

I wish Dr. Freed and his wife, Catherine, all the best as they approach this new adventure of retirement together.

TRIBUTE TO THE VETERANS OF
FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED
STATES 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 1999

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the Centennial Anniversary of a proud organization. Today, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Tenth District in the State of Michigan will celebrate the VFW's 100th Anniversary. The members will gather at the Charles Schoor Post 796 in Port Huron Michigan in honor of this historic occasion.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars dates back to the time of the Spanish-American War of the late 1800's. The first local organizations were founded by veterans in 1899 to secure rights and benefits for their service. Three separate groups were founded in Ohio, Colorado, and Pennsylvania, and later banded together to become known as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Today, the organization has over two million members, and includes veterans from World War I through Bosnia. Each new generation of members adds to the strength and focus of the VFW. However, the VFW has remained committed to recognizing military service and remembering those who gave their lives for freedom.

Under the motto, "Honor the dead by helping the living," the VFW has provided assistance to countless veterans across the United States. The VFW has more than 15,000 trained service officers who assist veterans and their families with government services, discharge upgrades, and other much-deserved benefits awarded to Veterans. Through national programs, the Veterans of Foreign Wars is able to provide members with information, scholarship, safety programs, and youth involvement activities.

On the 100th Anniversary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, we celebrate the people who have made this organization successful. I would like to extend my congratulations on this historic occasion and best wishes for the future.

BANKRUPTCY REFORM ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 833) to amend title II of the United States Code, and for further purposes:

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Chairman, while I believe that H.R. 833 is an important step towards ending the abuse and restoring responsibility to our nation's bankruptcy system, I believe that the effectiveness of this legislation

could be improved by adjusting the homestead exemption for bankruptcy filers to more adequately reflect the current costs of housing in the United States.

Mr. Chairman, in my home State of New York, the homestead exemption for individuals is just \$10,000 while couples are limited to only a \$20,000 exemption. Clearly this amount is woefully inadequate when compared to the current high costs of housing faced by the residents of New York.

Mr. Chairman, while I think that H.R. 833 sets a reasonable cap on homestead exemptions at \$250,000, I believe it is imperative that the homestead exemption for individuals and couples in New York be raised to sufficiently reflect the prevailing costs of housing in New York so that while consumers are working to meet their financial obligations and get back on their feet, they are not burdened with the prospect of losing their homes.

HONORING THE SILAS AND ELLA
LEWIS FAMILY REUNION

HON. RONNIE SHOWS

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 1999

Mr. SHOWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Family of Silas and Ella Lewis as they plan to celebrate their first Family Reunion from July 2nd through July 4th, 1999 in Monticello, Mississippi.

Silas Lewis was one of the first African-Americans to own land and a horse-drawn buggy in the early 1900's. Descendants of Silas and Ella Lewis continue to live in the area and have become productive and prominent members of the community.

All Americans come together as a family to honor our national heritage on the Fourth of July. It is a fitting tribute to Silas and Ella Lewis that so many members of their family have made the commitment to come together during the Fourth of July holiday to celebrate their personal heritage. Silas and Ella Lewis are role models for modern Americans. The principles of hard work and determination they instilled in their children and grandchildren continue to represent the strong family values we need to foster as we prepare to begin a new millennium.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to honor the memory of Silas and Ella Lewis. I am proud of their family for coming together to celebrate their noble heritage. And I am most proud that I am able to rise before this Congress—the People's House—to share their story and praise Silas and Ella Lewis.

MARKING THE 300TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE TOWN OF PLAINFIELD,
CONNECTICUT

HON. SAM GEJDENSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 1999

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 300th anniversary of the incorporation of the Town of Plainfield, Connecticut. I join the residents of the community in celebrating this special occasion.

Within only a few decades of landing at Plymouth Rock, citizens of the Massachusetts Bay Colony were migrating into the "hollowing wilderness" of eastern Connecticut and settling along the banks of the Quinebaug River. Today, it is hard to believe that Connecticut was once considered "frontier" territory, but the families who began to develop towns east of the Connecticut River in the 1640s and 1650s were pioneers well before the first Conestoga wagon set off along the Oregon trail. The Winthrop and Fitch families began to establish settlements on the Quinebaug in the mid-1650s. The Winthrop settlement on the eastern side of the River would ultimately become the Town of Plainfield when its inhabitants were granted the "powers and privileges of a township" on May 11, 1699. The name Plainfield—bestowed by Governor Fitz-John Winthrop in 1700—can be directly traced to the topography of the area which is dominated by fertile meadows and fields.

The development of Plainfield over the past three centuries is a microcosm of the history of New England and the nation as a whole. Plainfield was an agrarian community throughout the 1700s dotted by small family farms growing corn, rye, barley and other crops in the fertile lands surrounding the Quinebaug. Men from Plainfield joined colonists from across Connecticut and New England to fight for our independence during the Revolutionary War. The Community hosted 6,000 troops under the command of French General Rochambeau as they traveled from Newport, Rhode Island to Yorktown, Virginia to participate in the decisive campaign of the Revolution.

Beginning in the first decade of the nineteenth century, Plainfield began a fundamental transition which would forever reshape its character, population, economy and culture. In many respects, the history of this community, and many others throughout New England, is defined by the development and expansion of the textile industry. And Plainfield was an ideal place for this industry to grow. The rivers which run through Plainfield, including the Moosup and Quinebaug, offered an ideal source of power for early mills. The Hartford-Providence Turnpike, the major transportation route between the state capitals, ran through town. Moreover, Plainfield benefitted from its close proximity to Rhode Island—the birthplace of the factory-based textile industry in the United States. The early mills received important financial support from Rhode Island investors and utilized technology developed by Samuel Slater.

The first textile mill was established in the community by the Plainfield Union Manufacturing Company in 1809 along the Moosup River. Within a decade, the company employed 74 people who produced shirts, sheets, bedding and other products. In the years following 1809, which author Christopher Bickford describes as "those frenetic first years of growth of the textile industry," several other mills were established along the Moosup and Quinebaug Rivers, including one owned by the Moosup Manufacturing Company. By 1820, the character of Plainfield had changed significantly as the textile industry became more and more widespread.

Over the coming decades, the textile industry would grow exponentially, remaking the

community into an industrial center in Connecticut. The mills built during this period were multiple stories and incorporated the latest technological innovations. By 1840, Plainfield was home to seven cotton and five woolen mills. The cotton mills produced 3.2 million yards of cloth and employed 512 people. The woolen factories produced 110,500 yards of cloth using nearly 300 employees. In 1840, the railroad began to provide service to Plainfield. This linked Plainfield to communities throughout New England and provided another boost to the growing textile sector. Using the railroad, producers could distribute their products to new markets more cheaply than ever before. Moreover, the coming of the railroad helped to encourage the development of larger and larger industrial facilities. The original Wauregan Mill, built in 1853, was 250 feet long by 50 feet wide making it the largest mill in Plainfield by far. By 1860, this mill was the largest in Windham County with 425 employees who produced 3.9 million yards of various cloth products.

The history of Plainfield continued to be defined in large part by the textile industry through the 1920s. New mills continued to be constructed, including facilities built by the Plainfield Woolen Company and another by the Central Worsted Company. The last major mill was built by Harold Lawton between 1906 and 1912. This was the largest facility ever constructed during more than a century dominated by continuous growth in the textile industry. The original structure was three stories, measured more than 250 feet long and had a 150-foot smokestack rising above its steam generators. Over the next six years, the original building was expanded twice and employment grew to 1,200. These developments in the early part of this century prompted the Providence Sunday Journal to write in 1912 that "Plainfield has been transformed from a quiet farming community into one of the busiest mill villages hereabouts." The transformation of Plainfield from a frontier outpost into an industrial center was complete.

The residents of Plainfield have triumphed over a series of challenges throughout the twentieth century. They survived the Great Depression which dramatically reduced employment in the Town's mills. Young men from the Town served their nation bravely in two world wars, Korea, Vietnam and other military actions around the world. The community developed new industries in the 1950s and 1960s during a period in which economic forces beyond its control shifted textile manufacturing to the southern United States and overseas. During this period, new manufacturers, including Kaman Corporation and C&M Wire, moved to old mill buildings and contributed to economic diversification and revitalization.

Mr. Speaker, a yet to be published book documenting Plainfield's long history is appropriately titled: "Plainfield Transformed: Three Centuries of Life in a Connecticut Town." Over the past three hundred years, the community has been transformed from a frontier outpost to a center of textile manufacturing to the town we see today. As the residents celebrate their past, they look to the future with optimism and a strong sense of community. I know that our grandchildren and their children will mark Plainfield's 400th Anniversary with the pride we feel today.

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH E. DEVVOY

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 1999

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to invite my colleagues to pay tribute to Joseph E. DeVoy on the occasion of the Forest Hills Community and Civic Association's Testimonial Luncheon in recognition of his thirty-five years of service to the Association and to the Forest Hills community.

Joe DeVoy, a strong believer in community and coalition building, was selected as Community Board Six's first Chairman and continues to serve as a member of the Board. He has served as the President of the Central Queens Allied Council, a forerunner of Civic Alliances in Queens.

Joe DeVoy's strong interest and focus on community service led him to be one of the founding members of the Forest Hills Volunteer Ambulance Corps where he served as an EMT for six years. Through his dedicated efforts, the North Forest Park Branch of the Queens Borough Library was completed and opened to the public providing neighborhood residents with a haven to read and learn about their community and the world. In addition, Joe DeVoy was the driving force behind the designation and development of Remsen Park as a historic landmark and protected area and currently serves as the President of the Remsen Park Coalition.

Joe DeVoy routinely works with neighborhood community groups and local elected officials to ensure the quality of life of his friends and neighbors in Forest Hills. Under Joe DeVoy's leadership, the Forest Hills Community and Civic Association has developed a broad array of services for people of all ages. Today, the members of the Forest Hills Community and Civic Association still enjoy the benefits of Joe's guidance and leadership in finding ways to resolve problems which affect the Forest Hills community.

Joe DeVoy has long been known as an innovator and beacon of good will to all those with whom he has come into contact. Through his dedicated efforts, he has helped improve my constituents' quality of life. In recognition of his many accomplishments on behalf of my constituents, I offer my congratulations to Joseph E. DeVoy on the occasion of the Forest Hills Community and Civic Association's Testimonial Luncheon in honor of his thirty-five years of service to the Association and to the Forest Hills community.

WE THE PEOPLE . . . THE CITIZEN
AND THE CONSTITUTION

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 1999

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to congratulate the young scholars of Woodbridge High School from Bridgeville who represented my home state of Delaware in the We the People . . . The Citizen and the Constitution program. They were part of a group of 1200 students from across the country who were in Wash-

ington, D.C. from May first to the third to compete in the national finals of this program. These young scholars worked diligently and persistently to reach the national finals and through this program have gained a deeper knowledge and understanding of the fundamental principles and values of our constitutional democracy.

The names of the students are: Derek Bowman, Mike Clendaniel, Lisa Culver, Joy Diogo, Laura Divver, Shawanda Garrison, Krsitine Haring, Cassie Hartzell, Brooke Hearn, Lina Hertzog, Heather Holmes, Jared Judy, Michele Keough, Matt McCoy, Josh Miller, Blake Moore, Andrew Morozowich, Jessica Parkinson, Willie Savage, Crystal Short and Lefisha Williamson.

I would also like to extend my congratulations to their teacher, Barbara Hudson, who deserves much of the credit for the success of the team.

The We the People . . . The Citizen and the Constitution program is the most extensive educational program in the country developed specifically to educate young students about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The three-day final competition they participated in consisted of hearings modeled after those in the United States Congress. The students made oral presentations before a panel of adult judges and testified as constitutional experts before a "congressional committee." A panel of adult judges representing various regions of the country and a variety of appropriate professional fields served on the congressional committees. These judges followed up the testimonies with a series of questions designed to test the students' depth of understanding and their ability to apply constitutional knowledge to given situations.

The We the People program is administered by the Center for Civic Education, and has provided curricular materials at upper elementary, middle and high school levels for more than 26.5 million students nationwide. This program has promoted civic competence and responsibility among young students as well as awareness for contemporary relevance of the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

The team from Woodbridge High School conducted research in preparation for the national competition here in Washington, D.C. I congratulate them for their fine work that enabled them to come so far in this competition and to visit our nation's capital.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES' BENEFITS EQUITY ACT OF 1999

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 12, 1999

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the President of the United States, William Jefferson Clinton, I am pleased to introduce the "Federal Employees' Benefits Equity Act of 1999." This proposal eliminates certain inequities under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), with respect to computation of benefits for certain employees. The legislation also corrects an inequity created by the court decision. *Wassenaar v. OPM*, that affects benefits for survivors of law