

through the Department of Agriculture to 43,000 women, children and senior citizens each month throughout Southeast Michigan.

In addition to addressing the societal needs of the community, in 1981, the organization opened its Machinist Training Institute (MTI), to provide skills development in precision machining and metalworking. The institute has graduated more than 2,300 machinists.

Focus: HOPE created two pioneering programs—FAST TRACK and First Step—designed to help individuals improve their reading and math competencies by a minimum of two grade levels in 4–7 weeks. The organization also opened a Center for Children, which has now served over 5,000 children of colleagues, students, and neighbors with quality childcare and early childhood education.

Focus: HOPE has also partnered with many businesses and schools through the years. In 1993 Focus: HOPE developed the Center for Advanced Technologies to address the shortage of manufacturing engineers with hands-on skills. The organization formed a coalition with three university partners: Lawrence Technological University, Wayne State University and the University of Detroit Mercy and several corporations to design a curriculum for manufacturing engineering education.

The volunteer effort of Focus: HOPE brings together thousands of people each year to operate various programs including preparing boxes of food that are delivered to low-income families during the holidays, neighborhood cleanup and revitalization projects and programs that concentrate on education, the arts, manufacturing, engineering, and information technology training.

Last year in October, I joined Michigan's Governor Jennifer Granholm and Senators CARL LEVIN and DEBBIE STABENOW for Focus: HOPE's Walk 2003. This annual walk through the streets of Detroit, to celebrate our rich diversity, is patterned after the nonviolent marches led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Approximately 8,000 people from metropolitan Detroit walked an eight-mile route through Highland Park and Detroit. The route includes the area where the 1967 riots broke out, the first Ford Motor Company automotive production facility, and the original Motown recording studios.

Again, I would like to thank the late Father Cunningham and Eleanor M. Josaitis for their vision. Focus: HOPE has helped thousands of people fulfill their purpose in life. Focus: HOPE's commitment to bringing together people of all races, faiths, and economic backgrounds to overcome injustice and build racial harmony is an inspiration for us all.

I also thank the leadership for allowing this resolution to be included on today's suspension calendar.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 295, which congratulates Focus: HOPE on the occasion of its 35th anniversary. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this measure, and urge all my colleagues to vote for it today.

Focus: HOPE was established in 1968 by the late Father William Cunningham and Eleanor Josaitis. The riots of 1967 had a deep impact on the entire Detroit metropolitan area. For all the damage the riots did to our communities, one positive and lasting impact was that they served as a catalyst for the creation of Focus: HOPE. This organization started out as a food program and grew into a broad-scale

attack on poverty, racism and injustice. Today, Focus: HOPE is a vital part of Detroit and the surrounding metropolitan area, focusing its energy and innovation on practical solutions to the difficult problems of Hunger, economic disparity, joblessness, discrimination, and educational disadvantage.

I feel fortunate to have known Father Cunningham during the many years of his work with Focus: HOPE. This work continues under the guidance of my dear friend, Eleanor Josaitis, who co-founded this organization and serves as its chief operating officer.

As the resolution notes, Focus: HOPE has been a unique force for good for the past 35 years. For all of us who share Father Cunningham's dream that all people may live and work together in freedom, harmony, trust and affection, this resolution congratulates and salutes the contributions of Focus: HOPE to Detroit, the State of Michigan, and the nation.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 295, congratulating Focus: HOPE on its 35th anniversary. For three and a half decades, Focus: HOPE has been a leading voice for the poor and underprivileged in Southeastern Michigan. It has helped feed the poor, educate our young, and foster cultural understanding between diverse populations. Focus: HOPE deserves our recognition and gratitude for all that it has done and will continue to do.

Co-founded by Father William Cunningham and Eleanor Josaitis, Focus: HOPE is a community based organization dedicated to employing practical and intelligent action to eliminate racism, poverty, and injustice. It has the largest United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Commodity Supplemental Food Program in the nation. Each month, more than 43,000 mothers, children under age six, and senior citizens living on meager incomes get help through the Focus: HOPE Commodity Supplemental Food Program. That alone would garner recognition and plaudits for Focus: HOPE.

Yet, this organization has made economic opportunity the primary focus, leading to the development of some of the most highly respected and innovative education and training programs in the nation. By partnering with industry, universities, and governments, Focus: HOPE has created a pipeline of programs that offer both the technical and educational knowledge critical for a 21st century workforce. Moreover, Focus: HOPE supplies the opportunity, including childcare on campus and softskills training, for its students to be successful in their chosen career. More than 3,000 individuals have graduated from Focus: HOPE's Centers of Opportunity, obtaining jobs in the manufacturing, engineering and information technology fields. Mr. Speaker, I have long supported the efforts of Focus: HOPE, and congratulate them on their 35th anniversary. I ask my colleagues to recognize the importance of this very fine organization by supporting this concurrent resolution.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Focus: HOPE, a non-profit organization inspired by the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and founded by Father William T. Cunningham in 1968 in the city of Detroit. Focus: HOPE was founded as a civil rights organization, and now works to overcome racial and economic injustices, and has numerous other accomplishments.

Focus: HOPE has played an important role in acquiring affirmative action commitments

from many employers through supporting African-American and female employees in class-action lawsuits. The non-profit organization has also helped to develop a program through the Agriculture Department's Commodity Supplemental Food Program, which is now responsible for feeding more than 43,000 people per month in southeast Michigan. Additionally, it has assisted in the revitalization of several areas in central Detroit by creating parks, rehabilitating homes, and redeveloping obsolete buildings.

Additionally, Focus: HOPE has trained individuals for courses in advanced manufacturing and precision machining, which has resulted in the graduation of 2,500 people from their certification programs, thereby providing work opportunities to under-represented youth, women, and many others. Focus: HOPE has also developed two programs aimed at helping individuals improve their reading and math competencies. The organization has also enrolled candidates toward associate and bachelor degrees in engineering and technology programs, and as a result, has made contributions toward increasing diversity within these fields. Most of all, this resolution recognizes Focus: HOPE for its commitment and contributions to human rights in Detroit and the United States.

Focus: HOPE is a critically important organization that has been a tremendous asset to the city of Detroit. For this reason, I commend Focus: HOPE's work in improving the quality of life for citizens of Detroit who may not have had access to many opportunities, but who have the desire to succeed in life, and want to become contributing citizens of the economic mainstream.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. UPTON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 295.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING  
FIREFIGHTERS, POLICE, PUBLIC  
SERVANTS, CIVILIANS, AND PRI-  
VATE BUSINESSES WHO RE-  
SPONDED TO DEVASTATING FIRE  
IN RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, ON  
MARCH 26, 2004

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res.

612) recognizing and honoring the firefighters, police, public servants, civilians, and private businesses who responded to the devastating fire in Richmond, Virginia, on March 26, 2004, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 612

Whereas fire kills more Americans than all other natural disasters combined;

Whereas all Americans must work together for the common goal of fire prevention, fire use, and fire suppression;

Whereas firefighters routinely risk their lives to save others, and some sacrifice their lives in the line of duty;

Whereas on March 26, 2004, the Carver Community of Richmond, Virginia, and Virginia Commonwealth University experienced a devastating fire resulting in the condemnation and destruction of numerous buildings and property;

Whereas strong winds quickly spread the fire through several city blocks and a section of the Virginia Commonwealth University campus;

Whereas firefighters, police, public servants, and civilians exhibited resilience and courage in combating the dangerous fire and in dealing with its aftermath;

Whereas the local firefighters who initially answered the call were later assisted by countless firefighters from fire stations throughout the region who united in a determined effort to defeat the blaze and fight the challenging wind, smoke, and heat conditions in order to save the remaining area;

Whereas public, private, and civic organizations worked as a seamless team preserving and protecting human lives, defending property, and providing food and comfort to all affected; and

Whereas all involved met their community's call to duty by providing brave and steadfast assistance and upholding the finest traditions of the Commonwealth of Virginia: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives recognizes and honors the firefighters, police, public servants, civilians, and private businesses who responded to the devastating fire in Richmond, Virginia, on March 26, 2004, and commends them for their dedicated service to the people of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Resolution 612.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 612 recognizes those who responded to the tremendous fire in downtown Richmond, Virginia, on March 26, 2004. On that day, a colossal fire ripped through Richmond and the Virginia Commonwealth University campus area as well.

The wind-fueled blaze damned more than 30 buildings in the downtown Richmond area and several more buildings, and about 50 nearby homes were evacuated. Fortunately, no one was killed, and there were only a handful of reports of minor injuries. This resolution commends those citizens in the Richmond area who helped to minimize the effects of this terrible fire.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation's first responders provide an invaluable and largely thankless service, sometimes, to many of our citizens. The scene in Richmond on March 26 and the days that followed proved a stirring testament to that fact. Firefighters from Richmond and several neighboring counties rallied to extinguish the incredible fire. Law enforcement officers went door to door insisting that residents leave their homes. Many members of the downtown workforce, private organizations, and just your everyday average citizens helped to protect lives and defend property to limit the damage and the loss from the blaze.

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the distinguished gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR) for his work on House Resolution 612. And on behalf of the gentleman from Virginia and all the Members of this House, I want to thank the firefighters, the police, the businesses, organizations, civilians, and others who aided residents affected by the fire on March 26, 2004.

But even beyond the fine men and women from Richmond, Virginia, I want to thank all emergency responders across the country who protect every one of us every day. First responders routinely put their lives at risk to promote the general welfare of all Americans. I am pleased that the consideration of this resolution gives us a chance to praise medical services personnel, firefighters, law enforcement officials, as well as others who serve and protect all of us each and every day, and I urge support for this important resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join with my colleague from Michigan in consideration of H. Res. 612, recognizing and honoring firefighters, police, public servants, civilians, and private businesses who responded to the devastating fire in Richmond, Virginia, on March 26, 2004.

Mr. Speaker, far too often we, as Americans, overlook or take for granted the truly courageous risks that the men and women of our police and fire departments take to save the lives of others. I am pleased that we take time today to recognize and to honor the firefighters and police, as well as the public servants, civilians, and private businesses, who responded in the face of grave danger to a devastating fire in Richmond, Virginia, on March 26, 2004.

On March 26, 2004, a series of fires, fueled by strong winds, erupted in

downtown Richmond. This potentially deadly blaze forced hundreds of students at Virginia Commonwealth University from their dorm rooms and prompted city officials to declare the region a disaster area. By the time the fire was extinguished, it had destroyed six buildings and had seriously damaged 12 others.

Despite the enormity of this threat, no serious injuries were reported. This was due in large part to the quick reaction of the fire and police departments, as well as local public servants, civilians, and private businesses which all worked together to control the dangerous blaze. According to the City of Richmond's Assistant Fire Marshal, the fire could have been much worse. However, the selfless actions of the police and fire department and others turned a life-threatening disaster into a miracle.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I commend all of those who joined together in this great spirit of cooperation to save not only property but countless lives. I commend the gentleman for introducing this legislation and urge its passage.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to my distinguished colleague, the gentleman from the great State of Virginia (Mr. CANTOR), who authorized House Resolution 612.

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Michigan and the gentleman from Illinois for their leadership in bringing this resolution to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the brave firefighters, police, public servants, civilians, and private businesses that responded to the devastating fire in Richmond, Virginia, on March 26, 2004.

Our brave firefighters and first responders routinely risk their lives to save others, and some sacrifice their lives in the line of duty. The history of our great Nation has been marked with the heroic efforts of valiant individuals and organizations exhibiting resilience and courage as they combat dangerous fires and deal with their scorched aftermath.

Each year, fire kills more Americans than all other natural disasters combined. In order to lessen the death toll, all Americans must work together for the common goal of fire prevention, fire use, and fire suppression. The valiant firefighters, police, public servants, and civilians who protect the Richmond region have added their story to our Nation's history of selfless acts.

On March 26 of this year, the Carver community of Richmond, the City of Richmond, and Virginia Commonwealth University experienced a devastating fire which resulted in the destruction of numerous buildings and property. During the course of the day, strong winds quickly spread the fire through several city blocks and a section of the Virginia Commonwealth

University campus. The local firefighters, who initially answered the call, were later assisted by countless others from fire stations throughout the region. These units joined together to defeat the blaze and fight the challenging wind, smoke, and heat conditions. Their efforts prevented further destruction and helped protect innocent lives from being lost.

These firefighters were not alone that day, as public, private, and civic organizations worked as a seamless team preserving and protecting human lives, defending property, and providing food and comfort to all those affected. All of these organizations met their community's call to duty by providing brave and steadfast assistance to our community. They stand as a symbol to all who give of themselves in an effort to better our Nation and uphold the finest traditions of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

□ 1430

In closing, I am proud to recognize and honor the firefighters, police, public servants, civilians, and private businesses who responded to the devastating fire in Richmond on March 26, 2004, and commend them for their dedicated service to the people of the Commonwealth of Virginia and urge passage of House Resolution 612.

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 612, which recognizes and honors the firefighters, police, public servants, civilians, and private businesses who responded to the devastating fire in Richmond, Virginia, on March 26, 2004.

On March 26, 2004, a destructive fire swept through Virginia Commonwealth University and the Carver Community of Richmond, Virginia. The size of this blaze quickly grew out of control such that local Richmond firefighters called for assistance from fire stations throughout the region. The quick response and valiant united effort of firefighters, police, public servants, and civilians extinguished the blaze and averted further destruction of property. Additionally, public, private and civic organizations provided shelter, food and comfort to those affected by the fire. This is a further example of the amazing courage and perseverance required on a daily basis by fire and rescue personnel across the country. These citizens don the uniforms of service to protect and provide for our communities and for our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution honors the firefighters, police, public servants and private businesses who responded to this emergency with swiftness and courage, working together to protect the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. I urge all of my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of H. Res. 612, as amended; and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. UPTON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 612, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### HONORING TUSKEGEE AIRMEN AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION IN CREATING AN INTEGRATED UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 417) honoring the Tuskegee Airmen and their contribution in creating an integrated United States Air Force, the world's foremost Air and Space Supremacy Force.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 417

Whereas the United States is currently combating terrorism around the world and is highly dependent on the global reach and presence provided by the Air Force;

Whereas these operations require the highest skill and devotion to duty from all personnel involved;

Whereas the Tuskegee Airmen proved that such skill and devotion, and not skin color, are the determining factors in aviation;

Whereas the Tuskegee Airmen served honorably in the Second World War struggle against global fascism; and

Whereas the example of the Tuskegee Airmen has encouraged millions of Americans of every race to pursue careers in air and space technology: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),* That it is the sense of Congress that the United States Air Force should continue to honor and learn from the example provided by the Tuskegee Airmen as it faces the challenges of the 21st century and the war on terror.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 417.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oklahoma?

There was no objection.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER), the author of this resolution.

(Mr. PORTER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, the storied history of our Nation's Armed Forces was written by the great men

and women who served our country with honor and bravery. This past weekend, we celebrated the commemoration of a monument to World War II honoring all military veterans of the war, citizens on the home front, the Nation at large, and the high moral purpose and idealism that motivated our Nation's call to arms. In my home State of Nevada, I had the honor of spending Memorial Day at several events honoring veterans, many of whom served during World War II.

Among the most courageous of all those who served our country was a group of men who defied both fascism abroad and racism at home while establishing a record as one of the most successful fighting units in American history.

The Tuskegee Airmen were a group of dedicated and determined young men who enlisted to become America's first African American airmen. These airmen were trained at Tuskegee Army Airfield in Tuskegee, Alabama, beginning in 1941. Over the course of their service during World War II, the Tuskegee Airmen distinguished themselves over the skies of Europe.

Airmen trained at Tuskegee received two Presidential Unit citations for outstanding tactical air support and aerial combat, and they established the incredible and unprecedented record of flying more than 200 bomber escort missions without the loss of a single bomber to enemy aircraft. The outstanding record of these men was accomplished while fighting two wars, one against military forces overseas and the other against racism both at home and abroad.

Over the course of World War II, the Tuskegee Airmen returned home with some of our Nation's highest military honors, including 150 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 744 Air Medals, eight Purple Hearts, and 14 Bronze Stars. In addition, these brave pilots destroyed more than 1,000 German aircraft.

Many Americans became aware of the accomplishments of the Tuskegee Airmen from the 1995 feature film starring Lawrence Fishburn called "The Tuskegee Airmen." My first personal experience with these fine men came through a former member of my staff, Traci Scott, now serving with the Pentagon in Baghdad, whose father served with the Airmen, Captain Jesse H. Scott. After hearing his story, I wanted to do something special to honor this brave and honored group of soldiers.

Captain Scott was an original member of the Tuskegee Airmen. In fact, he was so eager to join that he lied about his age to get accepted. As he progressed through flight training, Captain Scott learned he was color blind and went on to serve on the ground crew of General Ben Davis. Captain Scott passed away in the year 2000, and he is honored being buried in Arlington Cemetery.

I am proud to offer a resolution in honor of Captain Scott and honoring