

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING UNION FIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP, PENNSYLVANIA ON THEIR 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize members of the Union Fire Association on the 100th Anniversary of their company's founding.

Ever since its establishment 100 years ago, the Union Fire Association has been an important member of Lower Merion Township. As the community has grown and prospered over the years, so has the Fire Association which now is one of the finest and well-equipped in the region.

The volunteers of this fine company deserve all the support that we may offer. They serve selflessly and tirelessly in order to protect their fellow citizens and, in the times of uncertainty we face today, their heroics are immeasurable. They are citizens just like you and I—teachers, students, doctors, lawyers, electricians, engineers, police officers. The list goes on and on—all willing to make sacrifices to ensure public safety. Before a member of this Company even sets foot into their first fire, they must undergo hours of training and, once completed, the education continues with advanced classes to learn vehicle rescue, fire-fighter rescue, pump operations and so on. As a service to the community, they put on demonstrations that educate us on how to stay safe in emergency situations. They are an irreplaceable and integral part of our community, whether it is raising money for a cause, adding to the joy of a local parade or hosting meetings and social functions. Clearly, the members of the Union Fire Association have served proudly and I rise today to recognize their service over the past 100 years.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing the Union Fire Association on their 100th Anniversary and salute, admire and appreciate all the volunteers that have served this community for so many years.

RECOGNIZING MRS. CARMEN VEGA

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to praise the achievements of Mrs. Carmen Vega, a paradigm of expertise in social work and education. Assistant Principal to the Long Branch High School and Middle School, Mrs. Vega has demonstrated outstanding versatility in various roles of leadership and mentorship. She proves an honorable recipient of the Latino American Committee of Monmouth County Annual Award, not solely for her work

in the Long Branch public school network, but for numerous other experiences in helping the counties of Monmouth and Ocean excel as dynamic and thriving communities.

A native of Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Mrs. Vega was raised in Long Branch, where she earned a Master's degree in Latino bilingual/bi-cultural issues from Rutgers University. More recently, she completed a Masters of Arts in Urban Education, also from Rutgers University. Her academic accolades provided her the honor as a licensed clinical social worker in the State of New Jersey.

Mrs. Vega's experience in advocacy and counseling, coupled with the framework of the Monmouth County Division of Social Services under which she worked, provided her with the skills to transform the outlooks and goals of many psychiatric patients. She was an engaging coordinator of a pre-discharge transitional program at Marlboro Psychiatric Hospital in Monmouth County, as well as a counselor to individuals and families throughout Ocean County. Mrs. Vega never forgot the importance of helping the psychiatrically handicapped, giving importance to their families and their friends as well. With a diverse background such as this, it is no wonder that in 1997, the Monmouth County Urban League honored Mrs. Vega with the Individual Equal Opportunity Award.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate Mrs. Vega for her dedication to the Monmouth and Ocean county communities. She exemplifies the ideals and aspirations of many dedicated and charitable citizens, as well as youth across all cultures. I ask that my colleagues rise and join me in honoring the distinguished Mrs. Carmen Vega.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MARY BONO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mrs. BONO. Mr. Speaker, due to a medical emergency in my family, I was unable to cast my vote for two very important pieces of legislation considered the week of October 6, 2003.

Had I been present, I would have voted for H.R. 2998 (rollcall No. 537), a bill to exempt certain members of the Armed Forces from the requirement to pay subsistence charges while hospitalized. I believe it is abhorrent that this practice has been allowed to continue for so long and am pleased the House has acted to amend this law. The least we can do for the brave men and women who were hospitalized because they served our nation and were wounded, is to not charge them for food.

In addition, I would also have voted for H.R. 2997 (rollcall No. 536), the "Veterans Benefits Act." Amongst many other provisions, this bill makes permanent the eligibility of certain former members of the Selected Reserve for veterans' housing loans and provides that the

remarriage of a surviving spouse of a veteran after age 55 should not bar the payment of veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation.

Also, on Wednesday, October 15, I was unable to show my support for H.R. 1828 (rollcall No. 543), the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Act. Holding these nations accountable for their actions will only ensure a more stable environment in the Middle East.

Again, I am pleased the House took such decisive action on all these bills and I look forward to them moving swiftly through the legislative process.

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH WEEK

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the 57th year of the National School Lunch Program, which is dedicated to the health and well being of our Nation's children. National School Lunch Week commenced on October 13 and will run until October 17th. The National School Lunch Program has been joined through the years by several excellent child-feeding programs, such as: School Breakfast, Food Stamp, Child and Adult Care, Emergency Food Assistance and Summer Nutrition Programs, among others, and there is definitely a need to continue these programs in order to inspire nutrition education and awareness in our children.

President Harry S. Truman signed the National School Lunch Act on June 4, 1946, which authorized the National School Lunch Program, which is the oldest and largest of child nutrition programs. The legislation came in response to claims that many American men had been rejected for World War II military service because of diet-related health problems. The Federally assisted meal program was established as "a measure of national security, to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's children and to encourage the domestic consumption of nutritious agricultural commodities." To continue the spirit of the program, in 1998, Congress expanded the National School Lunch Program to include reimbursement for snacks served to children in after school educational and enrichment programs for children through the age of 18.

In this day and age, we are even more focused on providing nutritious, well-balanced, low-cost or free meals for our young boys and girls. The Program contributes to the development of healthy eating habits by providing the children with no more than 30 percent calories from fat, and less than 10 percent from saturated fat. All children can take advantage of this program, but if the child comes from a family with an income at or below 130 percent of the poverty level, that child is eligible for free meals. With about 57 percent of children

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receiving free or reduced price lunches, the National School Lunch Program often times provides the most nutritious meal or the only meal that some children receive in a day.

We celebrate another year of this Program because it has helped combat the growing hunger and poverty levels among children in our country. According to the Food Research and Action Center, National School Lunch Program has grown from about 7.1 million children participating in 1947 to over 27.2 million in the 2001–2002 school year. The program operates in more than 99,800 public and non-profit private schools and residential childcare institutions, with over 187 billion lunches having been served.

National School Lunch Program is just one step in developing our children into the prosperous, successful individuals we want them to become. The Program's Team Nutrition Initiative focuses on teaching and motivating children to make food choices that enhance their energy, growth, and potential. In addition, the Program is vitally important to achieving our educational goals. Poorly fed children have more difficulty learning, are less attentive in class, and suffer more chronic problems, such as absenteeism and tardiness, than children who are properly nourished. By making nutritious meals available to all school children, the National School Lunch Program will help us ensure that we leave no child behind. According to the Food Research and Action Center, proper nutrition improves a child's behavior, school performance, and overall cognitive development. All in all, properly nourished children more actively participate in the education experience, which benefits them, their fellow students, and the entire school community. Studies have shown what we already have known—that healthy school meals play a critical and positive role in students' development and learning process. Unfortunately, we have a double-sided battle to fight, with regards to mal-nourishment and obesity. A peer-reviewed study conducted by academic researchers at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, found that girls in food insecure households had a significantly lower risk of being overweight if they participated in the National School Lunch Program. The findings suggest that participation in these Federal child nutrition programs can combat our growing problems with obesity in children.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in 2000, 10.5 percent of all U.S. households, representing 20 million adults and 13 million children, were "food insecure" because of lack of resources. In 2001, Illinois reported 9.2 percent of households are food insecure, which represents 3,239,229 children under the age of 18. Thanks to the National School Lunch Program, there are over 4,446 schools participating in Illinois, with over 1,083,548 students that benefits from it. Specifically in Chicago Public Schools, over 350,000 students are registered in the Program.

If President Truman found this to be important to our national security in 1946, we should continue his vision in 2003 by continuing to support National School Lunches. As the Committee on Education and the Workforce, of which I serve, continues to examine this program during its reauthorization, I will continue to ensure that good nutrition is promoted among our children, thus helping them

to become healthier, positive, citizens within our country.

RECOGNIZING REVEREND FELIX SANTANA

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of the late Reverend Felix Santana, a man who has served his faith and community tirelessly throughout his life. On October 17, 2003, the Latino American Committee of Monmouth County will honor the Reverend with an award for his contributions as a role model and mentor for Latino youths.

Reverend Santana was born in Humacao, Puerto Rico on August 21, 1924. In 1948 he moved to northern Indiana where he worked in the steel industry for two years. When America became entrenched in the Korean War, Reverend Santana heroically served his country in the U.S. Army and was decorated with the United Nations Service Medal. After the war, and a productive career in design, the Reverend entered the Bangor Theological Seminary in Maine.

After completing his studies, Reverend Santana and his family settled down in Monmouth County, New Jersey. It was then that Reverend Santana established the first Hispanic Ministry in Asbury Park, New Jersey. In addition, he led similar efforts in Ossining, New York, Plainfield, and Jersey City, New Jersey. However, the Reverend's commitment did not end at his religious responsibilities. Reverend Santana made time to serve Hispanics and others in his community. He helped set up an anti-poverty agency called "Checkmate, Inc" as was actively involved with the Puerto Rican Civic Association and the freeholders of New Jersey.

Mr. Speaker, Reverend Santana believed in serving his community. The legacy that he has left behind will continue to serve those he has given so much of himself too. I ask that my colleagues rise and join me to honor this most respectable man, Reverend Felix Santana.

PENSION FUNDING EQUITY ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 8, 2003

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for H.R. 3108, the Pension Funding Equity Act of 2003, a bill that passed this body last week, but also to express my dismay that a non-controversial, bipartisan provision was stripped from that bill before this House had an opportunity to vote for it. It is my hope that this provision, which would stabilize small business defined benefit pension plans, can be included in any conference report that this House may be asked to consider this year.

The provision, known as Section 415, would have replaced the 30-year Treasury bond rate with a fixed interest rate of 5.5 percent for pur-

poses of the maximum cap on benefits under Internal Revenue Code section 415. In the case of a small business defined benefit plan, the maximum cap on benefits can have an enormous impact on funding, due to the small number of participants. The 30-year Treasury bond rate that business must currently use to calculate funding is extremely volatile, leading to unpredictable funding requirements. For example, just last year between March and September (only 6 months), the 30-year rate fluctuated by almost a full percentage point—96 basis points—resulting in funding obligations for a benefit that varied by as much as \$140,000. That may not be much to a large company, but it is significant to a small business.

The cost of this unpredictability is choking off capital investments, new hires, higher wages, or better health care. The requirement to use an obsolete standard is depriving our economy of desperately needed capital at a time when our businesses and our workers need it most.

The small business provision has bipartisan support both in the House and Senate, it has no impact on current rules for calculating lump sums for rank-and-file participants, and there does not appear to be any substantive objections to its inclusion. So I am dismayed that it would have been taken out of the larger, two year pension fix.

I trust that as this process moves forward—in conference if there is an opportunity—we will be able to reattach this important small business provision to the bill.

RECOGNIZING MR. DIMAS MONTALVO

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 16, 2003

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to laud the accomplishments of Dr. Dimas Montalvo, a longtime community activist. Mr. Montalvo is the founder of the Latino American Committee and a tremendous supporter of various Latino-related programs. Friends and neighbors refer to him as a hometown hero for his many accomplishments and his longstanding service to the Latino community.

In search of a better future, Mr. Montalvo left Puerto Rico for New Jersey in 1957. He settled in Long Branch in 1959 where he began working at the Fort Monmouth Army Base barbershop before opening his own shop in 1965. Following the opening of his business, Mr. Montalvo started attending classes in the hopes of earning his GED and improving his English skills.

In 1969 Mr. Montalvo's barbershop was relocated and another business, Montalvo's Rooming House, was established in conjunction with the shop. Currently, he is still running both businesses from the same location, which has become a site for community outreach. It is there that Mr. Montalvo counsels people from all walks of life with various questions, concerns and problems. Over the years, Mr. Montalvo has become very active in numerous community organizations, including the Monmouth Community Action Program and the Spanish Fraternity of Monmouth County.