

the President of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. President Trajkovski lost his life in a plane crash this morning in the mountainous region of southern Bosnia. I would like to offer my most sincere condolences to the wife, son, and daughter of President Trajkovski for their tragic and untimely loss as well as to all of the families and friends of the two pilots and six aides on board the flight who also perished in the crash. Furthermore, I wish to extend my deepest condolences to the people of Macedonia who have today lost a truly forward-looking and unifying leader.

Boris Trajkovski, who served as President of Macedonia since 1999, will be remembered in the international community for his role as a peacemaker and a moderate in a region troubled by ethnic tensions and conflicts. These tensions and conflicts have at times been so severe as to threaten the stability and unity of Macedonia. President Trajkovski's accomplishments as a peacemaker are many and premised on his will to work together with all ethnic groups. Included among his accomplishments to this end is his role in a NATO-brokered peace agreement in 2001 that ended months of armed clashes between Macedonia's Slavic-speaking Orthodox Christians and ethnic Albanian minority. This agreement played an integral role in warding off a full-scale civil war in the country.

Since gaining its independence, Macedonia has been a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of which I am proud to serve as Vice President. Thus I have followed closely the developments in Macedonia and have observed first hand the efforts made by Macedonia under the leadership of President Trajkovski to secure a peaceful nation and to move the country forward to a bright future. Just this past Wednesday, President Trajkovski signed Macedonia's formal application to join the European Union, a move that would further benefit the people of Macedonia in their attempts to cement democracy and prosperity in their nation.

It is my hope that the loss of President Trajkovski does not signify a loss in any degree of the strong unifying efforts in which he so strongly believed and for which he fought. As well as offering my condolences to the people of Macedonia in their time of grief, I also want to take this opportunity to wish them every success in overcoming this tragedy and continuing on the path of peace and prosperity.

It is my hope that the greatest legacy left by the loss of President Trajkovski is the ongoing effort to see across ethnic divisions and to secure a peaceful and unified Macedonia in an equally peaceful and unified Europe.

IN HONOR OF RAUL VARGAS

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, it is with the utmost pleasure and privilege that I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to a friend and an educator, Mr. Raul Vargas. For more than 32 years Raul has guided young men and women along the path of academic excellence and future leadership success. Through his years of

effort, more than 5,600 college undergraduate and graduate students from across the country have received scholarships totaling \$10.3 million during their time at the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles. How fitting that on the evening of February 27, 2004, the USC Mexican American Alumni Association (MAAA), of which he is a founding member, will honor Raul Vargas for his lifetime commitment to education and inspirational leadership at USC.

The son of Felipe Vargas and Helena Sotelo, Raul Vargas was born on May 21, 1939, in Lordsburg, New Mexico. Raul lost his father at the tender age of four and when his mother married Alfredo Mejia, the family moved to Miami, Arizona. Growing up in this small mining town, Raul and his siblings Felipa, Alfredo, Alfonso, Elvia, and Elisa learned a strong work ethic and core values from their parents.

Raul is a proud alumnus of Miami High School and Arizona State University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration in 1961. That same year, Raul enlisted in the United States Army where he served until 1964.

Raul's service to his country evolved into a lifetime of service in the classroom. After completing his teaching credential at Arizona State University in 1966, Raul went on to teach Spanish in the Ontario School District in California. After five years of teaching, he resumed his studies at California State University, Los Angeles as a student in the Master's in Administration program. From there he continued his doctoral work in public policy at the University of Southern California. In January 1972, Raul joined the USC family as Executive Director of the Office for Mexican American Programs at the University of Southern California.

Raul has always been a hard worker and driven to succeed. Fortunately, he had the good sense to pause for a moment and recognize that the best thing in his life stood before him: Marcia Wyse. Raul and Marcia married in December of 1966. Together they have become an indivisible and indispensable team, blessed with a true partnership, friendship and love. Raul and Marcia are now the proud parents of two children, Tracie and Cesar, and one grandchild, Alexandra. And Marcia, in her own right, is one of our country's preeminent and forceful voices advocating for America's English-language learners and the value of bilingual education.

Raul's career has always combined his passion for students with his commitment to innovation as an administrator. So it was that in 1974, Raul and eight USC alumni founded the USC Mexican American Alumni Association with a bold, but untested vision to build a mighty anchor and support for Latino college enrollment at the University. Their success has surpassed all expectations. Raul and the MAAA recently completed the association's Endowment Fund Campaign which increased its endowment to \$2.1 million to assist future generations of Latino college students. Marcia will tell you that Raul takes great pride and honor in making a prestigious university like USC more accessible to Latino students.

Mr. Speaker, as family, friends and colleagues gather to celebrate Raul's many accomplishments, it is with great admiration and pride that I ask my colleagues to join me today in saluting this exceptional man and

brother to many. America, the University of Southern California, and America's future leaders have certainly gotten the better end of the bargain when the doors of education and public service opened to Raul Vargas. Fight on, my friend!

INTRODUCTION OF THE RESIDUAL RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINATION ACT

HON. LOUISE MCINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce important legislation that seeks to undo—in some small measure—an injustice done to thousands of American workers in the years following the Manhattan Project.

Beginning in the 1940s, throughout the United States, the government secretly contracted with hundreds of private-sector factories and laboratories to develop, test, and produce atomic weapons. For well over a decade, many of these facilities processed enormous amounts of radioactive materials such as thorium, uranium and radium. Yet, when the government contracts expired in the 1950s, few of these facilities were properly decontaminated.

In 2000, Congress saw fit to establish a reparations program for workers who developed diseases because of their work on our nation's atomic weapons program. Under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA), workers could receive a one-time payment of \$150,000 and medical coverage for expenses associated with the treatment of diseases contracted due to this exposure. One major shortcoming of the program is its failure to compensate individuals made sick from their work in former atomic weapons plants—where the walls and floors were permeated with radioactive residue—for decades following the end of Cold War era production.

In fact, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health released a report in the fall that found "significant" residual radioactive contamination existed in many of the former contractor sites well into the 1970s, 80s and beyond. Today, we see the legacy of this failure to properly decontaminate. Employees who, unbeknownst to them, worked in facilities with significant residual contamination, have contracted or succumbed to radiation-related cancers or disease.

The enactment of the EEOICPA was recognition that the federal government bore a responsibility to workers who were made sick and even died because of the work they did on the nation's atomic program. It is long since past the time for our government to take responsibility for its role in allowing these Cold War era facilities to remain dangerously contaminated and place workers needlessly at risk.

Mr. Speaker, the bill I am introducing today with my colleague, Mr. Quinn, the Residual Radioactive Contamination Compensation Act (RRCCA), would extend eligibility for the EEOICP to workers who were employed at facilities where NIOSH has found potential for significant radioactive contamination. For instance, of the fourteen facilities in and around

my congressional district, NIOSH found that five of the sites had potential for significant contamination well into the 1990s and beyond. At the same time, NIOSH reported that it could not make a determination at three of the sites without additional information. For this reason, the bill I am introducing would require NIOSH to update its report on an annual basis to include new information when it becomes available.

Mr. Speaker, the RRCCA seeks to open the door of eligibility for valid claims. At the same time, passage of this bill will mean very little if the chronic problems that have plagued this program are not addressed. As you may know, the implementation of this important program has been plagued by bureaucratic red tape. For far too many claimants, it's a waiting game. I know of dozens of constituents whose work and health history leave no doubt about eligibility but are still waiting to have their records reviewed. In those rare instances where the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has managed to evaluate claims, the approval rate has been abysmal.

Moreover, the Department of Health and Human Services has failed to issue one of the key regulations required by the law nearly 3½ years since the law was signed. The "Special Exposure Cohort" regulation is needed to address situations where the records needed to estimate radiation dose are not available, where the workers were not monitored, or the monitoring data is unreliable or altered. We note, for example, that NIOSH was unable to produce individual monitoring records for workers at Bethlehem Steel plant in Lackawanna, New York, where uranium billets were rolled into rods used as fuel in the government's plutonium reactors during the years 1949–1952. Just this week, a group of 25 Bethlehem Steel workers boarded a bus for Cleveland, to stage a protest outside of the Northeast Regional Headquarters of the program. These workers and others have been denied the right to petition for eligibility in the Special Exposure Cohort because the Department of Health and Human Services has failed to issue its regulations in a timely manner. Further delay is simply inexcusable.

As I have said, over and over again, this is an aging and ill population. Time is of the essence. Congress must act to ensure that the Energy Employee Occupational Illness Compensation Program is properly administered.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass the Residual Radioactive Contamination Compensation Act to help our constituents.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EXTENSION ACT OF 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 2004

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on February 11, 2004, I supported H.R. 3783, legislation to provide an extension of the transportation programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund pending enactment of a reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).

The fact that Congress had to approve yet another temporary extension of the Highway Trust Fund programs clearly shows the leadership of this Congress has misplaced priorities.

I am a cosponsor of H.R. 3550, the Transportation Equity Act, a Legacy for Users (TEA-LU), legislation which is the product of the hard and tireless work of two well respected members of the House, Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman DON YOUNG and Ranking Member JIM OBERSTAR. I call on my colleagues to enact this legislation at the full authorized level of \$375 billion through 2009.

Their legislation is being held hostage by ideological interests in the White House and House leadership who are apparently blind to the number one issue in my community of Houston, Texas: mobility.

While transportation reauthorization is stalled in Congress, residents in my community are idling away an average of 37 hours and 60 gallons of gas this year in congested traffic. We lose \$2.1 billion, every year, in productivity and fuel, and congestion has been getting worse. These figures are according to the Texas Transportation Institute's 2003 Urban Mobility Report.

Texas mobility is also impacted severely by the fact that 10 cents of every dollar we pay in gasoline taxes goes to other states. I strongly believe that Texas deserves at least 95 percent of Texas gas tax revenue for Texas transportation projects and have co-sponsored legislation, H.R. 2208, to that effect. But it will be much, much easier to increase our slice of the pie and get to that 95 percent level, if we fully fund H.R. 3550 and have a larger, total pie.

The gasoline tax funds our public highways by tapping revenue from those who benefit from them—motorists and truckers. Every cent we pay at the pump to the federal government goes to transportation. How else should we pay for our unavoidable road, bridge, and transit construction? The current gasoline user fee method is simpler than having to stop every 5 miles or so and dig around for change in our car seats to pay a highway toll.

Unless we can fully fund H.R. 3550, our constituents will be stopping to pay a lot more tolls in the future. The amount of funding generated by the static \$0.18 per gallon federal gasoline tax has significantly eroded over the last several years due to inflation. To allow for necessary highway construction the federal gas tax should be indexed to inflation, as proposed by my respected colleagues Chairman DON YOUNG and Ranking Member OBERSTAR.

It is frustrating to be confined by inadequate transportation funding during tough economic times because infrastructure investment brings major employment and development benefits. Each billion spent on infrastructure creates 47,500 American jobs, with 3.5 million jobs to be generated and sustained through 2009 under H.R. 3550, including over 200,000 jobs in Texas.

Inadequate transportation investment leads to lost hours spent in traffic, lost job opportunities, and lost lives from unsafe road conditions. I call on my colleagues to fully fund H.R. 3550 at the bipartisan level of \$375 billion.

RECOGNITION OF MRS. GINA CAYNE IN APPRECIATION FOR HER EFFORTS TO ASSIST THE VICTIMS OF THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 ATTACKS

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great privilege that I have the opportunity to recognize an outstanding woman, Mrs. Gina Cayne, for her distinguished efforts creating the Jason David Cayne Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting the families of deceased spouses.

Mrs. Cayne spent her youth in Marlboro, New Jersey where she met her childhood sweetheart and future husband, Mr. Jason David Cayne. In 1992, Jason and Gina wed, and Jason began his career trading Municipal Bonds. His success led him to a partnership with the firm of Cantor Fitzgerald in 1995. Six years later, during the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, Jason's life came to a tragic end. He was survived by his wife and three children.

However, in the wake of tragedy, the community reached out to Gina, and provided for her every need while she grieved for her beloved husband. After this difficult period ended, Gina was so thankful of the help of the community that she decided to return the favor, and try to bestow the same generosity to other victims of tragedy that results in the loss of a spouse.

Gina created the Jason David Cayne foundation in October of 2003 to assist with the immediate burden that families face when losing a spouse. In addition to financial assistance, the foundation provides help with organizing finances, and finding counseling that is required from the loss of a husband or wife.

Mr. Speaker, for overcoming the overwhelming loss of her husband, and in the wake of such tragedy, creating a foundation to help others like herself, Mrs. Gina Cayne deserves praise. I would like to extend my gratitude to Mrs. Cayne for her service to the grieving families of Monmouth County. In addition, I would like to ask my colleagues to join me in honoring a remarkable woman whose career in non-profit work has positively shaped the lives of all her foundation touches.

RECOGNIZING THE 101ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE JUVENILE COURTS IN CALIFORNIA

HON. DOUG OSE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 101st anniversary of the Juvenile Courts in California. As a result of the tireless efforts of the California Federation of Women's Clubs (CFWC), a bill was passed and signed into law by Governor George C. Pardee establishing the California juvenile court system on February 26, 1903. California became the seventh state to establish a juvenile court system with the first courts in San Francisco and Los Angeles—only 4 years after the nation's first juvenile court began in Chicago, Illinois.