

headquartered in Washington D.C. and has a U.S.-Mexico Border Field Office in El Paso, Texas, as well as country offices in 27 nations throughout the Americas and nine scientific and technical centers.

This year, as we celebrate the Centennial of the Pan American Health Organization, we also celebrate the notable health achievements of the countries of the Americas, with the support of PAHO.

One hundred years ago, public health in the Americas was an uncoordinated jumble, as individual countries made separate efforts to protect themselves and their people against the threat of "imported" diseases. Yet over the next century, through coordinated action, health progress unrivaled in history swept the Western Hemisphere as health leaders joined together to fight disease and to bring water, sanitation, and health services to millions.

The achievements of the countries of the Americas, led by the Pan American Health Organization over the last century, tell a story of ongoing progress: Measles, smallpox and polio have been eradicated from the Americas.

In the wake of the terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001 and with the threat of bioterrorism, the countries of the Americas are enhancing their emergency preparedness capabilities, improving their surveillance and response to outbreaks of infections, and expanding their laboratory capacity to diagnose agents used in bio-terrorism. Disaster and public health experts are being trained to prepare for and manage biological, chemical and radiological incidents.

A new "Building Blocks Model for HIV/AIDS Comprehensive Care" program is improving care for the 2.6 million people in the Americas who are infected with HIV.

Life expectancy at birth rose from less than 50 years at the start of the last century to 69.8 years in Latin America and the Caribbean, and to 76.9 years in North America today.

Efforts to promote quality control in blood services in the region have reduced the risk of diseases transmitted by blood transfusion by one-half.

Water supply and waste disposal services have improved significantly in many countries, with coverage exceeding 90 percent in some of them.

Progress is on track toward elimination of onchocerciasis, targeted for 2007.

Regional information systems have been developed for epidemiological surveillance of food borne diseases and for food legislation and regulations that both protect and favor international trade.

Progress toward the eradication of foot-and-mouth disease has been stepped up, and the original date for achieving eradication, 2013, has been advanced to 2007.

There has been a 65 percent reduction in leprosy in the region since 1992.

A health information system now enables front-line health workers to analyze health trends and health inequities between and within countries and, on the basis of that analysis, to target the most needy.

Laws have been passed on a broad spectrum of health issues, including health of the elderly, mental health, adolescent health, safe motherhood, vaccination, blood banks, and health insurance.

Intense work in emergency preparedness enabled countries to prepare for and mitigate the effects of many natural disasters, including

Hurricane Mitch and the deadly floods in Venezuela.

Eighteen countries of the region have established national plans to fortify food with micronutrients such as iron, iodine, and vitamin A.

I would like to commend Sir George A.O. Alleyne of Barbados, for his eight years of exemplary service as the Director of the Pan American Health Organization. The reputation that PAHO now enjoys with the U.S. Congress and the Executive branch is a direct attribute to the steadfast efforts by Dr. Alleyne and the excellent work by the entire organization.

I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Mirta Roses Periago of Argentina on recently being elected to be the new Executive Director of PAHO. She will be the first woman and first Argentine to lead the world's oldest international health organization.

As PAHO enters its second century of service, I hope we can continue the path of achievement. The region certainly faces numerous ongoing challenges, but together, across regional and national lines, we can join in this great effort to improve the lives of everyone living in the Americas.

#### A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING AUTUMN FRONTZ

**HON. ROBERT W. NEY**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 13, 2002*

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, whereas, Autumn Frontz is a heroine who saved her baby sister, Samantha Lynn, from choking; and

Whereas, Autumn Frontz acted quickly, without hesitation, proving herself to be remarkably responsible and caring; and

Whereas, Autumn Frontz is an asset to her family and the entire New Philadelphia community in her willingness to help others;

Therefore, I join with the residents of the entire 18th Congressional District of Ohio in honoring and congratulating Autumn Frontz for her selflessness and heroism.

#### IN HONOR OF JOHN C. BANUELOS FOR HIS SERVICE AND DEDICATION TO OUR NATION

**HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 13, 2002*

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to John C. Banuelos, in memory of his service to the community as a loyal citizen and as a proud member of our Armed Services during World War II.

Mr. Banuelos was born on January 26, 1921. He and his three brothers were Pioneer Farmers from Orange County. The four brothers went on to serve together in the Army during World War II. John served in the South Pacific theatre of operation where he led reconnaissance missions in the jungles of the Philippines and Japan. Some of his most notable experiences included personally meeting General Douglas MacArthur and befriending his family. Toward the end of the War, he participated in the guarding and transportation of gold and currency shipments seized from

Japan. As ground force squad leader "761," John led a group of 12 men who escorted generals from Tokyo to camps, inspected quarters for families of military personnel, and made reports on inspections.

Always proud but reserved and modest about his military experiences, John was awarded the expert M-1 classification in February of 1945, later receiving a personal letter on behalf of the United States from President Harry Truman. In addition, Staff Sergeant Banuelos' meritorious achievements included receiving the Victory Medal of Honor, the Asiatic Campaign medal, and a Good Conduct medal. Mr. Banuelos and his family are truly a distinguished part of our nation's military history.

Mr. Banuelos will be remembered for his service to our country and the community. As his Representative in Congress and as a member of the Armed Services Committee, I am proud to recognize John C. Banuelos for his contributions to our nation.

#### CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4546, BOB STUMP NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2003

SPEECH OF

**HON. JOHN D. DINGELL**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 12, 2002*

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, while there may be many worthwhile provisions in this bill, I strongly oppose the unnecessary and unwarranted exemption contained in Section 315 for the Department of Defense (DOD) from the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, our Nation's oldest conservation law. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act provides protection for over 850 species of migratory birds, including many that are threatened or endangered. The Act also sets forth U.S. obligations under four separate treaties to protect migratory birds and guide cooperative conservation management with Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Russia.

The provision which was inserted at the Bush Administration's request will effectively give the Defense Department license to bomb and destroy at will the natural habitats of migratory birds, endangering more than one million birds and curtailing the enjoyment of more than 50 million bird enthusiasts in this country. The provision will also provide an exclusive legal immunity from third-party lawsuits which challenge DOD non-compliance with the Act.

I have dealt with the military for years and they constantly seek to get out from under environmental laws. It is despicable that they are now using the threat of September 11 and al Qaeda to get unprecedented environmental immunity. We have fought two World Wars, the Korean War, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf War with this law in place, and there is no demonstrated need to exempt the Department of Defense now.

I raised concerns about this provision when H.R. 2456 was being considered and passed by the House. This environmental exemption was rushed through without significant public scrutiny. No hearings were held on the specifics of the proposal. Only one hearing was held in the House Armed Services Committee on the general issue and only the DOD and

Federal government agencies were allowed to testify. Other stakeholders, such as state and local governments, industry representatives, tribal governments, and citizen groups did not have a full opportunity to participate in hearings on the bill. This provision falls under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Resources and that is where the reviews and debate of this issue should have taken place.

Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of the Interior already has the authority under current law to issue permits for actions that might kill, harm or injure migratory birds in the course of government activities. In addition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and DOD have been developing regulations pursuant to Executive Order 13186 to resolve migratory bird disputes. And, in March 2002, a U.S. court recognized for the first time the DOD must comply with MBTA and ordered the military to apply for the administrative remedy already available. The DOD has chosen to fight this court ruling in the case of *Center for Biological Diversity vs Robert B. Pirie, Jr.*, Acting Secretary of the Navy; Donald H. Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense, (U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia).

The members of this body should also be aware of the ridiculous arguments that the DOD was making in court to support its efforts to exempt itself.

In the above-mentioned case, the DOD claimed:

... plaintiffs have suffered insufficient injury because the more birds that the defendants (DoD) kill, the more enjoyment Mr. Frew (a plaintiff) will get from seeing the ones that remain: "bird watchers get more enjoyment spotting a rare bird than they do spotting a common one."

Let me also quote Judge Sullivan's finding with respect to DoD's argument (on page 17 of his opinion):

Suffice it to say, there is absolutely no support in the law for the view that environmentalists should get enjoyment out of the destruction of natural resources because that destruction makes the remaining resources more scarce and therefore valuable. The Court hopes that the federal government will refrain from making or adopting such frivolous arguments in the future.

I also oppose the bill's provisions concerning the Price-Anderson Act, which are incomplete, insufficient, and fail to protect the public interest.

First, let me make clear that I am a strong supporter of the Act's reauthorization, and believe the best course at this late date would be for the other body to approve H.R. 2983, the Price-Anderson reauthorization passed by the House last November on suspension. Second, it is highly regrettable that this issue has been allowed to languish and, as a consequence, the Act lapsed in August. It is equally regrettable, however, that when my colleagues on the Armed Services Committee chose to address the Department of Energy (DOE) contractor issue in this bill, they did not take the logical step of including reforms from H.R. 2983 to make contractors accountable for irresponsible actions that harm the public.

Under current law, DOE contractors are completely indemnified for accidents involving nuclear materials, even if the accident resulted from willful misconduct or gross negligence.

This means that the taxpayer actually is required to reimburse a contractor for the cost of public harm caused by its own misconduct.

No other government contractor enjoys the right to unconditional indemnification, even those engaged in nuclear or other hazardous work for the defense agencies. When the House passed its version of Price-Anderson reauthorization, that bill included a bipartisan provision which prohibited indemnification of contractors for "conduct which constitutes intentional misconduct." The DOE claims that despite the current law's safety disincentive, it is necessary to secure contractors' services. I cannot imagine why the Department should even wish to hire a contractor who is not willing to be held accountable for its intentional misconduct.

Finally, it is my understanding that several contractors have signed contracts with DOE since the Act lapsed in August, under alternate statutory authority which can continue to fill the gap until Congress has an opportunity to address this issue thoroughly next year. In other words, there is no emergency that needs to be addressed in this bill, and in any event no reason for Congress to continue the unjustifiable policy of unconditionally indemnifying DOE contractors for intentional misconduct.

Mr. Speaker, in adopting the Migratory Bird Treaty Act exemption for DOD one of our Nation's most important environmental laws has been undermined. And by providing total indemnification for DOE contractors, even when they engage in intentional misconduct, we reduce public safety. Therefore, I rise in opposition to this conference report.

#### HONORING CORPORAL ANTONIO SLEDD

#### HON. JIM DAVIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 13, 2002*

Mr. DAVIS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to honor Corporal Antonio Sledd for his courage and sacrifice for our country. On October 8, 2002, Tony was killed when two Kuwaiti terrorists opened fire on members of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit training in the Persian Gulf.

Tony was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, but grew up in Tampa, where he attended Gaither High School. After graduating in 2000, Tony joined the Marines and earned the National Defense Service medal for serving during a time of conflict and a Deployment Ribbon for serving abroad for more than 90 days. At his funeral, he was awarded the Purple Heart and promoted from Lance Corporal to Corporal.

Friends and family remember Tony for his enthusiasm and devotion to his country. It was Tony who encouraged his twin brother, Michael, to join the Marines. Tony was planning a lifetime of service—after serving in the military he hoped to earn a degree in criminology, so he could pursue a career in the FBI.

Tony's friends call him a hero and remember his sense of humor and how he went out of his way to take care of others. In honor of

Tony, the community created a Gaither High School Education/Scholarship Fund to help future students who share Tony's dreams.

On behalf of the Tampa Bay community, I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to Tony's family. He was an American hero who will be remembered for his courage and sacrifice.

#### TUBERCULOSIS AND TUCKER HIGH SCHOOL

#### HON. CYNTHIA A. MCKINNEY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 13, 2002*

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to a forgotten disease, which is anything but forgotten right now in my congressional district. A number of students and administrators at Tucker High School in DeKalb County, Georgia are learning more than they care to know about tuberculosis.

Last week, about 200 Tucker High School students and staff had to be tested and treated after someone at the high school tested positive for tuberculosis. Tuberculosis is the forgotten disease, and as history continues to show us every time we forget and ignore TB, we are doomed to repeat history with continued outbreaks of tuberculosis as well as stronger strains of the disease such as multi-drug resistant tuberculosis. Every time government agencies are forced to cut back on funding for tuberculosis programs the rate of infection increases in populations who need our help the most.

Tuberculosis is truly a global disease, with more than 2 billion people around the world carrying the infection. Right here in the United States, the South has one of the highest rates of TB infection because of the vast health disparities between blacks and whites. African Americans have higher rates of TB in the United States because of poverty conditions in the South and in urban areas. Because of that poverty, African American also have a difficult time accessing tuberculosis medications and primary care treatment for the disease.

That is why I am a co-sponsor of H.R. 1167: The Comprehensive Tuberculosis Elimination Act of 2001 and H.R. 1168: The Stop TB Now Act. This legislation effectively implements recommendations listed in an Institute of Medicine report entitled "Ending Neglect: The Elimination of Tuberculosis in the United States". These recommendations attack tuberculosis on a national and international level. The legislation does so by increasing the authorized funding levels for both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as well as the National Institutes of Health (NIH), giving them more ammunition to fight this treacherous disease here in the United States and abroad.

We in the Congress have an unprecedented opportunity to eliminate tuberculosis in the United States and reduce this scourge, so other high schools do not have to go through the same trauma and interruption of their daily lives as the students, staff, and faculty have faced at Tucker High School. I urge the House of Representatives to pass H.R. 1167: The Comprehensive Tuberculosis Elimination Act of 2001 and H.R. 1168: The Stop TB Now Act.