

went on to become a public speaker and advocate for youth sports programs in disadvantaged neighborhoods. His humanitarian efforts were not carried out in vain, as he was awarded the Medal of Freedom from President Gerald Ford in 1976, the highest honor a U.S. civilian may receive.

On March 31, 1980, Jesse Owens passed away after a battle with lung cancer. He left behind his wife and three daughters, numerous world records, and a legendary performance in Germany that reshaped the world's notions of race. He gave America hope during a time when America gave him a seat in the "blacks only" restaurant and a place to stand on the bus. During this month in which we honor Black History and the significant achievements of African Americans, it is proper and fitting that we recognize Jesse Owens as a champion of track and field and, more importantly, humanity.

HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPACT OF THE US-VISIT PROGRAM ON SOUTH TEXAS COMMUNITIES

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight an issue of great importance to the communities of South Texas—the United States Visitor and Immigration Status Indicator Technology (US VISIT) program. I would like to thank the gentleman from Texas, Congressman JIM TURNER for his leadership on homeland security issues. He is a great advocate for improving our national security infrastructure at all levels.

We face many challenges in the homeland security area, from the need to improve our intelligence capabilities to providing more resources for local first responders. Without question, we need to continue efforts to improve our national security. But, we must do so in a way that does not undermine our economy. Security and commerce must go hand in hand.

Without a doubt, one of the goals of the September 11th terrorists was to damage our economy. We should not let them win by imposing security measures without the proper infrastructure and preparation needed to make them work smoothly. Texas is the gateway for trade between the United States and Mexico, one of our largest trading partners. Our ports along the border, from El Paso to Brownsville, handle the majority of land-based trade with Mexico. Laredo and El Paso are the two largest ports of entry and six out of the top 10 lands ports are in Texas.

I recently had the opportunity to visit the Port of Laredo with the Ranking Member, Mr. TURNER, to hear first hand about the impact of US-VISIT on our border communities. We met at the World Trade Bridge which, along with a sister bridge, accounts for roughly 40 percent of all overland trade between the United States and Mexico. The US-VISIT program, as currently designed, poses a great threat to our border and national economies. We clearly lack the infrastructure to handle the new requirements. Even without US-VISIT, our border infrastructure is inadequate to meet the current demands and future potential. We

need to improve our roads, build new bridges, and update our technology. With implementation of the US-VISIT program, we face the likelihood of greater delays, confusion, and a decrease in legitimate trade and tourist travel.

We must not tolerate any decrease in border trade. Our goal must be to expand it while improving our security. To do so requires more investment. To do so requires the development of new technologies that will protect us while allowing more people and goods to cross our borders.

We need to better understand how US-VISIT will impact us. For that reason, I have requested, through Ranking Member TURNER, that the GAO study the economic impact of US-VISIT on our land ports and to report on what infrastructure and technology we need in order to avoid an economic disaster. Once we have that information, and only then, can we decide how to properly carry out our border security measures.

And it's not just communities directly on the border that will suffer. Cities like San Antonio, a major trade gateway, will suffer similarly as trade becomes snarled at our ports and as trade literally moves elsewhere.

We must also address the unfairness of the existing border visa program. Currently, Mexican citizens can obtain a border laser visa, a secure document that allows them to enter the United States for 72 hours and travel no more than 25 miles from the port of entry. Obtaining a laser visa requires extensive background and security checks. Applicants are screened and checked. For that reason, we should also insist that holders of laser visas not be required to go through any duplicative requirements of US-VISIT, such as photographing and fingerprinting. Moreover, the 72-hour limit is unfair and if strictly enforced would devastate many border economies. We should allow laser visa holders to stay in the United States for up to six months.

These laser visa holders are an important part of our economy. Many of them have businesses, homes and family members in the United States. We must protect our security, but we must value our visitors who do not come to harm us, but rather to visit our country and contribute to our economy.

RECOGNIZING THE FAIRFAX COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2004 VALOR AWARD RECIPIENTS FROM THE FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, Mr. MORAN, Mr. WOLF, and I rise today to recognize an extraordinary group of men and women in Northern Virginia. Each year, the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce recognizes individuals who courageously have demonstrated selfless dedication to public safety. The hard work, dedication, and perseverance of the Fairfax County Police Department have earned several of its members the highest honor that Fairfax County bestows upon its public safety officials—The Valor Award.

There are several types of Valor Awards awarded to a public safety officer: The Life-

saving Award, the Certificate of Valor, or the Gold, Silver, or Bronze Medal of Valor. During the 26th Annual Awards Ceremony, 53 men and women from the Office of the Sheriff, Fire and Rescue Department, and the Police Department received one of the aforementioned honors for their bravery and heroism.

It is with great honor that we enter into the record the names of the recipients of the 2004 Valor Awards in the Fairfax County Police Department. Receiving the Lifesaving Award: PSCC Assistant Supervisor Jackie A. Ahrens, Police Officer First Class Garrett G. Broderick, Public Safety Communicator Gail M. Gibson, Police Officer First Class Daniel V. Johnson, Detective Thomas P. Lawn, Sergeant Shawn C. Martin, Police Officer First Class Weiss Rasool, Officer Stacy L. Sassano, Police Officer First Class Donna E. Shaw, and Detective James N. Sparks, III; the Certificate of Valor: Police Officer First Class William G. Brett, Senior Police Officer Robert A. Galpin Jr., Detective Matthew G. Payne, Detective Steven T. Pihonak, and Detective Gene M. Taitano; the Silver Medal of Honor: Police Officer First Class Timothy W. Cook; the Bronze Medal of Honor: Master Police Officer Bryan K. Cooke, Second Lieutenant Scott C. Durham, Master Police Officer Charles M. Haugan, Second Lieutenant Daniel P. Janickey, Police Officer First Class Ryan W. Morgan, Senior Sergeant John W. Orpin, Private First-Class David B. Patterson, Officer Randolph G. Philp, and Officer Frederick W. Von Meister.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all men and women who serve the Fairfax County Police Department. The events of September 11th serve as a reminder of the sacrifices our emergency service workers make for us each day. These individuals' continuous efforts on behalf of Fairfax County citizens are paramount to preserving security, law, and order throughout our community. Their selfless acts of heroism truly merit our highest praise. We ask our colleagues to join us in applauding this group of remarkable citizens.

IN RECOGNITION OF ASBAREZ, ARMENIAN DAILY NEWSPAPER'S 95TH ANNIVERSARY OF ESTABLISHMENT IN CALIFORNIA

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the bilingual daily newspaper, Asbarez, as it celebrates its 95th anniversary of establishment in California. Asbarez, which means 'arena' in English, was founded in August of 1908 in Fresno, California. At that time those who had come from Armenia looked to Armenia and Armenians for guidance, and the seven founding fathers, noticing the community's desire to preserve its heritage and identity, created Asbarez, with the hope of bringing the community and the homeland together.

Asbarez was born through the sacrifice of all those involved. In the words of Edward Megerdichian, who worked at Asbarez from 1956–1963, "[Asbarez] was ninety percent voluntary, and everyone had a sense of ownership, a sense of community—that this is our paper and our lives are described in this

paper." It was with such dedication that the newspaper persevered to keep all the Armenians in California informed and connected.

Recognizing that there was an important role for Asbarez to play in the growing Armenian community in Southern California, Asbarez Publishing Company moved its operation to Los Angeles in the 1970's. In the last three decades, Asbarez has become a bilingual daily newspaper, becoming the voice of the Armenian-American community from libraries to newsrooms.

Today, what was once a small paper has grown to thousands of subscriptions, and is read in numerous countries reaching a larger, more diverse audience than ever before. It has maintained and reaffirmed its commitment to providing reliable news and information to the community for 95 years.

It is my distinct honor to recognize Asbarez's invaluable service to the constituents of the 29th Congressional District over the years. Asbarez has truly succeeded in becoming a trusted information and community source. I ask that all the members join me in congratulating Asbarez's 95 years of establishment and service to the community.

JAVITS-WAGNER-O'DAY NATIONAL DISABILITIES DAY

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleagues of the many barriers people with disabilities face. They confront barriers to employment, transportation and mobility issues, environmental obstacles, as well as fears, prejudices and misconceptions about their ability to offer valuable service to business, to our communities, and to our nation.

People with disabilities battle a 50 percent nationwide unemployment rate, and those with severe disabilities struggle with a debilitating 70 percent rate of unemployment. I regret that ten years after this Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act, it is still necessary to affirm that people with disabilities can work and want to work. They can enrich the workplace with meaningful skills and talents. And they, like any other Americans, want to contribute their talents to our society.

The key to changing these shocking labor statistics is to encourage employers to focus on the abilities of an individual, rather than an individual's disabilities. Hiring a deserving, qualified individual with a disability is a win-win situation for business and the community. When a person with a disability is employed, the positive benefits reverberate in the community reducing welfare dependency and generating self-sufficiency, independence, stable families, and an increased tax base. Employing people with disabilities helps businesses as well. They have extremely high retention rates, higher than most employees, and there can be tax advantages for businesses that hire employees with disabilities.

The Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Program is to be commended and should be supported for providing employment opportunities to Americans with disabilities. The JWOD Program uses the purchasing power of the Fed-

eral Government to buy products and services from participating, community-based nonprofit agencies dedicated to training and employing individuals with disabilities. JWOD completes the cycle of support by enabling persons with disabilities to acquire job skills and training, receive good wages and benefits, and gain greater independence.

The program serves 40,000 people with disabilities nationwide. Last year, it generated approximately \$280 million in wages earned and nearly \$1.5 billion in products sold. In Georgia alone, some 972 people with disabilities earned nearly \$3 million in wages last year as a result of the Javits-Wagner-O'Day program.

The Bobby Dodd Institute (BDI), a community rehabilitation facility in my district, has found particular success with JWOD contracts. Bobby Dodd Institute trainees operate the Veterans Administration Hospital switchboard, the U.S. Attorney Office mailroom, the Decatur Army Reserve Base janitorial service, and even have an expanded regional presence at the Veterans Administration Hospital switchboard in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

As a result of these JWOD contracts, the Bobby Dodd Institute has been able to provide employment opportunities to numerous individuals with disabilities and has helped them to become independent, self-sufficient citizens. I am pleased that these JWOD contracts have had such a positive impact and hope that this is only the beginning. With support from my esteemed colleagues, Javits-Wagner-O'Day contracts can increase, and our whole society will benefit.

This is a program that truly makes a difference in the nation, and in Georgia. I am proud to support it.

INTRODUCTION OF END RACIAL PROFILING ACT OF 2004

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the End Racial Profiling Act of 2000, along with additional bipartisan cosponsors. As a product of years of extensive consultation with both the law enforcement and civil rights communities, this legislation represents the most comprehensive federal commitment to healing the rift cause by racial profiling and restoring public confidence in the criminal justice system at-large. The introduction of this legislation is critical step in what should be a nationwide, bipartisan effort to end this divisive practice.

Before September 11, 2001, there was wide agreement among Americans, including President Bush and Attorney General Ashcroft, that racial profiling is wrong and should end. Many in the law enforcement community acknowledged that singling out people for heightened scrutiny based on their race, ethnicity or national origin had eroded the trust in law enforcement necessary to appropriately serve and protect our communities. What was true before September 11th is even more true today: racial profiling is inappropriate and ineffective as a law enforcement tactic.

To that end, the Bush administration has promulgated a series of guidelines which are designed to end the practice of racial profiling

by federal law enforcement agencies. However, we must not mistake the issuance of federal guidelines as the final resolution of the racial profiling problem nationwide. The vast majority of racial profiling complaints arise from the routine activities of state and local law enforcement agencies. While these guidelines send a signal, they are not a replacement for the enactment of comprehensive federal anti-profiling legislation.

Racial profiling not only undermines our constitutional rights, it undermines the trust on which law enforcement depends to protect our communities. Since the first introduction of racial profiling legislation in the 105th Congress, the pervasive nature of the practice has gone from anecdote and theory to well documented fact. Data collected from New Jersey, Maryland, Texas, Pennsylvania, Florida, Illinois, Ohio, New York and Massachusetts show beyond a shadow of a doubt that African-Americans and Latinos are being stopped for routine traffic violations far in excess of their share of the population or even the rate at which such populations are accused of criminal conduct. Moreover, a recent Justice Department report found that although African-Americans and Hispanics are more likely to be stopped and searched by law enforcement, they are much less likely to be found in possession of contraband.

This legislation is designed to eliminate racial profiling by changing the policies and procedures underlying the practice. First, the bill provides a prohibition on racial profiling, enforceable by injunctive relief. Second, the receipt of federal law enforcement and other monies that go to state and local governments is conditioned on their adoption of effective policies that prohibit racial profiling. Third, the Justice Department is authorized to provide grants for the development and implementation of best policing practices, such as early warning systems, technology integration, and other management protocols that discourage profiling. Finally, the Attorney General is required to provide periodic reports to assess the nature of any ongoing discriminatory profiling practices.

The vast majority of law enforcement officers discharge their duties professionally and without bias. The value of their service should not be tarnished by a minority of police officials who engage in discriminatory behavior. Evidence obtained from enforcement efforts over the past several years has made it clear that federal action is necessary to address this problem with finality.

Racial profiling is a divisive practice that strikes at the very foundation of our democracy. When law-abiding citizens are treated differently by those who enforce the law simply because of their race, ethnicity, religion or national origin, they are denied the basic respect and equal treatment that is the right of every American. Decades ago, with the passage of sweeping civil rights legislation this country made clear race should not affect the treatment of individual Americans under the law. The practice of using race as a criterion in law enforcement flies in the face of the progress we have made toward racial equality.

With the continuing cooperation of the Administration, we have the opportunity to move bipartisan legislation and end the practice of racial profiling. I hope that we do not miss an historic opportunity to heal the rift cause by racial profiling and restore community confidence in law enforcement.