

of Sonoma's 2004 Alcaldesas, or honorary mayors.

For more than 10 years, Sue Holman and Susan Weeks have volunteered countless hours to Sonoma Valley's Meals on Wheels program. They work 5 days a week preparing 2 gourmet meals for housebound residents. A typical weekly fare is pork chops in mushroom sauce, spicy lamb logs, linguini and clams, tamale pie and roast beef. Over the past 10 years, they calculate that they have prepared a quarter of a million meals.

In addition to all of the food preparation, they prepare the menus, shop for groceries, do all of the baking, maintain inventory control and supervise the 90 volunteers who package and deliver the food and assist in the kitchen.

They recognize that many of the people they serve live alone and try to make each day special. Each holiday has a theme meal, and each client receives a personalized present or two at Christmas of Hanukkah and on their birthday, plus a split of wine or champagne.

They are able to maintain a high quality of fare and bolster the spirits of the people they serve while running the only all-volunteer Meals on Wheels program in the State of California.

In recognition of their contributions, the city of Sonoma designated them "los dos Alcaldesas," following a 28-year-old tradition of selecting someone in the community who works selflessly on behalf of others. The Alcaldesa/Alcaldesa reflects the town's Spanish and Mexican heritage and the "honorary mayors" will preside at all ceremonial functions on behalf of the city.

Susan Weeks settled in Sonoma 18 years ago following an international career that took her to Jerusalem, South Africa and Washington, D.C. In addition to Meals on Wheels, she has also been active in public safety and infrastructure issues, and working with the Verano Springs Association and the Sonoma Valley Citizens Action Committee.

Sue Holman is a retired investment banker who has been in Sonoma 11 years. An animal lover, she was one of the driving forces in the establishment of Sonoma's only dog park.

Mr. Speaker, Susan Weeks and Sue Holman provide an invaluable service to their community, and it is appropriate that we honor them today as Sonoma, California's 2004 Dos Alcaldesas.

HONORING MR. AND MRS. JEREMY
AND ANN PAVA—SPRINGFIELD
COMMUNITY LEADERS IN SERVICE

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the contributions made by Mr. Jeremy Pava and Mrs. Ann Pava to the Jewish community. Over the courses of their lives, they have contributed greatly through both their service and generosity to the advancement of Jewish causes in New England.

Ann sits on the boards of both the Association of Modern Orthodox Day Schools at Yeshiva University as well as the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance. She also serves as the

President of the Jewish Federation of Greater Springfield in Massachusetts. In 1999 Ms. Pava received this same Federation's Young Leadership Award.

Jeremy currently sits on the finance committee of the Heritage Academy and continues to serve as a trustee of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, as he has done since its inception. In the past, he has been the president of Congregation Kodimoh and the campaign chair for the Young Men's Division of the Jewish Federation of Greater Springfield. In 1999 he received the Kodimoh Brotherhood Humanitarian Award. At present, he also is a managing partner at Aspen Square Management, a real estate investment company in West Springfield.

Alone their actions are more than noteworthy, however, together they have given even more to the Jewish community. They are a founding family, and generous supporters, of the Hebrew High School of New England in West Hartford, which opened in 1996. Additionally, Ann was the founding President. HHNE is the only Jewish high school between New York and Boston, serving families from different observant backgrounds in Springfield, Hartford, and New Haven regardless of their financial situation.

This school has grown significantly since its inception in 1996. This burgeoning school is now pushing the limits of its current location, thanks in no small part to the work of Mr. and Mrs. Pava. They have both contributed immensely to the school's vitality and growth. As a result, they are to be honored at the Hebrew High School's first Annual Scholarship Dinner. The proceeds will go towards a new building to house the school, so that it may continue to grow and serve more members of the Jewish community in New England.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to pay tribute to two extraordinary people from the Springfield area. Their work for HHNE, Jewish education, and the Springfield community is commendable, and the standard they set for public service is outstanding. People, such as the Pavas, are what make Springfield such a wonderful place to live, and I am personally glad to share this city with them.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2004 FEBRUARY 11, 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2004

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, continuing my earlier statement, time is again running out in our effort to reauthorize our Federal highway, public transit, and transportation safety programs. The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21) expired on September 30, 2003, and Congress passed a 5-month extension, which expires on February 29. On September 24, during consideration of that extension bill, I stated: "I am afraid . . . we will be back here on this floor once again pleading for another extension of time to keep transportation programs from once again expiring. . . . I do not want to be back on this floor saying again what I said 6 years ago, time is running out."

Well, time is running out and we must again extend the programs. Why? Because ideology, not good policy, is driving this debate.

On November 19, 73 Members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure introduced H.R. 3550, authorizing \$375 billion for the highway, transit, and transportation safety programs for the next six years. Today, the bill has 137 cosponsors. The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee was poised to mark up this legislation last week, but the Republican Leadership has delayed its consideration.

Despite the fact that the funding levels included in our bill were derived from the Department of Transportation's highway and transit needs report, the Administration strongly opposes additional infrastructure investment. Last week, the President submitted his Budget to Congress and it flat-lined the highway and transit programs, and did not include one additional dollar for highway and transit investment over the next 6 years.

Why? When our country's economic strength, improve business productivity, and our desire to create a safe, efficient transportation system are all dependent upon increasing investment in our Nation's infrastructure, why does the Administration oppose such investment? It cannot be because of any renewed Republican concern about the size of the deficit—the President proposes \$1.2 trillion of new tax breaks that, if enacted, would result in a total of \$3.2 trillion of new tax breaks, primarily targeted at the wealthiest Americans, since assuming office in 2001.

When this Administration and the Republican-led Congress have presided over an economy that has seen the number of unemployed workers increase by 2.4 million workers and the construction industry is suffering under a 9.3 percent unemployment rate, why does this Administration oppose infrastructure investment that its own Department of Transportation estimates will create 47,500 jobs and \$6.2 billion for every \$1 billion of Federal funds invested? I am sure that the 800,000 construction workers who look for work each month would gladly line up for the more than 1.7 million construction jobs this bill will create and sustain over the next six years, including 445,000 jobs this year alone.

Why? Because the Administration and some of the Republican Leadership would rather kneel at the altar of "no new gas taxes" than develop the policy necessary to invest in our Nation's infrastructure. A few days ago, in an interview, President Bush implied that the highway and transit programs were fueling the Federal budget deficit. Nothing could be further from the truth. Nearly all of the expenditures from these programs are funded by the Highway Trust Fund. The Trust Fund is financed by revenues from user fees. It is a "pay-as-you-go" program; outgoing expenditures are tied to incoming revenues; and the revenues may only be used for infrastructure investment.

The Trust Fund is a model of fiscal discipline. The Byrd Amendment serves as an anti-deficiency mechanism that prevents the Trust Fund from over-spending. This system of user fees has been well-tested by decades of experience. It provides a clear and unambiguous way to provide the revenues required to make the necessary improvements to the system.

It is for these reasons that the bipartisan leadership of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee propose to restore the purchasing power of the gas tax, which was last increased more than a decade ago. Under the Committee's proposal, the gas tax would increase by a nickel and the average commuter would pay only an additional \$36 per year. The user fee system has served us well. We should further utilize the strengths of that system to generate the necessary revenues to meet the needs of the transportation system.

Regrettably, the reason we are here today with another extension bill is because Administration ideology and political expediency is trumping good policy. The reauthorization bill is again delayed. As we approach the summer construction season, States will be slow to make the necessary investments during these uncertain times. Good-paying jobs will be lost or never created. Last fall, State transportation officials estimated that an extension bill would mean \$2.1 billion in project delays and the loss of more than 90,000 jobs. This extension simply compounds those losses.

Instead, we now face vigorous behind-the-scenes efforts by the Administration and the Republican Leadership to cut the funding levels in our bipartisan bill and develop budget schemes that shift money from one account to another—to increase revenue to the Highway Trust Fund without increasing the user fee. While I will work with all parties to ensure that we find the necessary resources to increase our transportation investment, I will not support smoke-and-mirror proposals that simply further ideological objectives or political expediency, but not the long-term interests of the highway and transit programs.

Faced with these current roadblocks, we must again extend the highway, transit, and transportation safety programs or face a shutdown of both the Department of Transportation agencies and Federal surface transportation funding.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, there is one other very important element of this extension that deserves mention. That element is its continuation of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) program, as that program is set forth in TEA 21. Since enactment of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982, Congress has included a program to aid socially and economically disadvantaged businesses to successfully compete for transportation construction contracts. Because of this program, we have made impressive strides in increasing the participation of minority- and women-owned businesses in Federally-assisted transportation construction contracts. Today, more than 20,000 DBE's participate in the program. However, as recent evidence demonstrates, there continues to be a compelling need for the DBE program.

The current program is narrowly tailored to allow States to set and refine goals for participation of disadvantaged businesses in Federally-assisted transportation contracts. These goals must be appropriate for the State's population. Further, the current program requires States to try and meet those goals by race-neutral means. It is only when race-neutral means fail to achieve sufficient DBE participation, that race-conscious means may be used.

Indeed, as recent data provided by the States have shown, the lasting effects of discrimination are such that the overwhelming majority of States must continue to use race-

conscious means to try and achieve their participation goals. For example, my home state of Minnesota established a goal for 2002 of 10.3 percent DBE participation in Federally-assisted transportation construction contracts. Minnesota officials determined that only 2.6 percent of this goal could be achieved with race-neutral means and 7.7 percent would need to be met using race-conscious means. Despite its good-faith effort to achieve this self-imposed goal, Minnesota was only able to achieve 6.63 percent DBE participation.

Minnesota's experience demonstrates two important facts about the program. First, as courts throughout the country have found, the DBE program is truly one of setting goals; it is not a quota system. States must make a good-faith effort to achieve its goal. Second, the goal setting required by the DBE program is crucial to increasing participation of DBE's in Federally-assisted transportation contracts. In Minnesota state-funded transportation contracts, where there was no DBE goal established, DBE participation was only 4.42 percent.

By extending this program today, we specifically reaffirm the government's compelling interest in ensuring that States receiving Federal funds for transportation construction make a good faith effort to ensure participation by minority- and women-owned businesses in those construction projects.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3783.

HONORING SUSAN BOOTH FOR HER OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to join the many gathered to pay tribute to an outstanding member of our community, Susan Booth, as she is honored by the Devon Rotary and named a Paul Harris fellow. The Paul Harris fellow recognition was created in memory of Paul Harris, the founder of Rotary, as a way to show appreciation for contributions to the foundation's charitable and educational program. Every Paul Harris fellow receives a pin, medallion and a certificate when he or she becomes a fellow, identifying the recipient as an advocate of the foundation's goals of world peace and international understanding. The commitment and dedication that Susan has demonstrated is indeed a reflection of all that the Rotary stands for. It is wonderful to see her work so proudly recognized by her community.

Founder of the Archway Foundation, Susan has spent nearly 15 years collecting donations to feed and clothe homeless children in Romania. Inspired by a television program about Romanian orphans abandoned when communism collapsed, Susan, a railroad conductor on a commuter train between Connecticut and New York's Grand Central Station, switched to night shifts so that she could earn a master's degree in social work. Upon completing her degree, Susan went to Bucharest on a week's vacation in search of these Romanian orphans who were living in sewers

and abandoned buildings. With only a short list of contacts, Susan was fortunate to find an individual who knew where to look. "In that sewer, I found my life's work," she has said. Indeed, she has dedicated countless hours to her mission.

Operating out of her own home and a post office box, Susan collects clothing and donations and has been awarded hundreds of thousands in charitable grants. Through her hard work and the generosity of her contributors, Archway has been able to purchase two small homes in Romania as well as employ several Romanians. One of the homes is used as a soup kitchen from which volunteers take food out to hundreds of homeless children every week and provide groceries to squatter families who take refuge in abandoned buildings.

It is not often that you find an individual with such dedication and commitment. Susan's good work has touched the lives of thousands of needy children. More importantly, she has inspired countless numbers of people to donate their time and energy to provide one of life's most precious gifts: hope.

I am proud to stand today to join the Devon Rotary and the many family and friends who have gathered this evening in extending my sincere thanks and heart-felt congratulations to Susan Booth as she is named a Paul Harris fellow. Yours is a legacy that is sure to continue to inspire generations to come.

INDIA DISSOLVES PARLIAMENT: ELECTIONS COMING; MINORITY NATIONS SHOULD VOTE FOR FREEDOM

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I noticed the other day that India is dissolving its Parliament on February 6. They will be having new elections soon, perhaps as soon as March.

These elections, unlike ours, change faces, but don't seem to change policy. The repression of minorities continues no matter who wins. This repression has killed over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, over 300,000 Christians in Nagaland since 1947, over 85,000 Kashmiri Muslims since 1988, and tens of thousands of other minorities. More than 52,000 Sikhs, as well as tens of thousands of other minorities, continue to be held as political prisoners. Yet India cites elections like the ones upcoming to show that it is a democracy.

That isn't very democratic for the minorities, is it, Mr. Speaker? As I have said before, the mere fact that they have the right to choose their oppressors doesn't mean they live in a democracy.

Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, has issued an open letter to the Sikhs in Punjab on the elections urging the Sikhs in Punjab to reject all major parties and vote for candidates inclined to support the freedom of Khalistan, the Sikh homeland that declared its independence on October 7, 1987. That is the only way the Sikhs can survive. The Akali Dal is corrupt, he points out, and the Congress Party organized the June 1984 attack on the Golden Temple, the seat of Sikhism.