

Mr. Speaker, in a series of meetings arranged last week by Ms. Scallon, I met with representatives of scores of U.S. corporations deeply concerned over the potential impact of modifications or discontinuance of the "dual gateway" policy on their operations. Approximately half of U.S. investment in Ireland is made in the western part of the country. Many of these corporations have made sizable investments in western Ireland and are keen to maintain their presence in the region, but would be forced to reevaluate their positions should Shannon Airport's status be downgraded.

These business executives estimate that 40,000 jobs on the western corridor from north of Galway to south of Limerick are directly affected by Shannon Airport. An additional 80,000 jobs are indirectly affected by Shannon operations according to these business representatives. I also met with local leaders along the west coast who were united in their concern over the likely economic and social consequences of a downgrading of Shannon Airport's status. Business leaders from County Donegal warned of the ripple effect their region would feel from such a change.

The potential threat posed by possible changes to the "dual gateway" policy have galvanized U.S. business executives representing many different sizes and types of enterprises along the west coast to speak out with a single voice on this matter. They highlight the fact that Shannon Airport is a major access point to and from the U.S. and European cities necessary to sustain and promote development and growth in the region.

Mr. Speaker, for nearly six decades Shannon Airport has served as a vital gateway for the United States to Ireland and beyond. Indeed, many Americans, including me, trace their family roots back generations to counties along the rugged western coast of Ireland. Hundreds of thousands of American tourists pass through this gateway each year. An estimated 140 U.S. corporations have come to rely upon Shannon Airport as a vital gateway to doing business in western Ireland.

RECOGNITION OF UPCOMING ELECTIONS IN BELARUS

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 2004

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to again bring attention to the upcoming elections in Belarus.

The current leader, Aleksandr Lukashenko told the National Assembly on April 14th, "The new parliament that is to be elected this fall should include representatives of all groups aside from 'businessmen, merchants and capitalists.'"

At a time when Belarus desperately needs business and entrepreneurs, it is appalling that the Belarussian leader would declare that candidates with business backgrounds or professions would not be allowed to run or to serve in the Belarus Assembly.

In response to this repressive political environment, we need to focus our efforts on helping to promote the institutional survival of the country's democratic political organizations and helping their leaders and activists prepare for political and public policy.

The important thing for the current regime in Belarus to understand is that Washington and the world are watching.

HONORING FLAG CITY USA

HON. MICHAEL G. OXLEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 2004

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the official designation of my hometown of Findlay, Ohio, as Flag City USA.

Findlay's spirited celebration of Flag Day dates back to 1968, when an area businessman shared his passion for Old Glory with the community. John B. Cooke, a member of the Sons of the American Revolution, determined that every household in Findlay should display the flag on June 14. Speaking to industry and community groups throughout Findlay in support of this idea, he spearheaded a successful effort to purchase 14,000 flags. Area Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Camp Fire Girls distributed these flags to area households and businesses.

My predecessor in Congress and former boss, Jackson Betts, recognized this achievement in a speech to the House on June 12, 1968. "The strong patriotism of residents of my district," he said, "has rarely been better exhibited than the present project which will make Findlay, Ohio, Flag City USA on June 14, 1968." Congressman Betts also contributed a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol to Findlay's Flag Day display.

The event was heralded in the House by my immediate predecessor in Congress, Tennyson Guyer. On May 7, 1974, Congressman Guyer introduced a joint resolution to designate Findlay as Flag City USA, citing the 1968 Flag Day event and the dedication of a plaque in Findlay to our armed forces on that day. This Friday, May 7, I will join my constituents at an event in Findlay hosted by the Hancock/Flag City Heritage Commission to commemorate the 30th anniversary of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Flag City know that Old Glory is far more than a piece of cloth. This point was most clearly illustrated in 1989, after the Supreme Court upheld flag burning as a protected act. More than 2,000 area residents gathered in Findlay's Dorney Plaza to celebrate our flag and express their strong opposition to this ruling. I was proud to join them at this event, where they presented me with a petition containing more than 5,000 signatures objecting to the Court's act.

Our flag has never gone out of fashion in Findlay, but the post-September 11 era has brought even more poignancy to the banners readily seen throughout our city. They remind us of the debt we owe to the brave men and women who fight in defense of our freedom—both those protecting our homeland domestically and those engaged on our behalf across the globe.

As I go to work each day and see Old Glory flying over the Capitol dome, I reflect on our enduring freedoms celebrated each day in Findlay and in towns and villages throughout the nation. Our flag remains the most visible symbol of our nation and of the liberties we have too often taken for granted. It is a uni-

fying sign in times of peace and war, renewing pride in America and continued hope for our future.

It has been three decades since we were officially named Flag City USA, but Findlay's spirit of patriotism has shined brightly throughout its history. I salute the hard work of the Hancock/Flag City Heritage Commission for coordinating this commemoration, and thank all of the fine citizens of our community who maintain the pride of Flag City USA. They remind us that ours is the greatest nation on earth, and that our city is brimming with the American spirit.

NATIONAL TEACHER DAY

HON. CHARLES W. STENHOLM

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 2004

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I want to take time to recognize an important group of individuals who are being honored today, Tuesday, May 4, National Teacher Day.

Growing up in Stamford, my own teachers played an important role in my upbringing. It is one reason why I chose to become a teacher myself.

Since starting out as a vocational agriculture teacher, education has been a passion of mine. That is why I now spend so much time in our schools. And I certainly realize the important role that teachers play in our children's lives. Our teachers go above and beyond the call of duty time after time to help their students learn and be successful.

I'm happy we take this day to honor those who have chosen to enter this profession. It sometimes can be a thankless job. But it is rewarding to see the kids grow and mature before your very eyes—even after they have left your classroom.

I am pleased to cosponsor several pieces of legislation that support America's teachers, including:

The LEARN Act (H.R. 1643), legislation that would provide a \$2,000 tax credit to teachers and principals who work in low-income schools.

Student loan forgiveness legislation (H.R. 1751, H.R. 934 and H.R. 2811), designed to result in the recruitment of new and talented teachers to educate the next generation of students. These bills would provide student loan forgiveness up to \$17,500 to a teacher who teaches for five years in a low-income school, rural school or in high-demand subjects such as mathematics, science, special education, foreign languages and bilingual education.

The Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 594), which would end unfair discrimination against Texas teachers and other public employees who currently are denied the Social Security survivors benefit. I strongly support this legislation, and have signed a discharge petition that would bring H.R. 594 to the House floor for a vote.

As a former educator and grandfather of three, I will continue to be concerned about providing the best educational opportunities to all American children. Yet, the successful education of this nation's children is inextricably tied to the quality of the teachers educating them. We must provide the proper financial

and workforce incentives to retain the dedicated core of education professionals who daily shape the hearts and minds of the children of West Texas.

Today we recognize this important and influential group of people. My hat is off to our Texas teachers. And I encourage all Americans to take time on Tuesday to thank our teachers for the great job.

RECOGNIZING CARNEGIE MEDAL FOR NEIL JAY ROSENBERG

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 2004

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the late Mr. Neil Jay Rosenberg, formerly of Westerly, Rhode Island, who will be awarded the Carnegie Medal for his heroism on the morning of July 17, 2002. This year, 19 individuals from throughout the United States and Canada will receive the Carnegie Medal for risking their lives to an extraordinary degree while saving or attempting to save the lives of others. The medal and \$3,500 grant will be presented posthumously to Mr. Rosenberg's father of Brooklyn, New York.

Alerted to a fire in the livingroom of his family's two-story house on July 17, 2002, Mr. Rosenberg quickly evacuated his step father, Robert L. Ingram, who required the use of a wheelchair. He then turned back into the house where his girlfriend, Tara Verrier, and two half sisters, Crystal L. and Carol Ingram, remained on the second floor. Tragically, neither Mr. Rosenberg nor the others survived the fire.

Mr. Speaker, I hope our colleagues will join me in honoring a true hero, Mr. Neil Jay Rosenberg, for sacrificing his life in the hopes of saving others.

HONORING MR. HOTS MICHEL

HON. HENRY J. HYDE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 2004

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call your attention to Hots Michels, one of Chicago's best liked and most enduring entertainers. During his 50-year musical career, Hots has played for three different Presidents and many famous people including Zsa Zsa Gabor, Abbott and Costello and Bob Hope.

In case you didn't know it, the "piano bar" began in Chicago, where people would gather around a piano and sing away their troubles to a wonderful guy like Hots.

Hots started in the old Sherman House Hotel at Clark and Randolph in Chicago. It was the original piano bar across the street from City Hall where politicians, union leaders and the media gathered. More recently he has been playing at the Chicago Chop House for the last 18 years, entertaining the throngs of individuals visiting the "Windy City."

On May 2, the Chicago Sun-Times featured Hots Michels in an article entitled, "Piano Player to the Stars": Hots Michels." Today, I am pleased to share this article with my colleagues in recognition of Hots, a guy who still knows how to pack them in.

"PIANO PLAYER TO THE STARS": HOTS MICHEL

Strangers in the night are the only people who tip piano player Hots Michels. He's got too many pals.

"I was never a tip guy, mainly because people knew me too well," Hots says. "I'd be in business with them, how could I take a tip? And I wouldn't want to; it would have to be from a stranger."

Hots has a fishbowl on his piano in the Chop House, just in case any strangers drop by.

Hots Michels is the original Chicago piano bar guy. The gang at the bar in the Chicago Chop House busts his chops and calls him "the pianist to the stars!" He has tickled the ivories for the likes of Zsa Zsa Gabor, Abbott and Costello, Bob Hope, Don Rickles, Sidney Poitier, Nat King Cole and Wayne Newton. One night while plunking the 88s at the Sherman House, he saw a face peek through the curtains from the dining room. The face belonged to another piano player who had just retired and was on a book tour. Hots says, "The maitre d' came over to me and said, 'President Truman would like you to join him.'"

He's had pops with three different presidents (Truman, Reagan, Bush I) and said prayers with the Pope. He's been playing piano in saloons for more than 50 years. How old is he? "That's an unpublished number."

He's no teenager but he sure looks good for his age.

Hots started out in Little Flower Parish near 79th and Ashland. How did he get the name "Hots"?

"I have no idea," he says, "It has nothing to do with music."

Did your parents name you Hots? "Hots Michels, yeah." Gotcha.

His dad, Walt, was a musician and songwriter, and Hots must have it in his genes. "I play by ear, I can't read music. I don't know what it was, but anything that had to do with a formal education, I just went south. I have no idea how I really got to play the piano, but hey, thank God."

Chicago Chop House owner John Pontarelli says, "He can probably play 2,000 songs."

The piano bar was born in the old Sherman House Hotel at Clark and Randolph. Hots says, "They had the College Inn, the Porterhouse Room and the Well of the Sea. We had strolling violins at the Porterhouse Room, and in between was a little lounge where people would sit and wait to be called to a table. Someone got the idea, just put a piano in there and entertain 'em while they're in there. Then someone said, well let's build a bar around it. All by accident, it wasn't planned. They did, and it's hard to believe but people would wait in line to sit at the piano bar because it was so new." It's karaoke with class.

The Sherman House was across the street from City Hall. Pals would wander over for a couple of carnables along with union leaders and media folk, and most of them became friends with Hots over the years. Along the way he was involved in a multitude of schemes.

"Piano was never enough for me. I was involved in other things all my life. I had a small loan business, used cars, Christmas trees, launched a new lipstick, bubble bath, radio stations in Alaska, Mill Run Playhouse, video games. I had a detective agency. We were in the slot machine business, drilled oil three times in my life, had a burial vault company in Melrose Park, and on and on and on."

Hots and his friend Hal White raised championship hogs in their backyard in Beverly and entered them in an international livestock show. "We took grand champion of the show."

On the wall next to his piano is a picture of the two city slickers crossing the Rock Island Line tracks with their two prize pigs, Lightgreen and Coolbreeze.

Hots used to wear a turban at the piano when he was doing his act, "The Musical Wizard of Mental Telepathy." Folks would conceal the name of a song on a piece of paper and Hots would tear it up and play it for them on the piano. The gang at the Chop House says, "Carnac stole his act!"

He's been playing from 5 to 8 p.m. every weekday at the Chop House for the last 18 years. The joint is drenched in Chicago history with thousands of photos of the toddling town's sinners and saints, including Sally Rand sitting nude on a horse, a gallery of gangsters and every mayor in the history of the city. Grab a stool at the piano bar and request a tune from Hots. If you feel like singing, he'll be your accompanist. I ask him what's the most requested song and he says, "As Time Goes By," requested by the young and the old. "It's still the same old story."

If you're lucky, Joe Sullivan might stop by to do some crooning at the bar. Hots says, "He owns Clark & Barlow Hardware, but Joe could have easily made it in show business. He brings down the house." I've watched Pete Nolan warble here with hand moves and phrasing that rival Sinatra's.

It's not just the music that draws you to Hots' piano. There's a camaraderie among those half-dozen stools as we listen to him play his favorites. One night Charlie Carey and I were chillin' with Hots, and Charlie mentioned that he was on his way to Washington, D.C. Hots picked up the phone next to his piano, called his best friend, U.S. Rep. Henry Hyde, and handed Charlie the phone. Lobbyists charge heavily for that kind of clout, but Hots was just putting two pals together.

After a half century of playing piano in saloons and more than a few cockeyed business schemes, Hots tells me, "I have no beefs."

He's been around long enough to know that only suckers beef.

CONGRATULATIONS TO GIRL SCOUTS ON THEIR 92ND BIRTHDAY

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 2004

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I rise today to honor an American icon and an organization that we all know well, Girl Scouts of the USA. This year, Girl Scouts is celebrating 92 years of service to our communities and our nation. For 92 years, Girl Scouting has made a remarkable difference in the lives of girls in so many ways.

The Girl Scouts is an organization that has always been ahead of its time, and the experiences that girls have in Girl Scouting today are profound. For example, they travel the world, learn about science, math and engineering by working with some of the most innovative thinkers in these fields, and perform community service projects that are literally changing many of our communities for the better.

In March, I had the opportunity to meet with Girl Scout representatives from my district who came to Washington, D.C. with nearly 600 other Girl Scout executives, professional staff and volunteers from across the nation. The