

was under the leadership of Julian Virtue and his son Robert, now chairman of the board and CEO, that Virco went on to become an industry leader.

Virco is a leading supplier of tables, chairs, and storage equipment for schools, convention centers, auditoriums, places of worship, and hotels. Virco employs 2,400 individuals nationwide, including 700 jobs at its headquarters in Torrance, CA.

The Virco Manufacturing Co. is a valuable member of the Torrance community. Their contributions have been numerous. I congratulate Virco and its employees on this milestone and I wish them continued success.

1999 CONTRACTOR OF THE YEAR,
GREGG RIPPY

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 2000

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize the 1999 Contractor of the Year. Mr. Gregg Rippy was nominated for the award by the Colorado Contractors Association.

The Colorado Contractors Association emphasizes skill, integrity and responsibility as key traits of its members. These qualities are also what the association requires for the Contractor of the Year award. Another quality that Gregg displays amply is leadership.

Gregg has been a Colorado Contractors Association member for 17 years and has won numerous awards from both the state and national levels. During his recent presidency of Grand River Construction Company in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, the company was named chapter of the year on the national level by the Associated General Contractors of America and Gregg was named national chapter president of the year. He is now a national director with Associated General Contractors of America and has served as chairman of the Colorado Contractors Association legislative committee for four years. Gregg is also a co-owner of Rocky Mountain Redi-Mix.

A Colorado native, Gregg has followed a family tradition by becoming a contractor. His father, grandfather and uncle were all in the construction business. He first joined Grand River Construction after graduating from Colorado State University and eventually became president of the company.

It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to offer this tribute to my dear friend, Gregg Rippy, 1999 Contractor of the Year. His commitment to his country, his community and his profession is deeply admirable and highly commendable.

TAIWAN SECURITY ENHANCEMENT
ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. THOMAS M. DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 1, 2000

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H.R. 1838, the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act.

This legislation is important because it reaffirms our commitment to support democracy and economic stability in Asia. In 1979, Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act which ensured Taiwan's security by providing it with sufficient defensive weapons so it may protect and maintain its own national defense. While the U.S. and Taiwan do not share full diplomatic ties, our unique relationship with Taiwan demonstrates that Taiwan's security should be reinforced and enhanced.

The government of Taiwan is a representative democracy and the people of Taiwan will elect a new President next month. Taiwan is a bright example of how a democratic government which allows the free market to operate becomes a region of peace coupled with remarkable economic growth. Taiwan is the world's 15th largest economy and is the United States' 7th largest trading partner, while the United States is Taiwan's largest export market.

Given the events which have transpired over the past several years, it is essential that we protect American interests by promoting peace in the Taiwan Straits. H.R. 1838 will augment the process for defense sales to Taiwan by requiring the President to report annually to Congress Taiwan's requests for defense products, detailing why Taiwan needs these items, and justifying any decision that the United States makes to reject or postpone such arms sales to Taiwan. Furthermore, H.R. 1838 will address the deficiencies in Taiwan's readiness by supporting Taiwan's increased participation at U.S. defense colleges, requiring the enhancement of our military exchanges and joint training, and require the Secretary of Defense to develop a program to enhance operational training and exchanges between the Taiwanese and U.S. militaries on the issues of threat analysis, force planning, and operational methods.

Taiwan is and continues to be a strong U.S. ally. For this reason, I believe the priorities outlined in H.R. 1838 are imperative if we are to maintain peace and stability in this region of the world. Given the People's Republic of China's tendency to engage in aggressive rhetoric and brinkmanship, Taiwan's self-defense capability should be improved and strengthened. A secure Taiwan would provide a better foundation and possible progress for cross-strait dialogue.

I believe we must honor our commitments in the Taiwan Strait. The Republic of China is a vibrant nation with an expanding economy, and it is my belief that America should support Taiwan in its endeavors to remain free and democratic.

TIME FOR HAITIANS, NICARAGUANS AND CENTRAL AMERICANS TO ADJUST THEIR STATUS UNDER HRIFA AND NACARA

HON. CARRIE P. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 2000

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today, I introducing a bill to extend the time for eligible Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Central Americans to apply to adjust their status and become permanent residents under the Haitian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act of 1998

[HRIFA] and the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act [NACARA]

My bill would extend the time for eligible persons to apply to adjust their status under HRIFA and NACARA to October 1, 2001 or until 12 months after the date that the INS adopts final regulations implementing HRIFA and NACARA, whichever date is later.

Presently, under HRIFA and NACARA, eligible Haitians, Nicaraguans and Central Americans must apply to adjust their status to permanent residency by April 1, 2000 or they will lose their right to do so. The INS estimates that at least 50,000 Haitians are eligible to adjust their status under HRIFA. The Haitian community estimates the number as closer to 100,000 people. To date, only about 18,000 eligible Haitians have applied. Similarly, there are thousands of qualified Nicaraguans and Central Americans who have yet to adjust their status under NACARA.

Qualified applicants must pay very substantial filing fees to adjust their status under HRIFA and NACARA. For large families, these fees can amount to thousands of dollars. I have been told of a case where a person working full-time, earning a \$20,000 income, had to pay over \$2,000 in filing fees for his family. Many eligible applicants who are working are finding it very difficult to come with the filing fees. These fees are extremely burdensome. We should be reducing them. At a minimum, we should give people more time to earn them.

Moreover, because of language and cultural barriers, many eligible applicants are not even aware of their rights to adjust their status under HRIFA and NACARA. Finally, there have been very substantial bureaucratic delays in the issuance of regulations implementing HRIFA and NACARA. The INS received many public comments on its proposed HRIFA and NACARA regulations and these comments are still being reviewed and considered.

To date, final regulations have not been issued under either HRIFA and NACARA. As a result, the INS has not even definitively stated the standards that will govern its interpretation and implementation of HRIFA and NACARA. Simply put, the regulatory climate remains unsettled.

Mr. Speaker, HRIFA and NACARA were designed to allow eligible Haitians, Nicaraguans and Central Americans to become permanent residents. We must not allow high filing fees, language or cultural barriers, or delays in the issuance of implementing regulations to frustrate the intention behind these bills. We need to extend the filing deadline to assure that all eligible Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Central Americans receive a full and fair opportunity to adjust their status.

We must assure that all eligible persons are fully informed of their rights to adjust their status, that they know definitively the final regulations under which their rights will be determined, and that they receive an adequate period of time to earn the substantial filing fees that presently must accompany applications under HRIFA and NACARA.

Mr. Speaker, Representatives LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, ALCEE HASTINGS and PETER DEUTSCH are original cosponsors of my bill. I urge all my colleagues to support this critically important legislation.

SAN LUIS VALLEY PEACE OFFICER OF 1999, GEORGE DINGFELDER

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 2000

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to congratulate the San Luis Valley Peace Officer of 1999.

Officer George Dingfelder, based in Alamosa, Colorado, has won this distinguished award due to his high standard of professionalism and outstanding commitment to his field. George has made it a personal pledge to fight drunk driving and drug use in the San Luis Valley. George has made several contacts with drunk drivers and drug traffickers. He has recorded more than 500 drunk driving arrests and confiscated several hundred pounds of marijuana in his five year career. George was honored by Mothers Against Drunk Driving in 1998 for his efforts stopping drivers from being on the road while intoxicated.

George is also a local hero. He and his wife, Stephanie, saved a young boy when his life was threaten by a leopard at the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo. The leopard attacked the boy through a fence, but George and Stephanie were successful at fending off the rather large cat. As a result of their bravery, George

and Stephanie were awarded Colorado's Life Saving Award by Colorado Governor Bill Owens.

It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to offer this tribute to Officer George Dingfelder for his outstanding bravery and commitment to uphold the law. He has truly made a difference in the San Luis Valley.

**HONORING ROBERT H. MILLER, A
TRUE AMERICAN HERO**

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 2000

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to pause and recognize the life of a true American Hero. Robert Miller, who was a World War II veteran, passed away on January 12, 2000. He was 75 years old.

Bob served in the United States Armed Forces during one of the most infamous days in history. On June 6, 1944, Bob made it up only 15 feet on Omaha Beach before a sniper's bullet severed his spine. He was only 20 years old, and he would never walk again.

Bob received the Purple Heart and his unit, B Company of the 149th Combat Engineers, was awarded a presidential unit citation and the French Croix De Guerre.

After returning to the United States to recover from his injuries, Bob met his future bride, Pat Korber. They were married in 1950.

Bob attended the Kansas City Art Institute and earned a degree in commercial design. He worked for Goldblatt Tool Company until his retirement in 1978.

Bob and Pat moved to Pueblo, Colorado in 1980.

A very patriotic man, Bob never missed an opportunity to fly the flag or to visit with old military friends. In 1999, Bob drove to Des Moines, Iowa for a reunion. He knew no limits when it came to serving his country or staying in contact with those who had served with him. Bob was also in charge of a project to make a memorial to their military unit more conspicuous. The Air Force even flew a piece of granite for them to France.

Bob also liked to play wheelchair basketball. In 1973, he was one of the first people inducted into the National Wheelchair Basketball Hall of Fame. He served as the National Wheelchair Basketball Association's first president.

Bob was very involved in his community and his parish, Our Lady of the Meadows.

It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to offer tribute to Bob Miller. He was a man that will be missed by his community and everyone who knew him. He was a great American who deserves our highest praise and regard.