

and they'll take care of you." CSM Tention has been taking care of his people for 30 years. Whether it's exceeding recruitment/retention goals, yielding the highest Expert Field Medical Badge graduation rate, or spearheading Dining In's and ethnic recognition programs, CSM Tention's actions reflect the highest respect and honor among seniors, peers, and subordinates alike.

CSM Tention's awards and decorations include two Legions of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal, two Meritorious Service Medals, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, 10 Good Conduct Medals, the Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi Arabia), the Kuwait Liberation Medal (Kuwait), the Expert Field Medical Badge, the Air Assault Badge, and the Recruiter Badge with 3 Gold Stars.

CSM Tention earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Columbia College in 2004 and is working towards a Master's degree in Human Resource Management from Webster University.

I am proud to represent all South Carolinians in thanking CSM Tention and his family for their dedication, commitment to country, and service. CSM Tention is a credit to the United States Army and to the United States of America. I wish him all the best as he makes the transition to civilian life.

COMMENDING MILAN OPACICH

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to commend one of Northwest Indiana's most distinguished citizens, Milan Opacich, of Schererville, Indiana. Milan is one of twelve exemplary master folk and traditional artists chosen to receive the 2004 National Heritage Fellowship by the National Endowment for the Arts. On Thursday, September 30, 2004, he will be honored by the United States Government for his artistic excellence and his contributions to the art field. Milan's praiseworthy contributions will be recognized in Washington, D.C., at an awards ceremony on Capitol Hill.

Since 1982, the Endowment has awarded more than 282 National Heritage Fellowships. Recipients include bluesman B.B. King, Irish step dancer Michael Flatley, and acclaimed performers Shirley Caesar, Doc Watson, and Bill Monroe. Recipients are nominated, often by members of their own communities, and then judged by a panel on the basis of their continuing artistic accomplishments and contributions as practitioners or teachers. Milan was chosen for his expertise and commitment to passing on his skills and cultural traditions to a new generation. I can truly say that Milan is a dedicated, distinguished and committed citizen. I have known him for many years and consider him a close personal friend.

Milan was born and raised in Gary, Indiana by a Croatian mother and a Serbian father. He became interested in string music at the age of four, and at the age of fourteen he began playing country music. At the age of eighteen he took up tamburitza music. After high school, Milan became a journeyman tool and die maker, honing the skills he used to build

the tamburitza, a stringed instrument resembling the mandolin. He built instruments for himself, family, and friends; he also played in one of several orchestras.

In 1958 Milan joined the Gary Fire Department. He set up a small workshop in the basement of the firehouse to continue making his instruments during down times. When he wasn't fighting fires, Milan was in the basement of the firehouse making instruments. He worked for the Gary Fire Department for 20 years, retiring 26 years ago. Milan now resides in Schererville, Indiana. He has converted his garage into a workshop similar to a museum of musical instruments. He has several pictures highlighting the different bands he has played with over the years, most recently the Drina Tamburitza Orchestra. Today he is recognized as this Nation's premiere tamburitza maker. His instruments have been exhibited at both the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution and at the Roy Acuff Museum. In 2002, he was named to the Tamburitza Association of America Hall of Fame.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commending Milan Opacich for his outstanding contributions to the arts. His family and friends should be proud of his accomplishments. I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commending Milan Opacich for his lifetime of remarkable accomplishments and enduring service.

HIGHER EDUCATION SUSTAINABILITY ACT OF 2004

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the "Higher Education Sustainability Act of 2004," which would authorize \$50 million for six Sustainability Education Centers across the country to develop and implement integrated environmental, economic, and social sustainability programs. Each Sustainability Center will focus on multidisciplinary research, education, and outreach at institutions of higher education.

Sustainable development practices are being advanced by hundreds of U.S. cities and companies and through a variety of international agencies including the United Nations and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. As population growth, urban development and extreme weather incidents place great stress on ecosystems around the globe, the need for developing innovative and successful sustainable development practices becomes critical to sustaining our economic competitiveness, improving our environmental health and creating more livable communities.

In my home State of Oregon, we have many great examples of sustainable development and livable communities. Portland State University, located in my hometown, provides an excellent example of how to incorporate sustainability throughout the curriculum. Faculty from the departments of social sciences, life sciences, physical sciences, humanities, as well as the professional schools have been working to incorporate sustainability principles

in their coursework and research. PSU has developed several new initiatives developed, including a Certificate in Sustainability Program focusing on PSU's partnerships with Asia and Europe.

Portland State University's Sustainability Initiative has placed a high priority on Green Buildings that use smart technology to improve operational performance and produce significant energy savings. Their green Stephen Epler Residence Hall, opened this fall, uses harvested rainwater in restrooms and features low-flow water fixtures for showers and toilets. Its integrated energy design is projected to produce an expected \$29,000 a year in annual energy cost savings. PSU will save an additional \$275,000 in energy cost across the campus this year simply by installing energy-efficient equipment and lighting fixtures and adjusting temperature settings. These savings translate into the tuition costs for nearly 80 students—a significant figure, given the rising cost of college today!

These innovations are just a few among many that are already underway in colleges and universities across the nation. This legislation will ensure that we can extend these innovations to all our institutions of higher learning. I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass this bill and make a commitment to making our educational communities more sustainable and livable.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 4659, USERRA HEALTH CARE COVERAGE EXTENSION ACT OF 2004

HON. HENRY E. BROWN, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Benefits of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I am pleased to introduce H.R. 4659, the "USERRA Health Care Coverage Extension Act of 2004." I introduce this measure jointly with Representative MICHAEL MICHAUD, ranking member of the Benefits Subcommittee.

The bill would increase to 24 months, up from 18 months, the maximum period of employer-provided health care coverage that an employee covered by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) may elect to continue to receive while mobilized as a reservist or Guard member. This legislation would also reinstate reporting requirements for the Department of Labor in consultation with the Office of Special Counsel and the Department of Justice on USERRA cases.

Mr. Speaker, due to the technical nature of this bill, I have kept it in draft form until now. This approach has afforded the Committee on Veterans' Affairs the opportunity to take testimony on the bill, today in fact, as part of a hearing titled, "Protecting the Rights of Those Who Protect Us: Public Sector Compliance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and Improvements to the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA)." I am grateful to Chairman CHRISTOPHER SMITH and ranking member LANE EVANS for convening today's hearing because America has mobilized 387,986 reserve and Guard members in support of Operation

Noble Eagle, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. We need to continue to assist these selfless individuals. About 153,000 of them are still mobilized.

At today's hearing on the draft legislation, six Administration officials testified to the overall support of the bill. Craig Duehring, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, stated in his testimony that, "Increasing from 18 months to 24 months the maximum period of employer-provided health care plan coverage that an employee covered by USERRA may elect to continue is an important amendment that will align this coverage period with the length of time for which reservists can be mobilized under the current mobilization authority."

The extension of health care coverage will be especially helpful to federal government employees. Dan Blair, Deputy Director of the Office of Personnel Management, informed the Committee this morning that, "Last year, we asked agencies how much of the Federal Employees Health Benefits they pay for these reservists. I am pleased to report most agencies pay both shares. Of the 114 agencies surveyed, 96 pay the full premium." The "full premium" means the employer-employee share. The federal government needs to be the model employer when it comes to reserve and Guard members.

With regard to reinstating the reporting requirements for the Department of Labor, Office of Special Counsel, and Department of Justice, all three supported this measure. In fact, Mr. Charles Ciccolella, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training at the Department of Labor, stated in his testimony that, "In the past, the Department found this requirement to be useful."

With the documented support of the "USERRA Health Care: Coverage Extension Act of 2004," I encourage my colleagues to add their names in support of this timely legislation.

ELKINS HIGH SCHOOL'S VARSITY SOFTBALL CHAMPIONS

HON. TOM DeLAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to recognize some special constituents of mine, the members of the Elkins High School varsity softball team from Missouri City, for capping off their perfect 2004 season with the school's first Texas State championship.

To Coach Jim McClanahan, and assistant coaches Jim Smittle and Amy Mattes, thank you for the enormous amount of time and effort you gave to this team and for helping these girls live up to their potential. Without your hard work and dedication, this team could not have gotten where it is today.

And to the team itself—Alyssa Garza, Caryn Danielson, Abbie Palmieri, Amy Palmieri, Brittini Taylor, Courtney Cornett, Erin Howe, Erin Tresselt, Jamie Hinshaw, Jessie Rodriguez, Rachel Isenhower, Ragan Blake, Sam Dyess, Tiffany Williams, Ryan Graybill, Jenna Lamoreux, Shallon Watson, and Ashley Patterson—congratulations! I'm proud to represent you all in the House of Representatives.

While it's pretty clear from their record that there's a lot of talent on this team, you can't win 39 straight games on talent alone. It takes hard work, perseverance, and dedication—virtues this team has exemplified during its stellar season.

It's great to have talent, but it's better to have commitment. As someone once said, "It doesn't matter how good you are if you don't work hard."

These girls set themselves a goal this year and accomplished it. To have gone an entire season without a single loss is an amazing achievement and a testament to the character of these young ladies.

I am honored to enter their names and accomplishments into the RECORD today.

IN RECOGNITION OF RITA MORENO

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding performer, actress, and entertainer Rita Moreno for receiving the "nation's highest civilian award recognizing exceptional meritorious service," the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Rita Moreno has been an inspiration to many throughout her remarkable career as an actress on screen and stage. Her performances have been recognized with Grammy, Tony, and Emmy Awards, and she received an Oscar in 1961 for her performance as Anita in *West Side Story*. She has, in fact, been listed in the Guinness Book of World Records for her achievements and being the only female performer to have won all four of the most prestigious performing arts awards. Today, June 23, 2004 she will be honored at a White House ceremony with the presentation of the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

A dramatic actress, singer, dancer, comedienne, Ms. Moreno has portrayed a variety of different roles going beyond traditional limitations and proving that Latino performers are not limited to "ethnic" roles. Her versatility has led to decades of success on stage, screen, and television.

Ms. Moreno was born Rosa Delores Alverio in Humacao, a small town in Puerto Rico. At the age of five years old, she joined her mother in New York and the following year she started her dancing lessons. Rosita's immense talent became evident at a young age. By the age of thirteen, Rita Moreno had made her Broadway debut in *"Skydrift"*. She signed her first movie contract at the age of seventeen.

Ms. Moreno made some thirty films early in her career, and was often typecast as a Mexican spitfire or an Indian maiden. After a decade of these stereotypical roles she was cast as the strong-willed and independent Anita in the movie version of *West Side Story*. It was only after Rita Moreno won an Oscar for her outstanding performance as "Anita", which gained international acclaim, that she was finally recognized as a major talent. Indeed, the film's depiction of ethnic division and urban violence can be seen as a foreshadowing of the civil rights struggles and general social turbulence of subsequent years. Rita Moreno's depiction of a young woman believing in and pursuing the American dream was vivid and memorable.

In the early 1970s Ms. Moreno appeared in children's television programs providing inspiration to Hispanic children, with the intent to assure them of their value as citizens of society. Rita Moreno has also been the guest star on a wide variety of television productions, both here and abroad, including highly regarded educational television programs as well as starring in her own TV series.

Becoming engaged in so many facets of entertainment, Rita Moreno, early in 1978, turned her attention for the first time to live performances, creating an act that has attracted outstanding critical acclaim. All things considered, Rita Moreno's success goes far beyond her ability to act and sing or win awards. She has strived throughout her career to push past the boundaries that have marginalized actors who did not seem to represent mainstream America and cast Latinos and other minorities in menial roles. She continues to keep busy performing concerts across the country as a guest artist with symphony orchestras. In addition to her film, stage, television and concert careers, Ms. Moreno fills her spare time by lecturing to various organizations as well as to university audiences. She is also involved with a number of civic and charitable organizations and events.

Rita Moreno is a member of the Board of Directors of Third World Cinema, a company which is interested in creating opportunities in the film industry for minority groups, and has served as a member of the Board of Directors of the National Foundation for the Arts, the Alvin Ailey Dance Company, the Joffrey Ballet and the Los Angeles Theatre Center, as well as many other worthwhile organizations. Ms. Moreno is currently a member of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities and a commissioner of the very prestigious Presidential Fellowship Committee.

It is a special honor for me to recognize Rita Moreno and her great work in performing arts and to salute her leadership and achievements.

HONORING BRIAN BRADY

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my constituent Brian Brady who is retiring as Chief of Police of Novato, California. He has served in this capacity since 1992, undertaking many innovative projects in the city and earning the respect of the community.

Educated at Golden Gate University and Sonoma State University, Chief Brady served in several cities in California and New Mexico before coming to Novato in 1982 as Captain of both the Operations and Services and Administration Divisions. With a commitment to the principles of Community Policing, he assisted in the development of the city's first Police Advisory and Review Board and the Multi-Cultural Oversight Committee. A broad community collaboration that involved all officers, including service on boards of directors, Community Policing resulted in constant interactions, constructive dialogues and creation of additional successful programs such as:

School Resource Officers project uses uniformed officers on campus as part of the day