with a focus on helping those who serve—a cause he

knew would resonate throughout the entire DRS workforce. Through the years that followed, he has raised about \$600,000 to support the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund and their efforts to build a world-class, state-of-the-art physical rehabilitation center at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. Mark also helped raise over \$500,000 to assist the USO with the initiative "Operation Enduring Care," becoming a Global Partner with the USO in the process. In 2009, Mark helped raise over \$600,000 for the building of the state-of-the-art Intrepid Center of Excellence to research, diagnose and treat Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) suffered by those injured while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, and just last year Mark made it his personal mission to support "Operation Mend" at UCLA Medical Center matching the \$240,000 donated by DRS leadership with \$240,000 of his own money. His patriotism and philanthropic initiatives supporting military charities makes him a hero in his own right.

Mr. Speaker, I ask House—me in recognizing Mark S. Newman's contributions and thanking him for his dedication to our servicemen and women.

HONORING THE THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO SOCIETY AS THEY CELEBRATE THEIR 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to join the many families and community leaders who have gathered today to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Thaddeus Kosciuszko Society—a remarkable milestone for this very special organization.

Like so many others of its kind, the formation of the Thaddeus Kosciuszko Society was rooted in the common need of immigrants to support one another. Milford, Connecticut was an ideal location for Polish farmers who had recently immigrated to America to settle because of the agricultural opportunities the land presented. In a new country and beginning new farms, these families faced many challenges. Seeing the need to have someone or something available to them to assist in a time crisis, a group of seven men met on Sunday, April 1, 1912, and established an organization through which they could not only help each other, but also future generations. Their mission, as stated in their original bylaws was simple: "To promote social activities, recreation and mental improvement among its members and to provide relief benefit therefor in cases of sickness or trouble."

From that handful of farmers, the Society has grown throughout the years. Many of today's seventy-five members are descendants of the original seven. Throughout its 100-year history, the Society has often been a source of comfort and support for newly immigrated families. Over that time, the Society Treasury, funded by member dues and modest fund-raising events, has enabled the Society to provide financial support to relatives and survivors of the sick and deceased as well as more than \$50,000 in scholarships to students of Polish decent seeking higher education.

Keeping with the practice started by their founders, the Thaddeus Kosciuszko Society still meet once a month on a Sunday afternoon and their Annual Summer Picnic, now a well-known community tradition, is still held on a mid-summer Sunday afternoon. Though times and the needs of members have changed, the Society continues to make a difference in the lives of those in need, strengthening the bonds of friendship and community from one generation to the next. Today, as they celebrate their 100th Anniversary, they can proudly look back on their rich history and be secure in the knowledge that the Thaddeus Kosciuszko Society will remain a source of support and encouragement for many more families in the years to come.

RECOGNIZING LOUISIANA'S LONGEST MARRIED COUPLE

HON. RODNEY ALEXANDER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is with great pride that I rise today to recognize Louisiana's longest-married couple, Norman and Norma Burmah.

The Marksville couple, who celebrated their 81st wedding anniversary, will be inducted into the Louisiana Family Forum's Marriage Hall of Fame, and were recently commended by Governor Bobby Jindal in a reception held in their honor on Valentine's Day.

After an introduction by Norma's friend, the couple began their courtship in 1930 at the Roof Garden Dance Hall in New Orleans. The following year, Norman and Norma were married at Holy Ghost Church in the Crescent City.

Known as "Maw" and "Paw" to their loved ones, they are the proud parents of two daughters, and have been blessed with six grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren. After Hurricane Katrina destroyed their home in 2005, Norman and Norma relocated to Marksville where their strong commitments to each other, family and God have continued.

It is an honor to recognize Norman and Norma Burmah and give my heartfelt congratulations to them on this truly incredible event in their lives. I ask my colleagues to join me in extending best wishes to Louisiana's longest married couple.

EARTHQUAKE AWARENESS MONTH IN MISSOURI

HON. RUSS CARNAHAN

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

Mr. CARNAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring the important issue of earthquake awareness to the attention of the members of the House.

February is Earthquake Awareness Month in Missouri. My district lies within the New Madrid Seismic Zone, the nation's most active earthquake zone east of the Rocky Mountains. Every year there are more than 200 small earthquakes in this region and there have been earthquakes as strong as magnitude 7.0

in the past. These natural disasters aren't predictable so we must remain vigilant in our preparation for and awareness of the hazards associated with earthquakes.

This month I had the opportunity to speak with high school students from my district about what they are doing to prepare themselves for an earthquake. On February 7th they joined other students from 414 Missouri schools in the 2012 Great Central US Shake-Out. We discussed how the students can prepare their schools and homes for an earthquake and they told me about their experience practicing an earthquake drill. The safety of our children is of the utmost importance and schools play a key role during disasters so when they are well prepared the whole community benefits.

The Saint Louis University Earthquake Center is a world leader in the field of earthquake seismology. I had the opportunity to tour this facility and to learn about the groundbreaking research they are doing. As part of this year's Earthquake Awareness Month, Saint Louis University hosted a seminar entitled "Earthquakes: Mean Business" that focused on disaster preparedness and business continuity planning. The St. Louis Science Center also hosted an Earthquake Awareness Day to introduce our citizens to the science behind earthquakes.

I applaud the citizens and businesses of the St. Louis region for their vigilance in preparing for earthquakes and I encourage our continued investment in studying and preparing for these potentially devastating natural events.

HONORING NATIONAL KIDNEY MONTH

HON. TOM MARINO

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

Mr. MARINO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the House to join me on March 1, 2012 in recognition of Kidney Action Day and recognition of March as National Kidney Month. With over 31 million Americans affected by kidney disease, it is critical that we make every effort to raise awareness and stress the importance of early detection and treatment of the nation's 8th most deadly disease.

The effects of chronic kidney disease can go undetected for years without showing any symptoms but can evolve into a condition with the worst of consequences. As a survivor of kidney cancer, I know the importance of getting checked and beginning the fight at the earliest possible stage. A blood or urine screening can determine whether an individual is showing signs of a renal condition and in early stages, the disease can be treated with medication along with a diet and exercise program.

However, if left untreated, kidney disease may harbor other conditions such as diabetes or hypertension which increases the risk for a stroke, heart attack, or other cardiac-related issues. Dialysis may be needed in the later stages of chronic kidney disease as it aids in cleaning the bloodstream of toxins and in the most severe cases a kidney transplant may be needed. While there is no cure for chronic kidney disease, proper lifelong treatment can slow the onset of kidney failure and help control the symptoms of this devastating disease.

On March 1, 2012, I will be attending Kidney Action Day on the Hill in order to raise consciousness and spread knowledge that could potentially mitigate the tragic effects of this disease. I ask my fellow members of the House to join me on March 1, 2012 to recognize Kidney Action Day and National Kidney Month all across the United States so that we may spread awareness and lend a hand in saving the lives of those we serve.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, on February 28, 2012 I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall vote 79. If present, I would have voted "nay."

SUPPORTING GREAT LAKES WEEK

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, this week in Washington is Great Lakes Week. It could not come at a more important time.

Last Thursday, the Administration released the 2012 Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework, which is important in establishing the fight to protect our Great Lakes against invasive Asian carp that threaten our \$7 billion fishing industry. No lake is more important than Lake Erie—The largest fishery on the Great Lakes.

We should be thankful that President Obama is elevating Asian carp as a priority. I encourage him to do more to stop the carp from migrating into our precious ecosystem.

Last month, another important study was released, outlining a necessary path forward to separate our Great Lakes from the Mississippi watershed. This is the only real solution for stopping the enemy at the gate.

For the same reason, I am a cosponsor of the Stop Asian Carp Act, which calls for that barrier to be built now, not delayed for over a decade. Too much is at risk.

I represent the largest portion of coastal Ohio along Lake Erie—which contains more native fish than all the other Lakes combined. We must protect this valuable ecological treasure, and the local multi-billion dollar economy it supports. This involves the lake itself, the maritime industry, coastal tourism, recreation, wildlife refuges, energy protection, industrial plants and so much more.

These endowments extend far beyond Asian carp. This year, lakeside communities again are grappling with an expanding algal bloom that can be poisonous if ingested, creates biological dead-zones, and just plain stinks.

Residents stay inside to avoid the putrid smell, charter boat captains suffer as fishing declines, and hotels and restaurants in popular vacation spots sit empty as travelers take their recreational dollars elsewhere.

Under the Western Lake Erie Basin Partnership, I have brought together researchers,

non-profits, and local-residents to work with federal agencies including the EPA, Department of Agriculture, and Army Corps of Engineers to address this huge challenge.

Under President Obama, many of these efforts were integrated into a new program called the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, which is proving effective at addressing the enormous needs facing our Great Lakes.

Through the GLRI, specific areas of concern like the Cuyahoga, Maumee, and Black Rivers are receiving much needed federal dollars to improve these watersheds.

After years of work to develop the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, the GLRI is helping expand their efforts in wetland habitat restoration and enhancement.

In the Black River, we are removing steel mill slag and restoring habitat for native fish species.

This fall in Sandusky, we dedicated a new research vessel for Lake Erie—The "USS Muskie."

And, the University of Toledo is undertaking a study to assess the benefits provided by a newly created wetlands to prevent agricultural runoff that can produce algal blooms and increase nearshore health concerns, such as e coli and other bacteria.

I, along with a broad range of costal stakeholders, continue to work closely with the agency officials to ensure that the most fragile Great Lakes ecosystem—Lake Erie—receives funding levels in line with the great need.

And, it is essential that our Great Lakes delegation work with my colleagues in Congress to ensure that we continue sufficient funding to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

America has done so much to help certain areas like the Everglades and expanses of Alaska that few Americans will ever get to enjoy. More than one quarter of our country lives in a Great Lakes state and depends on healthy lakes for water, farming, business and pleasure.

During this Great Lakes Week, and throughout the upcoming months in which we will determine our spending priorities, I urge my colleagues, especially those in our region who have not already gotten on board, to support the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and other programs to protect these national and global treasures for today and tomorrow.

RECOGNIZING INTERNATIONAL RARE DISEASE DAY

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the fifth International Rare Disease Day, a day reserved to promote awareness of the approximately 6,800 rare diseases afflicting 30 million Americans.

In the United States, a rare disease is one that affects fewer than 200,000 people. The National Organization of Rare Disorders estimates that one in ten Americans are suffering today from a rare disease. Thanks to patients and their families, the medical community, and organizations established to advocate for greater awareness and research, advances have been in the diagnosis and treatment of many of these diseases. With a renewed commitment to scientific research and discovery,