



from injuries last year, and 700 more died of occupational diseases.

These numbers are unacceptable. Much needs to be done at the federal level to protect health and safety. We enacted new mine safety legislation this year, and I look forward to pushing for OSHA reforms in the next Congress with the help of my colleague John Tierney.

But legislation is just part of the answer. We also need the leadership of forward-thinking companies that put safety first and require employee protection to be part of every decision in the workplace.

The talented men and women here at the GE plant design and make engines and parts for planes, ships, and submarines for our armed forces. They also make a valuable contribution to our aviation industry, and provide good jobs for Massachusetts workers. They help to keep our men and women in combat safe, and they deserve a safe workplace as well.

Over the years I've learned that employees are the real experts in workplace safety. They're the ones operating machinery every day, and the ones who know the risks.

The health and safety program here at Lynn demonstrates the benefit of making workers full partners in safety decisions. The safety committees, and the weekly meetings with worker representatives on health and safety show that safety is a top priority for GE.

Everyone benefits from the results. The rate of accidents has been reduced dramatically over the last 10 years. The plant has made major improvements in ergonomics, and has adopted strict lock-out/tag-out procedures to protect workers when machinery is being repaired. They also have an onsite rescue team, so they can respond immediately to an accident.

We need innovative and effective management like this in many more worksites across the country. Our goal is to protect all workers on the job, and I look forward to working with Ed Foulke, the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health, who is here today, to see that more workplaces follow this example.

We know that a safe workplace is a successful workplace. Everyday GE Lynn is proving that. We're proud of the ships you make for the Navy, and the engines you make for the F-18's and the Blackhawk helicopters, and even the President's new helicopter, Marine One. It's all a tribute to the high quality work you do, the skill and dedication of your workforce, and the extra mile you go to keep your employees safe. Massachusetts is proud of you, and so are all of us. Thank you very much.

###