

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 1997

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, on May 1, 1997, I was unavoidably detained during roll-call vote No. 98, the vote on agreeing to House Resolution 129, providing amounts for the expenses of certain committees of the House of Representatives in the 105th Congress.

Had I been present for the vote, I would have voted "no."

WITCZAK'S HARDWARE
CELEBRATES 100TH ANNIVERSARY**HON. ROBERT A. BORSKI**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 1997

Mr. BORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a Philadelphia business institution in my congressional district as it marks its 100th anniversary in providing a valuable service to the community.

On May 17, 1897, Stella and Stanislaw Witczak, two Polish immigrants seeking to serve the needs of a growing community in Philadelphia, opened the doors to Witczak's Hardware.

One hundred years later, Witczak's hardware is still serving the needs of this tightly-knit Port Richmond community. Its owner, Michael Witczak, is proud to be the third generation owner of one of the oldest privately owned hardware stores in a city that is steeped in history.

Mr. Speaker, Witczak's Hardware is a living example of what the American Dream is all about. For a century, the business has continued to provide the community with nuts, bolts, plumbing supplies, electrical items, spring plants, snow shovels, and a variety of other household and hardware items.

It has evolved in much the way the community it served has changed over a century. Where once customers would go to buy pull chains for water closets, coal oil and globe oil for lamps, customers now go for paints, keys, and window screens.

While the items have changed to meet the demands and expectations of a fast-paced society, the store itself hasn't changed much over the years. Customers are still old friends, the wooden floors are a familiar fixture and the owner can still help customers find that perfect gadget or tool to aid in home improvement projects.

This very presence is what is so important to a community and to the people it serves. Witczak's business, firmly rooted in the Port Richmond neighborhood, is an example for many generations to see.

These businesses provide examples for other future business owners that offering a service to a neighborhood is convenient, important and still needed in our country. It is the business strategy that made our Nation become the world economic leader it is and it is the hub in the wheel that made our neighborhood prosper.

At a time when, competition is at an all-time high and super stores and mega-malls are in-

creasing, stores like Witczak's are facing tough obstacles. Nonetheless, their role as the "little mom and pop" stores once so prevalent in our neighborhoods are needed.

The immigrants who started these businesses are to be commended for the spirit and energy they displayed in making their American dream of prosperity come true.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to congratulate Witczak's Hardware for serving as a fine example of an American business that blossomed, remains strongly entrenched in its community, and continues to provide a service to the neighborhood. May it stand as an example for future business owners that one family's vision can lead to a century of accomplishment.

LIMA-ALLEN COUNTY RADIOTHON

HON. MICHAEL G. OXLEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 1997

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my best wishes and support to the Lima-Allen County, OH, branch of the NAACP, as its members make their final preparations for their annual radiothon. The event, planned for May 24 at the Bradfield Community Center in Lima, will join the Lima-Allen County branch with other branches of the NAACP from across the Nation in an effort to attract new members from the Lima-Allen County community, as well as to inspire old members to renew their commitment.

The chapter president, Rev. Robert Curtis, and my friend, Malcolm McCoy, deserve special recognition for their work with the organization. I wish them success in their upcoming radiothon and particularly commend their positive influence on the young people of Lima-Allen County.

CRAIG THORN III RECEIVES COLUMBIA COUNTY ASSOCIATION'S
DISTINGUISHED CITIZEN AWARD**HON. GERALD B.H. SOLOMON**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 1997

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, on May 15, 1997, the Columbia County Association will bestow its Distinguished Citizen Award on Craig Thorn III. Anyone who knows him realizes how well-deserved this honor really is.

Mr. Thorn's career is notable for the degree to which he moved on the State and national political scene while maintaining his local business presence. Since Gov. Nelson Rockefeller's 1966 reelection campaign, Mr. Thorn has been actively involved in State politics. In 1968, he served as an advance man in Rockefeller's Presidential campaign. Later, he served as the upstate director of the Duryea gubernatorial campaign in 1978 and was the chief of staff for New York State Assembly Republicans from 1979 to 1982.

The creativity, enthusiasm and initiative that Mr. Thorn demonstrated in State politics also have been carried over into his civic activities. Currently, he serves as a vice chairman of the board of trustees of Columbia Memorial Hos-

pital and chairman of the Columbia-Greene Community Hospital Foundation, which last year kicked off a Second Century of Caring Capital Campaign that already has secured \$2 million toward a new emergency wing with surgical facilities.

Additionally, Mr. Thorn is a trustee of Columbia Economic Development Corp. and secretary of Hudson Development Corp. as well as a member of the board of managers of the Columbia Hudson Partnership, the umbrella economic development organization for the county and city. In this role, he has been an enthusiastic proponent of waterfront development in the city of Hudson and an active player in the complex negotiations that are now resulting in the removal of several longstanding oil tanks by the river, making way for a new public park.

Mr. Thorn also conceived and set in motion a Flag Day parade that will take place in Hudson on Saturday, June 14, and honor not only the American flag but the entire spectrum of volunteer organizations in Columbia County.

I could go on and list all of Mr. Thorn's other accomplishments, but I think I would run out of time and space. Needless to say, I commend the Columbia County Association's selection of Craig Thorn as the recipient of its Distinguished Citizen Award. His long record of serving his community and his State are a model for other citizens to follow.

TAKING A STAND FOR HEALTHY
CHILDREN**HON. MARTIN FROST**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 1997

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute the Stand for Healthy Children Day that will be held on June 1. All across the Nation groups will be holding community health fairs focusing on the needs of our children. Ensuring that our children are healthy should be a top priority in this country and an issue that requires attention at all levels.

The Children's Defense Fund, in cooperation with communities all over the Nation will be working with local officials to educate parents and renew their commitment to improving the quality of our children's lives. Prevention and education is the key to giving children the healthy start they need.

In step with this important nationwide movement I am proud to participate in the Stand for Healthy Children for the 24th district at the Resource Center in Fort Worth, TX. This family picnic, sponsored by the National Stand for Children and the Community Health Foundation, will focus on teaching kids and parents about preventative health and safety. Free children's health screenings will be offered, and officers from the Fort Worth Police Department will be making identification cards for children. In addition, kids from all over Fort Worth will be able to participate in fun-filled activities, like art contests, story-telling, and other events.

Bringing families together to talk about their children's health care is essential. By holding these health fairs, we can address concerns and work effectively to improve the quality of life for our children.

COMMENDING LACASA ON ITS 1997-98 PROGRAM YEAR

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 1997

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the Latin American Community Alliance for Support and Assistance of Northwest Indiana, Inc. [LACASA], its Adult Education Learners, its Head Start Students, and its Agency Volunteers, on the achievements earned during the 1997-98 program year.

LACASA is dedicated to serving the Hispanic residents of northwest Indiana, who experience difficulty in obtaining needed social and educational services. Some quality services which the organization offers include: an adult education program, geared toward students at all levels; a Head Start program, which provides training in parenting skills, and an opportunity for parents to become empowered in the education of their children; and Access Assistance, a program stressing job search and person and community leadership preparation. Currently, LACASA is working to develop additional programs meant to improve the quality of life for northwest Indiana's Hispanic population. For those in need, LACASA hopes to provide transportation services to its programs, as well as to agencies where its clients are referred. The organization would also like to establish health stations in an effort to assist families in understanding their basic health needs and inform them about how to access the existing health care system. Finally, LACASA hopes to expand its services to the elderly by familiarizing them with in-home care options to prevent unnecessary institutionalization.

Students who have participated in LACASA's 1997-98 Adult Education Learners Program include: Juan Luis Alvarado, Juan Manuel Alvarado, Maria C. Alvarez, Maria Magdalena Alvarez, Armando Arellano, Lesly I. Arellano, Maria Z. Avila, Patricia A. Avila, Alejandra Ayala, Maria Barajas, Joseph Bialorucki, Barry D. Billingshley, Enrique Camacho, Jesus Camacho, Carmen Maria Carrillo, Phung S. Choi, Maria I. Concepcion, Filomeno Contreras, Juan L. Contreras, Gladys M. Coronado, Hiram D. Crespo, Maria L. Cuba, Efrain Delcid, Maria Margarita Delreal, Agustin Diaz, Carmen Flores, Eduardo Garcia, Galdino Garcia, Nestor Garcia, Patricia E. Garcia, Roman Garza, Jose Luis Gonzalez, Magdalena Gonzalez, Sonda D. Gooch, Mary Guerrero, Herhsy Gunn, Carmen Haro, Patricia A. Hayden, Carlos Hermosa, Juan Hernandez, Maria Herrera, George Howard, Alicia Huizar, Vicente Huizar, Matha Ann James, Hermila Lopez, Herminia Lopez, Luis Lopez, Charlean Mack, Luz M. Magana, Maria A. Magana, Marilu Maldonado, Ana Rosa Martinez, Erick J. Martinez, Georgina C. Martinez, Guadalupe G. Martinez, Miguel A. Martinez, Flavia Maya, Lisa M. Medina, Maria Merlos, Urbano Merlos, Egan Morgan, Fidel Nava, Gerardo Nunez, Ruben Ordonez, Alma Rosa Ortiz, Isabel Paz, Carmen Perez, Maribel Ponce, Marcos Juan Puebla, Mase T. Reed, Luis Eduardo Rivera, Danetta M. Robinson, Caridad Rodriguez, Elizabeth Rodriguez, Jose Mario Rodriguez, Nancy Rodriguez, Roberto Rodriguez, Zuleima Rodriguez, Jose L. Rojas, Omayra Rosario, Griselda Salas, Fermin

Sanchez, Maria Santos, Juan M. Soto, Mary Soto, Warren G. Strange, Arthur K. Thomas, Jheaneth Thomas Ernesto Tinoco, Michael Torres, Teresa Torres, Teresa Tril, Katrina D. Triplett, Charleane Vaughn, Lourdes Vazquez, Jose Vera, Ramon Villanueva, and Guadalupe M. Zurita.

The 1997-98 LACASA Head Start Program participants include: Jessica Acevedo, Yahaira Aguayo, Emilio Flores, Cinthia Garcia, Casandra Guerrero, Harlene Haro, Anneliese Hartonian, Saul Hernandez, Henry James, Yarelis Nieves, Heracio Herrera, Tabitha Pearson, Marissa Perez, Amanda Ramos, Alfonso Rodriguez, Javier Torres, Kristian Torres, Zuleyka Chavez, Crystal Cuadra, Enrique Cuanetti, Selena Flores, Stefanos Glinos, Rosa Hernandez, Fabian Herrera, John Jacquez, Marcus James, Alejandro Herrera, Maria Martinez, Sabrina Millsap, Mathew Ortiz, Jeffrey Perez, Abimael Ramos, Christopher Salgado, Michael Walker, Alberto Irizarry, and Kayla Cheek.

LACASA Agency Volunteers for 1997-98 include: Mary Belle Ang, Kysha Amour-Porter, Amy Abrego, John Breckenridge, Janis Breckenridge, Terrance Martinez, Ray Acevedo, Manuel A. Roman, Carmen Fuentes, Marilu Maladonado, Maria Cuba, Georgina Martinez, Eloisa Vizcarra, Rosa Magana, Fannie Torres, Mr. Maldonado, Nelson Flores, Nora Valtierra, Samantha Long, Erica Ocasio, Dylon Long, Betty Magana, Luz Magana, Gladys Reyes, Juan Luis Alvarado, Aurora Glinos, Zuleima Rodriguez, Gabriel Magana, Jr., Albina Venegas, Jennifer Ash, James Ash, Helen Williams, Manuel Alvarez, Elena Hernandez, Stanly Garlarki, and Pat Garlarki.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commending the LACASA Adult Education Learners, Head Start Students, and Agency Volunteers for their dedication to the pursuit of education. I would also like to congratulate LACASA for its continuing efforts to preserve the Hispanic culture, while improving the quality of life for the Hispanic residents of northwest Indiana.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 1997

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, on May 5, 1997, through May 7, 1997, I was officially traveling with the President on his first state visit to Mexico and was therefore unable to vote during four rollcall votes. This includes two rollcall votes, numbered 103 and 104 on H.R. 2, the Housing Opportunity and Responsibility Act; one rollcall vote numbered 108 on the Boehlert amendment to H.R. 478; and one rollcall vote numbered 109 on House Resolution 143, providing for consideration of H.R. 3, a juvenile justice bill.

Had I been present for the votes, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall votes numbered 103, 104, and 108. I would have voted "no" on rollcall vote numbered 109.

TRIBUTE TO EDWIN OHKI

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 1997

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding and courageous individual, Edwin Ohki. The death of Mr. Ohki on October 23, 1996, was a sad day for all of Sonoma County, where he was a longtime resident.

Born in Livingston, CA, in 1923, Ed and his family were placed in a Japanese internment camp when World War II began. After being forced to live in the camp for over a year, Ed volunteered for the U.S. Army, even though as a Japanese-American he was offered combat duty only.

Ed joined the famed 442d Infantry Battalion, the most decorated unit in U.S. Army history. During combat in Italy, he was injured and then returned to the United States to spend over four painful months in the hospital. Ed was awarded the Purple Heart for his actions. Despite his heroism and being honorably discharged from the Army, Ed was sent back to an internment camp.

After the war, Ed returned to California and graduated from the University of California, Davis. He moved to Santa Rosa, in 1951, where he later joined his family's landscape business. Ed also served as secretary of the Sonoma County Landscape Gardeners Association.

Ed was very active with the First United Methodist Church of Santa Rosa, and the local Buddhist community. In addition, he served as president of the Sonoma County Japanese-American Citizen League. Ed will forever be remembered as a bridge builder—as someone who reached out to people of all racial and religious backgrounds.

Mr. Speaker, Ed Ohki served his country and his community well. He consistently extended himself on behalf of many people for a variety of important causes. Our Nation owes a great deal of gratitude to him for his tireless efforts. I extend my deepest sympathies to his wife, Anne, and their family. He will be missed by all.

A MAN OF COURAGE, AN
INSPIRATION FOR MANKIND

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 1997

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I wish to take a moment today to remind my colleagues of the heroic struggle being waged by Wei Jingsheng.

Wei has spent all but one of the past 18 years in Chinese prisons, jailed for the crime of advocating political democracy. Released briefly in 1993, as China sought to tidy up its public image in an effort to win the 2000 Olympic Games for Beijing, Wei was re-arrested in 1994, only days after meeting with the United States Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, and sentenced to 14 additional years in prison. Today, he languishes in jail while his health deteriorates. His requests for urgent medical attention have gone unanswered.