

On behalf of the citizens of the 1st Congressional District, I wish to express our gratitude to Rabbi Steven Foster and Senator Joyce Foster. Through their commitment to public service and social justice, they have made our community a better place. We look forward the continued involvement of this remarkable couple in our civic life. Please join me in commending these distinguished public servants.

HONORING MRS. DEBBIE SPERO  
FOR RECEIVING THE JOHN  
CAMPANIUS HOLM AWARD

**HON. BART GORDON**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 19, 2009*

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Debbie Spero, recipient of the 2009 John Campanius Holm Award.

Each year, the National Weather Service honors Cooperative Weather Observers with this prestigious award, named after John Holm. During the years 1644 and 1645, Holm recorded observations of the local weather twice a day, and he is the first known person to have kept these observations.

Since September 1, 1985, Debbie Spero has been involved with the NWS Cooperative Observer Program in Bethpage, Tennessee, reporting daily weather and precipitation data to the Army Corps of Engineers. Her reports are used to document the climate of Middle Tennessee and are also used by local NWS officials to verify forecasts, warnings and precipitation patterns.

Through her 24 year involvement, Debbie has been an incredibly reliable observer. Her observations are complete and in near real time. When she has been unable to make her observations because of illness or travel, she has enlisted help to ensure as few breaks in the record as possible.

In her spare time, Debbie is an active community member. As a Girl Scout leader for more than 14 years, her troop has helped serve underprivileged girls in the Bethpage area by meeting with them weekly. Debbie also works as a Youth Leader at Grace Baptist Church and has served as President of the Bethpage Parent Teacher Organization.

Each year, the John Campanius Holm award is given to only 25 Cooperative Observers from more than 11,000 in the program. The award is based on complete and accurate observations, outstanding enthusiasm for imparting observational knowledge, and civic involvement in the community. The award is only given to active observers of more than 20 years.

Debbie, thank you for your hard work and dedication in serving your community. I wish you all the best in the years to come.

CONGRATULATIONS TO PRESIDENT  
HAMID KARZAI

**HON. JOE WILSON**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 19, 2009*

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, as co-chairman of the Afghanistan

Caucus, I want to congratulate President Hamid Karzai on his inauguration for a second term in Afghanistan. In his speech, I am pleased President Karzai stated that he is committed to tackling corruption and restoring security in his nation.

I support the position of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who attended the inauguration, that President Karzai has his chance to "have accountability and tangible results that will improve the lives of the people." In my nine visits to Afghanistan, I have learned of the dedication of Defense Minister Abdul Raheem Wardak and Interior Minister Haneef Atmar. I know firsthand of the capabilities of the Afghan police and army units, who were trained by my former National Guard unit, the 218th Brigade led by Brigadier General Bob Livingston, 2007–2008, of the South Carolina Army National Guard.

It is vitally important that in order for Afghanistan to turn the corner, the U.S. must do everything promised to the people of Afghanistan to provide for a secure and stable society. We must grant the necessary resources with our NATO allies to President Karzai to get the job done.

I was grateful to learn last night at a dinner with Slovak Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajcak to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution that Slovakia is doubling its troop commitment in Afghanistan. Slovakia is a revered partner of America promoting freedom and democracy.

CONGRATULATING TURKEY AND  
ARMENIA FOR THEIR STEPS  
TOWARDS PEACE

**HON. DAN BURTON**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 19, 2009*

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, last month in Zurich, Switzerland, with the strong support of the United States, the foreign ministers of Turkey and Armenia took an unprecedented step forward in their efforts to overcome decades of animosity and distrust between their two countries.

Almost before the ink was dry special interest groups in both countries and abroad who profit from the status quo were attacking the deal which means that there are still immense hurdle left before Turkey and Armenia full normalize diplomatic and bilateral relations. Nevertheless, the two protocols offering a "road map" signed on October 10, 2009, is the right course of action for both countries. The process is very fragile, but enjoys the support of the international community.

The protocols have been submitted to the Turkish and Armenian parliaments for debate and ratification. The stage is now set for the two parliaments to both deliberate the contents of and hopefully pass the protocols. It will not be an easy vote but the political, economic and international benefits for both sides are enormous; that is if Turks and Armenians are willing to take the chance for real peace; and willing to give up business as usual.

For years I have come to this Floor advocating that issues concerning Turkey and Armenia should be resolved at the negotiating table by the two countries in question. I urge my colleagues to strongly support this process.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CLEAN RE-  
NEWABLE WATER SUPPLY BOND  
ACT OF 2009

**HON. XAVIER BECERRA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 19, 2009*

Mr. BECERRA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Clean Renewable Water Supply Bond Act of 2009 with Representative GINNY BROWN-WAITE. This legislation would authorize public water agencies to issue tax credit bonds as a financing vehicle for certain innovative new water supply technologies.

Drought, global climate change, population growth, and increased competition for urban, agricultural, and environmental needs have combined to create potential water shortages of crisis proportions in the decades ahead unless Congress acts quickly to invest in new, alternative water supply facilities.

Fresh water is a limited resource in high demand. Population growth continues to strain available and quickly diminishing water supplies, leading to a growing need for new investments in water supply and treatment facility projects. The U.S. General Accounting Office has stated that even under normal water conditions, 36 States anticipate water shortages in the next 10 years.

However, innovative technologies exist that can help provide new sources of clean water while helping to improve the environment. While the costs of these technologies continue to decline, the initial capital expenditures required to build their infrastructure is still too high to use conventional financing mechanisms. A deeper subsidy is needed and can be achieved through the use of tax credit bonds.

This legislation would authorize the use of tax credit bonds, Clean Renewable Water Supply bonds, or "CREWS", to finance certain kinds of innovative water supply facilities. These facilities include water-recycling facilities, projects to clean up and use impaired groundwater, and both seawater and brackish groundwater desalination projects. These CREWS bonds would be issued by public water agencies in exactly the same way as those agencies can presently issue conventional tax-exempt municipal bonds.

The proceeds from the sale of the bonds would result in an interest-free loan to the water agency. Instead of the agency having to make interest payments to the bondholders, as would be the case with conventional tax-exempt municipal bonds, the Federal Government would provide the bondholders with a tax credit equal to what the interest payments would have been. Under the proposal, the agency would save over \$60 million in interest payments on a \$100 million water supply project, which is the type of subsidy necessary to offset the upfront capital expenditure.

Working with Representative BROWN-WAITE, I hope this Congress moves with all due speed to consider and pass this vital legislation. Let me also take this opportunity to invite all of my colleagues to join me in sponsoring this bill that takes concrete action to address our nation's future water needs.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. BART STUPAK**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 19, 2009*

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, on Monday, November 2, 2009 through the morning of Friday, November 6, 2009, I could not be present for votes due to a family funeral back in Michigan.

Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

House Rollcall Vote 832. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 833. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 834. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 835. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 836. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 837. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 838. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 839. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 840. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 841. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 842. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 843. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 844. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 845. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 846. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 847. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 848. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 849. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 850. I would have voted "no."

House Rollcall Vote 851. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 852. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 853. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 854. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 855. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 856. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 857. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 858. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 859. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 860. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 861. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 862. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 863. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 864. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 865. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 866. I would have voted "yes."

House Rollcall Vote 867. I would have voted "yes."

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. JOHN A. YARMUTH**

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 19, 2009*

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, I was unable to cast the recorded votes for rollcalls 896, 897, and 898. Had I been present I would have voted "yes" for these measures.

## HONORING LT. FLORENCE BACONG CHOE

**HON. DUNCAN HUNTER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 19, 2009*

Mr. HUNTER. Madam Speaker, today I rise in recognition of Lieutenant Florence Bacong Choe of San Diego, California. Lt. Choe was a victim of a tragic shooting that occurred at Forward Operating Base Shaheen in Afghanistan's Northern Balkh province on March 27, 2009.

According to friends and family, Lt. Choe was all Navy. She was born at San Diego Naval Hospital and grew up in San Diego, where she graduated from Monte Vista High School in 1991. After graduating from the University of California, San Diego with a degree in Biology in 1997, she continued her education and received a Masters degree in Public Health Care Administration from San Diego State University in 2001. Following the events of September 11, 2001, Lt. Choe visited the San Diego Navy recruitment office and enlisted as a Lieutenant Junior Grade in the U.S. Navy Medical Service Corps.

While serving in her capacity as Healthcare Administrator for Medical and Surgical Services at the National Navy Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, she met her future husband, Lieutenant Commander Chong "Jay" Choe. They were married on June 21, 2004 and in 2006, they welcomed the birth of their daughter, Kristin Bacong Choe.

A dedicated service member, Lt. Choe fulfilled various duties in the Navy Medical Corps in Japan and San Diego before deploying to Afghanistan in May of 2008. It was during this deployment where she made the ultimate sacrifice after a shooter, disguised as an Afghan Army soldier, opened fire and killed Lt. Choe and Lt. J.G. Francis L. Toner IV.

Madam Speaker, for Lt. Choe it was never about self, but about family, friends and country. She dedicated her extensive knowledge about the medical field to provide quality care for the men and women of the U.S. Navy. For her, and the thousands of others who have given their lives in the name of freedom and democracy, I ask that this body continue to do its best to ensure their deaths were not in vain. May God continue to watch over the

family and friends of Lt. Florence Bacong Choe as her memory, passion and dedication to our country continue to live on as we moved forward to a better tomorrow.

## AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICA ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN**

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Saturday, November 7, 2009*

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act. Congress has made unprecedented strides this year in the fight to reform our nation's health insurance system and provide coverage to all Americans, and today's vote represents a historic culmination of these vast, collaborative efforts. This transformative bill offers real solutions for Rhode Islanders by providing better access to affordable, quality health care coverage and finally puts America back on the path to an efficient and sustainable health care system.

This summer, I traveled across the district to meet with Rhode Islanders and discuss health reform. I met with constituents who had health insurance all their lives, but then lost it when they were diagnosed with cancer. I met with small business owners who provided coverage for their employees for decades, but were forced to discontinue it when they could no longer keep up with skyrocketing costs. And I met with parents who were desperate to protect their children's health, but feared they would soon run up against lifetime insurance caps.

All of these stories conveyed the same message—health care costs in the United States are rising at an unsustainable rate, and they are placing a huge burden on Rhode Island families, employers and health care providers. This year alone, over 13,000 Rhode Islanders lost their insurance coverage due to rising unemployment. And those who still have coverage are struggling with rising premiums, co-pays and crushing medical debt. Meanwhile, yearly double-digit premium increases are forcing businesses to choose between keeping their employees' health coverage and keeping their employees.

As a longtime advocate of universal health care, I made a promise to my constituents to change the status quo of health care in America. The time for inaction is over—we must join together to pass this bill.

H.R. 3962 will institute the changes we need to provide more security and stability to Americans who have health insurance, guarantee insurance to the millions who don't, and lower health care costs for our families, businesses and the government.

This legislation builds on the strengths of our current employer-based system by encouraging businesses who offer their own coverage to continue doing so. Americans who don't have coverage through their employer will be able to shop for their choice of a health plan through a new "health insurance exchange," modeled after the tried and true Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, which successfully provides coverage for over 9 million federal employees, retirees and their dependents.

Unlike the limited options that are available to most consumers today, the exchange will