

greater were it not for the skill, dedication, compassion and sacrifice of these emergency responders.

I also extend my best wishes to law enforcement authorities as they investigate the causes of this tragedy. Unfortunately, preliminary investigations indicate that some of the fires may have been deliberately lit. I have full confidence that the Australian authorities will bring anyone responsible for this death and destruction to justice, and take such other action as is necessary to minimize the likelihood of future calamities of this nature.

Madam Speaker, the fires that continue to burn in Southeast Australia have caused loss and destruction on a catastrophic scale. The Australian people will truly be in my thoughts and prayers over the coming weeks. I wish the affected communities the very best as they fight to retain and rebuild their lives, and encourage my colleagues to do so as well.

CONGRESSIONAL PAY RAISE

HON. HARRY E. MITCHELL

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to thank Speaker PELOSI for agreeing to block the next scheduled congressional pay raise.

As government acts to cap executive compensation, and as millions of Americans watch their incomes shrink, a pay raise for Members of Congress would have seemed glaringly out of touch.

If we are going to talk the talk of fiscal discipline, we must also walk the walk of self-restraint. The American people are not getting a raise this year. Neither should Congress.

I also wish to thank Dr. RON PAUL and 107 of our colleagues—Republicans and Democrats—who were willing to support H.R. 156, the Stop the Congressional Pay Raise Act. Without the leadership of these Members—so many of them new Members—we may not have taken this important step.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Madam Speaker, unfortunately last night, February 10, 2009, I was unable to cast my votes on the Motion to Instruct Conferees on H.R. 1, H. Res. 114, H. Res. 60, H. Res. 143, H. Res. 128, and H. Res. 134 and wish the record to reflect my intentions had I been able to vote.

Had I been present for rollcall No. 54, on the Motion to Instruct Conferees to H.R. 1, stating that the Economic Stimulus bill must be made available for 48 hours before a final vote, I would have voted "aye." It is unbelievable to me that we are more than likely going to be asked to vote on an \$800 billion piece of legislation, that will be drafted behind closed doors, after having less than 24 hours to review it. We owe it to our constituents to take our time with this bill, study it extensively and ensure that the stimulus will actually create jobs.

Had I been present for rollcall No. 55, on suspending the rules and passing H. Res. 114, Supporting the goals and ideals of "National Girls and Women in Sports Day," I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for rollcall No. 56, on suspending the rules and passing H. Res. 60, Recognizing and commending University of Oklahoma quarterback Sam Bradford for winning the 2008 Heisman Trophy and for his academic and athletic accomplishments, I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for rollcall No. 57, on a motion to table H. Res. 143, the personal resolution offered by Rep. JOHN CARTER to ensure that Chairman CHARLIE RANGEL steps aside during his ethics investigation, I would have voted "no." Over the past couple of years we have had an unbelievable number of ethics violations by Members of Congress that have deteriorated the trust that the American people had for its Representatives and it is about time we took a hard line on ethics violations. Rep. RANGEL has admitted that he has made mistakes and the House ethics committee is currently investigating him on numerous separate cases. To make clear to the American people that this is a House of integrity, I must ask Chairman RANGEL to step aside until the ethics committee can complete its work.

Had I been present for rollcall No. 58, on suspending the rules and passing H. Res. 128, Honoring Miami University for its 200 years of commitment to extraordinary higher education, I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for rollcall No. 59, on suspending the rules and passing H. Res. 134, Recognizing the 50th Anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s visit to India, and the positive influence that the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi had on Dr. King's work during the Civil Rights Movement, I would have voted "aye."

TRIBUTE TO JUDITH MONGIN

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the excellence in education in the 4th Congressional District of Iowa, and to specifically congratulate Judith Mongin of Ames Community School District, who earned the National Board Certification—the highest level of certification in the teaching profession.

National Board Certification is a voluntary assessment program designed to recognize and reward great teachers. National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) have successfully demonstrated advanced teaching knowledge, skills and practices. Certification is achieved through a rigorous, performance-based assessment that typically takes one to three years to complete. Certification is offered in 25 different subjects, covering 97 percent of the subjects taught in K–12 schools.

I congratulate Judith Mongin on her well-deserved certification, and I'm certain that she will continue to touch the lives of many youth in her community. It is a great honor to represent Judith in the United States Congress, and I wish her continued success.

CONGRATULATING THE "MISS MADISON"

HON. BARON P. HILL

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Mr. HILL. Madam Speaker, on Saturday, February 14, 2009, the *Miss Madison* will be crowned the 2008 National Championship Winner by the American Boat Racing Association in Madison, Indiana. I regret that I will not be able to attend the event, but want to reiterate my heartfelt congratulations to those responsible for the win and the entire Madison community.

Miss Madison is a real source of pride to Southern Indiana, and rightfully so. As the only city-owned hydroplane race boat, the *Miss Madison* is not only this year's champion, but holds the record for most consecutive seasons run at 47. *Miss Madison* has been racing since 1961 and can boast of a Turbine Engine motor capable of reaching about 19000 rpms.

Congratulations, again, to the *Miss Madison*, its fans and supporters. I look forward to attending award banquets in the future for this powerful boat.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION ACT OF 2009

HON. RICK BOUCHER

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Mr. BOUCHER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to join with Congressman MIKE PENCE in introducing the Free Flow of Information Act of 2009. We are joined by Judiciary Committee Chairman JOHN CONYERS, Judiciary Committee Vice Ranking Member BOB GOODLATTE, and 35 other original cosponsors.

Our bipartisan legislation provides a privilege in federal court proceedings for reporters to refrain from revealing their confidential sources of information.

The privilege is similar in nature to that currently offered by 36 states and the District of Columbia. Such broad-based support for assuring the confidentiality of journalists' sources at the state level lays bare the glaring lack of similar protection at the federal level.

The ability to assure confidentiality to people who provide information is essential to effective news gathering and reporting on highly sensitive and important issues.

Typically, the best information about corruption in government or misdeeds in a private organization will come from someone on the inside who feels a responsibility to bring the information to light.

But that person has a lot to lose if his or her identity becomes known. In many cases, the person responsible for the corruption or the misdeeds can punish the source through dismissal or more subtle forms of punitive action if the source's identity becomes known.

It is only by assuring anonymity to the source that a reporter can gain access to the information in order to bring it to public scrutiny.

I have long thought that the ability to protect the confidentiality of sources is so essential to

biological corridors, NREPA connects the region's core wildlands into a functioning ecological whole. NREPA also creates jobs by putting people to work restoring the land in wildland restoration and recovery areas designated in the bill.

Finally, I want to be very clear about what NREPA doesn't do. NREPA does not impact private landowners. It impacts only federal public lands—lands owned by all Americans.

Some years ago, two NREPA supporters from Manhattan, Montana wrote to me and said "We feel that there is a little ray of hope for the incredible but dwindling wildlands we are so lucky to live near and love." All of us have a responsibility to sustain that hope.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, February 10, 2009, I was not present for six recorded votes. Had I been present, I would have voted the following way: roll No. 54—"yea"; roll No. 55—"yea"; roll No. 56—"yea"; roll No. 57—"nay"; roll No. 58—"yea"; roll No. 59—"yea."

FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION ACT OF 2009

HON. MIKE PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, in October 2007, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the Free Flow of Information Act, legislation that would provide a qualified privilege to journalists to shield confidential sources from compelled disclosure by a federal court. I am pleased to join over 30 of my colleagues today in reintroducing that same legislation that previously garnered 398 votes here on the House floor. Today, we take up the mantle and renew the push to make this bill law.

I am honored to be joined by my distinguished colleague Congressman RICK BOUCHER, who is such a tireless advocate for the First Amendment. Also, we are pleased to have Chairman CONYERS and Reps. COBLE, WALDEN, BLUNT, GOODLATTE, LOFGREN, WEXLER, YARMUTH and many others as original cosponsors. This is truly a bipartisan issue. It is a First Amendment issue, and I thank these Members for their leadership. They are truly champions for a free press.

Enshrined in the First Amendment are these words: "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press."

As a conservative who believes in limited government, I know the only check on government power in real time is a free and independent press. The Free Flow of Information Act is not about protecting reporters; it is about protecting the public's right to know. Our Founders did not enshrine the freedom of the press in the Constitution because they got good press. And, I am certainly not advocating

a free and independent press because I always get good press.

We all remember when not long ago a confidential source brought to light abuses at the highest levels of government in the long national nightmare of Watergate. History records that W. Mark Felt never would have come forward without the assurance made to him of confidentiality.

But, thirty-plus years later the press cannot make that assurance to sources, and we face the real danger that there may never be another Deep Throat. The protections provided by the Free Flow of Information Act are necessary so that members of the media can bring forward information to the American public without fear of retribution or prosecution.

In recent years, we have famously seen reporters such as Judith Miller jailed and David Ashenfelter, Mark Fainaru-Wada and Lance Williams threatened with jail sentences. They are a few names among many who have been subpoenaed for taking a stand for the First Amendment and refusing to reveal confidential sources.

Compelling reporters to testify, and in particular, compelling them to reveal the identity of their confidential sources, is a detriment to the public interest. Without the promise of confidentiality, many important conduits of information about our government will be shut down. The dissemination of information by the media to the public on matters ranging from the operation of our government to events in our local communities is invaluable to the operation of our democracy. Without the free flow of information from sources to reporters, the public is ill-equipped to make informed decisions.

Thirty-six states and the District of Columbia have various statutes that protect reporters from being compelled to testify or disclose sources and information in court. Thirteen states have protections for reporters as a result of judicial decisions. The Free Flow of Information Act would set national standards similar to those that are in effect in the states.

The Free Flow of Information Act closely follows existing Department of Justice guidelines for issuing subpoenas to members of the news media. It simply makes the guidelines mandatory and provides protection against compelled disclosure of confidential sources. In doing so, this legislation strikes a balance between the public interest in the free flow of information against the public interest in compelling testimony in highly limited circumstances such as situations involving grave risk to national security or imminent threat of bodily harm.

Abraham Lincoln said, "Give the people the facts and the Republic will be saved." The Free Flow of Information Act is designed to ensure that the American people have the facts that they need to make choices as an informed electorate.

A free and independent press is the only agency in America that has complete freedom to hold government accountable. Integrity in government is not a Democratic or Republican issue, and corruption cannot be laid at the feet of one party. When scandal hits either party, any branch of government, or any institution in our society, it wounds our nation.

As a conservative, I believe that concentrations of power should be subject to great scrutiny. The longer I serve in Congress, the more firmly I believe in the wisdom of our Found-

ers—especially as it pertains to the First Amendment and freedom of the press. It is imperative that we preserve the transparency and integrity of American government, and the only way to do that is by preserving a free and independent press.

Thomas Jefferson warned that, "Our liberty cannot be guarded but by the freedom of the press, nor that limited without danger of losing it."

This Congress would be wise to take those words to heart. Now is the time to heed the advice of Mr. Jefferson.

I believe there are bipartisan majorities in the House and Senate sufficient to enact this bill this year. President Obama pledged his support for a federal media shield during his service in the Senate.

With the bipartisan support of my colleagues in Congress and the President, I believe the time has come to stitch this tear in the First Amendment freedom of the press.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, on February 10, 2009, I was unavoidably detained and was not able to record my vote for rollcall Nos. 54–56.

Had I been present I would have voted: rollcall No. 54—"yes"—On Motion to Instruct Conferees; rollcall No. 55—"yes"—Supporting the goals and ideals of "National Girls and Women in Sports Day"; rollcall No. 56—"yes"—Recognizing and commending University of Oklahoma quarterback Sam Bradford for winning the 2008 Heisman Trophy and for his academic and athletic accomplishments.

EARMARK REFORM

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, on January 28, 2009, I introduced a resolution, H. Res. 100, to amend the Rules of the House of Representatives to provide for earmark reform. The bill that I introduced will not only promote accountability and transparency in Congress, but push its Members in a direction that better serves their constituents.

All too frequently, Congressional spending requests are funding embarrassing and unworthy projects. This institution has lost credibility because earmarks fund "monuments-to-me," bizarre private enterprises, or even projects to subsidize their family. This growing trend is unacceptable and, as guardians of taxpayer dollars, we owe it to the citizens of the United States to be good stewards of their money.

Congressional spending requests deserve to be scrutinized and publicly debated, that is why I introduced this commonsense approach to reform the earmark process. This resolution will prohibit earmarks from being used for non-public entities, except for institutions of higher education. Likewise, this bill will prohibit any earmark for any entity named after an individual serving in Congress, which will eliminate controversial "monuments-to-me."