

Study after study has demonstrated that sound reading skills are essential to a student's academic achievement. Students who learn to read well gain the ability to excel in other subjects and enhance their overall educational performance. Reading is a particular important ingredient for success in the Information Age and Congress must support innovative efforts to improve reading.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the great achievements of Reading Together USA and strongly support its proposed extension Reading Together Adult Tutors. Education holds the key to our nation's future. Education leads to progress. One of the most important responsibilities we have as a society is to provide quality education for all of our children that is crucial to succeed in a competitive global environment.

I encourage my colleagues to join students and tutors, parents and educators to support both Reading Together USA and Reading Together Adult Tutors and to allocate the necessary fund for the Fiscal Year 2000.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE IN SUPPORT OF AMERICA'S TEACHERS

SPEECH OF

HON. NICK LAMPSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 1999

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the thousands of men and women who help our children learn during National Teacher Appreciation Week.

As a former high school teacher, who is married to a special ed teacher, I know both the joys and challenges teachers face every day.

I remember the sense of excitement my students shared with me when we watched Neil Armstrong step onto the moon in 1969. I will never forget the gleam in their eyes and their new-found enthusiasm about space and science.

I also know about the challenges. My wife, Susan, faces children with not only physical and developmental disabilities, but also emotional problems and mental illness. But, special ed teachers aren't the only educators who face emotional and behavioral problems.

Unfortunately, many of our children suffer from physical and emotional abuse, or live in homes wrought with substance abuse and violence. Teachers, alone, cannot solve all of society's ills. We, as a broader community, must help our teachers reinforce the lessons taught in school by getting involved with their education.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of parents and grandparents everywhere, I'd like to thank our nation's teachers for helping the next generation succeed.

MASSACHUSETTS CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION WELCOMES THE INTERNATIONAL REGATTA

HON. JOHN JOSEPH MOAKLEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 1999

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation, I am submitting the following statement that welcomes an international regatta of spectacular sailing ships that will visit the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the city of Boston on July 11–16 in the year 2000. We anticipate a fantastic event and look forward to welcoming the world to Massachusetts and Boston.

SAIL BOSTON 2000

(July 11–16)

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the City of Boston officially welcome you to join with us in celebrating the New Millennium with a magnificent gathering of Tall Ships from all over the world from July 11–16 in the Year 2000.

The entire Massachusetts House Delegation in the United States Congress, Governor Paul Cellucci, both houses of the Massachusetts Legislature, and the Mayor of Boston, Tom Menino, are delighted to welcome the World's Tall Ships to Boston and to accept the American Sail Training Association, and International Sail Training Association invitation to serve as the Official Race Port for the Millennium Transatlantic Regatta Sailing from Boston to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and on to Amsterdam.

On July 11–16, in the Year 2000, the City of Boston and port cities and towns in Cape Cod and along the coast of Southeastern Massachusetts will host an international regatta of sailing ships to culminate in a Parade of Sail led by the U.S.S. Constitution, the oldest commissioned war ship in the United States Navy.

In 1992, when Boston hosted the most majestic and most successful Tall Ship event in the United States, over 150 sailing ships, and representative warships from over thirty-five nations graced the port of Boston with grand, international good will. Thousands of crew members mixed with over 7 million visitors from all over the world over a six day period, celebrating Boston's unique maritime history and cultural diversity.

From all accounts, Sail Boston 2000 will surpass the success of its predecessor in 1992. We have, to date, secured commitments from over eighty Sailing Ships and continue to work in conjunction with the United States Government and the international sailing community to once again share our magnificent harbor with the world.

FIRST TIME HOMEBUYERS ACT

HON. WILLIAM F. GOODLING

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 1999

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the, First Time Homebuyers Act, which will make the American Dream of owning a home a reality for thousands of renters and low income families. Today renters often pay as much for rent as many homeowners pay for a monthly mortgage payment. It is not surprising that a recent Fannie Mae National

Housing Survey found that 60% rank homeownership as their top priority in life.

To many Americans, homeownership means financial, psychological and familial security. This is especially true for minorities, younger Americans and those with lower incomes. Homeownership means a stronger economy, after neighborhoods and a better quality of life. Mr. Speaker, given such an optimistic view of homeownership, why do so many individuals continue to rent? According to the Fannie Mae survey, renters cite the expense of a down payment as the major obstacle in their ability to afford a home.

Several years ago, I visited a home builder in York, PA, located in my Congressional District, who developed a unique and innovative arrangement in which moderately priced single-family homes are constructed for purchase with no down payment. A local financial institution finances 80 percent of the loan, while the builder the remaining 20 percent as a second mortgage. This creative financing plan makes the purchase of a home affordable for financially responsible, hard-working people who want to buy a home, but can not afford the down payment.

However, the Tax Code penalizes builders who finance the down payment on behalf of the purchasers. Currently, the Tax Code limits a builder's ability to finance second mortgages because it assumes that the buyers are paying the entire balance of their tax obligations in the year the property is purchased. The law also requires builders to pay taxes on the entire amount of the of the income received from a mortgage in the year the purchase is made. For a builder, it becomes almost impossible to pay these taxes, not having cash on hand to do so until received at a future date. In other words, the Tax Code prohibits a builder from using the installment method to calculate their tax liability. This situation places a builder in a financial bind and jeopardizes the future of this and similar housing programs.

The First Time Homebuyers Act will enable a builder to use the installment method to calculate their tax liability under certain specific circumstances. This bill applies to any one family, owner-occupied unit. The purchasers must be a first time homebuyer who qualifies for 100 percent of the loan. Further, the legislation directs that a second mortgage on the property be no more than 20 percent of the sale price and applies only to single-family homes costing no more than 75 percent of the median home price for newly constructed one-family residential real property in a given area.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation which is specifically geared to helping those who need the most assistance buying a new home. With your support the First Time Homebuyers Act, can make the American Dream an American reality.

HONORING JACK C. HAYS HIGH SCHOOL REBEL BAND

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 1999

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, the Jack C. Hays School Rebel Band of Buda, Texas, recently earned the distinct honor of being selected for

the 1999 "Sudler Flag of Honor" award from the John Philip Sousa Foundation. This award is the highest recognition of excellence in concert performance that a high school band can receive. During the 17 years the award has been in existence, only 39 bands from the entire United States and Canada have been selected for the Flag of Honor award. Conductor Gerald Babbitt and his Rebel band deserve our praise and recognition on the occasion of receiving this prestigious award.

The John Philip Sousa Foundation designed this award to identify and recognize high school concert band programs of very special excellence at the international level. To be eligible for nomination, a band must have maintained excellence over a period of many years in several areas including concert, marching, small ensemble and soloists. The director must have been the conductor of the band for at least the previous seven consecutive years including the year of the award.

Each recipient receives a four-by-six foot "Flag of Honor" which becomes the property of the band. The flag is designed in red, white and blue and bears the logo of the John Philip Sousa Foundation. The conductor receives a personal plaque and each student in the band receives a personalized diploma.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honor to have such an outstanding high school band in the 14th Congressional District. I am delighted to extend my hearty congratulations to them. Their hard work and dedication is an inspiration to us all.

STATEMENT ON THE NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

HON. ROBIN HAYES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 1999

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I begin with the following quote: "Without the assistance of the Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in Him who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well."—Abraham Lincoln as he began his inaugural journey from Illinois to Washington, D.C., February 11, 1861.

Mr. Speaker, throughout the history of our Nation, leaders have turned to prayer for guidance and inspiration. Our Founding Fathers built this country on the principle that its citizens had a God-given right to freedom, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Since that time, America has been a beacon for millions in search of religious freedom.

The first Thursday of May of each year is set aside as the National Day of Prayer. This day serves to recognize the important role of prayer in our nation's past, present and future.

We recognize today, Thursday, May 6 as the National Day of Prayer. Because of the recent events here at home and abroad, I believe this day has a special significance this year.

The recent events in Yugoslavia and Colorado have sharply reminded us that life is fragile and sometimes fleeting. While our nation is troubled by the senseless death and destruction that surrounds the war in Europe and the shooting in Littleton, we can take comfort in

the fact that our nation is also actively working to repair and heal itself.

As a new member of Congress, I have been thrust into the middle of the many policy debates that shape our nation. Often times there are tough choices to be made, and I am comforted by the fact that I have the ability and the freedom to turn to prayer as a source of guidance.

I hope that we as a nation will make time everyday for a period of prayer and reflection.

PLEDGING SUPPORT FOR THE TRUTH IN ROCK ACT

HON. MAURICE D. HINCHEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 1999

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of legislation authored by my friend and colleague, Mr. KUCINICH of Ohio. The Truth in Rock Act would protect rock and roll's early heroes from the victimization of imitators by changing the trademark laws that allow the imposters to get away with it.

Under current trademark law, the original members of performing groups cannot use the names that made them famous without risking copyright infringement. But the original artists can be replaced by imposter performers who make recordings and sell concert tickets under their names.

You can buy a concert ticket to see the Drifters or the Coasters perform this summer. You'll be surprised to see on stage performers who are not the original Drifters or Coasters. You won't be listening to the memorable voices of those legendary artists; you'll be listening to their imitators.

The law allows the imposters to perform as the Drifters or the Coasters. Under that same law, the original members of the Drifters and the Coasters cannot mention their past affiliation with these bands.

This is a widespread practice that takes advantage of recording artists and consumers. The Truth in Rock Act corrects this inequity by permitting original recording artists to seek damages from the imposters. More importantly, it gives the original members of rock bands the right to advertise their ties to the groups they founded.

Tomorrow night I'll be joining a group of legendary recording artists who have been victimized by the trademark laws. These musicians are working hard to raise awareness on this issue and I'm proud to join them. They deserve the support of this Congress.

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 1999

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 150th anniversary of the territory of Minnesota and the counties of Dakota, Washington and Ramsey, the St. Paul Pioneer Press, the Minnesota Historical Society and Gibbs Farm in Falcon Heights. Each of these institutions have contributed to the culture and societal foundation of our great state!

The Saint Paul Pioneer Press has been a reliable source of information and communication for St. Paul and the surrounding communities. I commend them on their objectivity and thorough coverage of important events throughout Minnesota and the world and for spawning many rival newspapers, especially the Minneapolis Star Tribune.

The Gibbs Farm serves as a reminder of the origins of Minnesota. The original fabric of the Gibbs Farm, now in an urban setting, continues to teach and entertain our citizens with weekly events, and acts as a window into history. This is an unique and valuable resource for many citizens in the urban area.

The Minnesota Historical Society has become an icon in Minnesota; a treasure of information and preservation advocacy about who we are and where we have come from. Exhibit symbolize important events of our past, and educate us on the importance of the future. Several exhibits planned for the fall will be centered around the sesquicentennial celebrations.

Even as a territory, Minnesotas' first counties took shape before the formation of our state. The lines that were drawn established more than boundaries. The community spirit we feel today was forged in the early years of our existence and these first counties—Ramsey, Dakota, and Washington—reflect our leaders heritage and geographic governance, then and now.

As a former teacher, I understand the importance of learning from history. The origins of our great state are important to our citizens today, and these institutions have played an important role in shaping and crafting the state. Physical reminders and symbolic entities encapsulate the heart and soul and the essence of what it is to be a Minnesota. As we employ the inspiration and lessons from our past, may we put them to such a good use as our antecedents.

Mr. Speaker, I submit for the RECORD an article from the April 25th edition of the St. Paul Pioneer Press highlighting this historical landmark.

150TH ANNIVERSARIES CELEBRATE HERITAGE, SPUR OPTIMISTIC DISCUSSIONS OF FUTURE

(By Heather Johnson)

Twin Cities native Leah Otto was intrigued that St. Paul's designation as territorial capital 150 years ago in 1849 helped spur a boom that more than tripled the city's population in five years—from 1,358 in 1850 to 4,716 in 1855.

That tidbit was among the facts she gleaned while doing research for the city's sesquicentennial.

Such trivia is what Otto, assistant director of marketing and promotions for St. Paul, hopes will be shared throughout the year as the city celebrates its history as the capital of, first, the Minnesota Territory and, since 1858, the state of Minnesota.

Since that initial burst of growth, she said, the city has kept thriving, a sign residents continue to feel St. Paul's pull.

St. Paul isn't alone in pausing this year to reflect on accomplishments and goals with explorations of the past, assessments of the present and optimistic discussions about the future. 1999 also marks the 150th anniversary of the organization of the Minnesota Territory and Washington, Ramsey and Dakota counties, as well as the Minnesota Historical Society, Gibbs Farm in Falcon Heights and the St. Paul Pioneer Press.

"There's a lot to commemorate," said Priscilla Farnham, executive director of the