

Mr. Bliden holds a bachelors degree in economics from the University of Maryland, College Park, and after earning a law degree from the University of Maryland School of Law in 1973, began his career in government as a legal intern at the State's Attorney's office in Prince George's County. By 1974, Dave was an Associate County Attorney, serving as a liaison to the Maryland Association of County Civil Attorneys. Serving as Deputy County Attorney in the Office of Law for Anne Arundel County from 1984–1991, Dave served as the County Executive's liaison to the General Assembly, Governor's staff, and the Maryland Association of Counties.

In 1991, Mr. Bliden was appointed Executive Director of the Maryland Association of Counties. As executive director, Dave managed the trade association which represents Maryland's twenty-four political subdivisions. He has served as MACo's primary representative to the Maryland General Assembly, the Governor's office, and the Local Government Insurance Trust. Throughout his tenure, he was a proactive communicator and was always conversant in emerging trends with local issues.

Dave's willingness to look at each county in Maryland individually, as well as part of one great state provided the backbone for Maryland's continued success. Although times are tough today in Maryland, they could be considerably worse were it not for the talents, persuasiveness, and dedication of Dave Bliden.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join with me today to honor David S. Bliden in his retirement from the position of Executive Director of the Maryland Association of Counties. His legacy as a brilliant and competent director will be forever remembered in his service to one of Maryland's largest associations. It is with great pride that I congratulate Dave Bliden on his exemplary legal career and his outstanding leadership at MACo.

IN HONOR OF MICHELLE L. SMITH

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. CASTLE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to the late Michelle L. Smith. On Monday morning, December 22nd, the Delaware City Fire Company was informed of the tragic loss of Firefighter Michelle L. Smith, who succumbed to the traumatic injuries she sustained on December 20th. Michelle was assisting with the care of a critically injured motorcyclist at the scene of an accident on DuPont Highway when she was hit by a passing car. This is the first death in the line of duty for the Delaware City Fire Company in its 121-year history.

Michelle L. Smith has served the Delaware City Fire Company and the Delaware City Ladies Auxiliary for over five years, holding the position of Secretary with the Ladies Auxiliary. She also served with the Volunteer Hose Company of Middletown, DE.

Michelle will be greatly missed by her family, friends, and coworkers. She exemplified the honor and dedication that all firefighters throughout Delaware and across the United States strive for on a daily basis. The President of Delaware City Fire Company, Wally

Poppe stated that, "Firefighter Smith typified Delaware City Fire Company as a firefighter and as a member of the Ladies Auxiliary. She took great pride in her numerous contributions, including emergency response, fire prevention and community awareness."

Michelle L. Smith will be greatly missed and her heroism, dedication, and selflessness will serve as an inspiration to all those who knew her.

HONORING MILES HOCHARD

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Miles Hochard of Weston, Missouri. Miles is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1249, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Miles has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years Miles has been involved with Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Miles Hochard for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

TRIBUTE TO TEAM LETTERKENNY

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. SHUSTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to salute the service of a distinguished group of American citizens. This dedicated group has worked for many years to enhance the military value of Letterkenny Army Depot and sustain the installation's work to increase support to our military. Each of these individuals has professionally served our Nation with great distinction.

Mike Ross has aggressively led Team Letterkenny from the start. Mike has sacrificed countless days, night and weekends to ensure that Letterkenny projects move forward and Letterkenny is prepared to meet worldwide military priorities. Mike has led numerous team visits to Washington and Harrisburg to ensure that we understand the importance of Letterkenny and support their initiatives. Mike has also focused his Franklin County Area Development staff to work countless individual projects to modernize, expand and promote the depot. Mike Ross's professional leadership and hard work have significantly increased the military value of Letterkenny Army Depot and dramatically increased community understanding and support for Letterkenny.

Dave Sciamanna and Commissioner Robert Thomas serve as co-chairs of the local component of Team Letterkenny. Dave is also President of the Greater Chambersburg Chamber of Commerce and Bob is the Presi-

dent of the Franklin County Commissioners. These dedicated community leaders have many high priority community responsibilities, but they always find time to work on initiatives to support Letterkenny's military mission. Dave and Bob are instrumental in marketing Letterkenny's capability, and they aggressively partner with Letterkenny to show potential workers the highlights of working at Letterkenny and living in Franklin County. Despite their busy schedules, Dave and Bob are always ready to adjust their calendars and do whatever is needed to support Letterkenny and our military.

John Gray chairs the depot component of Team Letterkenny. His brilliant leadership and professional focus have dramatically increased the community's understanding of Letterkenny's importance to our military services. He has consistently dedicated countless off-duty hours to expanding community support for the depot and raising awareness of military contributions to the economy of the State. John Gray consistently provides thought provoking ideas and focuses the organizational energy on the best way to turn ideas into reality.

Stacy Gregson and Joe Spielbauer chair the State component of Team Letterkenny. They have worked tirelessly to obtain Pennsylvania resources to support Team Letterkenny initiatives and they can always be counted on to actively support all of the team initiatives. They have done an outstanding job educating Commonwealth leaders on the importance of Letterkenny to our military and our State.

I am proud of the work of these fine Americans, and I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring this team for their long and honorable service to our great Nation.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I share with our colleagues moving remarks that 19-year-old Ti-Anna Wang, a U.S. citizen, delivered at a press conference on the occasion of International Human Rights Day.

She had recently returned from China where she visited her father, Dr. Wang Bingzhang, who is serving a life-sentence in a Chinese prison for his pro-democracy activities. His ordeal bears the markings of so many Chinese dissidents who have been robbed of their freedom and endured severe hardship at the hands of their captors.

One thing we learned from President Ronald Reagan in his dealings with the Soviet Union is that it both inspires hope in the oppressed and shames the oppressors when we raise the individual cases of political and religious prisoners, like Dr. Wang.

I would like to start by thanking everyone here, on behalf of my family, for taking the time to come to this event. Since I started my work in DC, I've been lucky enough to be surrounded by supportive, generous and kind people who are genuinely concerned about my father's case. I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been involved in his fight for freedom. More specifically, I would like to thank Dr. Yang, Congressman WOLF, Congressman SMITH, Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN and Senator

FEINSTEIN for their recent work on my father's case. It is the compassion of everyone here that gives my family hope and reason to believe that the unlikely is possible.

I'm here today to tell you about my recent visit with my father just two weeks ago. To give a little background, my father's sentence allows for only one visit a month. Each of these visits last about 30 minutes. The standard procedure is that my family receives a visitation notice in the mail that lets us know the date of the visit. As my whole family lives in North America, we usually have a very short amount of time to make the necessary travel arrangements for a long trip to China. Once there, we have to go through a lengthy authorization process before we are allowed to see him. For my latest visit, I had some difficulties getting my visa as scheduled, and didn't have the proper paperwork, which added a lot of additional stress to this already difficult process. The visit takes place in a bare concrete building that borders the gate of his remote prison, several miles away from the closest city. It is so secluded that we have to be driven there by the prison officials, as some of the terrain in that area has yet to be paved. Right before we can meet, the prison authorities reminds us of the rules and regulations, which include only speaking in Chinese, and staying away from topics that will cause my father anxiety. These visits are conducted in visitation booths and are monitored by four prison officials, two standing behind the each of us. Separated by metal bars and two layers of plexi-glass, my father and I can only communicate using a telephone.

I was very nervous about seeing my father this time. It had been over a year since my last visit, and my family had lost contact with him for 2 months without any clear explanations from the prison, so I was worried about the state that my father was in. I was so relieved when I was finally able to see him, cheerful enough to smile. My first concern was his health. My father said that while he is stable, his chronic allergies and severe phlebitis continues to plague him. We talked mostly about my family, my educational future and the work that we are doing on his behalf. As we spoke, it was clear to me that my father's untreated depression and psychological health continues to worsen. He had difficulty making steady eye contact and sometimes repeated the same sentences several times. The prison officials monitoring our conversation were kind enough to allot us an extra 10 minutes.

My father wanted me to let everyone know that he is eternally grateful for all the work that has been done on his behalf and that he remains hopeful that justice will prevail. As our conversation came to an end, my father began to cry. He said the thought of never seeing his ailing 87-year-old mother again often brings him to tears and that his only wish is that they will be reunited before it's too late.

It has now been over 6 years that my father, now almost 62 years old, lingers alone in prison. I come here today in hopes of conveying the message that my father's situation has become evermore critical and his time is running out. This is my third time I've visited my father, and it is obvious that both his physical and mental health is deteriorating. He has aged so much in the last few years, and his depression is becoming dangerously severe. The prison authorities have told my family that my father's only chance of receiving medical parole is if he admit guilt to the charges of "terrorism" and "espionage". . . but I know that my father would never, nor does my family want him to confess to claims that are not only false, but that will comprise his dignity and values.

As we commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, I just want to remind everyone that it is because of my father's unwavering commitment to this cause that he is being so unjustly punished today. As the founder of the Chinese overseas pro-democracy movement, there was nothing harder than my father fought for than the values of human rights, freedom and democracy for the people of his homeland. His contribution to his beliefs has now cost him 6 years of solitary confinement, and possibly his life if we do not continue to fight for his freedom.

So I would like to close today by asking the present and new administration to call for my father's immediate release on medical and humanitarian grounds.

I also invite everyone here, along with your friends and family to visit www.initiativesforchina.org to sign an online petition addressed to President Hu Jintao, also calling for my father's release. Lastly, I would like to work with congressional leaders toward the goal of obtaining honorary U.S. citizenship for my father as recognition of his lifelong service to democracy and as a statement of America's recommitment to making human rights a priority in its agenda. On behalf of my family, I would like to thank everyone here for coming and for your sincere concern for my father.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY PRESERVATION ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise to protect the integrity of the Social Security trust fund by introducing the Social Security Preservation Act. The Social Security Preservation Act is a rather simple bill which states that all moneys raised by the Social Security trust fund will be spent in payments to beneficiaries, with excess receipts invested in interest-bearing certificates of deposit. This will help keep Social Security trust fund moneys from being diverted to other programs, as well as allow the fund to grow by providing for investment in interest-bearing instruments.

The Social Security Preservation Act ensures that the government will keep its promises to America's seniors that taxes collected for Social Security will be used for Social Security. When the government taxes Americans to fund Social Security, it promises the American people that the money will be there for them when they retire. Congress has a moral obligation to keep that promise.

With federal deficits reaching historic levels, and with new demands being made on the U.S. Treasury on an almost weekly basis, the pressure from special interests for massive new raids on the trust fund is greater than ever. Thus it is vital that Congress act now to protect the trust fund from big spending, pork-barrel politics. As a medical doctor, I know the first step in treatment is to stop the bleeding, and the Social Security Preservation Act stops the bleeding of the Social Security trust fund. I therefore call upon all my colleagues, regardless of which proposal for long-term Social Security reform they support, to stand up for America's seniors by cosponsoring the Social Security Preservation Act.

HONORING KEARNEY HIGH SCHOOL OF KEARNEY, MISSOURI

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize the outstanding achievements of the students, teachers, administrators, parents, and patrons of Kearney High School and the Kearney R-1 School District. Kearney High School was named a 2008 No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School of the year.

Madam Speaker, Kearney R-1 School District encompasses 100 square miles in northern Clay County and Clinton County. In order for Kearney High School to receive such a prestigious national distinction, they were required to score in the top 10 percent on the State of Missouri's assessment test. I would like to make a special note of Kearney R-1 School District Superintendent Dr. Chris Belcher, newly retired Kearney High School Principal Daryl Rinne, and current Kearney High School Principal Randy Wepler for their commitment and leadership to the students of Kearney High School.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join me in applauding the outstanding achievements of Kearney High School. It is an honor to have a high school like Kearney in the Sixth Congressional District of Missouri that strives for educational excellence. We wish them many more years of success.

INTRODUCING LEGISLATION TO STUDY METHODS OF ERADICATING ASIAN CARP FROM THE GREAT LAKES ECOSYSTEM

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand here today to introduce legislation which provides for the exploration of methods to eradicate the dangerous Asian carp from the Great Lakes.

Each year, invasive species in the Great Lakes cause more than \$5 billion in economic damage and irreparable harm to an ecosystem that provides more than 40 million people with jobs, water, food, and recreation. A new invader, the Asian carp, threatens to further destroy the region's ecosystem and economy, and it is imperative that we act to prevent this catastrophe.

A single barrier in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, built as a temporary demonstration project 5 years ago, is the only thing preventing these invaders from entering Lake Michigan and drastically altering the entire region's ecosystem. While Congress recently provided full authorization and funding for this critical barrier, it may not be enough to prevent the Asian carp from infiltrating the Great Lakes and the devastating consequences that would follow.

It is therefore critical that we also explore alternatives and supplements to the carp barrier. My legislation would direct the Fish and Wildlife Service in conjunction with the National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration and