

and food banks, the Lions Club has given all its support to promoting a better quality of life to the people it touches. It has also been heavily active in youth development. The Lions-Quest program provides youth with a sense of community, as well as tools and assistance for their success in the future.

With a diverse Hispanic community in West New York, the Lions Club has been active in helping in disaster relief and rebuilding efforts to many areas in the Caribbean and Central and South America impacted by natural disasters. It has been a force in gathering necessary supplies and food to help in times of need, and takes tremendous pride in the positive difference it makes in the lives of the people in its community and around the world.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the members and officers, past and present, of the West New York Leones Cubanos de Hudson in recognition of their outstanding contributions and caring dedication to our community over the last 25 years.

TRIBUTE TO STAFF SERGEANT
STACEY CRAIG BRANDON

HON. MARION BERRY

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 2004

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, to die for one's country, while tragic, is the ultimate honor. To die for the freedom of others may not carry with it an adequate expression to illustrate the debt it generates. Today, I rise to honor Staff Sergeant Stacey Brandon who was killed during his tour of duty in Taji, Iraq. He was 35 years-old.

Staff Sergeant Brandon joined the National Guard in 1990 and when he was called to active duty for "Iraqi Freedom" on October 12, 2003, he answered the call and served his country with honor. His ability, intelligence and dedication quickly earned him a promotion to the rank of Staff Sergeant in February 2004.

Despite his notable dedication to his country, he was a husband and a father first. A son, a brother, a friend, an athlete and a light of optimism others were drawn to always. Along with the many lives he touched, Staff Sergeant Brandon carried God in his heart. He was a passionate singer of gospel music and he and his wife, April, joined the Hazen First Baptist Church upon their move to Hazen, Arkansas.

We can ask nothing greater from a human being than to anonymously fight to the end to help people they may have never met. Unfortunately for those left behind, this soldier has a name. He has the respect of those whose lives he touched, and, now, grieving family and friends who I offer my deepest sympathies and utmost respect.

Staff Sergeant Brandon will be remembered for his honor, his mettle, his bravery and his commitment to his family, his God and his country. On behalf of the Congress, I extend the utmost respect for a fine American, a loving father, husband and son, and the perfect model of a patriot.

FREEDOM FOR JORGE OLIVERA
CASTILLO

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 2004

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Jorge Olivera Castillo, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Olivera Castillo worked for 10 years as a national television editor. After being confronted on a daily basis with the blatantly false propaganda mandated by the tyrannical regime, he left his job to join other pro-democracy activists working for freedom and human rights for every Cuban citizen. Using his skills as a journalist, Mr. Olivera Castillo began to report on the brutal policies of the totalitarian regime. He later became the director of the Havana Press agency. Starting in 2001, Mr. Olivera Castillo's articles concerning the state of Cuba under totalitarian rule were published in Spain.

Because of Mr. Olivera Castillo's unrelenting commitment to writing the truth about the totalitarian regime, he has been constantly harassed by the dictator's thugs. According to Amnesty International, Mr. Olivera Castillo has been expelled from his house, arrested, and accused of "counterrevolutionary" activities by the tyrant Castro. During the brutal March 2003 crackdown on peaceful pro-democracy activists and independent journalists, Mr. Olivera Castillo was arrested. In a sham trial, Mr. Olivera Castillo was sentenced to 18 years in the totalitarian gulag because of his commitment to truth over propaganda.

Mr. Olivera Castillo is currently languishing in an infernal cell in the totalitarian gulag. Reporters Without Borders reports that Mr. Olivera Castillo is suffering from numerous medical problems, is confined with common prisoners, and is being forced to drink seriously polluted water. These depraved conditions are truly appalling. It is a crime of the highest order that people who work for freedom are imprisoned in these nightmarish conditions.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Olivera Castillo is suffering in a grotesque, inhumane, totalitarian gulag because he believes in freedom. My colleagues, we can no longer allow peaceful pro-democracy activists to languish in the depraved prisons of tyrants. We must demand immediate freedom for Jorge Olivera Castillo and every prisoner of conscience in totalitarian Cuba.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 2004

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, today marks the 2004 National Day of Prayer—a day set aside by millions of people across this country to acknowledge God and give him thanks for all that is truly good. Once again, we are reminded of our need for him in the midst of turmoil and suffering around the world, and we recall our need to listen and hear from the Almighty.

Right now there are thousands of young men and women in uniform who are bravely serving this country in Iraq, Afghanistan and in other foreign countries. We ask God to protect them and grant them favor. We ask God to comfort their families and loved ones who eagerly await their return. Let us continue to pray for peace in these lands and for reconciliation among its people.

Throughout American history—from the earliest settlers to the Continental Congress, from General George Washington to President George W. Bush—the American people have called upon the Providence of God.

In 1775, the Continental Congress issued a proclamation setting aside a day of prayer. In 1952, Congress established an annual day of prayer, and then in 1988, the law was amended designating the National Day of Prayer as the first Thursday in May.

Our country has witnessed the benefits of national prayer and fasting in times past, and I hope citizens from all walks of life will humbly acknowledge God and seek his guidance, strength and resolve.

Let us remember to pray for our President, his Cabinet, military leaders, Members of Congress, Supreme Court Justices, State governors and local officials.

And may we, like our Founding Fathers, earnestly seek to know God's will for us and our country on this national day of prayer.

RECOGNIZING MR. CLYDE
LEHMANN

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 2004

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise on this day during Teacher Appreciation Week in recognition of a very special person, Clyde Lehmann. Mr. Lehmann has been selected to receive the 2004 Milken National Educator Award.

The Milken National Educator Award is a very prestigious award that acknowledges quality teachers, and highlights how they are required to ensure the academic success of America's students. It is bestowed upon K-12 teachers in recognition of demonstrated excellence in teaching. Awardees are chosen based upon their: Exceptional educational talent as evidenced by outstanding instructional practices in the classroom, school and profession; outstanding accomplishments and strong long-range potential for professional and policy leadership; and engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues and the community.

Mr. Lehmann has certainly earned such an award. As a Latin teacher at Northside Health Careers High School, he uses creativity to keep his students interested in learning. He accomplishes this by using poetry, performance, song, and even travel to pique students' interest in his classes.

His unfaltering dedication to the achievement of his students is reflected in their impressive academic successes—a large number of Mr. Lehmann's students have earned gold and silver medals at National Latin competitions. He has demonstrated his interest in and passion for Latin through his teaching. This passion has seemingly been contagious—four of his former students have become Latin teachers.

Mr. Lehmann has demonstrated his devotion to Latin by engaging in related activities outside of the classroom. This teacher's devotion to his realm of study has led him to sponsor the Health Careers Latin Club which, with one hundred members, is one of the largest organizations on campus. Along with his wife, Mr. Lehmann has organized summer tours of ancient sites in Rome for his students. Additionally, he also has twice served as the president of the San Antonio Classical Society.

I am very proud of Mr. Lehmann and his professional accomplishments. Nothing is more important in one's life than education. I am pleased to acknowledge a man whose knowledge, commitment, drive, and enthusiasm have clearly been a meaningful, positive influence on his students' lives.

CONGRATULATING CHARTER
SCHOOLS FOR THEIR ONGOING
CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION

SPEECH OF

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 4, 2004

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the continued success of our Nation's charter schools. I am extremely proud of the several Charter schools that reside in my district. Many may not fully understand the difference between a regular public school and a Charter school. In Chicago, the Charter schools are public schools, open to all children who reside in Chicago without academic admissions criteria. Each charter school has a unique mission and is operated by community organizations, universities, foundations and school teachers. While charter schools are funded by the Board of Education, they are not required to follow many board regulations. For example, they are free to set their own policies for curriculum, school hours and discipline. But charter schools are held accountable for high student academic achievement by the Board of Education.

I would like to acknowledge and congratulate some of the great charter schools in my district:

The first arts-focused charter school in Chicago, the Charter School of the Chicago Children's Choir (CSCCC), integrate music throughout its interdisciplinary academic curriculum. Learning is project-oriented and emphasizes creativity. Students are able to sing in as many as 17 different languages. The late Rev. Christopher Moore founded the choir in 1956 with "a dream that young people from diverse backgrounds could better understand each other, as well as learn about themselves, by learning to make beautiful music together." The choir that Moore started with a handful of kids in the First Unitarian Church of Chicago on the South Side has grown into a downtown-based, city-wide program that brings together nearly 3,000 children each year. Its groups have performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Lyric Opera, at the White House, and around the world.

In 2000, community leaders working to improve educational opportunities in the West Side neighborhood of Lawndale created L.E.A.R.N., Lawndale Educational and Regional Network. They applied for a charter

school and hired Nancy Dearhammer, an experienced charter school leader, to plan the curriculum and become executive director. L.E.A.R.N. will emphasize high academic standards through a 10:1 student-teacher ratio, a rigorous curriculum, year-round classes and parent involvement. L.E.A.R.N.'s year-round schedule is unusual: 9 weeks on followed by 2 weeks off, giving students a safe, positive environment all year. Parent involvement is key in the mission of the school with monthly parent teacher conversations, bi-monthly parental satisfaction surveys, and strong encouragement to volunteer at the school to keep parents involved. L.E.A.R.N. is also fundraising to offer pre-school, adult education and community health services to Lawndale families.

A strong work ethic and solid commitment to education are the cornerstones of success at North Lawndale College Prep and the only requirements for admission. A rigorous community school for 350 students on Chicago's west side, North Lawndale Prep graduated its first class in June 2002. It is dedicated to developing, as opposed to merely recruiting, college-ready students from impoverished city neighborhoods. With high expectations, every student is expected to complete four years of English, social studies, and math, three years of science, and two years of foreign language. There are extra courses in reading for freshmen, writing for sophomores, and oral expression for juniors. At every level, students are expected to produce their best work consistently. In addition to athletics and after-school activities, North Lawndale Prep offers students a wide array of summer programs. These include outdoor adventure programs, an extensive orientation for freshmen, internships at Chicago businesses, and attendance at prestigious prep school and college summer programs. The summer programs expand the horizons of North Lawndale Prep students and prepare them for the challenges of college.

As demonstrated in these three examples, Charter schools provide excellence in education by delivering high-quality education and challenging our students to reach their potential. Charter schools have brought hope and the idea of success back to many poor, disadvantaged areas that felt abandoned by the education system. I commend the students for their hard work, dedication and success, the teachers for their love of education and commitment to the school and the students, and all parents for playing an active role in their child's education and more importantly their lives by letting that child know that you care and are interested in what they do every day.

TRIBUTE TO KAHUKU HIGH
SCHOOL

HON. ED CASE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 2004

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the incredible students of Kahuku High School for their great achievement in winning fourth place at the national finals of the We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution program held in Washington, D.C. from May 1–3, 2004. These outstanding students from my O'ahu's North Shore underwent

months of intensive study and hard-won victories to win the right to represent Hawaii in the finals, where they competed against a class from every state in the country and demonstrated a remarkable understanding of the fundamental ideas and values of American constitutional government.

This is the first time in Hawaii's eight-year history at this rigorous competition that one of our schools has competed in the final ten. This is truly a wonderful accomplishment that our whole state is deeply proud of!

I commend Kahuku's great teacher, Sandra Cashman, for her unending commitment to her students and for producing generations of responsible citizens. Commendations are also in order to State Director of We the People Lyla Berg and District Coordinator Sharon Kaohi for their leadership in creating our leaders of tomorrow.

However, ultimately this competition is by and about our kids. So I would like to send my heartiest congratulations to Samuel Braden, Chelsey Bunker, Stacia Colton, Brian Craycraft, Tusiata Esera, Lacey Golonka, Evelyn Griffin, Reis Harney, Celesta Hubner, Azura Iversen-Keahi, Jeremy James, Natalie Kamauoha, Jennifer Kamiya, Tiffany Lee, Brook McArthur, Donna Ramos, Alicia Reidy, Leilani Relator, Aaron Rillamos, Austin Spring, Ian Tapu, Alexandra Thompson, Rachel Telleson, Seini Unga, and Jordan Williams. You have all made Hawaii proud. Aloha and best of wishes in your future endeavors.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

HON. RANDY NEUGEBAUER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 2004

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, I would submit this prayer for the RECORD for the National Day of Prayer.

Father, we come to you this day that we have set aside for prayer in this great nation. May we be a nation of prayer not just on this day, but every day.

We come today acknowledging you as the Creator of heaven and earth. We thank you that You have given us the privilege of living in this great land and have blessed it in a mighty way. Our prayer today is that we would indeed be "One Nation under God".

We pray for our President as he leads during these difficult days. Give him the wisdom and courage to make clear and decisive decisions. We pray for the men and women that are defending our world today from evil. We pray for their safety and their return to the family and loved ones that wait anxiously for their homecoming. May their families know your peace and comfort now as never before. Freedom and liberty do not come without a price. Many have gone before and paid a huge price for us to live in this great nation and to enjoy the freedoms we have today. Let us never forget their sacrifice and help us to be good stewards of the inheritance they have left us.

Finally, Father today more than ever our nation needs healing. The principles on which this nation was founded and which You ordained are under attack. The scriptures say, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my