

on American Airlines Flight 11, whose family lives in my district of San Francisco. On September 11, Betty called the airline reservations center from the plane to sound the alarm and provide information about the terrorists who had taken over the plane. I am aware of the enormous pain and suffering her family has been experiencing and extend them my deepest sympathy. It is an honor to pay tribute to Betty and express my appreciation for her life and bravery in the face of enormous danger.

Now, even stepping onto an airplane is an act requiring willpower and courage for many Americans. Yet flight attendants do it every day. Flight attendants deserve our respect, cooperation, courtesy, and commendation for their hard work and courage their hard work. I urge my colleagues to vote for this resolution.

HONORING BONNIE ELOISE RUSH
MILAM

HON. NICK LAMPSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 12, 2002

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Bonnie Eloise Rush Milam. It is fitting that today we honor this great lady, a proud American who gave so much to her country and it's military by founding the Melody Maids.

Eloise Milam was born in a house on the bay shore of Anahuac, Texas. Her family wound it's way through Texas, to Oregon and then eventually settled in Beaumont. She began to take piano lessons at age five and loved playing and singing on local programs, eventually becoming a member of the chorus at Beaumont High School.

After graduation, she continued through college and after as a member of numerous music and drama organizations. She sang in church and community concerts and with the Beaumont Light Opera Company.

By 1942, Eloise Milam had a very large group of private voice students. She was frequently asked to arrange programs for community affairs. When asked to assist with a bond rally at the Jefferson Theater, she presented her students as a choral group. Because the newspaper insisted on having a name for the group, they quickly decided on the Melody Maids. A new career was born.

The Melody Maids traveled countless times from coast to coast, singing for conventions and programs of all sorts, but primarily for military installations and especially veteran's hospitals. They made four tours of Europe, several more to England, three to the Far East, seven to the Far North, four to the Caribbean, five to Mexico, seven to Hawaii and four to Bermuda, Iceland, and the Azores.

Many of the tours were financed by the girls themselves with money made from musicals, style shows, cake and pie sales and other benefits. Practically all the tours after 1956 were sponsored by the Entertainment Branch of the Dept. of Defense. They were the most frequently requested of all the performers who traveled with the Department of Defense's Professional Entertainment Branch. She led her group into numerous hospital wards all over the world where individual conversations with wounded, injured, or ill military personnel proved to be a bright spot for them and a personal privilege for group members.

Her influence has been felt by hundreds of Texas high-school and college-age Melody Maids and by thousands of military personnel around the world. Her talent and spirit represented by this group in their performances before civic organizations and in hospitals and military installations have brought significant goodwill to Texas.

Her leadership was characterized by a combination of kindness and emphasis on excellence. The standards she set for the group are many that we should set for ourselves today. Eloise stressed the value of service to our fellow human beings, the rewards of helping one another in group activities, and a respect for different cultures and religions.

Every August, women from all over the country head toward Beaumont. They come to spend a weekend reminiscing about their Melody Maid experiences, exchange family news, and mostly to be with Eloise and recognize her tireless work and passionate dedication to service and country.

Mr. Speaker, it is truly an honor to stand here tonight, representing such an amazing lady. Eloise Milam's commitment to her community and country is an inspiration to us all.

CONTINUING CRISIS IN FOSTER
CARE

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 12, 2002

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, in 1980 Congress made a commitment to improve the lives of abused and neglected children. However, lack of federal oversight and accountability has undercut that commitment. In fact, in far too many instances we have had devastating results. Of the estimated 2000 children annually who die of abuse and neglect, more than 40 percent were already known to child welfare agencies.

In Milwaukee, 48 percent of families investigated for abuse had prior involvement with the child welfare system; in Washington, DC, 32 percent of such families had been previously reported to protected services; and in New York City, in 43 percent of families that had been the subject of an abuse/maltreatment complaint, children were abused or maltreated again while under city supervision.

These sobering statistics are made worse when you consider that this state-sanctioned abuse and neglect occurs despite federally mandated procedural safeguards, including individualized case planning, case management and case reviews.

Federal law requires that children have a safe environment consistent with their special needs. Yet year after year, many states have consistently failed to meet even the basic needs of foster care children. This continued failure raises serious questions about the adequacy of federal oversight of state child welfare programs, which the federal government largely funds.

In yet another tragic example of our failure to provide for and protect foster children, a 9-year-old boy died of an asthma attack six weeks after being placed in foster care. According to the following article in the Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles county officials admit that social workers failed to inform medical workers of the child's severe asthma.

[From The Los Angeles Times, July 31, 2002]

TEARFUL APOLOGY IN BOY'S DEATH; COUNTY: A \$1-MILLION PAYOUT IS OKD. MOLINA, MOVED BY A MOTHER'S PLEA, VOWS ANSWERS IN FOSTER CARE CASE.

(By Garrett Therolf)

A mother's plea for a criminal investigation into the death of her son—whose life ended while he was in the Los Angeles County foster care system—Tuesday elicited a trembling and tearful apology from county Supervisor Gloria Molina, who pledged to demand answers from county officials about what happened.

Hours later, Molina and her colleagues approved a \$1-million settlement in the lawsuit brought over the boy's death.

Molina's remarks and the board action followed an emotional appeal by the boy's mother.

Debra Reid, 44, entered the hearing room grim-faced, flanked by eight family members dressed in black. At her side was her son Debin, who was placed in foster care for 15 months in 1997. His older brother, Jonathan, was taken away at the same time. The children were taken from their mother after social workers concluded that she was unstable and not tending properly to their medical needs.

But Jonathan died six weeks after being placed in foster care, where social workers, by the county's admission, failed to inform medical workers of his severe asthma. Reid has been fighting the county in the courts ever since.

"This is five years in coming," Reid began.

Racked with sobs, Reid recalled how she begged social workers to treat Jonathan's asthma. Social workers had dismissed Reid's account of the severity of the child's asthma, county officials acknowledged.

"They said my child was healthy," Reid told the board. "Well, that child now lies in an Inglewood cemetery."

None of the social workers has been disciplined in the case, county officials said. Reid begged supervisors to launch a criminal investigation, alleging that social workers had falsified reports to take the boy from her.

"We have sought true justice and we have not received it until someone sends this case for criminal investigation," Reid said. "All we have received is a payoff, and we're not satisfied with a payoff."

"Not one person from the county," Reid said, "has bothered to apologize."

Reid's appeal to the board is one of many that the supervisors have heard involving the foster care system.

Virtually every week, a parade of parents come before the supervisors, pleading for help in getting their children out of that system. Most weeks, they leave empty-handed, as supervisors insist that they cannot involve themselves in matters that are before the courts. The pleas often meet with indifference from county officials, who typically talk among themselves as parents address the supervisors.

Tuesday was different.

As Reid spoke, the hearing room went silent. Aides and department heads dabbed at tears. In an adjacent chamber where county administrators eat snacks and drink coffee, all movement ceased.

Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke asked Reid whether she was satisfied with the settlement. After conferring with her attorney, Reid said she was, but reiterated her call for justice.

Then Molina spoke, her voice trembling, her eyes watering.

She recalled how supervisors routinely rebuff requests for help in foster care cases, and how she had told a congresswoman

pleading on Reid's behalf that she had to trust the courts to do the right thing.

"I don't know that my apology to you will help you at all," Molina said. "I can only say I apologize for not being more attentive."

Promising to personally pursue the issue, Molina said, "We've got to really take the gloves off on this thing, because this is a real battle. If that department [the Department of Children and Family Services] could not protect those children, then we should not be empowering that department to carry out this work."

Supervisor Mike Antonovich quickly added his apology. Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky said the whole board apologized for what happened to Jonathan.

After the meeting, Reid said Molina's apology "meant a lot. She was sincere. That is the first sign of remorse I have seen in the county."

Reid said Tuesday's hearing and the conclusion of two civil cases filed over Jonathan's death and Debin's placement in foster care were gratifying milestones in her family's quest for justice.

The determination to press for further action on Jonathan's death has occupied Reid and her family for years, she said Tuesday. At each step of the way, nine family members have gathered to vote on strategic decisions about how to pursue the case, she said.

Along the way, the family has turned to one lawyer after another—seven in all.

"Every time a lawyer didn't believe in me or in this case we got rid of them," Reid said. "Jonathan is still very much a part of this family."

VICTORVILLE, CALIFORNIA CELEBRATES 40 YEARS OF CITYHOOD

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 12, 2002

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like today to congratulate the citizens and civic leaders of Victorville, California on the 40th anniversary of cityhood for the Mojave Desert community. The history of this rapidly growing city is a fascinating glimpse of the growth of the inland areas of California.

Like many of the towns of the Southwest, Victorville began its existence as a railroad stop. Around 1885, a station was established at the Mojave River crossing on what ultimately became the Santa Fe Railway's on its Mojave Desert. It was named for Jacob Nash Victor, a railroad construction superintendent who was a pioneer in the early development of the expansion of the railroad to the west. In 1901 the US Postal Service renamed the city to Victorville to eliminate a name duplication problem with Victor, Colorado.

When it was incorporated on Sept. 21, 1962, the city of Victorville had grown to just over 8,000 residences; by 1995 the city boasted a bustling population of 60,649 and had increased its size to 67.68 sq. miles, an increase of over 58 sq. miles. Rich soil and an abundance of water encouraged the development of the agricultural community. Large deposits of limestone and granite led to the cement manufacturing industry, which has emerged as the most important sector of commerce in the Victor Valley.

With the historic Route 66 running through Victorville and heading on up to Chicago, the town has always provided numerous activities

for tourists, included a Route 66 museum and the San Bernardino County Fair. The city has become the commercial hub of the Victor Valley, which includes more than 300,000 people in a wide range of communities.

One of the most important national connections with Victorville began in 1941 with the construction of the Victorville Army Airfield. Later renamed George Air Force Base, the base construction was completed on May 18, 1943. When fully activated, the base housed two jet fighter wings of the Tactical Air Command whose primary aircraft was the F-4 phantom Wild Weasel, which provided vital electronic reconnaissance from the Vietnam War through the Persian Gulf War. The base also employed over 6,000 military and civilian personnel. In January 1989 the Secretary of Defense announced the closure of the base. In the past decade since the closure, Victorville annexed the base, renamed it the Southern California Logistics Airport, and has turned it into a booming new commercial center and international cargo airport that is expected to serve the entire Southwest region.

Mr. Speaker, I have proudly represented the City of Victorville for more than two decades in Congress, and I have watched it grow into a dynamic city that is well-governed and fiscally sound. The City Council now oversees a budget of \$77.6 million for 69,298 citizens who are known for their friendliness, self-sufficiency and optimism. Please join me in congratulating the city leaders and the community for their 40 years of cityhood, and wishing them continued success in the future.

RECOGNIZING CHIEF TIM HOLMAN, GERMAN TWP. FIRE AND EMS

HON. DAVID L. HOBSON

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 12, 2002

Mr. HOBSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of Tim Holman, who is the chief of the German Township Volunteer Fire Department and EMS. Chief Holman was recently named "Volunteer Fire Chief of the Year" at the 2002 International Association of Fire Chiefs Conference in Kansas City.

Tim has volunteered for the German Township Fire Department for 27 years, and he has served as chief since 1991. By incorporating his private sector business experience into the management of the fire department, Chief Holman successfully consolidated two township fire departments, while also implementing an officer development program, a quality improvement process, and a team building process. Chief Holman has been essential in the streamlining of his fire department, allowing the brave volunteers of the German Township Fire Department to better serve their community. I applaud Chief Holman, and the men and women of the volunteer fire departments throughout my district, for the dedication, sacrifice and commitment that exemplifies volunteer fire departments.

AMENDING THE SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT

HON. GEORGE R. NETHERCUTT, JR.

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 12, 2002

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today, along with my colleague in the other body, the Senator from New Mexico [Senator BINGAMAN], who serves as Chairman of the Senate Energy and Environment Committee, to introduce this important legislation. The bill we introduced today will amend PL 106-393, the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, to clarify the treatment of Title III funds reserved by counties under such Act.

Since 1908, Congress recognized that federal land deprived counties of revenues they would have otherwise received and therefore accorded a measure of compensation to counties by sharing revenues derived from National Forest System lands. Further, Congress annually appropriates funds for counties that are considered payments in lieu of taxes (PILT), an amount that is based upon a formula derived from the amount of federal land and revenue sharing receipts.

In recent years, counties have increasingly suffered hardship due to the severe fluctuation of shared federal receipts. Local education and road maintenance programs have been the most affected by the declines. PL 106-393, the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, was borne as a result. The intent of the bill was to address the fluctuation of shared federal receipts and restore stability and predictability to the annual payments made to States and counties containing National Forest System lands and public domain lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management for use by the counties for the benefit of public schools, roads, and other purposes. Congress further created opportunities within this Act to enhance the restoration, maintenance and stewardship of Federal lands. For example, under Title II of this Act, eligible counties have the opportunity to place a percentage of their payments toward cooperative projects on federal land.

PL 106-393, originally introduced by Representative Nathan Deal and Senator Ron Wyden, enjoyed bi-partisan support in both Houses of Congress and was ultimately signed into law on October 30, 2000. It set forth three categories by which eligible counties could elect to receive their stabilized payments under Title I, II, or III, or a combination thereof. Eligible counties receive Title I and Title III funding directly while Title II funding is directly held by the federal government and allocated toward cooperative federal projects that I briefly mentioned above.

As it stands however, PL 106-393 undermines the stability and predictability of payments it purports to provide the counties. To understand the enormity of impact, it is critical to remember that PILT is the only form of federal payment that a county can use for its day-to-day operations. While appropriated PILT funds have always been impacted by shared federal receipts, the Act kept Title I consistent with the shared receipts and its relationship with PILT payments. However, the intent of the Act was that Title II and Title III would not impact PILT.