

TRIBUTE TO PASTOR CHARLES E.
THOMAS

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 5, 2000

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my colleagues here in the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in honoring a very special person, Rev. Dr. Charles E. Thomas, Pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Newark, NJ, who will retire later this month after more than three decades of faithful service.

Born and raised in Montgomery, AL, to Reverend Nathaniel and Fannie Thomas, he pursued his educational goals, receiving a bachelor's degree in business administration from Selma University in Selma, AL. Reverend Thomas received a bachelor degree in theology from the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, TN, and an honorary doctorate degree from the Urban Bible Institute of Detroit, MI. Reverend Thomas was called to the New Hope Baptist Church in Newark, NJ, in 1957 and began his pastorate on August 6, 1968.

Throughout his years of service, Pastor Thomas has made a difference in countless lives through his strong commitment to the church and to the entire community. In 1972, Reverend Thomas undertook a major project, the formation of the New Hope Day Care Center, which was first housed in the church's dining room. The day care center later moved to a four-story building purchased by the church. Today, the center continues its successful operation, rendering services for 66 children year round on a daily basis. Pastor Thomas also administered the development of the Minority Contractors and Craftsmen Trade Association and the New Hope Skills Centers. These programs trained workers in carpentry, masonry and machinery and enabled them to pursue careers in those fields.

Pastor Thomas also reorganized the Scholarship Fund at New Hope, expanding opportunities for young men and women who wish to attend college. In 1975, Pastor Thomas organized the New Hope Development Corporation, which was responsible for the building of New Hope Village, a 170-family housing complex in Newark which provides affordable housing. Other innovative programs he spearheaded include van transportation for seniors, services to address teen pregnancies, prison ministry and drug and alcohol counseling.

Mr. Speaker, on the occasion of his retirement, let us express our warmest congratula-

tions to Pastor Thomas and our appreciation for his dedicated service to his church and his community.

ITALIAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE

HON. NICK LAMPSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 5, 2000

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, October 9th is Columbus Day. Columbus Day is more than just a celebration of the great explorer, Christopher Columbus, it's about the achievements of Italian-American heritage and the vision of our entire nation.

Italian-Americans came to this country with little, but we've left a large mark on our history and culture. I look at my own family and feel the same way—I started with little and hopefully will leave a mark on the Southeast, Texas area. My mother, who did not graduate from high school, but earned a G.E.D. on her 80th birthday, successfully raised six children by herself after my father died when I was young. She produced an artist, a doctor, a college teacher, successful business people, and a United States Congressman—not too bad.

In 1492, a brave and noble explorer with nothing but dreams landed in a vast and foreign land full of promise—America. Although he can be considered a controversial figure because Americans born here in what is now the U.S. certainly lost during European expansion, his courage and desire for success made him a hero to all.

Columbus Day celebrates our proud people and recognizes the unique Italian-American experience. With strong leadership and eternal pride, Italian-American communities not only in Southeast Texas, but also around the nation, have distinguished themselves through a strong sense of family and dedication to their youth.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the most valuable and most powerful influence Christopher Columbus has on our nation and in our human history is vision. All Americans can draw inspiration from the character and accomplishments of Columbus.

With his sense of vision, courage, imagination, and optimism, we can create a future bright with promise and a new world where all of us can pursue our dreams. For we have the power to shape the vision of this nation today, tomorrow, and into the next century.

THE NEEDLESTICK SAFETY AND
PREVENTION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 3, 2000

Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, we are here today because needlestick related health problems are costly and preventable. H.R. 5178, the Needlestick Safety and Prevention Act, will protect our Nation's health care providers from unnecessary health risks.

Each year, between 600,000 and 800,000 health care workers are accidentally stuck by needles. As a result, over 1,000 of these injured workers go on to contract HIV, hepatitis B, or hepatitis C, and over 100 eventually die from their illness. Even those who are fortunate enough not to be infected by one of these diseases must suffer through 6 months of waiting before they and their families know that they are healthy.

This suffering can be avoided. Studies have shown that over 80 percent of needlestick injuries are avoidable. Passage of the Needlestick Safety and Prevention Act will require a strong national standard to prevent needlestick injuries, and will empower OSHA to increase the usage of safer needles.

These changes will reduce not only the suffering of injured providers and their families, but also the costs that hospitals must absorb each time a needlestick occurs. The post-exposure treatments that every injured worker have cost up to \$3,000. My home State of California was the first State to pass this legislation, and estimates are that we will save over \$100 million each year as a result.

Unfortunately, this legislation will be too late for many health care providers. Peggy Ferro, a health care worker in my district in San Francisco, was the first health care provider to pass away from AIDS as a result of a needlestick. She died at the young age of 49, while still fighting for passage of the legislation that we are debating today.

Although this legislation has not been passed soon enough to help Peggy, we can honor her memory by ensuring that safer needle technology is used in health facilities. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 5178.