

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

WE THE PEOPLE: PROJECT CITIZEN STUDENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN TUCSON, AZ

**HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA**

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 27, 2004*

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to commend a group of students from my district for their civic engagement. Along with their teacher, these 23 students developed a proposal for curbing bullying in Arizona schools. This proposal was taken up in the Arizona State legislature with bipartisan support. The bill was introduced by Representative Phil Lopez and Representative Linda Gray, and has already passed the Education Committee and has garnered the support of Gov. Janet Napolitano. If passed, the bill would require that school boards adopt and enforce procedures that prohibit the harassment, bullying and intimidation of pupils.

Using the skill of civic engagement, taught through Project Citizen, these students have made a positive impact in their community, and serve as role models for their peers. Project Citizen is a curricular program for middle school students that promotes competent and responsible participation in local and State government. The program helps young people learn how to monitor and influence public policy. In the process, they develop support for democratic values and principles, tolerance, and feelings of political efficacy. The Project Citizen program is administered by the Center for Civic Education with the assistance of the National Conference of State Legislatures. It is funded by the U.S. Department of Education by act of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the contribution of these students and applaud their efforts to be actively involved in efforts to improve their community. On behalf of the schools and children of Arizona I would like to thank the following students for their admirable interest in civic engagement. I hope their enthusiasm for government is shared among their peers.

Marina Ardt, Eva Baisan, Edward Barnes, Amanda Belt, Katie Brown, Audrey Bustamante, Nicholas Franco, Taiya Gehrels, Brianna Herreras-Crouse, Shelby Kline, Katie Knight, Mounir Koussa, Alison Lambert, Ben Langworthy, Pricilla Martinez, Dillon McCallum, Dylan Monke, Danny O'Sullivan, Johnny Police, Joy Ratanavongsa, Tanisha Sosa, John Taylor, Jessica Willy, and their teacher, Cheri Bludau of the Mansfeld Middle School of Tucson.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to submit the attached article from the Tucson Citizen recognizing the valiant efforts of these young adults.

KIDS' ASSIGNMENT TURNS HEADS AT STATE LEVEL

Here is a brief primer on the workings of the Arizona Legislature from an expert who has learned how to write a bill, have it introduced by a lawmaker, then watched it advance through the Legislature:

"It is a very long process," explained Tashina Sosa. "It's like a never-ending thriller book."

Thriller book? Perhaps.

Horror story? More often.

But who am I to argue with an insider—someone who has seen firsthand the laborious and languorous way that the Legislature goes about its work.

There are several thousand professional lobbyists at work in Phoenix right now who are being paid well—very well—to get their employers' messages to lawmakers.

Tashina Sosa isn't one of them, although it is quite likely that she will be more successful than most of those professionals.

Sosa is a freshman at Tucson High Magnet School. And work that she and her classmates started last year when they were enrolled at Mansfeld Middle School may soon result in a law.

This law, unlike many of those passed by legislators, actually makes sense and actually is needed. It would require each school district to enact an anti-bullying policy.

Sosa and 23 other Mansfeld students were enrolled last year in a law-related education class taught by Cheri Bludau. Part of the class was a project called We the People-Project Citizen, a national program that promotes student participation in government.

After discussing several ideas and conducting research on matters ripe for change, the students settled on the issue of bullying, Bludau said.

But there were some concerns. Some students feared the topic may be too "child-like" and of little interest to the Legislature, Bludau said. Others were afraid that a law would be meaningless—that bullying was not something that could be stopped with legislation.

But the research was persuasive. Studies found that bullying is one of the most under-rated and serious problems in schools. Students involved in murders in school and students who commit suicide are far more likely to be victims of bullies than the average student is. Education and federal officials estimate that nationwide, 160,000 students miss school every day because they fear being bullied.

"A majority of adults see it as a right of passage," Bludau said, "but the students know it is impacting their lives."

Using laws written in other states as a starting point, Bludau's class wrote a bill it hoped to have introduced in the Legislature. Class members took the bill to Project Citizen's state competition last year and won first place. They then submitted it for national competition and earned a "superior" rating—the highest award.

Last summer, Bludau e-mailed a copy of the proposed bill to Gov. Janet Napolitano. Within 45 minutes, Napolitano wrote back, saying she would be very much behind it.

Thus emboldened, the students went hunting for a legislator who would introduce the bill—and they found support from state Rep. Phil Lopes, a Tucson Democrat. He liked the bill, but because he is a member of the minority party, he needed help from a Republican. Rep. Linda Gray, a Glendale Republican and chair of the House Education Committee, signed on.

The bill was formally introduced and assigned a number and title: "HB2533—Schools; policies; bullying" and scheduled for a hearing and debate last week before the Education Committee.

The students were scheduled to go to Phoenix to testify in support of their bill—but they were foiled by another state issue. It was time for them to take part of the mandated AIMS test. Nonetheless, the bill easily passed the committee.

The bill is scheduled to be heard in the House Judiciary Committee today. Lopes is optimistic that it will eventually pass both houses and be signed into law by Napolitano.

"The kids did all the work," Lopes said. "It's just incredible. I knew nothing about the substance of the topic. But I saw what they had done and said, 'My God, we've got to help them out.'"

Sosa is excited that her class's work may soon be memorialized in state law. And so is her classmate, Mounir Koussa, also now a freshman at Tucson High. "It's good for me to know that a student can make a difference in society," Koussa said.

It has taken almost two months for the bill to make it to this point in the legislative process, and Bludau still can't quite believe her students have been so successful.

"Way back in January, little did we know that we could have this kind of impact on the state of Arizona," she said. "I'm very proud of my students, as you can tell."

Cheri Bludau's students have completed their assignment. Now legislators must complete theirs.

WHAT THE LAW WOULD DO

If the bill written by students at Mansfeld Middle School becomes law, it would require that school boards adopt and enforce procedures that prohibit the harassment, bullying and intimidation of pupils.

Those procedures must include:

A confidential process that allows pupils to report incidents of harassment, intimidation or bullying to school officials.

A procedure for the parents or guardians of pupils to submit written reports concerning harassment, intimidation or bullying to school officials.

A requirement that school district employees report suspected harassment, intimidation or bullying.

A formal process for the documentation and investigation of reported incidents.

Disciplinary procedures for students admitting to, or found guilty of harassment, intimidation or bullying.

A procedure that provides consequences for submitting false reports.

The bill submitted by the students was amended in the House Education Committee to cover events not only on school grounds, but also on school buses, at school bus stops and at all school-sponsored events and activities.

A MODEL TWO-YEAR COLLEGE

**HON. BARNEY FRANK**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 27, 2004*

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to see the Boston Globe, in an editorial on Thursday, April 22, give appropriate recognition to the excellent job that

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

is done by Bristol Community College. As the Globe editorial correctly noted, "Bristol Community College in Fall River has been performing . . . superbly for more than 30 years and is a model for other community colleges . . . as they strive to prepare Massachusetts residents for the jobs of today and the future."

Dealing with a changing economy, in which workers lose their jobs through no fault of their own because of technology, globalization, and other factors, is the single most important issue facing us as a nation. The private sector is a great creator of wealth, but it does not by itself resolve the problems that are created by this ongoing transitional process, especially at times such as now when economic transitions are even more rapid than at other times.

This is why a well-funded, vigorous public sector is important to work along with the private sector in enhancing the quality of life for all Americans. And in the economic sphere, as Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan frequently points out, community colleges have an essential role to play. I was therefore very pleased that the Boston Globe Editorial Board recognized Bristol Community College for the wonderful work it does.

I have been fortunate to be the Representative of Bristol Community College in Congress since 1983, and I have had numerous occasions during that time to see how well the people at BCC perform. To former President Eileen Farley and current President John Sbrega, I send my congratulations, along with my congratulations to all of the faculty, administrators and students who have done so much to make this institution an educational model.

Mr. Speaker, community colleges are an essential part of the way in which we should be responding to economic change, and because Bristol Community College is such a good example of how to do this, I ask that the editorial from the Boston Globe be printed here.

[From the Boston Globe, Apr. 22, 2004]

#### A MODEL TWO-YEAR COLLEGE

Community colleges have a threefold mission: They prepare some students for further schooling, they educate others for immediate entry into the work force, and they enhance the skills of those who have already been working for years. Bristol Community College in Fall River has been performing these roles superbly for more than 30 years, and is a model for other community colleges around the state as they strive to prepare Massachusetts residents for the jobs of today and the future.

"This school is wonderful," said Janet Maynard, 39, who is getting an associate's degree in nursing after a 19-year break from school. "The staff is incredible. They don't leave anybody behind." Maynard, one of 6,600 students at Bristol, is juggling a paid job—one day a week at St. Anne's Hospital in Fall River as a unit secretary—with the hard work of rearing five daughters. St. Anne's, which has worked with Bristol's nursing program for decades, is paying Maynard's tuition in the conviction that it is investing in a more skilled work force.

Jason Brilhante, 21, attends Bristol because "it's extremely affordable"—\$2,544 a year—"and has high standards." After graduating from the two-year business program, he'll go on to Bryant College in Smithfield, R.I., with the aim of becoming a certified public accountant. Bryant will give him a partial scholarship, confident that his fine work at Bristol will continue in later years.

"We partner with them all the time," said Irene Olsen, retired personnel manager for

the AT&T call center in Fairhaven and now a consultant with the union-management Alliance for Employee Growth and Development. Bristol offers business-related courses to 40 AT&T employees at the Fairhaven workplace. If students can't come to the beautiful Fall River campus, Bristol goes to them.

No wonder that Judith Gill, chancellor of higher education, praised Bristol in draft assessments of the 15 Massachusetts community colleges last fall—along with Middlesex and Holyoke community colleges—as a high-performing institution.

Other colleges complained that the six criteria used for the ratings were too few, so Gill took away the "high performing" designation from all three colleges. Gill promises that by 2006 the Board of Higher Education will devise better assessments based on 30 criteria. When that is published, the differences between high-performing colleges and those not doing well should be clear.

Assessments are important as community colleges make the case that they are vital to the development and maintenance of an educated work force in Massachusetts. They should never again have to endure the deep cuts in state aid—nearly 20 percent—they have experienced since 2001. Not all community colleges follow the example of Bristol in providing essential services to students and the wider communities they serve. Those that do earn the support and gratitude of everyone in Massachusetts.

#### TRIBUTE TO THE LATE MARY LADESIC

#### HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 27, 2004*

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the passing of Mary Ladesic, who was the first woman elected to countywide public office in Wyandotte County, Kansas.

Elected as Wyandotte County Treasurer in 1980, Mary Ladesic served in that position until her retirement in 1997. She died at her home on April 17. Born in Kansas City, MO, she lived in Kansas City, KS, for most of her life.

As Wyandotte County Treasurer, Mary Ladesic was a nationally recognized, innovative manager, starting a "tag team" program for marketing license plates that became a model for other Kansas counties and a successful amnesty program for collecting back taxes.

Mary Ladesic also was active in partisan politics at the county and state levels, as a member of the Southside Democratic Club and all Democratic clubs in Wyandotte County, a lifetime member of the Kansas Federation of Women's Democratic Clubs, vice chair of the Wyandotte County Democratic Central Committee, and was awarded the Georgia Neese Gray Award by the Kansas Democratic Party in 1997. As the Party's official description of that award states, it is

reserved for presentation to Kansans who have served in elected office at the municipal and/or county level and who have performed outstanding service to their local community in the pursuit of the principles of the Kansas Democratic Party. Such service commends a lengthy and broad participation in public service endeavors to the city, county and state. This award shall be considered the highest honor which can be bestowed by

the Kansas Democratic Party to its municipal and county elected officials.

Survived by her husband, William, 3 children and 10 grandchildren, Mary also was a member of Stony Point Christian Church and an active supporter of Maur Hill School in Atchison, Kansas. I commend her for a life full of support for her community and service to others, and include in the RECORD a recent article from the Kansas City Kansan detailing her life and good works. Mary Ladesic will be missed by all who knew her.

[From the Kansas City Kansan, Apr. 20, 2004]

#### MARY LADESIC, FIRST WOMAN ELECTED TO COUNTYWIDE OFFICE, DIES

(By Mary Rupert)

The first woman elected to a countywide public office in Wyandotte County, former Treasurer Mary P. Ladesic, died Saturday.

Ladesic, 68, held the post of county treasurer for 17 years in Wyandotte County, beginning in 1980 and retiring in 1997. She died at her home in Kansas City, Kan.

"She liked the job of county treasurer because she loved people," remembered her husband, William Ladesic.

He recalled that as county treasurer, Mary always kept \$100 of her own money in a drawer for people who didn't have quite enough money to pay their taxes. She'd give them \$20 or \$15, and tell them they could come back and repay her later, he recalled. They always did, he said.

"When she left that office, she took the \$100 with her," he said. "She trusted the people. She wouldn't say anything bad about anybody. She was just a beautiful person."

Ladesic said his wife was a good campaigner.

"She treated people all alike, it didn't make any difference," Ladesic said.

He remembered that she used to tell him that people would sometimes complain to the treasurer about their taxes.

"Any time they complain, I can't say they're wrong, because any time you're taking money away from people, they should be angry," he remembered her telling him.

Ladesic said Mary was an innovator in her job, starting a "tag team" program and an amnesty program for back taxes. She worked to get state laws changed in order to implement the programs, he said. The license tag program raised \$3 million in the first six months here, he said, and it won awards and became a model for other counties.

She also assisted in training new county treasurers at the state level, he said.

Ladesic recalled that Mary did volunteer work with her church at the food kitchen.

"She'd do the work of three people and wouldn't stop," he recalled. She also did volunteer work for Maur Hill School in Atchison, Kan., and for local Democratic events, he said.

"Mary was a pioneer in being the first woman elected to public office in Wyandotte County," said Don Denney, media relations specialist for the Unified Government. "She was a dedicated public servant and will never be forgotten for what she accomplished."

She received the Georgia Neese Gray Award and other national awards.

"She was a diehard Democrat who worked hard for her party," Denney said. "My heart goes out to her husband, Bill, and the rest of the family."

Ladesic was a member of the Southside Democratic Club, and other Democratic clubs in Wyandotte County, and had served as vice chairwoman of the Wyandotte County Central Committee of the Democratic Party.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Wednesday at Stony Point Christian Church,