

our military uses overseas, yet it has just 35 percent of the equipment it needs. The time has come to fix this.

Since 9/11, every single person in this country has benefited from the exemplary service provided by the men and women of the Guard. I urge the new leadership in this Congress, as they examine defense policies and budgets, to keep in mind the needs of these brave men and women, who for too long have been treated as second-class citizens by our military. This country cannot afford a broken state/federal response to homeland emergencies.

Madam Speaker, those National Guardsmen responsible for our homeland defense and military assistance to civilian authorities deserve the resources, planning and training they need. These reforms are long overdue, and the National Guard Empowerment Act of 2007 represents an essential step in the right direction.

HONORING RONALD PHILLIPS—3 MILLION MILES ACCIDENT FREE

HON. DAVID DAVIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2007

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Ronald Phillips, a resident of the First Congressional District of Tennessee, who has recently accumulated over 3 million accident-free miles during his career as a truck driver.

In June 2004, Ronald was the first driver to receive the 2 Million Mile Safe Driving Award at Con-way.

His other accomplishments include: 25,000 Safe Driver & Worker Hours Distinguished Driver Recipient; Member Con-way Freight's Elite President's Club; Quarterly Leaders Award from Con-way; National Finalist for Ray O'Brien Award in 2003, 2004, and 2005; Tennessee Truck Driving Championships—2nd place in straight truck class in 2006; Highway Watch Member; Certified Driver Trainer and Mentor; Con-way Defensive Driver Trainer; National Eagle Scout Association Member; Regional Values Task Force Member for Con-way; Member Trucker Buddy International.

Ronald Phillips is an AWANA leader at his church and has participated in several mission trips and charitable work.

Ronald Phillips resides in Gray, Tennessee with his wife of 23 years, JoAnn. They are the proud parents of one daughter, Regina (21) who is graduating from King College this year.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and my fellow members to join me in honoring Ronald Phillips, a testament to hard-work, determination and the values that have made this Nation so great.

HRANT DINK'S DEATH A LOSS FOR MANY

HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2007

Mr. CAPUANO. Madam Speaker, I supported H. Res. 102 and I condemn in the

strongest possible terms the cowardly murder of journalist Hrant Dink in Istanbul on January 19. I find particularly contemptible the actions of those who seemingly chose a seventeen-year-old youth—the alleged killer—to commit this appalling crime. This despicable act should not, however, obscure the inspiring solidarity of tens of thousands of secular, Muslim, and Armenian Christian Turks who filed past Mr. Dink's bier and marched in his funeral procession. Western news media have estimated the crowds between 50,000 and 100,000. Important Turkish officials, such as Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Ali Sahin; Interior Minister Abdulkadir Aksu; the governor of Istanbul, Muammer Guler; the head of the security forces, Celalettin Cerrah; and two generals joined Arman Kirakossian, the deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia, and other Armenian officials at the funeral service.

Everyone in the world who cherishes freedom and brotherhood must take heart when signs proclaiming "We are all Armenians" are carried through the streets of Istanbul. I wish to express my condolences to the family and friends of Hrant Dink. I want also to express my profound respect for all his fellow citizens who protested his murder and mourned his death.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BUDGET AUTONOMY ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2007

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, next to H.R. 328, the bill to give the District its first full vote in the House, the bill we introduce today is the most important bill to the District of Columbia that will come before Congress this session. The District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act that Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member TOM DAVIS and I introduce would give the District the right to enact its local budget without annual congressional oversight. The original Senate version of the Home Rule Act provided for budget autonomy, and 32 years of unnecessary difficulties and delay occasioned by the extra layer of oversight offer ample evidence that the time is at hand for Congress to permit the city to enact its local budget and move forward immediately to operate and manage the city.

This is the most important of the bills to be introduced as part of the "Free and Equal D.C." series of bills designed to accomplish two goals: (1) to give the city control over its core functions, such as budget, legislation and criminal justice; and (2) to transfer to the District the Home Rule Act provisions that prescribe the city's structure and others that make it necessary to come to Congress for changes, as well as many other provisions that have been included in the Act over the years. Budget Autonomy is most important because the ability to enact a budget and spend its own taxpayer funds as authorized is central to a jurisdiction's ability to operate and manage a functioning government. For that reason, the budget process is essential to the right to self government. By definition, Congress will retain jurisdiction over the District of Columbia under Article I, Section 8 of the

Constitution. Since, therefore, Congress could in any case affect changes in the District's budget and laws at will, it is unnecessary to require lengthy repetition of the District's budget process here. The redundancy of the congressional appropriations process is its most striking feature, considering that few if any changes in the budget itself are made.

I am gratified that Congress itself has moved toward the position embodied in this bill. The congressional experience with the District's budget has matured, and year after year, Congress has made no changes. At the same time, there has been increasing recognition of the hardship and delays that the annual appropriations process causes. As a result, Congress has already begun freeing the city from the congressional appropriations network. Last year, Congress approved the Mid-year Budget Autonomy bill, offering the first freedom from the federal appropriations process, the most important structural change for the city since passage of the Home Rule Act 32 years ago. The District can now spend its local funds annually without congressional approval, instead of returning mid-year to become a part of the federal supplemental appropriation in order to spend funds collected since the annual appropriations bill. Moreover during the past few years, appropriators have responded to our concern about the hardships resulting from delays in enacting the D.C. appropriation. I appreciate the agreement that has allowed the local D.C. budget to be in the first continuing resolution, permitting the city to spend its local funds at the next year's level. This approach has ended the lengthy processes that began years before I was elected, whereby the D.C. budget was delayed for floor fights about local policy and laws unrelated to the budget.

I have long argued that budget autonomy would benefit the city financially and operationally without withdrawing congressional jurisdiction. Only statehood would completely eliminate congressional power over the budget, but that option is not available at this time because the Mayor and City Council turned over the costs for some state functions carried by the city to the federal government in 1997. However, permitting the local budget to go into effect on time benefits the District and the Congress alike. For the city, a timely budget would: eliminate the uncertainty of the congressional process that in turn affects the city's bond rating and adds unnecessary interest for local taxpayers to pick up; significantly increase the District's ability to make accurate revenue forecasts; and reduce the countless operational problems, large and small, that result when the city cannot proceed on budget on time. Among the many examples, one particularly comes to mind that resulted when the D.C. budget was enacted five months late. Despite significant cuts in most functions, the city had increased the budget of the D.C. Public Schools (DCPS), but DCPS was forced to spend at the prior year's levels under a Continuing Resolution without the benefit of its urgently needed increase. As a result, for example, textbooks had to be returned to publishers under contract provisions; school supplies were returned; school buses under the bus lease contract were reduced, creating longer rides for disabled children; and tuition payments for special education students went unpaid.

Leaving its local budget to the District also would bring benefits to Congress. The D.C.



**Extension of Remarks
Honoring Ronald Phillips
3 Million Miles Accident Free
The Honorable David Davis
Of Tennessee
In the House of Representatives
January 30, 2007**

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