

RECOGNIZING THE HARRISON
SCHMITT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
FOR RECEIVING THE BLUE RIB-
BON AWARD

HON. HARRY TEAGUE

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

Mr. TEAGUE. Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate Harrison Schmitt Elementary School in Silver City, New Mexico, for receiving the Blue Ribbon School Award awarded by the U.S. Department of Education for demonstrating academic excellence and dramatic gains in student achievement levels.

The Blue Ribbon Schools award was created in 1982 to recognize schools where the students attain and maintain high academic standards and are pushed to improve themselves and further their dedication to scholastic achievement. This award shows that Harrison Schmitt Elementary School is striving to close the achievement gap.

Schools like Harrison Schmitt Elementary achieve such great distinctions because of the hard work and its dedicated educators and families. The students also deserve to be recognized for making the most of the opportunities afforded to them by the excellent staff. Harrison Schmitt Elementary School is a prime example for the academic progress other schools throughout the nation should strive to achieve.

I am honored to have Blue Ribbon Schools like Harrison Schmitt Elementary School in my district. I commend their achievement and wish them luck in the continuing their academic achievement.

PERMANENT ESTATE TAX RELIEF
FOR FAMILIES, FARMERS, AND
SMALL BUSINESSES ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 3, 2009

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4154, the Permanent Estate Tax Relief for Families, Farmers, and Small Businesses Act of 2009. This legislation is a necessary step in cleaning up the toxic fiscal legacy of the Bush administration.

The estate tax is set to expire completely in 2010 unless Congress acts. Under current estate tax parameters, an individual can inherit, tax-free, a trust fund worth \$3.5 million—more than a middle class family making \$70,000 a year earns in a lifetime. For couples, the exemption is \$7 million. H.R. 4154 would permanently extend these generous parameters, ensuring that 99.8 percent of Americans never pay a dime in estate taxes.

This legislation helps put the Nation back on a path of fiscal sustainability. While it affects only a handful of the wealthiest Americans, the estate tax is an important source of Federal revenue. Eliminating this tax completely would expand the deficit by \$662 billion and reduce funding available for schools, roads and other priority investments. The bill also includes a “pay-as-you-go” provision that mandates fiscally responsible spending, restoring a 1990s law that turned record deficits into surpluses.

Without congressional action, the estate tax will return in 2011 at a much higher rate. By permanently extending current levels, H.R. 4154 is a compromise between higher estate taxes in the next decade and a complete elimination of the tax.

Republican opposition to this compromise legislation is wrong-headed and hypocritical. By supporting nothing but a full repeal, Republicans are pushing for a policy that adds \$662 billion to the deficit. This is extraordinarily irresponsible in a time of rising deficits and economic recession. With many middle-class families losing their jobs and their homes, it is difficult to justify a costly new tax cut for the Nation’s wealthiest estates so they can pass on even larger inheritances tax-free. H.R. 4154 is a far more reasonable approach.

HONORING BAYSHORE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, the people of the Second District of Texas are proud to recognize the students, faculty, and staff of Bayshore Elementary School in La Porte, Texas. Bayshore Elementary has earned the prestigious rating of “Exemplary” from the Texas Education Agency. This honor is especially meaningful for the students, teachers, and administrators of Bayshore Elementary because of the challenges they faced in the aftermath of Hurricane Ike.

Despite being dispersed to five other neighboring campuses, the students of Bayshore still performed at the “Exemplary” level on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills test. In the tradition of the Americans and Texans that have gone before them, the students and staff of Bayshore Elementary were able to rise above a difficult situation and achieve excellence in the face of adversity. This award not only recognizes their resilience but their determination to overcome difficulty and that is extremely honorable.

The Second District of Texas is proud of Bayshore Elementary school and commends them for their “Exemplary” award.

CELEBRATING THE 60TH ANNIVER-
SARY OF THE VOICE OF AMER-
ICA’S UKRAINIAN SERVICE

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise today on the special occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Voice of America’s first Ukrainian-language broadcast. As Co-chair of the Ukrainian Caucus, it is my honor to recognize this day. In the darkest hours of the cold war, Ukrainians behind the Iron Curtain have received VOA broadcasts of accurate, balanced and comprehensive news and information. The VOA reports that Ukrainian dissidents imprisoned in Siberian camps and human rights activists who worked clandestinely to avoid arrest say they drew strength from its broadcasts.

As the Communist system began to fissure, VOA notes it continued to provide Ukrainians

with the news and information that their own censored, government-controlled media would not provide. Through the decades VOA was there to tell Ukrainians stories about the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, the Prague Spring of 1968, the rise of the Solidarity movement in Poland in the 1980s, the cover up of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant explosion in 1986, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and the Ukrainian independence and democracy movement which played a key role in the collapse of the U.S.S.R. in 1991. Through Ukraine’s struggles with independency, VOA was a vital source of accurate news and responsible commentary.

Today, VOA continues to reach millions of Ukrainians each week. The radio broadcasts that began in the early cold war period have been replaced with daily television broadcasts and reporting on VOA’s web site. Ukrainians still look to VOA not only to hear about the Washington perspective on what is happening in Ukraine, but also to comprehend America’s story—its foreign policy objectives, national politics, social challenges, culture, arts, educational opportunities, business successes and achievements in science, technology, and medicine. The United States continues to serve as an important example for Ukrainians on maintaining a vibrant, prosperous, pluralistic society. Through its strict adherence to journalistic excellence over the past 60 years, the Voice of America’s Ukrainian Service has been a key institution in U.S. public diplomacy. Today, its mission remains critical as ever, and we proudly mark this milestone anniversary.

IN RECOGNITION OF DANE
NOWELS

HON. DOUG LAMBORN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

Mr. LAMBORN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dane Nowels, an American patriot who passed away on December 1, 2009. As a resident of Colorado Springs and Colorado, Nowels was a true servant to his nation and community. I rise today to honor his contribution to our community and country.

Born in Oakland California on October 18, 1947, Nowels graduated from The Ohio State University in 1969 with a degree in agricultural economics. As an agricultural enthusiast, Nowel was a four time National Champion in Tractor Pulling using the tractors that he built himself.

After service in the Army and a career as a commodities broker, Nowels moved to Colorado Springs, Colorado to provide heavy equipment to farmers and ranchers throughout southern Colorado for Ellen Equipment Company.

Nowels was a natural leader, and he used his talents to serve others in the El Paso County community. As President of the Pikes Peak Firearms Coalition and Vice-Chairman of the El Paso County Republican Party, Nowels accomplished much in El Paso County in defense of liberty. Nowels encouraged minorities, youth, young adults, and businesspeople to rally behind local and state candidates who

exhibit support for a strong national defense and limited government. He was an advocate for traditional American values based upon the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, especially the Second Amendment right to bear arms. In addition, Nowels was an active member of the Pikes Peak Economics Forum, often speaking to and debating area high school and college students about the free market system and the Constitutional rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Throughout his life, Nowels was committed to serving this great country, whether in the Army or defending liberty in his community. I mourn his passing, and today ask that we honor the life of a true American hero.

COMMENDING THE SOLDIERS AND
CIVILIAN PERSONNEL STA-
TIONED AT FORT GORDON

SPEECH OF

HON. PAUL C. BROUN

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 7, 2009

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the soldiers, civilians, and military families stationed at Fort Gordon for their service and dedication to the United States, and to honor the lineage of Fort Gordon as an indispensable communications installation and training center in our Nation's history.

Fort Gordon was originally conceived as Camp Gordon on October 18, 1941, as an answer to America's fight in WWII Europe. Camp Gordon was home to three Army Divisions—the 4th Infantry Division, the 26th Infantry Division, and the 10th Armor Division. All served with distinction in the liberation of Europe from the Nazi tyranny. It was not until March 21, 1956, that Camp Gordon was given permanent status and renamed Fort Gordon.

Since that time, Fort Gordon's soldiers and civilians have continuously served with distinction in Vietnam, Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and in current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. All the while, the military family members were providing support while dealing with the hardship of long and often times multiple deployment separations.

In June 1986, the United States Army Signal Regiment was established and Fort Gordon was designated as the home base for the regiment. Fort Gordon is home not only to the Army's premier signal training center, but it is also home to deploying active and reserve Army units. The soldiers in these units take the lessons learned from the battlefield in order to incorporate the lessons into the signal training curriculum and in research and development. This functional and technical analysis has led to the development of mobile subscriber equipment, the Army's communication architecture and information mission area, which include integration of automation, communications, and visual information.

Fort Gordon's role as a communications leader was not achieved through individuality but through a combined effort of the Army and the citizens of Augusta who together have fostered a strong community. Margaret Mead said

it best when referring to the strength of a community, "never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." These committed Augusta citizens were and are an essential part of Fort Gordon's history that has led to a safer and secure America.

REIT ENERGY GRANTS

HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "Sustainable Property Grants Act of 2009," legislation that would allow real estate investment trusts (REITs) to fully benefit from the energy grants included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (the Recovery Act).

Congress created REITs in 1960 to enable investors from all walks of life to own professionally managed, income-producing real estate. REITs combine the capital of many investors to benefit from a diversified portfolio of income-producing real estate, including apartments, health care facilities, hotels, offices and warehouses. REITs are required to distribute at least 90 percent of their taxable income. Most distribute their entire taxable income.

Buildings represent about 40 percent of all energy use and approximately 70 percent of all electricity consumption in the United States, but REITs, which own 6 billion square feet of commercial real estate, cannot currently access tax incentives designed to reduce their energy use. Providing incentives for REITs to engage in energy efficiency projects could significantly contribute to achieving our energy reduction goals.

That is why I am introducing legislation today to amend the Recovery Act to allow REITs to participate fully in the energy grants in lieu of tax credits program.

Section 1603 of the Recovery Act provides Energy Grants to companies that invest in qualifying renewable energy projects. These grants are intended to encourage qualifying investments by taxpayers whose tax liability is not sufficient to benefit from existing energy credits. In fact, the Recovery Act Energy Grants were designed as a substitute for energy credits during the current economic downturn since many taxpayers have inadequate tax liability to use the credits. Despite being designed for this purpose, the Energy Grants provision in the Recovery Act have been interpreted to benefit a REIT only to the extent it retains taxable income, which most do not.

This legislation would further existing Congressional policy and promote the greatest possible participation in efforts to increase the use of renewable energy. REITs would be afforded the same economic incentives as other property owners to make investments in renewable energy projects. With enough critical mass, these types of investments should help fuel the U.S. economy's growth, create additional jobs and, over time, reduce American reliance on foreign oil.

I hope that you will join me in supporting this legislation.

CONGRATULATING DAVID COHEN

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

Mr. ISRAEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to offer my sincere congratulations to my constituent, David Cohen, upon being awarded the Dick Steinberg Good Guy Award. This honor is given to a Jewish individual who best demonstrates the good aspects of sportsmanship.

Like the award's namesake, David has earned the distinction in the sport of football. Dick Steinberg was the Vice-President and General Manager of the New York Jets for six years. He was widely regarded and was one of the most respected men in football. As Head Coach of the football team at Hofstra University, he has exemplified the behavior and character that the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame and Museum believes deserves to be recognized.

I hope that he continues to act as a leader in our community and carry on the legacy of Dick Steinberg. Congratulations to David upon this receiving this great honor.

HONORING HENRY R. MUÑOZ III

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

Mr. GONZALEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Henry R. Muñoz III, a public servant who has dedicated his professional career and philanthropic efforts to serving others, on the special occasion of his 50th birthday.

Born in San Antonio on December 14, 1959, Henry Muñoz has honored us with his vision and leadership for decades, benefiting our cities, state and country. As a longtime friend, I know firsthand his track record of service to this nation and especially to the great State of Texas.

Throughout his life, Mr. Muñoz has engaged in a number of different professions: entrepreneur, artist, philanthropist, and activist. From his appointments to the Texas Department of Transportation, VIA Transit, Smithsonian National Board, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum, and many more, Mr. Muñoz has dedicated his passion and efforts to raising funds for these prestigious organizations. Mr. Muñoz has also raised over \$5 million in student scholarships, allowing young leaders in our communities pursue their dreams through higher education.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Henry Muñoz III as we celebrate his 50th birthday, a life highlighted by decades of community service, philanthropy, and leadership.