

commitment to scholarship, sportsmanship, and excellence has served the school well throughout his career. I congratulate Coach Ortega on this important accomplishment, and I wish him all the best for continued success at St. Mark's.

# COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BROWN v. BOARD OF EDUCATION

## HON. DIANE E. WATSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2004*

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Brown versus Board of Education Supreme Court decision and to call on this administration and Congress to further renew the goals and visions laid out by this monumental case.

On May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court announced in Brown versus Board of Education that "in the field of education, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place." In the half century that followed, this pivotal decision ushered in a new era, leading to the gradual elimination of State-sponsored racism. Specifically, it established the legal and moral framework for the civil and voting rights legislation of the 1960s that drastically expanded the Constitution's promise of "equal protection" to all spheres of public life.

However, few people today would claim that the promises of Brown have been fulfilled. There is no doubt that the disturbing phenomenon of "white flight" in the North and "segacademies" in the South following efforts at integration created new forms of segregation along economic, and all too often, racial lines. As a recent study by the Harvard Civil Rights Project indicates, 70 percent of African-American children today attend schools that are predominantly African-American, roughly the same level as 40 years ago.

Throughout the country today and this week, many will gather to celebrate and commemorate the legacy of Brown. But it is also an occasion for observance. We cannot ignore how, across America today, Black and White students still go to separate schools in the same town, divided by neighborhoods and segregated by wealth. We cannot ignore the disparity in resources that continue to plague many of our school systems, especially those serving predominantly inner-city minority and impoverished children.

Today is an occasion to recommit ourselves to the vision of Brown, to redouble our efforts in working toward an America that treats everyone equally and empowers everyone economically. Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act to establish a framework for States and districts to address and eventually eliminate education failures. I once again issue a call to action. First this administration and this Congress must fully fund No Child Left Behind to demonstrate our commitment to educational equity. Second, we must increase funding for Pell grants so that low- and moderate-income students can have access to higher education. This 50th anniversary commemoration of Brown versus Board of Education, like the decision itself, calls for action, not just words. Justice deferred is justice denied.

# CONGRATULATING THE PEOPLE OF TAIWAN AND PRESIDENT CHEN SHUI-BIAN

## HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2004*

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to send my best wishes and warm congratulations to the people of Taiwan for having successfully concluded their most recent presidential election.

As the people of Taiwan prepare to inaugurate their incumbent President, Mr. Chen Shui-bian, I salute them and the democratic endeavor that we have recently witnessed.

In the last 4 years, under the leadership of President Chen Shui-bian, Taiwan has continued to prosper.

It has one of the strongest economies in the world and its people enjoy unprecedented prosperity. Taiwan has solid schools, a good transportation system, and sound medical care for its citizens. Furthermore, the people of Taiwan enjoy political freedoms, such as direct elections, a free press, and human rights.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Taiwan have every right to be proud of their presidential election.

I look forward to working with Mr. Chen's new administrative team in the next 4 years and beyond. Taiwan and the United States are truly friends and this relationship is stronger now than at any other time.

Americans and the people of Taiwan are also allies in the war on terrorism. Moreover, we share an abiding concern about peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and Taiwan's participation in world organizations, such as the World Health Organization.

Congratulations again to the people of Taiwan and President Chen Shui-bian.

## A TRIBUTE TO MRS. ALICE NICKENS

## HON. FRANK W. BALLANCE, JR.

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2004*

Mr. BALLANCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Mrs. Alice Nickens, one of my most senior constituents on the occasion of the recent celebration of her 100th birthday. Mrs. Nickens has had the good fortune to witness all of the remarkable events and changes that shaped our country during the 20th century.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Nickens is a retired educator who taught at every school in Hertford County. She began by teaching history as a senior at Waters Normal Institute before beginning her formal career as an educator in 1922.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Nickens indicated that, "in those days", a person didn't have to go to college in order to teach. Mrs. Nickens was considered bright in her subjects and she acknowledges that she was fortunate to have gotten a teaching position. She earned an undergraduate degree from Hampton Institute in Virginia and a masters degree from the University of Pennsylvania, and she never looked for another job.

Mr. Speaker, for 95 long years, Mrs. Nickens has been a dedicated member of

Pleasant Plains Baptist Church. She taught Sunday school for 50 years, emphasizing the power of prayers and the providence of the Lord.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Nickens acknowledges the fact that she is very blessed to have lived such a long and productive life. She realizes that many people take their health for granted and neglect to go to the doctor for regular visits. She warns that some of the diseases with which we suffer today could be prevented if folks would simply commit to take care of themselves and make regular visits to the doctor whether in good or poor health.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Mrs. Alice Nickens, an exemplary citizen as she celebrates her 100th birthday.

# RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF INCREASING AWARENESS OF AUTISM (H. RES. 605)

## HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2004*

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to rise in strong support and as a co-sponsor of H. Res. 605, recognizing the importance of increasing awareness of autism. Autism spectrum disorders and related developmental disabilities affect one in every 166 children—a dramatic increase from a decade ago when the prevalence was thought to be one in every 10,000. Prevalence is thought to be increasing by 10–17 percent annually, yet there remains little public awareness and understanding regarding these conditions.

Autism is a brain disorder, affecting a child's ability to communicate and interact socially. Parents of children with autism require a great deal of patience and support to properly care for these children. Congress must raise awareness of these conditions so that these parents receive the support of their communities and the expert assistance of trained medical professionals and teachers, regardless of income level.

It is not enough, however, to simply recognize the needs of people living with autism. As Members of Congress, we have a responsibility to follow through on commitments we have already made to the parents and teachers of these children. The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act requires the Federal Government to allocate funding for 40 percent of the cost of educating children with disabilities. Since this law was passed in 1991, Congress has never appropriated sufficient resources to meet this requirement. States are left to cover the costs of funding-intensive programs, such as special education programs for children with autism. As a result of insufficient funding, special education programs are chronically plagued by insufficient staffing, resources and training.

Congress must also provide resources to diagnose and treat children with autism before they reach school age, through training programs for medical professionals and initiatives designed to reach and treat autistic children during the crucial early stages of development. Medical professionals need to be educated so that they are aware of and recognize autism and its related disorders. Too often parents

are told not to worry if their child is slower than same age peers, especially if that child is a boy. Precious time is lost waiting for children to "grow out" of their symptoms when that time could be spent receiving early intervention services.

It is important to recognize scientifically valid methods that are effective in working with people with autism. At this time, there is no cure for autism. There are, however, many effective methodologies that can improve the lives of children with autism, and Congress has a responsibility to recognize and fund practitioners and trainers of these methodologies, while also educating parents on the limitations of current treatment so that they do not fall victim to unscrupulous individuals promising easy cures.

Teachers, therapists and doctors who treat children with autism are true American heroes and deserve the best training, support and recognition we can provide. I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize some of the leading organizations in the fight for proper treatment, care and research, such as the Autism Society of America, Cure Autism Now, the National Alliance for Autism Research and Unlocking Autism.

I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for introducing this important resolution, and I urge my colleagues to vote for it. I also urge my colleagues to promote sufficient funding this year to address the critical needs this condition presents to people living with autism nationwide.

#### SPECIAL EXPOSURE COHORT FAIRNESS ACT OF 2004

**HON. TOM UDALL**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2004*

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Special Exposure Cohort Fairness Act of 2004.

On October 30, 2000, the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA) was enacted into law. The purpose of this law was to provide for timely, uniform, and adequate compensation of covered employees suffering from illnesses incurred as a result of their work at Department of Energy facilities. While this law's enactment was welcome and past due, serious flaws in the program have been apparent during the years since its passage, and delays in getting compensation to workers have been numerous.

The language in Subtitle B of the EEOICPA clearly states that where it is not feasible to estimate with sufficient accuracy the radiation dose of a class of workers, and if there is a reasonable likelihood that the radiation dose may have endangered the health of the members of the group, that class of workers may petition to be included in a Special Exposure Cohort. Special Exposure Cohort status provides an automatic presumption of causation for 22 radiation-related cancers. When the law was passed, Special Exposure Cohorts were designated by Congress at four facilities.

The men and women who were exposed to harmful doses of radiation while working at the Los Alamos National Laboratory have waited years for the Secretary of Health and Human

Services to issue a rule designating the process for classes of workers to petition to be in a Special Exposure Cohort. As a result of this unfair delay, workers have been unable to file petitions to become members of a Cohort. Four years after the bill was passed in Congress, a Special Exposure Cohort rule was finally issued last night. But workers cannot wait any longer for their compensation—it is simply unfair to ask them to do so. Moreover, a report issued on May 5, 2004 by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) of the CDC stated that some facilities are not consistently providing adequate responses to data requests for dose reconstruction. The report details the Los Alamos National Laboratory's (LANL) lack of full compliance. Data issued in the report shows that of the 548 dose reconstruction cases pending with LANL on January 15 of this year, 499 had been pending for over 150 days.

The bill I am introducing today is a step in the right direction to help many of my constituents who have suffered because of their having worked at Los Alamos National Laboratory. I continue to hear from constituents who were exposed to harmful doses of radiation and who are wondering why they have had to wait years to receive their compensation. Workers cannot wait any longer for a flawed bureaucratic process to start working.

My bill allows energy employees who were employed for at least 250 days between 1945 and 2000 at the Los Alamos National Laboratory Area G, linear accelerator, or who were security guards or construction workers, to be considered as members of a Special Exposure Cohort. In addition, the bill will allow employees who worked anywhere at Los Alamos National Laboratory, and whose records have not been received by NIOSH from the Lab within 200 days of receipt, to qualify under the Special Cohort. It is worth noting that the enactment of the legislation would not preclude additional groups of workers in New Mexico from seeking to become part of the Special Exposure Cohort.

Subtitle B is unfortunately only one component of the original EEOICPA law that needs amending. There are many outstanding issues that I will continue to work on with my colleagues, including fixing physicians panels, speeding up dose reconstructions, and locating a willing payer for all meritorious claims. This bill represents just one step in the larger fight to ensure that energy workers get the compensation they deserve.

Since enactment of the EEOICPA in 2000, the New Mexico legislature has passed two House Joint Memorials calling for the creation of a Special Exposure Cohort for the facilities listed in this bill. Hearings have been conducted; reports have been issued. Meanwhile, many of the claimants in this program are so ill that they may never see the compensation check that they deserve—a small source of comfort for them and their families in return for the harmful exposures they suffered. It is time for action.

STATEMENT OF KATHY MARTINEZ, MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES (NCD), ON INTERNATIONAL DISABILITY RIGHTS: THE PROPOSED UN CONVENTION

**HON. TOM LANTOS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2004*

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on March 30th, the Congressional Human Rights Caucus held a groundbreaking Members' Briefing entitled, "International Disability Rights: The Proposed UN Convention." This discussion of the global situation of people with disabilities was intended to help establish disability rights issues as an integral part of the general human rights discourse. The briefing brought together the human rights community and the disability rights community, and it raised awareness in Congress of the need to protect disability rights under international law to the same extent as other human rights through a binding UN convention on the rights of people with disabilities.

Our expert witnesses included Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Mark P. Lagon; the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ecuador to the United Nations, Ambassador Luis Gallegos; the United Nations Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Johan Scholvinck; the distinguished former Attorney General of the United States, former Under-Secretary General of the United Nations and former Governor of Pennsylvania, the Honorable Dick Thornburgh; the President of the National Organization on Disability (NOD), Alan A. Reich; Kathy Martinez, a member of the National Council on Disabilities (NCD); and a representative of the United States International Council on Disabilities (USCID) and Executive Director of Mental Disability Rights International, Eric Rosenthal.

As I had announced earlier, I intend to place the important statements of our witnesses in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, so that all of my colleagues may profit from their expertise, and I ask that the statement of Kathy Martinez be placed at this point in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

"INTERNATIONAL DISABILITY RIGHTS: THE PROPOSED UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION," MARCH 30, 2004, WASHINGTON, DC

NCD is an independent federal agency whose members are appointed by the President to advise the President, the Administration and Congress on disability policy issues. NCD supports House Concurrent Resolution 169, which expresses the Sense of Congress that the U.S. should support a UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities.

As a group composed of some 600 million people worldwide, people with disabilities are a sizable global population. More compelling, however, than the sheer magnitude of this population, is the appalling history regarding the denial of even the most basic human rights of people with disabilities in both the developed and the developing countries. Even in the 21st century, the Department of State Country Reports has revealed that people in psychiatric facilities are restrained in cages and are subjected to serious human rights abuses. In the late 1990s, governments in many countries in Europe, Asia,