

of Grambling State University, a position she held with great honor and distinction for three years. In this short period of time, Dr. Warner successfully obtained 100-percent accreditation of Board of Regents-mandated programs, from 87 percent when she accepted the position. Under Dr. Warner's leadership, six endowed professorships and a mini college by the Division of Continuing Education were established. She also took the leading role attaining the unconditional reaffirmation of Accreditation by Southern Association Colleges and Schools at Grambling State University.

Dr. Warner has shown many noteworthy accomplishments throughout her tenure at GSU. The Fall 2003 enrollment showed the first increase in three years, and retention rates increased system-wide and campus-wide. Under her leadership, funding was raised and groundbreaking began on the new Health, Physical Education and Recreation Building and Multi-purpose Center. Additionally, Dr. Warner signed several strategic partnerships in distance learning and created student and faculty computer labs.

I thank Dr. Warner for her outstanding contributions to the university and to our community and am proud to recognize her notable accomplishments and manifold contributions. I extend congratulations to Dr. Warner and best wishes for her future endeavors as she retires from acting president of Grambling State University.

#### RECOGNIZING MAY AS HEALTHY VISION MONTH

#### HON. MIKE MCINTYRE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 5, 2004*

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize May as Healthy Vision Month and to highlight the important recommendations of the Vision Problems Action Plan, a National Public Health Strategy as a way to prevent blindness and vision loss.

As Proverbs 29:18 states, "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

As the son of an optometrist and someone who has focused carefully on proper eye care, I know that good vision is critical to conducting activities of daily living. Vision not only affects our ability to learn and work, but it also affects our ability to adequately communicate with others. Therefore, it is essential that we in Congress have the foresight and insight to put forth measures that will improve our eyesight. And, by encouraging awareness, early diagnosis and prevention of eye disorders, I am confident that we can.

First, it's about having the foresight to recognize the problems associated with eye disorders. Unfortunately, far too many people are at risk for losing their eyesight. In fact, more than 80 million Americans have a potentially blinding eye disease, 3 million have low vision, 1.1 million are legally blind, and an additional 200,000 are more severely visually impaired. In my state of North Carolina, over 6 million people over the age of 18 have some case of vision impairment or age-related eye disease. However, despite the fact that half of all blindness and some eye disorders can be prevented, far too many people do not access the care they need. If nothing is done, the number

of blind and visually impaired individuals will double by 2030.

That is why it is so important that we have the insight to address these concerns now. And, what better way to do that than to highlight May as Healthy Vision Month—a national eye campaign to raise awareness about the various conditions that can affect eyesight and cause vision loss. A component of Healthy People 2010, this initiative will undoubtedly serve as a catalyst to highlight the horrors of serious vision problems.

Additionally, it is important that we highlight the recently released report, Vision Problems Action Plan, a National Public Health Strategy. Developed by a coalition of leading eye health experts, including Prevent Blindness American, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Lighthouse International, the American Optometric Association, and the American Academy of Ophthalmology, this report will provide our nation with a framework for preventing vision loss.

In addition to its focus on preventing vision loss, this groundbreaking study also recommends that in order to reduce the occurrence of vision loss and its accompanying disabilities, our nation must concentrate on access to care and treatment including rehabilitation and research. The report also states that we must ensure that vision problems at the National Eye Institute and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have the resources they need to improve communication and education campaigns and prevention research.

To better ensure access to and the availability of treatment and rehabilitation services for individuals with vision loss, the report recommends the importance of supporting programs at the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services and the Department of Health and Human Services that remove barriers and improve access to eye exams currently covered under Medicare, such as diabetic eye exams and glaucoma detection for high risk populations.

The report also recommends bolstering our research efforts to improve our understanding of the eye and visual system in health and disease, as well as developing the most appropriate and effective means of prevention, and access to treatment and rehabilitation.

Finally, it's about improving our eyesight. Working in conjunction with Healthy Vision Month, the Vision report will undeniably provide the roadmap that is necessary to raise awareness about vision loss, provide individuals with the tools they need to prevent it, and give hope to the millions already suffering from vision loss that better treatments can and will be found. I applaud those who played an integral role in developing this report, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to adopt its recommendations.

As a member of the Congressional Vision Caucus, I recognize the severity of eye disorders and the risks associated with not having regular check-ups. At the very least, proper eye care should be a basic component of adequate health care. Today, I stand committed to making it a national priority.

CINCO DE MAYO

#### HON. CHARLES W. STENHOLM

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 5, 2004*

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to reflect on this important day in history where a relatively small group of valiant men met and overcame tremendous odds to bring hope and unity to a struggling nation.

On Cinco de Mayo, 1862, General Zaragoza led an untrained and outmatched group of 2,000 Mexican fighters to defend the town of Puebla against the French. Under the command of Napoleon III, these 6,000 French soldiers were among the best-trained and best-equipped armies in the world. However, their sophisticated armor and weapons were no match for the iron will and solidarity of the Mexican people.

Their victory became a symbol of the pride and patriotism of the Mexican people, who defended themselves against a superior force. In the United States, Cinco de Mayo has become a celebration of the achievements and rich contributions Hispanics have made to our great nation, as well as a reminder of the values and freedoms all Americans hold so dear.

Hispanics in my Congressional District, and across the nation, have added much to the cultural fabric of our country. As the fastest-growing minority population in the nation, they are a driving force in the U.S.—economically, politically, and socially.

That is why I am proud to cosponsor House Concurrent Resolution 163, a resolution which recognizes the historical significance of Cinco de Mayo and calls upon the American people to observe the date with appropriate festivities. I know in West Texas, folks are participating in local festivals and gatherings to commemorate Mexico's victory at Puebla.

Hispanics share with other Americans the common goals of freedom, opportunity, and a chance to build a better life. I am happy to be here and remember this momentous day as we are reminded that all people—regardless of their race, color, creed, or gender—deserve the opportunity to experience liberty, freedom and the right to self-determination. America stands behind these ideals and appreciates the contributions of Hispanics everywhere.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE COUNCIL HOUSE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT ACT— MAKE A HISTORICAL SITE MORE ACCESSIBLE TO TOURISTS

#### HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 5, 2004*

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site Boundary Adjustment Act. This is the original home of the National Council of Negro Women founded by the great Mary McLeod Bethune. Ms. Bethune is also the legendary founder of the historically black college, Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute for Negro Girls, now Bethune-Cookman College, and she played a powerful role in the Roosevelt Administration.

The Bethune Council House, declared a National Historic Site by Congress in 1982, was acquired by the National Park Service (NPS) in 1994. The Bethune Council House, a historic house museum, features original furniture, photographs and facsimiles of historic documents from the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW). This legislation is needed for two reasons. First, the Bethune House is not handicap accessible, and as a historic building, it would be impossible to alter the house in any way without endangering its historic nature. This bill would extend the current boundary of the Bethune House by authorizing the NPS to acquire the abutting property to allow handicapped accessibility. Second, the bill provides space for administrative offices for the NPS to conduct duties related to the Bethune Council House.

This legislation is needed to carry out the important mission of the Bethune Council House. The Bethune legacy is carried forward today by the nation's most prominent civil rights leader, Dr. Dorothy Height, Chair and President Emerita of the NCNW, who recently received the Congressional Gold Medal of here in the Congress. Consequently, this bill honors both of these heroes of our country by assuring that the first home of the organization to which they dedicated their lives is accessible to all Americans. I ask that the House pass this bill promptly.

#### TRIBUTE TO MS. ESTHER WRIGHT

##### HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 5, 2004*

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, Ms. Esther Dolores Wright has dedicated her life to the service of others as an educator for over 40 years. She began her teaching career in Newark, N.J. in 1964, and over the years, she has literally touched thousands of lives in a positive way. Ms. Wright received her Masters of Arts in Education with a concentration in Administration and Supervision from the University of Virginia in May, 1976. She has served the students, parents, and teachers of Maple Avenue School as an Administrator for over 15 years.

During her tenure as Principal of Maple Avenue School, she has presided over many important changes to the school facility and programs, including complete renovations to the school auditorium, gymnasium, and playground area, as well as the establishment of a state of the art science lab and the creation of a computer network, which provides internet access to all of Maple Avenue School's primary and middle school students. They have implemented a distance learning program in conjunction with the New Jersey State Department of Education, which recognized Maple Avenue School with a 'Best Practices' award. She has continued to provide support for innovative programs to encourage student achievement such as the Morning, After School, and Saturday Academy enrichment programs; character development programs such as Best Friends for girls and Best Men for boys; the Afternoon and Evening After School Youth Development Programs, which serve the student and community populations; and Project ACCEL, which reduces high school drop out rates and retention rates for students.

In addition, under Ms. Wright's guidance and direction, Maple Avenue School and students have been at the forefront of a number of innovative initiatives such as Law Day, Career Day, Instrumental and Choral Music programs, the Talented and Gifted Program, and a school wide Science Fair. Maple Avenue School students have represented the school in the district Science Fair, Math Fair, and Technology Fair, and have consistently won local and regional Art awards. In addition, their debate team has been City Champion for several consecutive years and their basketball team played in the 2003 District Championship finals.

During Ms. Wright's time as Principal, Maple Avenue School has also been recognized by the district for achievements in Literacy, Science, and Math. Based upon 8th grade GEPA scores for the past two years, Maple Avenue School has been cited as one of the top 5 schools and one of the top 10 schools, respectively, in the district in Literacy. During the same time period, Maple Avenue School has been recognized as one of the most improved schools and as one of the top 10 schools in the district in Science. During the 2001-2002 school year, Maple Avenue School has been one of the top 10 most improved schools in Math, according to ESPA scores, and has been a past winner of the Math Olympics and most recently went to the district semi-finals.

Maple Avenue graduates are accepted into the Newark Public School's Magnet High School Programs; Arts High; Science High; University, Technology, and Essex County Vocational High School; as well as area Private and Catholic High Schools at a rate of 30 percent. Many more participate in Magnet Career Academies, which provide transition into skilled career opportunities after High School.

I salute Ms. Wright for her dedication to the students, parents, and teachers in our community, and I am proud to have her in my district. Mr. Speaker, please join me in extending my thanks to Ms. Wright for her lifetime of public service, and I invite my colleagues to join me in recognizing the achievements of the Maple Avenue School.

#### IN SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL VISION STRATEGY

##### HON. PATRICK J. TIBERI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 5, 2004*

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, as a founding member of the Congressional Vision Caucus, I rise to recognize May as Healthy Vision Month, and to discuss the important recommendations of the Vision Problems Action Plan, A National Public Health Strategy as a way to prevent blindness and vision loss.

Good vision is critical to conducting activities of daily living, is a portal for language, and affects developmental learning, communicating, working, health and quality of life.

Unfortunately, far too many people are at risk for losing their eyesight. More than 80 million Americans have a potentially blinding eye disease, 3 million have low vision, 1.1 million are legally blind, and an additional 200,000 are more severely visually impaired. Despite the fact that half of all blindness can be pre-

vented, far too many people do not access the care they need. If nothing is done, the number of blind and visually impaired individuals will double by 2030.

That is why awareness, early diagnosis and prevention are so important. Healthy Vision Month, a component of Healthy People 2010, is a national eye health campaign to raise awareness about the various conditions that can affect eyesight and cause vision loss.

Additionally, a coalition of leading eye health experts, including Prevent Blindness America, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Lighthouse International, and the American Academy of Ophthalmology, just this week have released the Vision Problems Action Plan, A National Public Health Strategy, to provide our nation with a framework for preventing vision loss.

This groundbreaking study recommends that, in order to reduce the occurrence of vision loss and its accompanying disabilities, our nation must concentrate our efforts in three priority areas: prevention/public health, access to care and treatment including rehabilitation, and research.

Our public health and prevention campaign must ensure that vision programs at the National Eye Institute (NEI) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have the resources they need to improve communication and education campaigns, increase surveillance, epidemiology and prevention research; and implement appropriate programs, policies and systems changes.

In order to ensure access to and availability of treatment and rehabilitation services for individuals with vision loss, we must support programs at the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that remove barriers and improve access to services covered under Medicare.

Finally, we must bolster our research efforts to improve our understanding of the eye and visual system in health and disease, as well as developing the most appropriate and effective means of prevention, and access to treatment and rehabilitation.

This report provides the roadmap we need to raise awareness about vision loss, give individuals the tools they need to prevent it, and give hope to the millions already suffering from vision loss that better treatments can be found.

I would like to thank all of the organizations involved in crafting this report, including the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the American Optometric Association, the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention, Lighthouse International, the National Alliance For Eye and Vision Research, the National Eye Institute (NEI) and most importantly, Prevent Blindness America. Prevent Blindness America should be commended for spearheading this effort, for bringing together these various groups, and for its almost century-long tradition of preventing vision loss.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE COLLEGE ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY ACT

##### HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 5, 2004*

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, in 1965, Higher Education Act was established to assist low