

Building," the measure expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the month of April should be designated as "Financial Literacy for Youth Month" and the measure to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 7554 Pacific Avenue in Stockton, California, as the "Norman D. Shumway Post Office Building."

Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall Vote No. 109, "aye" on rollcall Vote No. 110 and "aye" on rollcall Vote No. 111.

HONORING THE MONTROSE SENIOR CENTER

HON. SCOTT McINNS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the Senior Center of Montrose, Colorado on the occasion of its thirtieth anniversary. Since 1973, the Senior Center has provided a place for seniors to gather, share a hot meal, and participate in a variety of group activities. The center plays a pivotal role in the Montrose community, and today I would like to celebrate its anniversary before this body of Congress and this nation.

The Senior Center has grown and changed over the thirty years since it first offered a Valentine's Day bingo game, finally establishing a permanent meeting place in 1990 with the opening of the Montrose Pavilion. The center's meal program has steadily grown, now serving an average of 139 meals at the center and delivering seventy-two more to homebound seniors every day. The senior recreation department offers about twenty-five classes a week, introducing seniors to computers, yoga, and oil painting and offering events such as lectures and sporting tournaments for over 1,500 participants a month. In a rural community like Montrose, the senior center provides an important focal point for enhancing the lives of senior citizens, both physically and mentally.

Mr. Speaker, the Montrose Senior Center has been providing many services crucial to the local senior community for thirty years and it shows no signs of slowing down. Its longevity is admirable—a credit to its members and the surrounding community. Today I would like to congratulate the Senior Center of Montrose for its outreach to the senior citizen community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOSEPH M. HOEFFEL

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I was absent for votes on Monday, April 7, 2003, as a result of a medical procedure. Had I been present, I would have cast my votes as follows: Rollcall vote No. 111: "aye"; rollcall vote No. 110: "aye"; and rollcall vote No. 109: "aye."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SPENCER BACHUS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, April 7th, I missed rollcall votes 109, 110 and 111, due to a flight delay. If I had been present I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 109, "yea" on rollcall No. 110 and "yea" on rollcall No. 111.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROB PORTMAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, on April 7, 2003, I was unavoidably detained at a leadership meeting and missed the vote on rollcall No. 109 on H.R. 1055, the Roswell N. Beck Post Office Building Designation Act.

Had I been present, I would have voted, "yes."

TRIBUTE TO THE TOLEDO-LUCAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, Lucas County, Ohio will celebrate Public Health Week April 7–13, 2003. I am pleased to recognize the efforts of the Toledo-Lucas County Health Department and its Public Health Planning Committee in its efforts to promote health education for the citizenry of our region.

The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department provides a wide array of services, including immunizations, AIDS/HIV counseling and testing, specialty health clinics, wellness programs, outreach, and advocacy. It is the local agency responsible for ensuring safe water and air, environmental services, food protection, animal control, and health assessments of the people in Lucas County. Its staff, administration, and volunteers are committed to public service, and deeply dedicated to the promotion of public health and wellness.

Celebrated in 46 states, Public Health Week is a coordinated effort to utilize the resources of the systems of public health to educate people about a wide array of issues. This year's effort focuses on weight and obesity. With two-thirds of adults overweight, and the number of overweight children tripling in twenty years, Public Health Week 2003 urges Americans to "shape up their future."

HONORING DEE CRANE

HON. SCOTT McINNS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Dee Crane

for her exemplary service to the Mesa County Valley School District in Colorado. Dee has been an educator for forty-two years and today I would like to honor her accomplishments before this body of Congress and this nation.

Dee began teaching at Lincoln Orchard Mesa Elementary School before serving as Assistant Principal at Appleton, Pomona, and Lincoln Park Elementary Schools. She became principal at Taylor Elementary School in 1971 after two years as the district's Administrative Supervisor of Elementary Education. Since then, Dee has earned a reputation as an innovative and effective educator, consistently implementing new teaching methods and helping her students to achieve high scores on assessment tests.

Dee also recognizes the critical role of parental and community involvement in a child's education, and works with the local PTA to organize volunteer programs at Taylor. As principal, Dee plays a very active role in the lives of her students and faculty, spending her days in classrooms and on the playground rather than in the principal's office. For her efforts, Dee has earned numerous community honors, most recently named a Woman of Distinction by the Grand Junction American Business Women's Association.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege to recognize Dee Crane for her service to Mesa County Valley School District and to elementary education in Western Colorado. Dee is a guiding force in the lives of her young students and a dedicated leader of Taylor Elementary School. It is my great privilege to honor her today, and I wish her the best in all of her future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO ERIC SCOTT RUSSELL

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize a great American youth, Eric Scott Russell. Eric Scott Russell was born on May 1, 1985 to Julie and Darryl Russell.

The family is a member of St. Dominic parish where Eric attended elementary school. His academic learning was broadened with his attendance at University School, St. Ignatius High School and Charles Rush, where he was to graduate June 2003. In addition to his schooling, Eric was an exceptional athlete in cross country track and field and football.

Eric had a desire to have a career in journalism. As a result of his diligence and hard work, the Cleveland Plain Dealer and the Cleveland National Association of Black Journalists selected Eric to participate in a seven-week internship and seminar, where he was honored as "the most knowledgeable on current events".

At his home going services, I read Eric Scott Russell's college entrance essay entitled, "Overcoming Adversity". It read:

Many people say that the adversity we face in life can either make us or break us. Well, it all depends on the way that you look at obstacles, placed in your path, and what you learn as a result of going through them. I have learned the true relevance of this for myself because of recent adversity that I have faced. This adversity has taught me

that you have to always work for your best and never settle for anything less because, even if you don't deserve it, people will try to put you down and slight your name and your character. If you haven't made sure that you are at the top of your game, these attacks can break you.

The obstacle that I was forced to face was racism. Racism is, unfortunately, a common obstacle for African-American people, but my situation was unique in that it allowed a great number of people to learn of it. At the end of my junior year, a student who worked as the sports editor of the school yearbook decided, for reasons I still do not know, to deliberately and maliciously misrepresent me in print. Instead of putting my name under the Cross-Country Team picture, this student editor put the slur "Blacky". The yearbook staff and faculty advisor submitted then published the yearbook and it was distributed to the entire school.

When I was confronted with what this boy did it blew me away. I couldn't understand why this had happened to me and it sent me through a myriad of emotions. At first I was confused, then anger set in to cloud my thinking even more. I was filled with self-pity and fear of what people might say or do. I worried what this boy's hateful actions would do to my future and there wasn't much anyone could say to make me feel any better. I had to sort it out on my own and come up with my own answers.

Over time, and after much thought, I was left with two realizations. The first did not take me too long to reach. I decided that I should not feel any self-pity because the slur did not reflect on my character, but rather on the character of the boy who did this to me. The second realization took much more time because of its importance and its impact on my life. I realized that up to that point, I had not accomplished much in my high school career, and had not made a lasting mark to show that the slur was not a reflection of who I am. I decided to remain at my high school and complete my senior year, rather than allow the pain of racism to drive me away. I would face the racism and work to correct it. I joined the "Project LOVE" student group to begin this task.

Although the long-term ramifications of this one horrific event can never be speculated upon with accuracy or fully understood there are few things that I know for sure. I know that our society often projects the guilty behind a veil of obscurity while the victim is hung out to dry. I know that there are poor people who will rush to defend, or even worse, condone racism in our society. But, I also know that I must show, by my deeds, that character and integrity mean something in this world, because I believe as professed by Mahatma Gandhi, that education without character is one of the seven deadly social sins in our society. I know that my actions must reflect my beliefs and that my life must be a testimony to this fact.

On behalf of the people of the 11th Congressional District of Ohio and the United States Congress, I extend my sincere condolences.

GUATEMALA

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, in the past year, Guatemala has relapsed into some of the same anarchic behavior it demonstrated

during its brutal civil war from 1960 to 1996, which pitted leftist guerrillas against the military and associated right-wing death squads. An alarming escalation is now taking place not only in the country's general level of violence, but also in the activity of death squads linked to the military. There has been an ominous increase in human rights violations. HIJOS, a humanitarian organization based in Guatemala, released a study on January 29 which reported that 61 young people have been murdered in Guatemala City during just the first 3 weeks of the new year.

These covert paramilitary groups, which are remnants of the anti-Communist military and civil institutions that existed during the country's bitter civil strife, have reemerged to protect a burgeoning drug trade.

Guatemala's government, led by President Alfonso Portillo, is hopelessly mired in corruption, intertwined with illicit activity on the part of the military, and is complicit with the expansion of the drug trade. Since Portillo took office, drug seizures have decreased dramatically. According to a 2001 United Nations Office of Drug and Crime (UNODC) study, Guatemala's reported seizure of cocaine steadily increased from 956 kg in 1995 to 9,959 kg in 1999. In 2000, however, the year after Portillo took office, this trend reversed and the number plunged to 1,517 kg of cocaine.

The country's difficulties with drugs, corruption, and human rights abuses are germane because they jeopardize the White House's plans for the development of a U.S.-sponsored free-trade agreement with Central America. The Bush administration, by decertifying Guatemala but not suspending its \$53 million in aid, is purposefully misusing the decertification process by sacrificing its war on drugs for a potential trade accord, continuing aid to the corrupt Portillo regime in order to maintain relations with Guatemala at all costs.

The following research memorandum was authored by Jason Ballet, a research associate with the Washington-based Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA), a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that has been long committed to addressing issues associated with democracy and human rights throughout the hemisphere.

GUATEMALA'S DRUG WOES AND THE MISUSE OF THE DRUG CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
(By Jason Ballet, Research Associate,
Council on Hemispheric Affairs)

In the past year, Guatemala has relapsed into some of the same anarchic behavior it demonstrated during its brutal civil war from 1960 to 1996, which pitted leftist guerrillas against the military and associated right-wing death squads. The latter groups were responsible for most of the 200,000 deaths that occurred during the conflict. An alarming escalation is now taking place not only in the country's general level of violence, but also in the activity of death squads linked to the military. These groups have reemerged with a new motivation—to protect a burgeoning drug trade. By deferring to the military, a weak government led by Alfonso Portillo is either unwilling or unable to halt rights violations and impede the now booming narcotics trade. The Bush administration, by maintaining normal relations with Guatemala through decertifying it but not suspending its \$53 million in aid, is sacrificing the drug war in favor of cultivating a free trade agreement with Central America. Today, Portillo's government more closely resembles a "drugocracy" than a democracy; it is corrupt, an utter captive of

the drug trade, and linked to growing rights violations.

THE RETURN OF DEATH SQUADS

Rightist death squads have resurfaced, relying on an arsenal of tactics ranging from death threats, to the intimidation of prominent political figures, judges, and human rights activists, and political assassinations. These groups have committed numerous rights violations just within the past month. On January 9, 2003, unidentified gunmen assassinated the former congressional leader and head of the Christian Democrats, Jose Lubon Dubon. A few weeks later, on January 27, assailants attacked the opposition leaders of the National Unity for Hope (UNE) party, resulting in 5 injuries. Furthermore, the Supreme Court of Guatemala recently revealed that more than 130 judges received death threats since 2001. The majority of international and local observers attribute such activities to illegal arms groups.

High profile assassinations are not a new phenomena in Guatemala, occurring in the thousands during the 1980s. Former foreign Minister Alberto Fustes Mohr, Myrna Mack, an anthropologist who investigated displaced indigenous populations during the civil war, and Bishop Juan Gerardi, the head of the Guatemalan Archdiocese who published a major Truth Commission study implicating the military in the vast majority of deaths during the war, were all murdered by clandestine groups due to their democratic standing.

Preliminary statistics recorded this year demonstrate an ominous increase in murder rates compared to the already substantial levels over the past two years. HIJOS, a humanitarian organization based in Guatemala, released a study on January 29 which reported that 61 young people have been murdered in Guatemala City during just the first 3 weeks of the new year. The report explains that "50 percent of the victims showed a bullet wound to the head," indicating that many were premeditated executions designed by organized groups.

A NEW MOTIVATION AND PORTILLO'S COMPLICITY

Why have the death squads reemerged? The escalation of violence and the reintroduction of death squads have accompanied an expansion of the drug trade under the tenure of Portillo, beginning in December of 1999. The government is hopelessly mired in corruption and intertwined with illicit activity on the part of the military. Both the military and government are complicit in protecting and expanding the drug trade in Guatemala, from which they handsomely benefit.

The illegal armed groups now being found in Guatemala are in fact remnants of the anti-Communist military and civil institutions that existed during the country's bitter civil strife of the 1980s. According to a 2002 Canadian Disarmament Information Service (CANDIS) report, retired military officers often transformed their entire units into criminal enterprises. These former soldiers possess intimate knowledge of the nation's facilities that in the past were used in covert operations, such as secluded landing strips, and safe houses for the monitoring of local populations. This knowledge, along with an easy access to weapons, has facilitated the expansion of the drug trade and incidents of political intimidation, making attempts to restrain drug trafficking more difficult.

These tainted groups are capitalizing on the pivotal geographic location of Guatemala to advance the drug trade. Occupying the southern border of Mexico, it plays a strategic role in trafficking and storing the cocaine being moved from South America to the United States.

Many of these officials have a history of human rights abuses. The United Nations