

wholeheartedly support the formation of an Afghanistan/Pakistan Study Group in the hope that it will help to turn the tide of this war and lessen the number of casualties as well.

I, too, have a deep respect and confidence in Gen. Petraus and would not want my comments to be construed as being critical of the leadership of our military. I have no formal training in political science or history so please accept these comments as simply the perspective of an American mother with children glad to serve our country.

God bless you and give you wisdom as you serve in the leadership of our country.

Sincerely,

* * *

PS It meant so much to see my sons receive a standing ovation when introduced during last weeks luncheon. It is these very Lance Corporals, Corporals and Sergeants who are almost daily listed among the casualties. My son, * * *, remarked that listening to your speech "restored his faith in the republic". Thank you again for recognizing their service.

HONORING THE LAJKONIK SONG AND DANCE ENSEMBLE

HON. MIKE QUIGLEY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the thousands of Polish-American constituents residing in the 5th District of Illinois, I rise today in recognition of the 20th Anniversary of the Lajkonik Song and Dance Ensemble. For 20 successful years, the Lajkonik Song and Dance Ensemble has promoted Polish folk culture and history to constituents of Polish and non-Polish decent alike.

Founded in 1991—under patronage of the Polish National Alliance Group 3241, and belonging to the Holy Trinity Polish Mission—Lajkonik has had the opportunity to flourish to an influential organization and cultural asset to the City of Chicago.

The Lajkonik Ensemble has performed in various locations in Chicago; some include the Chicago Cultural Center, Taste of Chicago, Daley Plaza, Chicago Public Libraries and Millennium Park, among others. Additionally, Lajkonik has traveled the Midwest and also represented the Chicago Polish Community at the International Folk Dance Festival in Rzeszów, Poland on four occasions.

Though the event focuses on Polish traditions, Lajkonik also reaches out to the American population to promote and encourage all people to learn about Polish culture, to support and appreciate it. The performances consist of different Polish regional folk songs, dances and colorful authentic Polish costumes.

Sunday, May 29th, 2011 marks the 20th Anniversary of the Lajkonik Song and Dance Ensemble. All the community support and time volunteered by numerous individuals have made two decades possible and hopefully many more anniversaries to come. The 20th Anniversary celebration will be held at the Copernicus Cultural and Civic Center consisting of hundreds of children performing in a Gala Concert displaying regional costumes, folk dances, songs, and other performances.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize this exciting day on behalf of my 110,000 Polish

American constituents. I congratulate all those who contributed their time and passion of preserving the Polish culture toward another successful celebration.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent for votes in the House Chamber yesterday. I would like the record to show that, had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 254 and 255 and "no" on rollcall vote 256.

RECOGNIZING KEITH LEWINGER ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE FALLBROOK PUBLIC UTILITIES DISTRICT

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the honorable public service of Keith Lewinger as he retires as General Manager of the Fallbrook Public Utilities District (PUD) of California.

After graduating from the University of Cornell in the early 70's, Mr. Lewinger worked for the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts, the Irvine Ranch Water District, and the Otay Water District. Mr. Lewinger proceeded as General Manager for ten years at Otay which is one of the largest water districts in San Diego County.

In 1999 Mr. Lewinger joined the team at the Fallbrook PUD which contains approximately 8,000 water and 4,000 sewer connections. After 12 years of committed leadership, Mr. Lewinger has established a solid foundation for the Fallbrook PUD and has been instrumental in the area's resource management efforts.

Previously a member of the Governor's Recycled Water Task Force, Mr. Lewinger also represents the San Diego County Water Authority on the Metropolitan Water District Board of Southern California. Additionally, he serves on the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA's) Board of Directors as Vice-Chair of Region 10, has been Chairman of ACWA's Water Reclamation and Reuse Committee, a member of the California and National Boards of Directors of the WaterReuse Association including President of the California Section of the WaterReuse Association, and a member of the American Water Works Association's (AWWA's) Water Reuse Committee.

It is an honor to recognize Mr. Lewinger on the occasion of his retirement after nearly three decades of contributions to the resources community. Mr. Speaker, I ask you to please join me in recognizing Mr. Keith Lewinger's dedicated service to the Fallbrook Public Utilities District and the state of California.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR STRENGTHENING SAFETY STANDARDS FOR OFFSHORE BLOWOUT PREVENTERS AND EMERGENCY SHUTOFF EQUIP- MENT

HON. JAY INSLEE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker. I rise today to once again to introduce the Offshore Drilling Safety Improvement Act.

As we rapidly approach the one-year anniversary of the catastrophic Deepwater Horizon oil spill, which killed 11 workers and dumped hundreds of millions of gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico, we must confront the fact that Congress still has yet to pass comprehensive safety reform for offshore oil drilling. A year after toxic sludge drenched the Gulf beaches, communities are still suffering from economic ramifications of the loss of tourism and fishing.

Last year, after numerous congressional hearings and months of hard work, the House passed the Consolidated Land, Energy, and Aquatic, CLEAR, Act, a comprehensive approach to make sure American jobs and coastlines are protected. Among other beneficial improvements, the CLEAR Act included important provisions requiring better technology on blowout preventers and other commonsense safety reforms. Unfortunately, the bill did not make it through the Senate, and over the last few months the House has yet to pass similar legislation.

That is why I am once again, with bipartisan support, introducing the Offshore Drilling Safety Improvement Act. This act strengthens the standards for safety equipment on offshore oil rigs by requiring the use of the best available technology for blowout preventers and emergency shutoff equipment. It will also require the Administration to consider independent and reputable science and expertise when determining appropriate equipment. It is one vital piece of the larger, comprehensive effort to create a regulatory system that protects American jobs, coasts, and communities.

We may never know for sure what exactly caused the disastrous leak but we do know that we must work together to protect our shores and local economies from future spills. Other countries around the world require more comprehensive emergency safety equipment. It is time that, in the places we decide to drill, we are using the best safety equipment available.

A MODEL OF FEDERAL/STATE CO- OPERATION ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, one of the most troubling inconsistencies in our political dialogue is the one in which many conservatives argue on some issues that the Federal Government must be respectful of states' rights and not intrude on the prerogatives of the States, but, on the other hand,