

Dillard, a sixth grade student at Renfro Elementary School in Collinsville, Illinois. Brandon's teacher is Judy Barnett and his parents are David and Bonnie Dillard.

Brandon wrote the following poem following the tragedy of the *Columbia* shuttle.

Sparks & fire falling from the sky.  
Seven heroes had to die.  
Weightlessly floating through time and space.

Now they float in a heavenly place.  
Children now living without a mom or dad.  
When I think of this it makes me sad.  
We will never forget this horrible story.  
Taken from the Earth in a blaze of glory.  
This message we send to the *Columbia* crew.  
America will never forget about you.  
Sparks & fire falling from the sky.  
Seven heroes had to die.

INTRODUCING THE "BUILDING SECURE AND HEALTHY FAMILIES ACT OF 2003"

**HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 11, 2003*

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "Building Secure and Healthy Families Act of 2003." This legislation amends existing welfare law to provide alternative programs to the Republican marriage proposals. It would also improve provisions concerning family violence, childcare, care-giving, and teen pregnancy prevention.

I'm thankful to Senator MURRAY for working to pass companion legislation in the Senate. I am also grateful to the more than 80 poverty, domestic violence, and children's groups that have endorsed this legislation.

As the current Republican marriage proposal demonstrates, even when Republicans correctly identify a societal problem, they administer the wrong remedy due to their blind allegiance to their Christian right wing ideology. Of course families with one income are likely to be poorer than families with two incomes. However, simply getting poor people married does not address any of the underlying causes of poverty such as domestic violence, substance abuse or mental illness. In fact, encouraging marriage may exacerbate those very problems. Thus, the Republican solution is at best naive and simplistic and at worst dangerously harmful and intolerant.

In contrast, the Building Secure and Healthy Families Act of 2003 provides evidence-based solutions to help families overcome problems such as: lacking sufficient income, suffering from family violence, facing teenage pregnancy, being without child care or care-giving skills themselves, or suffering from physical and mental disabilities.

My bill provides an alternative to the marriage promotion provisions of the Republican plan by creating a \$100 million per year competitive grant to states to be used for one of the following programs:

Income enhancement programs (like the Minnesota Family Investment Program);

Programs that provide education, opportunity and support to teens to reduce first and subsequent births; and

Programs that provide services to build family stability by securing employment and child care, and providing other services such as

mental health and substance abuse counseling.

One of the key programs encouraged in my bill is the Minnesota Family Investment Program or MFIP. This innovative program allows welfare recipients to keep more of their welfare check while they work. It is structured to raise incomes, MFIP is the only welfare program in the country that has created more stable marriages and improved outcomes for child well-being.

In fact, Wade Horn, the Assistant Secretary for Administration for Children and Families at the Department of Health and Human Services, agrees that MFIP works. In a November 2000 Washington Times editorial Horn wrote, "These results [of MFIP] provide dramatic new evidence that changes in welfare incentives can increase the likelihood that single parents will get married and that married parents will stay married."

Unfortunately, the Republican marriage plan in their welfare bill does nothing to encourage MFIP-type programs. Instead, it narrowly focuses on providing education programs that deal with inadequate relationship skills, unrealistic expectations about marriage, and the inadequate meaning of marital commitment. It ignores other economic, social and cultural issues relating to marriage instability.

Unlike MFIP, there is no evidence that the Republican-backed marriage programs work. But, maybe they don't care. Their proposal fails to require grantees to meet any criteria of experience, competence or fiscal soundness to get these grants. Also, there are no evaluation standards in their grants. Therefore, it is apparent that the Republican program is more an effort to appease its political base—the religious right—than it is to stabilize and make poor families secure and healthy.

Besides its competitive grant program, my bill encourages parental care-giving and seeks to protect children from the dangers of poverty. Specifically, the bill:

Prohibits states from kicking children off welfare for parents failure to meet TANF requirements;

Disallows states from sanctioning parents on welfare who cannot meet their work requirements because they have no available child care for their children age 13 and under;

Requires states to count care-giving as work for parents who have children that are age 1 and under;

Gives states the option to count as work care-giving for a child up to age 3;

Deems care-giving for one's sick or disabled child or other family member as a work activity and stops the welfare work clock for care-giving for one's sick or disabled family member

Finally, this bill extends the current Family Violence Option by requiring that states:

Coordinate with domestic or sexual violence coalitions in the development of policies and procedures to have trained caseworkers identify survivors of domestic and sexual violence, refer them for services, and modify or waive welfare work requirements as necessary.

Provide notice, confidentiality, and pre-sanction review to ensure that individuals are not being sanctioned under the welfare law when domestic or sexual violence is a significant contributing factor in noncompliance.

Unfortunately, studies show that even local welfare offices of states that have domestic violence provisions may not fully inform individuals who disclose domestic violence of all

their rights. Approximately 75 percent of welfare recipients who identified themselves as victims of violence were not informed about available services, including counseling, housing, or the possibility of using work time to seek help.

To have a secure and healthy America requires having secure and healthy American families. This bill helps develop those healthy American families by broadening the use of the Republican marriage promotion funds to fund proven programs we know that have accomplished this goal. Please join me in enacting the "Building Secure and Healthy Families Act of 2003."

TRIBUTE TO ELLEN STRAUS

**HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 11, 2003*

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ellen Straus of Marshall, California, who died on November 30, 2002, after a lifetime of vision, leadership, and dedication to protecting agriculture and assuring its viability in West Marin.

Ellen was born in Amsterdam in 1927 to a Jewish family. In February, 1940, fearful of the Nazi threat, they immigrated to New York where her father was able to continue his work as a diamond broker. Ellen, a bright 13-year-old who knew no English, began attending school right away and in 1948 graduated from Bard College with a major in Natural Sciences and Mathematics. When she applied for research jobs, she was asked if she knew typing and shorthand, so, in order to find work, she enrolled in Katherine Gibbs School in New York City to obtain a Business Degree.

In 1949 in New York Ellen met William Straus, a rancher from Marin County, California, who, like herself, came from a European Jewish family that had immigrated to the U.S. Bill had received a degree from UC Berkeley in animal husbandry and bought a dairy ranch near Marshall in 1941. Bill and Ellen were married in New York and moved to their ranch on Tomales Bay.

Although the work was hard, Ellen loved the ranch and the beautiful Tomales Bay area. She raised four children and taught them what she had learned by observing Hitler's rise to power—the importance of individuals becoming politically involved to create and preserve what is valued in life. Ellen was active in politics, including 14 years on the Democratic Central Committee of Marin.

During the 1960's she was a key supporter of the effort to create Point Reyes National Seashore, establishing herself as a visionary who understood that ranchers and conservationists need to work together to preserve open spaces for both agriculture and recreation. She worked hard to develop cooperation between the two groups, and her husband Bill became the first rancher to join the Marin Conservation League.

This vision continued to motivate Ellen and Bill as they fought for a new general plan for Marin County in the 1960s to prevent rural West Marin from being carved up for subdivisions and freeways. Realizing that even this successful effort was not enough, Ellen co-founded Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT) with Phyllis Faber in 1980.

MALT was the first land trust in the country focused on the protection of agriculture. Under MALT, ranchers are paid for the development rights to their land which they continue to own. Under the agreement, they can live on the property and farm or sell to other farmers, always keeping the land in agriculture. Ellen's energy and commitment were key in MALT's success. She served for many years as a Board Member and Chair, and today the agency, with 32,000 acres preserved, is a national model for developing partnerships to protect agricultural land.

Ellen also understood the importance of educating the public in the value of agriculture. In the early 1970s she began hosting school groups at the ranch. Soon she was welcoming adults, from politicians to budding environmentalists, including visitors from abroad. Along with a good education and a up-close look at cows, Ellen served homemade apple pie. Today visitor programs to West Marin ranches continue to play a key role in informing the public about the role of agriculture in the community.

Ellen cared not only about preserving agriculture but also improving it. Concerned about the quality of food people eat and chemical and hormone additives, Ellen was a leader in developing organic products. She worked with her son Albert, who currently operates the family dairy, to produce the first organic milk west of the Mississippi. The Straus Family Creamery is now well-known for its high quality dairy products and environmental practices.

Numerous awards are a testament to Ellen's leadership. These include the Marin Women's Hall of Fame, the White House "Points of Light," and America's highest honor from the American Farmland Trust, the 1998 Steward of the Land award.

Ellen was also active in the the Greenbelt Alliance, the Eastshore Planning, Group, the Marin Conservation League, the Marin Community Foundation Neighborhood Achievements program, the Environmental Action Committee, the Tomales Bay Advisory Committee, the Environmental Forum, and West Marin Growers.

Ellen was a dedicated wife, mother and grandmother. She is survived by Bill, her husband of 52 years; sister Anneke Prins Simons; her four children: Albert and his wife Jeanne Smithfield; Vivien; Miriam and her husband Alan Berkowitz; and Michael; her four grandsons Isaac, Jonah, Reuben and Eli . . . and 270 milking cows.

Mr. Speaker, Ellen Straus will be missed by so many who shared in her work and her dreams. It is fitting to recognize her visionary efforts in preserving open space in West Marin and helping to create Point Reyes National Seashore that have left a legacy that all can enjoy. Her pioneering work in organic dairying is creating a new future in agriculture. I will always remember Ellen Straus as a wonderful, warm friend and committed steward of the land.

IN MEMORY OF JULIA ABRAMS

**HON. IKE SKELTON**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 11, 2003*

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, it is with deep sadness that I inform the House of the death

of Julia Abrams, widow of former Army chief of staff General Creighton W. Abrams, Jr.

Mrs. Abrams was born in Drummondville, Quebec. She was married to General Abrams in the summer of 1936 after they met while she was a junior at Vassar College and he was a cadet at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

Mrs. Abrams founded the Arlington Ladies in the early 1970's. This group of women attended graveside interment services at Arlington National Cemetery and they also wrote notes of condolence and offered support. She was also honorary first lady of the U.S. Armor Association, a member of the executive council of the National Girl Scouts of America and a member of the National Military Families Association.

Mrs. Abrams accompanied her husband to overseas assignments and lived in Germany and Thailand. While in Thailand, she did volunteer work for Mitradab, a Thai-U.S. foundation chartered for school construction in rural Thailand.

Mr. Speaker, Julia Abrams was truly a lovely lady. She was a role model for Army wives and helped them cope with day to day military life. I know the Members of the House will join me in extending heartfelt condolences to her family: her three sons, Brigadier General Creighton Williams Abrams III, USA, Retired; General John Nelson Abrams, USA, Retired; and Lieutenant Colonel Robert Bruce Abrams, USA and her three daughters, Noel Bradley, Jeanne Daley and Elizabeth Doyle.

RECOGNIZING BROWARD COUNTY  
TEACHER OF THE YEAR, MRS.  
JANE KOSZORU

**HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 11, 2003*

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Mrs. Jane Koszoru, the 2003 Broward County Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Koszoru was recognized by Broward County for her outstanding professionalism and her consistent drive to teach and encourage Broward's children to achieve high standards.

Jane began her career 30 years ago as a teacher at Driftwood Middle School in Hollywood, Florida. Soon after, she taught at Coral Springs High School, where she stayed for 24 years. She is currently teaching at the College Academy at Broward Community College. The College Academy is an educational program that is provided, free of charge, to certain junior and senior high school students who attend classes with college students. At graduation, many of these students can enter a university with junior status.

Mrs. Koszoru grew up in Broward County and graduated from Nova High School in Davie, Florida. For Jane, teaching is a family tradition. Both her mother and grandmother taught in one-room classrooms in Nebraska. To her certain delight, her daughter is currently majoring in Education at the University of Florida.

Not only has Jane had a positive influence on her daughter, but she has inspired hundreds of her students. They nicknamed her, "Mrs. Work," with good reason, considering she has a reputation for pushing her students

to the best of their ability. Jane believes that children are smarter than they are given credit for and that all they need is someone to help them along. She creates high standards in her classroom and is constantly motivating her students to challenge themselves. Most certainly they are inspired by her own dedication to her career.

Mr. Speaker, today, we recognize Jane Koszoru for her accomplishments and her dedication to the students of Broward County, Florida. We also send our congratulations to her on being named the 2003 Broward County Teacher of the Year.

A SOLDIER'S STORY

**HON. JOHN SHIMKUS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 11, 2003*

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to submit the following article from the Shelbyville Daily Union, "A Soldier's Story: Letters Between Shelbyville Men Unite Mothers."

This story first appeared on February 10th. It is a prime example of the human component of our efforts to pursue and promote freedom and liberty.

A SOLDIER'S STORY: LETTERS BETWEEN  
SHELBYVILLE MEN UNITE MOTHERS

(By Sharon Mosley)

In 1990, during duty off the coast of Oman, United States Marine Staff Sergeant Keith Boehm wrote a letter to Shelbyville seventh grader Brian Alex Miller telling about his life as part of helicopter crew during the Gulf War. Miller had written to Boehm, a Shelbyville native, as part of a school assignment to write to soldiers.

"You wrote that it is boring when it rains," wrote Boehm. "Well you should try spending six months on a ship." What followed was a detailed description of Boehm's life as an electrician attached to a helicopter crew. While he told of the many mundane hours spent working on the ship, he also shared with his young reader some "pretty exciting stuff" like landing reconnaissance troops and scattering a herd of wild camels with the helicopter.

Boehm's letter became part of Miller's collection of "things"—tucked away in a drawer while Miller grew up, graduated from Shelbyville High School in 1995 and attended the University of Illinois. He is now a graduate student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, studying architecture. With the possibility of another war in the Gulf looming, Miller's mother, Nancy Miller of Shelbyville, found Alex's letter from Boehm and wondered what had happened to the Staff Sergeant from Shelbyville. One phone call later, she found Boehm's mother, Sharon Boehm, also of Shelbyville.

"It is funny that we've both lived here all these years and didn't know each other," Nancy Miller said. "Shelbyville's not that large." Sharon Boehm said Keith is now Warrant Officer Boehm and is still a Marine, currently based in California.

"He was going to retire but after September 11 they froze all the retirements so he's still in," said Sharon Boehm. "He's active in recruiting."

Nancy Miller said she was interested in letters from soldiers in part, because an uncle, also a Marine, was killed at Okinawa during World War II.

"From his letters we were able to get a sense of what he was going through and the