

my fellow Kentuckians in congratulating these fine young ladies.●

JUAN MEJIA

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am pleased to recognize Juan Mejia for his achievement in becoming the Tulare County spelling bee champion and his entrance into the prestigious National Spelling Bee in Washington D.C.

Juan was born in Guzman, Mexico and moved to the United States when he was a year and a half old. He learned English while attending pre-school at a Head Start Program at Sundale School. Continuing on to Kohn Elementary he distinguished himself as a bright and motivated student and was accepted into the GATE program for gifted students. Now at Live Oak Middle School he continues to excel in his studies and extra-curricular activities.

Juan Mejia's achievement in the Tulare County Spelling Bee is particularly notable because of his late introduction to the English language. By working hard and using all available resources, Juan overcame an educational barrier to become a master of the English language. For his focus, fortitude and determined work, I congratulate him and wish him the best of luck in the National Spelling Bee in Washington D.C. Regardless of the outcome in the National Spelling Bee, Juan Mejia is a tremendous success and a worthy example of how challenges can be met and overcome with focused effort and perseverance.●

IN RECOGNITION OF DOUG HARRISON

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am pleased to recognize Doug Harrison's lifetime of service to the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District, and most importantly, the people of Fresno County.

In 1970, Doug Harrison began a career with the FMFCD. He served as general manager for 31 years. Mr. Harrison led the effort that designed and implemented a storm drainage system that ended regular flooding which had plagued residences and businesses for generations. Under his leadership, the construction of flood retention basins throughout the Fresno-Clovis metropolitan area became part of a network of groundwater recharge facilities, and in recent years Mr. Harrison led efforts to work with community groups, such as Tree Fresno, to landscape many of these facilities. The result has been the protection of property, replenishment of vital groundwater resources and beautiful greenspace, as well as recreational facilities at many basins.

Mr. Harrison is an exemplary public servant, who has worked tirelessly for a broad constituency. He has made the lives of many people better. His innovation, energy and dedication will be missed. To him, I say thank you. He is a public servant in the best and truest sense of the word.●

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY BASKETBALL TEAM

● Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I commend the Kennesaw State University Owls basketball team for winning its first NCAA Division II national championship title. In the 84-59 victory over Southern Indiana, the Owls showed great poise. After the Screaming Eagles sprinted to an eight-point lead, the Owls settled down, regained the lead and never lost it. The team, which moved up to the NCAA Division II Peach Belt Conference in 1994, took the championship in only their second appearance at the NCAA Division II national tournament.

The title capped a 35-4 season record, which had ended with a 26-game winning streak and the Peach Belt championship.

I commend Coach Tommy Ingle, his assistant coaches Jeff Jones and Stace Tedford, for developing and leading this strong team of student athletes. Coach Ingle was able to take the team to a national title in only his second year at the helm. That is extremely impressive.

I also want to praise the players themselves, including seniors Reggie McCoy, Terrence Hill, and Justin Thompson for displaying leadership, determination, skill and sportsmanship. This young basketball squad has already made its mark in college basketball.

In addition to their basketball performance, the Fighting Owls have demonstrated the personal qualities that make them a credit to one of Georgia's great institutes of higher learning, and a credit to the great State of Georgia as well.●

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF ASSUMPTION GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I would like to pay tribute to Assumption Greek Orthodox Church, the second Greek Orthodox congregation to be formed in the state of Michigan. Events celebrating the 75th anniversary of Assumption Church began in 2003 and will continue in 2004 with a grand banquet to be held on April 24. These events bring together members of the congregation, as well as thousands of others from throughout the metropolitan Detroit area and around the country, to mark this milestone in the history of Assumption Church.

At the turn of the century, many Greek immigrants settled in cities and towns across the nation. Greek immigrants established a thriving community in Detroit, in what has become known as Greektown. Seventy-five years ago, seven men from the growing Greek community on Detroit's "eastside" met to lay plans for a parochial school and a place of worship that would be close to their homes. They sought to continue the tradition of teaching the Greek language and history to their community. In 1930, with

the blessing of the Patriarch of Constantinople, the first Church Council established the Assumption Church at Hillger and Kercheval in Detroit. The Church was formally named "Koimisis tis Theotokou" meaning "The Dormition of the Virgin Mary."

The Church experienced steady growth in both the number of families that joined the parish and the number of new programs that served the needs of the parishioners. Beginning with its first Greek school "Socrates," the Church added various programs for its youth, women, and senior citizens, and continued to expand its philanthropic and religious outreach. The parishioners' reputation as a thriving, caring congregation grew and attracted families from Detroit's suburbs and beyond. Today, more than 1,200 families belong to Assumption Church, making it the largest parish in the region and one of the largest parishes in the Archdiocese.

The Assumption Greek Orthodox Church family moved several times over the years before building the current facilities in St. Clair Shores, which include the notable Assumption Cultural Center. They built churches at Beniteau and Vernor Highway and on Charlevoix that serve Protestant congregations today. Like these stalwart structures that are reminders of the congregation's vision and faithfulness, Assumption's spiritual leaders have been significant pillars in the community. The first priest, Father Christopher Makris, arrived in Detroit from Chicago. His service was followed by 11 clergy leaders and several laity, who have been represented in the highest positions of service nationally in matters of religious education, stewardship, athletics, the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical festival and various missionary activities. Father Demetrios Kavadas provided spiritual leadership for 39 years and is Assumption's longest serving clergyman. In 2003, Father Epihanios Perialas became interim pastor and honored the parish through his elevation to Metropolitan of Spain and Portugal. Father Michael Varlamos became pastor in 2003 and continues to serve in that capacity today. Unfortunately, the Church experienced a devastating fire on December 21, 2002, that destroyed the interior of the Church along with its beautiful iconography. The Church was promptly restored and re-opened its doors almost one year to the day, in December 2003.

I know my colleagues join me in congratulating the congregation of Assumption Greek Orthodox Church for achieving 75 years of devotion to God, their faith, and excellence in serving their members and the surrounding communities.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a withdrawal which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:08 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by one of its clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3550. An act to authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 4:01 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by one of its clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 3108. An act to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to temporarily replace the 30-year Treasury rate with a rate based on long-term corporate bonds for certain pension plan funding requirements and other provisions, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was signed subsequently by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2290. A bill to create a fair and efficient system to resolve claims of victims for bodily injury caused by asbestos exposure, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-7036. A communication from the Secretary of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of a violation of the Antideficiency Act in the United States Coast Guard; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC-7038. A communication from the Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Acquisition policy, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Acquisition Regulation; Federal Acquisition Circular 2001-20" (FAC2001-20) received on April 5, 2003; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-7039. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the quality of health care furnished under the health care programs of the Department; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-7040. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the National Defense Stockpile Annual Materials Plan for Fiscal Year 2005; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-7041. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the National Defense Stockpile; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-7042. A communication from the Board of Trustees, National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Trust's operations and financial condition; to the Committee on Finance.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

POM-387. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Legislature of the State of New Jersey relative to their ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

JOINT RESOLUTION

Whereas, the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution granted citizenship to, and protected the civil liberties of, freed slaves; and

Whereas, the Fourteenth Amendment also prohibits states from abridging the privileges or immunities of any citizen, depriving any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, or denying any person equal protection of laws; and

Whereas, the rights guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment are part of the foundation of our free society; and

Whereas, in 1866, the New Jersey Legislature acted to ensure these rights by ratifying the Fourteenth Amendment; and

Whereas, thereafter, the New Jersey Legislature, in 1868, attempted to withdraw its ratification of this amendment by passage of Joint Resolution No. IV; and

Whereas, both the Federal Secretary of State and the Congress refused to recognize the New Jersey's attempt to withdraw ratification and the Fourteenth Amendment became a part of the United States Constitution on July 20, 1868; and

Whereas, the attempt to withdraw New Jersey's ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment is contrary to this State's long tradition of respect for, and protection of, the civil rights of all persons; and

Whereas, even though the attempt to withdraw New Jersey's ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment was without effect, there is, nevertheless, a need to rectify this misguided action; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey,

1. Joint Resolution No. IV of 1868 which attempted to withdraw New Jersey's ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment is hereby revoked.

2. Duly authenticated copies of this Joint Resolution shall be transmitted to the federal Secretary of State, the presiding officers of the Congress of the United States, and each member of New Jersey's congressional delegation.

3. This Joint Resolution shall take effect immediately.

POM-388. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of California relative to disabled military retirees; to the Committee on Armed Services.

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 34

Whereas, a penalty is imposed against disabled military retirees for concurrent re-

ceipt of retirement and disability compensation; and

Whereas, if a member of the armed forces retires with 20 or more years of service to this country, earning retirement compensation, and this same retiree has a major disability resulting from wounds or service connected activities, \$1 from his or her retirement check is deducted for each dollar of disability payment received; and

Whereas, this law requires retired military personnel to do something no one else in America is obligated to do—pay for their own disability; and

Whereas, for many years, veterans' organizations and disabled veterans battled to change this law; and

Whereas, last year, Congress recognized that disabled military retirees had a legitimate complaint and introduced legislation that was designed to correct this policy; and

Whereas, included within the National Defense Authorization Act For Fiscal Year of 2002 is legislation that will end this discriminatory practice of deducting disability compensation from retirement pay. However, the legislation will be effective only if the President requests money to cover its costs in his next budget; and

Whereas, these disabled military retirees fought in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, and a dozen brush fire wars in unremembered countries, risking everything for our country. They gave of their youth and health, only to be retired with a disability that they are forced to pay for out of their own pockets; and

Whereas, the discrimination our country has displayed for its disabled military retirees should not be passed on to those young people who are now fighting our War Against Terrorism; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly and Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature of the State of California respectfully memorializes the Congress and the President of the United States to urge the Congress of the United States to fund the National Defense Authorization Act For Fiscal Year of 2002, to eliminate the penalty imposed against disabled military retirees for concurrent receipt of retirement and disability compensation; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, and to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, and each Member in the Congress of the United States.

POM-389. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of California relative to military reserve personnel; to the Committee on Armed Services.

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 26

Whereas, the military reserve forces of the United States provide a valuable service to the citizens of the United States; and

Whereas, military reserve personnel make up 60 percent of the total armed forces of the United States; and

Whereas, the reserve forces of the United States military provide for the continuing freedom and pursuit of democracy throughout the world; and

Whereas, the military reserve upholds our values and beliefs in times of peace as well as war; and

Whereas, evidence suggests that members of the military reserve may be discriminated against due to their reserve status when applying for financing; and

Whereas, this discrimination results in members of the military reserve being charged higher interest rates for loans due to their reserve status; and