

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

REMEMBERING THE VICTIMS OF THE S.S. "EASTLAND" DISASTER

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 2015

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I stand before you today to pay tribute to the victims of the S.S. *Eastland* disaster, which occurred in Chicago 100 years ago. On the centennial of this solemn event, the family of one of the victims, Anna Kubiak, will lay down a ceremonial wreath in remembrance of Anna and the other victims of the disaster. The S.S. *Eastland* Memorial dedication ceremony will take place at the Old Light-house Museum in Michigan City, Indiana, on July 25, 2015.

The S.S. *Eastland* disaster occurred on the morning of July 24, 1915, near the Clark Street Bridge in Chicago, Illinois. The S.S. *Eastland* was chartered by the Western Electric Company to transport employees, families, and friends across Lake Michigan to Michigan City for a day of celebration that was to include food, a parade, sporting events, and other festivities.

Unfortunately, the S.S. *Eastland* never left the Chicago River that tragic morning. While the S.S. *Eastland* was still docked, it slowly began to roll over into the river with more than 2,500 passengers and crew members on board. Eight hundred and forty-four people lost their lives in the disaster, including twenty-two complete families, and many more were injured. The immense loss sustained that day will be recalled by generations to come, and the tragedy of that fateful morning will be remembered as one of the most catastrophic maritime events in American history.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commemorating the centennial anniversary of the S.S. *Eastland* disaster. We honor the victims and their families as we remember this devastating day in our nation's history. I would like to commend the efforts of the many people who dedicated their time and efforts to make the S.S. *Eastland* Memorial dedication ceremony possible.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF NORTHWEST FLORIDA'S MARION CLIFTON "M.C." DAVIS

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 2015

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the life and legacy of Northwest Florida's Marion Clifton "M.C." Davis, who lost his battle with lung cancer on July 11, 2015. A longtime resident of Walton County, Florida, M.C. had an abiding love for Northwest Florida. He dedicated much of his life to pre-

serving the Gulf Coast's natural beauty for current generations and future generations to come, and the Northwest Florida community mourns his passing.

Born October 18, 1944 in Douglas, Georgia, M.C. graduated with a Political Science degree from the University of North Carolina in 1970 and his J.D. from Samford Law School in 1973. After an immensely successful business career, which saw him pursue many different career paths, M.C. decided to use his success to help restore and preserve the land that he loved. Northwest Florida is blessed with immense biological and ecological diversity, with a high concentration of plants and wildlife alike, and in 2000, M.C. purchased more than 50,000 acres of land in Walton County to create the Nokuse Plantation, the largest privately held nature preserve east of the Mississippi River.

As a result of his dedication to conservation, M.C. has helped lead efforts to restore several native plant and animal species, including longleaf pine, which once blanketed millions of acres in the Southeast, and gopher tortoises, which are listed by the state as a threatened species. In addition, countless plants and animals from diverse parts of nature can be found on Nokuse Plantation, including eagles, ospreys, bobcats, foxes, raccoons and armadillos, among others. Indeed, M.C. has called this project a 300-year effort to help restore the full biological wealth bestowed on Northwest Florida.

Nokuse Plantation also sits in a critical area of Northwest Florida, serving as a link between several important sites, including Eglin Air Force Base Reserve, Blackwater River State Forest and the Conecuh National Forest. By helping to preserve this critical resource, Nokuse Plantation also helps ensure that sufficient base buffering exists to support critical military missions at Eglin Air Force Base.

In addition to his work establishing Nokuse Plantation, M.C. also founded the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center. Located on the Nokuse Plantation, the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center provides students in the 4th through 7th grades, as well as their teachers, the opportunity to study in one of the most biodiverse ecosystems in the United States. Each year, more than 5,000 students from across Northwest Florida study at the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center, which helps integrate into the State of Florida's curriculum, particularly in the important Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields.

Throughout his life, M.C. touched the lives of many and without question, his generosity and commitment to nature will be felt in Northwest Florida for many generations to come. While many will remember M.C. for his dedication to preserving Northwest Florida's natural beauty, to those who knew him best, M.C. will be remembered as a loving husband, father, and grandfather.

On behalf of the United States Congress, I am privileged to recognize the life of M.C. Davis. My wife Vicki and I extend our heartfelt prayers and condolences to his wife and high

school sweetheart, Stella; his children Crystal, Lisa, and Wendy; his granddaughters, Claire, Alex, Julia, Mary-Shelton; and the entire Davis family.

CELEBRATING ELOISE BRONAK'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 2015

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mrs. Eloise Bronak on her 100th Birthday, which she will be celebrating on July 28, 2015.

Eloise Bronak was born in Decatur, Illinois. She has lived in Texas and Michigan, and eventually settled in St. Clair, MO. For the past seven years, she has lived at Willow Brooke Assisted Living Facility in Union, MO. Eloise served our nation during World War II as a Navy nurse. In 1944, Eloise joined the Navy as a registered nurse, but was unable to serve overseas due to her height. "They wouldn't let me go overseas because I was too little—I couldn't stretch enough," she joked. "I was to take what was left over." During her service of three years in the Navy, Eloise took care of wounded soldiers who returned to the United States. After her time in the service, she continued to serve in the medical field by working in public health, at the medical department at Chrysler in St. Louis, MO, and in health care in St. Louis County. Eloise had the opportunity to see the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. with the Franklin County Honor Flight.

Birthdays are a very special time. It's a time to come together and celebrate your life and accomplishments and recognize the impact that you have had on the lives of those around you.

I ask you in joining me in recognizing Eloise Bronak on this momentous occasion.

RECOGNIZING VIETNAM VETERANS ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE START OF THE VIETNAM WAR

HON. DANIEL T. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 2015

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask the United States House of Representatives to join me in recognizing the veterans of the Vietnam War on the 50th anniversary of the start of the conflict.

U.S. ground combat operations began in South Vietnam in 1965, with the last troops being pulled out in May 1975. Over three and a half million Americans served in Vietnam during that period, and more than 58,000 lost

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

their lives. It is my honor to recognize the veterans of Vietnam and their families for their patriotism and sacrifice.

While this anniversary presents a clear opportunity to remember the sacrifices of our veterans, I want to make sure our nation does not forget their contributions in the generations to come. The immense perseverance and bravery of our soldiers both in the face of conflict and in the decades following exemplify the American commitment to service and democracy. We owe these veterans our profoundest gratitude.

I would particularly like to recognize the contributions of Michigan veterans. Over 400,000 men and women of our state served in the Vietnam War, with 2,654 paying the ultimate sacrifice.

On July 18th, we honor our state's veterans at the Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly, Michigan. It is my honor to represent many of these men and women, and my duty to respectfully preserve their memories with the same dedication with which these veterans defended our freedoms.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the veterans of Vietnam and extend my deepest appreciation to them for their years of service to our great country.

THE GOLDMAN ACT TO RETURN
ABDUCTED AMERICAN CHILDREN:
ENSURING ACCURATE
NUMBERS AND ADMINISTRATION
ACTION

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 2015

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all of everyone—especially all of the left-behind parents I saw in the audience—for joining me at a hearing I held last week to discuss how the U.S. Department of State's first annual report under the Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act can better correspond with the mandate set by Congress and achieve the return of abducted American children, which is the ultimate objective of the Goldman Act.

Every year, an estimated 1,000 American children are unlawfully removed from their homes by one of their parents and taken across international borders.

International parental child abduction rips children from their homes and families and whisks them away to a foreign land, alienating them from the love and care of the parent and family left behind.

Child abduction is child abuse, and it continues to plague families across the United States.

For decades, the State Department has used "quiet diplomacy" to attempt to bring these children home. But we know that less than half of these children ever come home—even from countries that have signed the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.

In a hearing I held on this issue back in 2009, former Assistant Secretary of State Bernie Aronson called quiet diplomacy "a sophisticated form of begging." Thousands of American families still ruptured and grieving from

years of unresolved abductions confirm that "quiet diplomacy" is gravely inadequate.

Last year, Congress unanimously passed the Goldman Act to give teeth to requests for return and access. The actions required by the law escalate in severity, and range from official protests through diplomatic channels, to extradition, to the suspension of development, security, or other foreign assistance.

The Goldman Act is a law calculated to get results, as we did in the return of Sean Goldman from Brazil in late December, 2009.

But the new law is only as good as its implementation.

The State Department's first annual report that we reviewed last week is the first step in moving past "quiet diplomacy" to results. The State Department must get this report right in order to trigger the actions above and for the law to be an effective tool.

Countries should be listed as worst offenders if they have high numbers of cases—30 percent or more—that have been pending over a year: or if their judicial or administrative branch, or central authority for abduction fail in their duties under the Hague Convention or other controlling agreement, or; if their law enforcement rarely fails to enforce return orders or access rights.

Once these countries are properly classified, the Secretary of State then determines which of the aforementioned actions the U.S. will apply to the country in order to encourage the timely resolution of abduction and access cases.

While the State Department has choice of which tools to apply, and can waive actions for up to 180 days, the State Department does not have discretion over whether to report accurately to Congress on the country's record, or on whether the country is objectively non-compliant.

As we have seen in the human trafficking context—I authored the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 as well as the Goldman Act—accurate accounting of a country's record, especially in comparison with other countries, can do wonders to prod much needed reform.

Accurate reporting is also critical to family court judges across the country and parents considering their child's travel to a foreign country where abduction or access problems are a risk.

The stakes are high: misleading or incomplete information could mean the loss of another American child to abduction.

For example, a judge might look at the report table filled with zeros in the unresolved cases category—such as in the case of Japan—and erroneously conclude that a country is not of concern, giving permission to an estranged spouse to travel with the child for a vacation. The estranged spouse then abducts the child and the left-behind parent spends his or her life savings and many years trying to get the child returned to the U.S.

All of which could have been avoided with accurate reporting on the danger.

I am very concerned that the first annual report contains major gaps and even misleading information, especially when it comes to countries with which we have the most intractable abduction cases.

For instance, the report indicates that India, which has consistently been in the top five destinations for abducted American children, had 19 new cases in 2014, 22 resolved cases,

and no unresolved cases. However, we know from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, or NCMEC, that India has 53 open abduction cases—and that 51 have been pending for more than 1 year.

While the State Department has shown willingness to work constructively on making the report better—for example, meeting last week with staff—our June 11 hearing left many questions unanswered as to why this report failed to hold countries accountable for unresolved cases.

We wrote the law with the belief that the State Department was formally raising these cases by name with the foreign ministries of destination countries, and asked that cases still pending one year after being raised would be counted as "unresolved."

But these cases were not included in the report. A few parents who reported their cases to the State Department years ago and who have been consistently begging the Department for help were told by their case officers recently that the cases were formally communicated to India in May of 2015.

May of 2015—delay is denial.

The Goldman Act also requires the State Department to take actions against countries such as India and Japan if they refuse to resolve abduction and access cases.

The Goldman Act also requires the State Department to begin negotiations with countries like India and Japan for a bilateral agreement to secure the resolution of the more than 100 open cases we have pending with those two countries—cases that are not listed as "unresolved" in the report.

The Goldman Act requires an end to the status quo—but the first step toward change is telling the truth in the report.

Which is why I am so concerned that Japan was not listed as showing a persistent failure to work with the U.S. on abduction cases. Japan has never issued and enforced a return order for a single one of the hundreds of American children abducted there.

It holds the world record on the abduction of American children never returned.

And yet it got a pass on more than 50 open cases, most of which have been pending for 5 years or more.

Among such cases is that of Sgt. Michael Elias, who has not seen his children, Jade and Michael Jr., since 2008. Michael served as a Marine who saw combat in Iraq. His wife, who worked in the Japanese consulate, used documents fraudulently obtained with the apparent complicity of Japanese consulate personnel to kidnap their children, then aged 4 and 2, in defiance of a court order, telling Michael on a phone call that there was nothing that he could do, as "my country will protect me."

Her country, very worried about its designation in the new report, sent a high-level delegation in March to meet with Ambassador Jacobs and explain why Japan should be excused from being listed as "non-compliant," despite the fact that more than one year after signing the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, Japan has ordered zero returns to the U.S.

Just before the report was released in May—two weeks late—Takashi Okada, Deputy Director General in the Secretariat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told the Japanese Diet that he had been in consultation with the State Department and "because we strived to make an explanation to the U.S. side, I hope