

and Jewish culture in areas of our Nation where Americans have had little or no interaction with members of the Jewish community. Given that anti-Semitism unfortunately remains prevalent throughout the country, it is more important than ever that we work to break down barriers and address ignorance and intolerance, which too often leads to anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and hate.

I am proud to stand with the American Jewish Community during the month of May to highlight past achievements and the ongoing contributions of a community that cares deeply about the well-being and future of this Nation. I urge all of my colleagues as well as the American people to join me in recognizing the myriad of contributions of the American Jewish community throughout this month and to take concrete steps to observe JAHM.

RECOGNIZING THE DEPARTMENT
OF INTERIOR 2008 HONOR AWARD
RECIPIENTS

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding group of men and women in Northern Virginia. Each year, the Department of the Interior recognizes individuals who have contributed immensely to their departments with the Honor Awards Ceremony.

There are several types of Honor Awards that can be awarded to an employee: the Distinguished Service Award, the Safety Award, and the Valor Award. The Distinguished Service Award recognizes individuals that have gone above and beyond expectations and contributed to the Department. The Safety Award recognizes safety and health employees who performed outstanding service and played an important role in the Department. The Valor Award is given to individuals that demonstrated courage when they faced dangerous situations.

It is with great pride that we enter into the record the names of the recipients of the 2008 Honor Awards. Receiving the Distinguished Service Award: Ms. Barbara L. Chadwick; Mr. Robert Labelle; Mr. David Bama; Mr. Bruce Sheaffer; and The Safety Award: Ms. Louis Rowe.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all the men and women who serve in the Department of Interior. Their efforts, made on behalf of the American public, are selfless acts of heroism and truly merit our highest praise. We ask our colleagues to join us in applauding this group of remarkable citizens.

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN
JOHN CONYERS, JR.

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my strong support for H. Res. 1134, sup-

porting the goals and ideals of Mental Health Month. This legislation applauds the hard work of practitioners and national and community organizations in promoting mental health awareness, and supports improving the overall quality of life for those with mental illness. H. Res. 1134 also supports the findings of the President's Commission on Mental Health that the nation's failure to prioritize mental health is a national tragedy.

Mr. Speaker, mental health is no less important than physical health. In fact, as science is proving, mental health and physical health are intertwined in complex ways that are only beginning to be understood. The relationship between depression and heart disease is just one example of the inherent symbiosis of psychiatric and somatic illnesses.

Just as the heart is the organ upon which heart disease preys, the brain is the organ plagued by diseases of the mind. Likewise, death as a result of suicide is no less tragic than death secondary to a heart attack. Those suffering from severe psychiatric illness should not be held to a lesser standard of care than those suffering from physical illnesses.

Ensuring access to appropriate services is central to improving the quality of life for those with mental illness. The issue of mental health insurance parity, in my opinion, is a civil rights issue. Inequity of coverage with regard to mental health and substance abuse treatment benefits is tantamount to discrimination against the mentally ill, and it reinforces the strategy of insurance companies to deny care rather than provide care.

The mental health community scored a victory for its patients earlier this year when the House voted to pass H.R. 1424, the "Paul Wellstone Mental Health and Addiction Equity Act of 2007."

It has taken courage on the part of Congressmen like my colleague PATRICK KENNEDY to stand up to special interests and "do the right thing" when it comes to ending discrimination against the mentally ill and standing up to health insurance companies. There is still work to be done before a mental health insurance parity bill is signed into law. Hopefully, the bill will soon be reconciled into a form which will benefit psychiatric patients and end discrimination against the mentally ill.

Mr. Speaker, let us applaud the tireless work and unending determination of those fighting to improve the lives of the mentally ill. Let us also be reminded that there is much work to be done before the stigma associated with mental illness is ended, and the lives of those suffering from mental illness are valued as much as those suffering from other medical illnesses.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I wish to clarify my vote on Ordering the Previous Question on the Rule for the Conference Report on S. Con. Res. 70, the Budget Resolution.

In the 109th Congress, the Florida delegation, on a bi-partisan basis, worked hard to protect Florida's environmental treasures. The

bill we achieved passage of, Public Law 109-432 (HR 6111), provided Florida with 125 mile protection off our coast. Furthermore, the legislation codified the ban on drilling within the "military mission line"—approximately 234 miles from Tampa—to provide even more protection for Florida's west coast through the year 2022. I strongly support the current ban. I also believe other states should have the right to search for energy if they wish to do so.

LETTER TO PRESIDENT BUSH

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I sent the following letter to the President on May 13, 2008:

President GEORGE W. BUSH,
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington,
DC.

DEAR PRESIDENT BUSH: I strongly urge you to reconsider Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's trip to the Czech Republic in early June to sign the European Ground-Based Mid-Course Defense, GMD, agreement. You have urged that the United States Ballistic Missile Defense System must include a European theatre to defend the country against an Iranian deployment of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, ICBM. I remain unconvinced that the arguments for the European GMD are valid.

The claim that the GMD will prevent a missile attack on the United States stands in contravention of the facts. Iran would have to overcome the many technical difficulties associated with development and deployment of long-range ballistic missiles. The longest range missile that Iran has tested is 1,600 kilometers. The straight line distance from Tehran to Washington, D.C. is 10,186 kilometers. The United States has never deployed a missile with this range. Our longest range missile, the MX or Peacekeeper, has a range of approximately 8,000 kilometers. Only five countries have deployed any long-range ballistic missiles to date.

In fact, it is conceivable that the U.S. will have its own technical difficulties to overcome before such a system can be proven viable. Two stage interceptors, proposed to be used in the European GMD, have never before been flight tested and therefore have no proven track record of viability. The Test and Evaluation department of the Pentagon cautions that many more tests under realistic conditions would be needed before conceding our capability to shoot down an offensive missile.

The citizens of the Czech Republic and Poland clearly reject the proposed agreement. Public opinion polls in the Czech Republic reflect strong opposition to the placement of the radar in their country. A poll conducted in the summer of 2007 shows that three-quarters of the population is calling for a public referendum on the proposed agreement. Opinion polls show that a consistent majority of the Polish public is opposed to the agreement and argues that they feel no particular threat from Iran. However, they indicated that the installment of interceptors would strain diplomatic relations with Russia. Similar concerns have been voiced about the prospect of Czech participation in the installment of the radar.

The GMD proposal has by some accounts exacerbated U.S.-Russia relations. The U.S. has shared information but not meaningfully

cooperated with Russia in these negotiations. Because the Czech Republic and Poland fall within the boundaries of former Russian influence, U.S. actions with regard to the GMD have been perceived by Russia as an intrusion. There can be no doubt that U.S. efforts to impose the GMD are perceived as an obstruction to the diplomatic ties between our nations.

Assertions made by the Administration that the U.S. ICBM system could be used to protect the European Union reflect a flawed policy. If the Administration is concerned about the threat of ICBM attack on Europe it should cooperate with the international community to address these concerns instead of pursuing even more unilateral international policing. NATO is a better forum in which to address these concerns.

The timing of Secretary Rice's trip to sign the agreement is also questionable. The Conference Report for the FY 2008 Department of Defense, DOD, authorization requires an independent assessment of the two stage interceptors as well as an independent analysis to assess alternatives to the European GMD. The assessment will not be released until after Secretary Rice's trip. If the assessment finds the GMD and the interceptors to be as unnecessary, unviable, and counterproductive to diplomacy as I have outlined in this letter, it will make it difficult to turn back. Additionally, the December 2007 National Intelligence Estimate on Iran states that Tehran halted its nuclear program in 2003 and as such, reaffirms the lack of an impending nuclear threat to the United States from Iran. This further confirms that there is no urgent need to sign a formal agreement with the Czech Republic in June.

The viability, necessity and prudence of the fulfillment of a formal agreement with both the Czech Republic and Poland on the European GMD are called into question. Furthermore, this \$4 billion project will be solely funded by U.S. taxpayers. I urge you to cancel the upcoming trip by Secretary Rice to the Czech Republic and instead focus on the more pressing diplomatic efforts that are needed to protect U.S. security through our relationships with the international community.

Sincerely,

DENNIS J. KUCINICH,
Member of Congress.

CELEBRATING ISRAEL'S 60TH
ANNIVERSARY

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. TIAHRT. Madam Speaker, congratulations to the people of Israel and their forebearers on the 60th anniversary of the reestablishment of the State of Israel. Born out of genocide and conflict, the modern State of Israel has developed into a free, democratic and prosperous country. An unflinching ally of the United States, Israel is a beacon of freedom and religious tolerance in the Middle East. I am honored to strongly support the modern State of Israel and reaffirm the bonds of close friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

The narrow strip of land that now constitutes modern Israel has been important to the Jewish people for four millennia, and the first Jewish kingdom was established in this region over 3,000 years ago. Although forced to emigrate from the historical Jewish homeland over

the centuries, the Jewish people have continuously yearned for and often returned to their home. History shows that waves of Jewish people returned to the Holy Land at the very least during the 12th, 15th, 16th, and 18th centuries. Large-scale migration back to Israel started in the late 1800s and continues through today.

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly formally approved the partitioning of the British Mandate of Palestine and the creation of a Jewish State. On May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the modern State of Israel. Under the leadership of President Harry S. Truman, the United States was the first nation to recognize the State of Israel and establish full diplomatic relations.

Over the course of three wars, countless military operations, constant terrorism, and unjustified diplomatic and economic boycotts, Israel's existence has been continuously threatened. But, through it all, the Jewish people have remained vigilant and continue to build a strong and vibrant state.

Today, Israel has one of the leading economies in the Middle East, while maintaining a strong commitment to human rights, freedom of speech, press and religion, and democratic values. With open and free elections, and an independent judiciary, Israel remains the most democratic country in the region.

Since the creation of the modern State of Israel, the hallmark of the relationship with the United States has been a strong friendship. Israel has been a trusted military ally and partner for six decades. The close relationship between our governments and continued military assistance are essential for promoting democracy and peace in the Middle East and throughout the world.

In times of humanitarian need or global crisis, the United States can always count on Israel to stand close and provide assistance. From contributing search-and-rescue teams following the 1998 bombings of the American Embassies in east Africa, to providing humanitarian aid following the 2005 devastation of the Gulf Coast from a series of hurricanes, the State of Israel has always been a stalwart friend to the American people. The United States must remain committed to supporting the State of Israel.

It is important to honor this historic milestone. The United States Congress and the American people look forward to continued growth and success of the State of Israel. I ask that all my colleagues honor this important anniversary.

A TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF
ERNEST S. KINNEY

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Ernest S. Kinney of Fresno, California who recently passed away at 63 years of age. He leaves behind a loving wife, Marion, two children and several grandchildren.

Mr. Kinney was born and raised in Bishop, California. In 1962 he went to Fresno State to play football, and in 1965 he served as stu-

dent body president and President of the 16th State College Student President's Association. Upon graduating from Fresno State he joined the U.S. Marine Corp in 1968 and served as a Captain until 1971.

After his military career Mr. Kinney attended the San Joaquin College of Law while working as a social worker during the day. He graduated as part of the school's second graduating class in 1975 and was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2007.

After only two and a half short years Ernest established his own private practice in 1978 and formed the Ernest S. Kinney Law Corporation. During more than three decades of practicing law he gained the respect of the entire community. He was tough and dedicated and admired by his colleagues, and he will be remembered mostly for his colorful character and his skills in the courtroom.

Ernest enjoyed the simple things in life like going to football and basketball games with friends, going to the beach with his grandchildren and lunches with his friends. He had passion and he loved people.

It goes without saying that Mr. Ernest Kinney was one of kind. His commitment to family and clients will forever live in the lives of the people he touched. His passion for justice under the law will be remembered by all who knew him. I am honored and humbled to join his family in celebrating the life of this amazing man who will never be forgotten.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SAVING
ENERGY THROUGH PUBLIC
TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 2008

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, together with Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Ranking Member JOHN L. MICA and Highways and Transit Subcommittee Chairman PETER A. DEFazio, I am pleased to introduce H.R. 6052, the "Saving Energy Through Public Transportation Act of 2008."

We are introducing this bill to promote energy savings through increased public transportation use in the United States. Recently, public transportation has experienced a renaissance in American cities and towns. In 2007, Americans took over 10.3 billion trips on public transportation, the highest level in 50 years. Public transportation use is up 32 percent since 1995, a figure that is more than double the growth rate of the population and is substantially over the growth rate for the vehicle miles traveled on our Nation's highways for that same period. All around the country, voters continue to approve state and local ballot initiatives to support public transportation, even when it means local taxes will be raised or continued.

As the price of gas approaches \$4 a gallon, even more commuters are choosing to ride the train or the bus to work rather than drive alone in their cars. Transit systems in metropolitan areas are reporting increases in ridership of 5, 10, and even 15 percent over last year's figures. Some of the biggest increases in ridership are occurring in many areas in the South and West where new bus and light rail lines have been built in the last few years.