

the commonsense step of establishing a reserve which can produce refined petroleum products. The presence of such a reserve will ensure the availability of emergency refinery capacity—a need which has been clearly illustrated by the events and high gasoline prices of recent months.

Last year's catastrophic hurricanes, which severely damaged oil refineries in the gulf coast illustrated the nation's vulnerability to a disruption in supply of refined petroleum and exposed shortcomings in our current Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) system. If the nation loses significant refinery capacity, crude released from the SPR cannot be converted easily into refined product such as gasoline or home heating oil. Even with no disruptions, our nation's refineries are running at virtually full capacity meaning that any reduction in our ability to refine product results in an almost immediate increase in gasoline prices.

The legislation we are introducing would help address this vulnerability by requiring the Secretary of Energy to establish and operate a Strategic Refinery Reserve (SRR) with capacity equal to 5 percent of the total United States demand for gasoline, home heating oil and other refined petroleum products. The Secretary may design and construct new facilities or acquire and re-open previously closed facilities.

During non-emergency times the SRR would provide refined product to the federal fleet, including the Department of Defense. Operating the refinery reserve on a full-time basis will ensure that federal fleet and military needs are met, will lessen start up times for SRR refineries to full production during emergencies and will lessen the demand for refined product in the consumer market by freeing additional supply.

During times of emergency, the SRR production could be increased and the resulting refined products could be used in the commercial market. Under the legislation, the Secretary is authorized to use SRR production for commercial use based on two criteria: the same severe supply disruption criteria used to trigger a drawdown of the SPR and upon a Presidential determination of a regional supply shortage.

Our legislation is a common sense approach to ensure that additional refinery capacity is available to provide gasoline during times of energy emergency, and I urge its consideration and approval by the House.

NATIONAL NURSES WEEK

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 11, 2006

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the work of America's 2.9 million registered nurses and recognize National Nurses Week, which is celebrated annually May 6–12 throughout the United States. The purpose of National Nurses Week is to raise public awareness of the value of nursing and to help educate the public about the vital roles registered nurses play in meeting the health care needs of the American people.

America's nurses comprise our nation's largest health care profession. They continue to meet the different, emerging, and challenging

health care needs of the American population in a wide range of settings. Nurses enhance both primary and preventive health care and are an indispensable component in the safety and quality of care of hospitalized patients.

It is my honor to recognize registered nurses who care for all of us. Today, we celebrate registered nursing's accomplishments and efforts to improve our health care system and show our appreciation for the nation's registered nurses not just during this week, but at every opportunity throughout the year.

TRIBUTE TO CALHOUN HIGH SCHOOL

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 11, 2006

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Calhoun High School (CHS) of Port Lavaca, Calhoun County, TX. On January 6–7, 2006 the CHS advanced government class, taught by Gennie Westbrook, traveled to Austin to participate in the Texas State final meet for We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution. Calhoun High School ranked second of the seven schools participating in the meet, which is the highest rank yet achieved by a CHS class. In 1995, 2002, and 2003, the CHS class placed third. Students participating in the state contest were Holly Batchelder, Matthew Boyett, Ryan Cardona, Kenneth Chang, Karl Chen, Andrew Delgado, Carlos Galindo, Julio Herrera, Paul Jenkins, Brian Kao, Dustin Lambden, Kayla Meyer, Jake Prejean, and Thomas Reagan.

Twenty-two CHS juniors accompanied the group as observers. We the People alumnae who also accompanied the group to assist as guest judges for practice times were Jessica Davenport, John Westbrook, Bobby Van Borssum, Redford Hong, William Krause, and Jason Fite.

Local community members who helped the class in their weekly practice sessions after school were Connie Hunt and Assistant District Attorney Shannon Salyer, who have worked with each year's class for several years. Others who assisted the class in preparation this year included District Attorney Dan Heard, Assistant District Attorney Pat Brown, and Texas A&M aerospace PhD student Darren Hartl.

We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution is a nationally acclaimed civic education program focusing on the history and principles of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. In addition to the requirements of the standard government class, students in this program must master a rigorous curriculum in the background and philosophy of the U.S. Constitution. They participate in oral assessment that involves both prepared and extemporaneous responses to challenging questions. In this nationwide competition, students play the role of "experts in the Constitution," testifying before a mock Congressional hearing. Among other criteria, students are evaluated on their depth of knowledge, ability to apply academic data to current problems, and understanding of landmark Supreme Court cases. Teams of three students each present a four-minute prepared testimony to answer questions they have researched all semester,

and then they respond to extemporaneous follow-up questions from the judges for another six minutes. Judges at the state contest include practicing attorneys, university professors, historians, and legislative staff members.

In 2001, the Center for Civic Education conducted a survey of We the People alumnae, focusing on voting and civic participation. Among the former students, 82 percent reported that they voted in the November 2000 election. In addition, 77 percent had voted in previous elections. By contrast, the National Election Studies reported 48 percent turnout in the November 2000 election by other respondents aged 18–30. Research also indicates that participation in We the People programs helps encourage greater interest in politics and public affairs, increased involvement in government decision making at all levels, greater willingness to respect the opinions and rights of others, and better preparation for the privileges and responsibilities of democratic citizenship. More information about the program may be found at the Center for Civic Education website, <http://www.civiced.org/wethepeople.php>.

We the People: the Citizen and the Constitution is the Advanced U.S. Government class available every fall to Calhoun High School seniors. The first place team from each state traveled to Washington, D.C. for the National Final Competition on April 29–May 1, 2006. McAllen's Lamar Academy team, taught by LeAnna Morse, won first place this year in Texas, and her class often receives Honorable Mention as one of the top 10 schools at the national final meet.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate teacher Gennie Westbrook, the students of Calhoun High School and all the others participating in this important effort.

INTRODUCTION OF THE EARLY CAREER RESEARCH ACT AND THE RESEARCH FOR COMPETITIVENESS ACT

HON. MICHAEL T. McCUAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 11, 2006

Mr. McCUAUL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce today the Early Career Research Act and the Research for Competitiveness Act. These bills expand and strengthen science and engineering research programs at the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy to encourage young scientists and engineers to pursue innovative research that could lead to the major scientific breakthroughs of tomorrow.

President Bush, in his State of the Union Address, articulated the link between science and engineering research and national competitiveness. I agree with the President. Like him, I believe that science shapes the future. And, like him, I believe that for America to remain number one in the world, it must remain number one in science. I want to ensure that the highly-innovative, highly-productive industries of tomorrow are created here in America and stay in America to provide high-wage jobs for our children and grandchildren.

Texas is one of the world's leading technology centers and I have the privilege of representing Texas' high-tech core. In Texas, we