

significant improvements to trunkline bridges through the state due to strategic planning as well as opening almost 80 miles of widened roadways and passing relief lanes to relieve congestion, reduce delays and improve safety. Other program successes have been in overall safety, economic development projects, parking, roadside programs, and environmental quality.

Mr. Speaker, on June 30th, a special ceremony to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Michigan Department of Transportation will be held at the Mackinac Bridge in my district, one of the world's largest suspension bridges that connects the Upper and Lower Peninsulas with five miles of concrete and steel innovation. Friday, July 1st, the department's employees will also celebrate the anniversary in Lansing, Michigan. Celebrating this milestone year at the Mackinac Bridge is most appropriate because of the symbolism the Mighty Mac shares with that of this accomplished state department. MDOT has connected people from Copper Harbor to Coldwater, has set a number of firsts in national accomplishments, and continues to look ahead at ways to improve transportation for Michigan residents and visitors. Since its inception by Mr. Earle, MDOT has focused on the quality of its services and resources, the effectiveness of their work, the dedication to the needs of their travelers, the integrity to improve transportation the right way the first time, and the pride of being the best as what they do. I ask the United States House of Representatives to join the Michigan Congressional Delegation in congratulating the Michigan Department of Transportation on its first 100 years and even better success through the next century.

CONGRATULATING THE PHOENIX COMPANIES

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2005

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate The Phoenix Companies on its active commitment to Connecticut's capital of Hartford. Phoenix restated that commitment today with the celebration of three events significant to the city where it has operated since its founding in 1851. In that time, the Phoenix has evolved into a leading financial services company specializing in life insurance, annuities and asset management.

The company has returned all of its Connecticut operations to Hartford, and today welcomes back 450 employees who have relocated there. In February, the Phoenix's distinctive two-sided headquarters that is a signature of Hartford's skyline was added to the National Register of Historic Places. Considered a classic example of Modernist architecture, the building was designed in the early 1960s by Max Abramovitz, who is widely acclaimed for his role in designing the United Nations and Lincoln Center. The Phoenix is undertaking a major \$25 million renovation to update its landmark boatshaped building into a state-of-the-art office building while maintaining its exceptional architectural integrity.

As The Phoenix renovates its home, it has also reached out to help the citizens of Hartford become home-owners. Its philanthropic

arm, The Phoenix Foundation Inc., is providing a \$100,000 grant to The Neighborhoods of Hartford, Inc., which is responsible for implementing Mayor Eddie Perez's homeownership initiative. The Foundation's grant will reinforce and extend the initiative, providing funding for additional projects designed to tip transition neighborhoods into healthy ones. Last year, The Foundation's grants totaled \$1.36 million, almost all of which went to Hartford-area organizations.

The Phoenix's investments and active participation in the city is admirable, and its embrace of its community roots is to be applauded.

HONORING OLEE LEWIS FOR HER SERVICE TO HENRY COUNTY

HON. JOHN S. TANNER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2005

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great Tennessean and a dear friend of mine, Mrs. Olee Lewis of Paris, Tennessee. Olee recently completed her 38th year of serving our community at the Henry County Northwest Tennessee Economic Development Council.

As a daughter of a local tobacco farmer, Olee dreamed of being a missionary or a nurse, and as an adult, she made her dreams come true. Olee received her nurse's aide certification after high school and then began training at National Baptist Missionary Training School in Nashville. She had to leave missionary school before she was finished but still jumped into a life of missionary work back home.

Olee has directed the Henry County Northwest Tennessee Economic Development Council and has helped many people throughout her years there. One of Olee's greatest accomplishments is the "Sister to Sister and Brother to Brother" club, which organizes black men and women to meet the needs of the community. "Sister to Sister" has been so successful there is now a "Sister to Sister II."

She has also found the time to organize the SHARE program, serve as Secretary of the Tennessee Baptist Missionary and Education Ushers Department, and serve as a director of many different projects in her local church. For her extraordinary work in the community, Olee has received the Personalities of the South Award, was appointed to the important Families First Committee and was named a Kentucky Colonel. Married to the late Charles Wesley Lewis, Olee has been a wonderful mother to four foster children and also has five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Throughout her life, Olee has contributed much to our community, our state and our nation. She has never shied away from work when her skills and efforts were needed and could make a difference. Mr. Speaker, please join me as I recognize Olee's many achievements and contributions, and to say thanks to her for all she has done through the years to make the city of Paris, Henry County, and the State of Tennessee a better place to live.

TRIBUTE TO IRMA VELASQUEZ

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2005

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today in recognition of the extraordinary achievements of Irma Velasquez, who was recently awarded the Thomas Jefferson Award for Public Service for her creation of a school for autistic children in my district. With her son as inspiration, Ms. Velasquez started Wings Learning Center five years ago so children with autism would have the tools to excel in the face of even the toughest disabilities.

The Thomas Jefferson Award for Public Service has been nationally administered since 1972 by the American Institute for Public Service. The award is given to those who are committed to making a difference in their community. Ms. Velasquez was given her award by the San Francisco Chronicle for her tireless pursuit in search of techniques to let autistic children flourish.

Mr. Speaker, her son Aaron was diagnosed with autism at the age of three. Having received her bachelor's degree in Economics and Business Administration from San Francisco State University and working as an accountant, she was ill-prepared for the diagnosis. Ms. Velasquez knew little about how to help her son with his disability and how to interact with him in daily life. She searched for the right education that could help her son while at the same time she educated herself about autism. Not satisfied with the special education disabled students were receiving at the schools in her district, she and her husband, Sherman Chan, started a unique school for her son.

Wings Learning Center, in San Mateo, California, maintains a team approach in the classroom and creates play groups that focus on social and motor skills. In addition to a dedicated set of teachers, the staff also consists of speech and occupational therapists. Today this primary school has 14 students enrolled from all over the Bay Area with more students starting in the fall of 2005. Ultimately Wings Learning Center hopes to find enough space to expand into a high school and provide training and support programs for educators.

Mr. Speaker, I believe Irma Velasquez deserves more recognition. What started as love for her child and a drive to understand his world quickly turned into an opportunity to help other children and offer resources for parents in a similar situation. I urge my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Irma Velasquez, and wish her well on a promising future as a provider of special education for autistic children.

BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO ISSUE A COMPULSORY LICENSE FOR LOPINAVIR/RITONAVIR

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2005

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, Brazil's HIV/AIDS program has been recognized by the

United Nations AIDS program as one of the best in the world in both treatment and prevention. Working alongside nonprofit organizations, the government has aggressively fought the disease by offering universal antiretroviral treatment. Many of the first-line antiretroviral drugs used in Brazil are locally produced by generic companies, allowing the country to afford to treat tens of thousands of patients.

But other second-line antiretroviral drugs like the lopinavir/ritonavir combination, efavirenz, and tenofovir have been sold by their brand name producers at a high cost. These three drugs alone consume 70% of Brazil's AIDS budget. According to Brazilian Health Minister Humberto Costa, the Brazilian government pays more than \$2,600 annually per patient to purchase doses of lopinavir/ritonavir.

Some who oppose Brazil's action have claimed that it violates trade rules. In fact, the World Trade Organization's 1994 Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property specifically permits compulsory licensing. The 2001 Doha Declaration reaffirmed this option, stating, "Each member has the right to grant compulsory licenses and the freedom to determine the grounds upon which such licenses are granted."

As a signatory of the Doha Declaration, the United States should respect the rights of other nations to address important health problems.

MEETING BLAIR'S G-8 AFRICA GOALS—PROGRESS, BUT FAR FROM FINISHED

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker I rise to discuss the ongoing progress towards meetings the objectives of Prime Minister Blair's G-8 objectives. The announcement of a tentative debt relief agreement for certain developing countries, mostly in Africa, is an extremely promising development for Africa that is long overdue. The recent agreement on 100 percent debt relief will initially benefit 14 nations in Africa, and is largely based on the Heavy Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Program, which already offers some debt relief to the world's poorest nations.

Several countries not included in the initial package are still technically eligible. An additional 9 African countries could qualify for full debt cancellation in the next 12 to 18 months, and a further 9 countries in Africa may potentially benefit from the agreement sometime in the future, if they continue to progress in meeting HIPC objectives, such as tackling corruption. But these additional countries are by no means guaranteed debt relief.

The current \$40 billion debt relief package must be commended. It is by far the most significant and comprehensive debt relief package ever given to Africa. However, a recent article entitled "Plan That Falls Far Short of Global Needs" in the publication *CaribNews* suggests that the plan must be closely scrutinized. One glaring issue is that the current package at most cancels only one-sixth of Africa's \$295 billion debt and leaves out several countries such as Nigeria and Kenya.

Nigeria, despite having a per capita GDP in line with HIPC eligible countries, and a staggering \$36 billion debt, is not currently included in the deal, though G-8 representatives say that some type of Nigeria specific arrangement is in the works. As a leader in West Africa, if not the entire continent, its fate is closely linked to that of the region. As such, the inclusion of Nigeria in a debt relief package is crucial.

In addition to debt relief, the issue of increased assistance must be addressed. This was reiterated in a recent Op-Ed release by Bernice Powell Jackson, Executive Minister of the Justice and Witness Ministries of the United Church of Christ, which calls on the U.S. to do more to help Africa. President Bush has so far rejected Blair's call to double aid to Africa, as well as establish the UN sanctioned benchmark which calls on developed countries to devote 0.7 percent of their gross national income to overseas development assistance by 2015. Of the G8 countries, France, Germany, Italy and Britain, have all pledged to hit the 0.7 percent target in the allotted period. The European Union also a collective body has also agreed to the benchmark.

In 2004, the United States, the largest economy in the world, was second to last among industrialized nations in the amount of development assistance it gave as a percentage of Gross National Income—it was dead last in 2003. In sheer volume the U.S. gives the largest total amount of foreign development aid, but as a proportion of national income only 0.16 percent goes to aid, far short of the 0.7 percent UN target.

While we claim to be the leader of the free world, small countries such as Norway and Denmark dwarf us in the percentage of their national income dedicated to development. Indeed, these countries have long exceeded the 0.7 percent aid target that the U.S. has yet to adopt. In addition, a recent report released by the Brookings Institute argues that the extent of U.S. assistance in recent years is not as large as the Administration has asserted.

Lastly, the issue of trade liberalization must be tackled if Africa is to experience real and sustainable development. Africa has a population of 860 million, accounting for 13.6 percent of the world's population, yet it only accounts for only two percent of global trade volume—down from 6 percent in the 1980's.

This is compounded by industrialized countries' usage of unfair trading mechanisms, such as subsidies, which have prevented African farmers and firms from competing on an equal footing with other nations. While industrialized nations battle with each other over increasing the \$50 billion they give in annual development assistance, they continue to spend over \$300 billion on domestic agricultural subsidies.

For its part, the U.S. gives billions of dollars annually in subsidies to a very small group of largescale agricultural producers—while compelling poor countries to further open up their markets. The World Bank has estimated that an end to Western agricultural subsidies would allow developing countries to earn hundreds of billions—on their own. Concessions on trade may prove to be the hardest sell in Blair's G-8 agenda, but his agenda is one the world cannot afford to ignore.

HELPING THE LEAST OF THESE: CANCEL AFRICA'S DEBT AND SHARE THE WEALTH

(By Bernice Powell Jackson)

If you were only to read most of the newspaper headlines, you'd think that the U.S. government is being quite generous to the world's poorest continent, Africa, but it just ain't so. In fact, we're being awfully stingy and while President Bush is trying to put a happy face on his meetings with British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Mr. Blair must be pretty disappointed at how little he is coming away with for Africa.

The truth is that 34 of the world's 48 poorest nations are in Africa, which is also facing a rampant AIDS epidemic, where thousands die every day. Moreover, a number of African nations are still recovering from civil wars and/or enormous national debts, many of which were incurred by unscrupulous dictators and illegitimate governments who never used the funds for the hospitals and schools for which they were intended. The truth is that Africa is a continent whose natural resources of gold, diamonds, oil, chromium and other much-needed minerals have been ravaged by much of the rest of the world. Moreover, tens of millions of its most precious resource—human beings—died or were stolen in the African slave trade a century ago. I remember being on a World Council of Churches panel in 1998 in Zimbabwe, where an African leader reminded us that when you count the billions of dollars lost to Africa through these ways, "we don't owe Europe and America anything. You still owe us," he said.

The truth is that for many of the poorest nations, paying back these huge national debts is not only burdensome, it is impossible. For most, they will never be able to pay off the principle, while the interest costs continue to mount. But many of these nations are forced to make these interest payments, which means that they cannot put funds into health care and education, which are critical to their national survival.

Even the new World Bank President, Paul Wolfowitz, has said that a case can be made for more funds going to development in Africa. President Bush, however, doesn't seem to agree with his protégé, Mr. Wolfowitz. In his meetings with Prime Minister Blair, President Bush has expressed an openness to canceling debts, but he has refused to increase substantially U.S. foreign aid to Africa. Instead, he has agreed to use \$674 million already allocated by Congress for emergency famine relief to a few African countries.

The extra \$25 billion a year for Africa sought by Mr. Blair, are not budgeted President Bush replied. Nevermind that almost the entire \$220 billion allocated for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been unbudgeted by this same administration.

Many Americans believe that we spend about 25 percent of our Federal budget on foreign aid to poor nations when we actually spend about 1 percent. Many Americans believe the headlines when our government agrees to fund programs like the \$15 million announced for AIDS in Africa. The reality is that little of that money has been sent. Similarly, three years ago the U.S. signed onto the United Nation's Millennium Project. In it, the world's richest nations agreed to increase their aid to .7 percent by 2015 to the poorest nations. Two weeks ago the European Union agreed to double their aid by 2015. But, it seems the President Bush has told Mr. Blair that we won't be doing the same. It's the old story of the check is in the mail.

In a recent editorial, the *New York Times* pointed out that .7 percent of the American economy would equal about \$80 billion. That's roughly equivalent to the amount the