

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,

we can provide much more than treatments and disease management to millions of our suffering constituents, we can provide cures.

In my congressional district, I have met with countless constituents and their families whose lives have, in one way or another, been impacted by a rare disease such as Epidermolysis Bullosa, commonly known as EB, which is characterized by the presence of extremely fragile skin that results in the development of recurrent, painful blisters, open sores, and in some forms of the disease, in disfiguring scars, disabling musculoskeletal deformities, and internal blistering. EB affects approximately 12,000 individuals in the United States.

I have also met with families impacted by Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. This is a form of muscular dystrophy found in boys who experience a progressive loss of muscle function. Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy esti-

mates that 15,000 young men suffer from Duchenne.

Marfan Syndrome is another rare disease that has impacted my constituents. Marfan Syndrome is a disorder of the connective tissue that can affect the skeletal, cardiovascular, and nervous systems, the skin, eyes, and lungs. While there is no cure, an early diagnosis and proper treatment can provide a normal life-span. The National Marfan Foundation estimates that 200,000 are affected by Marfan Syndrome.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to also mention Dysautonomia, a group of disorders that cause a breakdown or failure of the autonomic nervous system which regulates involuntary functions of the body: heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature, and perspiration. Some forms of this order are characterized as rare diseases such as Multiple System Atrophy and Familial

Dysautonomia. Although other forms such as Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome, Neurocardiogenic Syncope, and Autoimmune Autonomic Ganglionopathy are not, this does not detract from their importance and should not result in a federal commitment less than resolute in discovering advances to help increase accurate diagnosis and better treatment. Together, the National Dysautonomia Research Foundation estimates that over one million Americans are impacted by an autonomic system disorder.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I join with patients, their families, and millions in the United States and around the world to recognize this important day. I urge my colleagues to take a moment today to think about what more Congress can do to help Americans and their families suffering from rare diseases. Together, we can do more for all.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, March 1, 2012 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 6

9:30 a.m.

Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine U.S. Central Command and U.S. Special Operations Command in review of the Defense Authorization request for fiscal year 2013 and the Future Years Defense Program; with the possibility of a closed session in SVC-217 following the open session.

SH-216

10 a.m.

Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold hearings to examine spurring job growth through capital formation while protecting investors, part II.

SD-538

Budget

To hold hearings to examine perspectives on the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2013 for the Department of Defense.

SD-608

Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2013 for the Forest Service.

SD-366

Finance

To hold hearings to examine tax reform options, focusing on incentives for capital investment and manufacturing.

SD-215

10:30 a.m.

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Tony Hammond, of Missouri, to be a Commissioner of the Postal Regulatory Commission.

SD-342

2:30 p.m.

Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2013 for international development priorities.

SD-419

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Mark A. Robbins, of California, to be a Member of the Merit Systems

Protection Board, and Roy Wallace McLeese III, to be an Associate Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals.

SD-342

Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Science and Space Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine keeping America competitive through investments in research and development.

SR-253

Intelligence

To hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters.

SH-219

MARCH 7

9 a.m.

Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the situation in Syria; with the possibility of a closed session in SVC-217 following the open session.

SD-106

9:30 a.m.

Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

To hold hearings to examine healthy food initiatives, local production, and nutrition.

SH-216

10 a.m.

Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

To hold hearings to examine risk management and commodities in the 2012 farm bill.

SH-216

Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine priorities, plans, and progress of the nation's space program.

SR-253

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the President's reorganization plan, focusing on retooling government for the 21st century.

SD-342

Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine lending discrimination practices and foreclosure abuses.

SD-226

Appropriations

Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2013 for the Department of Health and Human Services.

SD-124

Veterans' Affairs

To hold joint hearings to examine a legislative presentation from the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW).

SD-G50

10:30 a.m.

Appropriations

Department of Defense Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2013 for the Department of the Navy.

SD-192

2 p.m.

Aging

To hold hearings to examine opportunities for savings, focusing on removing obstacles for small business.

SD-562

2:30 p.m.

Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2013 for the Coast Guard and

the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

SR-253

Energy and Natural Resources

National Parks Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine S. 29, to establish the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area, S. 1150, to establish the Susquehanna Gateway National Heritage Area in the State of Pennsylvania, S. 1191, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a study regarding the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Naugatuck River Valley National Heritage Area in Connecticut, S. 1198, to reauthorize the Essex National Heritage Area, S. 1215, to provide for the exchange of land located in the Lowell National Historical Park, S. 1589, to extend the authorization for the Coastal Heritage Trail in the State of New Jersey, S. 1708, to establish the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park, H.R. 1141, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating prehistoric, historic, and limestone forest sites on Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, as a unit of the National Park System, H.R. 2606, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to allow the construction and operation of natural gas pipeline facilities in the Gateway National Recreation Area, S. 2131, to reauthorize the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, the Lackawanna Valley National Heritage Area, and the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, and S. 2133, to reauthorize the America's Agricultural Heritage Partnership in the State of Iowa.

SD-366

MARCH 8

9:30 a.m.

Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the Department of the Army in review of the Defense Authorization request for fiscal year 2013 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD-106

10 a.m.

Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

To hold hearings to examine the key to America's global competitiveness, focusing on a quality education.

SD-430

2:15 p.m.

Indian Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2013 for Native Programs.

SD-628

2:30 p.m.

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2013 for the Department of Homeland Security.

SD-342

Intelligence

To hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters.

SH-219

MARCH 13

9:30 a.m.

Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine U.S. Southern Command and U.S. Northern Command in review of the Defense Authorization request for fiscal year 2013 and the Future Years Defense Program;

with the possibility of a closed session in SVC-217 following the open session.

SD-G50

10 a.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine the report of the Independent Consultant's Review with Respect to the Department of Energy Loan and Loan Guarantee Portfolio.

SD-366

10:30 a.m.

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Contracting Oversight Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine contractors, focusing on how much they are costing the government.

SD-342

Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine the Freedom of Information Act, focusing on safeguarding critical infrastructure information and the public's right to know.

SD-226

MARCH 14

10 a.m.

Veterans' Affairs

To hold hearings to examine ending homelessness among veterans, focusing on Veterans' Affairs progress on its five year plan.

SR-418

2 p.m.

Armed Services

Personnel Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine the Active, Guard, Reserve, and civilian personnel programs in review of the Defense Authorization request for fiscal year 2013 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR-232A

MARCH 15

9:30 a.m.

Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the Department of the Navy in review of the Defense Authorization request for fiscal year 2013 and the Future Years Defense Program; with the possibility of a closed session in SVC-217 following the open session.

SD-G50

2:15 p.m.

Indian Affairs

To hold an oversight hearing to examine Indian water rights, focusing on promoting the negotiation and implementation of water settlements in Indian country.

SD-628

MARCH 20

9:30 a.m.

Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the Department of the Air Force in review of the Defense Authorization request for fiscal year 2013 and the Future Years Defense Program; with the possibility of a closed session in SVC-217 following the open session.

SD-G50

MARCH 21

10 a.m.

Veterans' Affairs

To hold joint hearings to examine the legislative presentations of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), Non Commissioned Officers Association, American Ex-Prisoners of War, Vietnam Veterans of America, Wounded Warrior Project, National Association of State Directors of Vet-

erans Affairs, and The Retired Enlisted Association.

SD-G50

2 p.m.

Judiciary

Antitrust, Competition Policy and Consumer Rights Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine Verizon and cable deals.

SD-226

MARCH 22

10 a.m.

Veterans' Affairs

To hold joint hearings to examine the legislative presentations of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Air Force Sergeants Association, Blinded Veterans Association, American Veterans (AMVETS), Gold Star Wives, Fleet Reserve Association, Military Officers Association of America, and the Jewish War Veterans.

345, Cannon Building

MARCH 28

10 a.m.

Veterans' Affairs

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Margaret Bartley, of Maryland, and Coral Wong Pietsch, of Hawaii, both to be a Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

SR-418

2 p.m.

Armed Services

Personnel Subcommittee

To resume hearings to examine the Active, Guard, Reserve, and civilian personnel programs in review of the Defense Authorization request for fiscal year 2013 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR-232A