

RECOGNIZING CORINA VILLARAI-GOSA, THE FIRST LADY OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES

**HON. HILDA L. SOLIS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 22, 2005*

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an extraordinary woman, Corina Villaraigosa, the First Lady of the City of Los Angeles.

Corina is a working mother whose proven ability to balance a successful career while never losing sight of her first priority—her family—has made her a role model for countless Latinas and other women. Corina is a very talented and giving person whose love for her children and her students has no boundaries.

For nearly 20 years, Corina Villaraigosa has extended her love for children beyond her home and into the schools of the Montebello Unified School District. Thousands of young Californians, many of them English language learners, have been fortunate enough to call Mrs. Villaraigosa their teacher. Whether at home or in the classroom Corina creates an enriched environment that enables children to embrace the gift of learning and to become productive members of our society. She understands that education is the great equalizer for the Latino community and all communities. For Corina, teaching is truly a vocation, a calling to help young people—our Nation's greatest treasure.

Corina's strong sense of civic duty was learned at an early from her beloved parents. As a mother, a teacher and now as the First Lady of Los Angeles, Corina has always served her community with grace and distinction. The residents of Los Angeles are proud to call Corina Villaraigosa their First Lady.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting Mrs. Corina Villaraigosa for her selfless and extraordinary dedication to her family and community. She is a role model for future generations of Mexican-American women and all women, and I am honored to recognize her today.

CALLING FOR FREE AND FAIR PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

**HON. CHET EDWARDS**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 22, 2005*

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, with H. Res. 326, the House of Representatives calls for free and fair parliamentary elections in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Without question, we send a message with this resolution that improvements must be made in Azerbaijan's democratic process, but while we discuss our hopes for improvement, it is important to remember how important Azerbaijan is to American interests in the region.

Azerbaijan is a staunch ally in the global war on terrorism. Following September 11, Azerbaijan was amongst the first countries to offer the United States unconditional support in the war against terrorism, providing its airspace and the use of its airports for Operation

Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Azerbaijan was the first Muslim nation to send its troops to serve shoulder-to-shoulder with U.S. forces in Iraq.

Azerbaijan joined all 12 international conventions on counter-terrorism and reinforces regional cooperation on fighting terrorism through signing numerous agreements and participating in the activities of regional organizations such as NATO, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and others. Azerbaijan serves as the chair of the GUUAM Working Group (Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova) on the fight against terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking. GUUAM countries actively cooperate in law-enforcement, trade and transportation, and political-military spheres.

Azerbaijan was a pioneer in opening the Caspian Sea to international cooperation and oil and gas exploration. Since 1994, Azerbaijan has extensively developed its energy resources to diversify western energy supplies. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline opened May 25 of this year. It is widely recognized that the East-West energy corridor plays an important security role in the region.

To the United States, Azerbaijan is a critical partner in the Global War on Terrorism and the energy sector. To Azerbaijan, the United States is a pivotal leader in its efforts to promote democracy and stability within its borders and throughout the region.

Azerbaijan is seeking to establish itself as a democratic nation and viable socio-economic partner in the Caucasus, Europe and on the world stage. It is already an important partner on many fronts, and free and fair elections will allow us to further develop that partnership.

USA PATRIOT AND TERRORISM PREVENTION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

**HON. SANDER M. LEVIN**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 21, 2005*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3199) to extend and modify authorities needed to combat terrorism, and for other purposes:

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Chairman, I supported the State Department Authorization (FY 06–07) bill as reported by the International Relations Committee, and supported many of the amendments offered here on the floor of the House. However, this bill now also includes three major amendments which came up on the floor of the House, which are misguided and which I opposed.

The Rohrabacher amendment correctly acknowledges the importance of intelligence gathering, while it ignores allegations of serious abuses at Guantanamo Bay. These instances of abuse, combined with others have damaged our credibility around the world and hindered the effectiveness of our efforts in Iraq and the war on terror.

As to the Ros-Lehtinen amendment on Iraq, I have never supported setting a deadline for withdrawing American troops from Iraq. We do need an effective plan in place to transfer responsibility for Iraq's security to the Iraqi peo-

ple as soon as possible. This requires specific and meaningful benchmarks to gauge progress and determine when our troops can return home. The Ros-Lehtinen amendment, which was never discussed in Committee, makes no reference at all to any benchmarks and contains language that gives support to a vague, open-ended commitment to keep our troops in Iraq indefinitely.

Finally, I support U.N. reform. The Hyde legislation regarding the U.N. when brought up separately in the House was opposed by 195 Members and was the subject of serious objections from the Bush Administration. It was also quite clear that it could not pass the Senate, so it is being bootstrapped to this bill. The Hyde Amendment lacks the flexibility needed for the Administration to effectively seek the necessary reforms at the U.N. For example, if a single one of 14 specific goals set forth in the amendment are not met by 2007, 50 percent of our dues would be withheld. Such a rigid approach would weaken the Bush Administration's hand to implement the changes which are necessary at the U.N.

Because the final State Department Authorization bill contains those three amendments, which I opposed, I am voting against final passage. I hope the Senate and Administration will seek the necessary improvements in this legislation.

TRIBUTE TO A GREAT MENTOR

**HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 22, 2005*

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, mentors have played an important role for business leaders, artists, athletes and politicians for hundreds of years. Having an influential and important role model to learn from and to lean on for support and advice is priceless. Today I would like to honor and compliment my personal mentor, New York State Senator Owen Johnson from Babylon, Long Island.

For over 10 years I had the honor and privilege to work for my good friend Owen in the New York State Senate. Always supportive of my entrepreneurial efforts, Owen encouraged intellectual curiosity and always gave me the latitude and freedom to complete my master's degree.

While Owen had the chance to run for Congress himself, he chose to remain a New York State Senator to be closer to his family. Christel, his lovely wife, son Owen, and daughter Chirsten are truly the loves of his life.

Owen Johnson, a conservative before it was fashionable, is the chairman of the prestigious Senate Finance Committee. A seasoned and polished debater and legislator, Owen and I had hundreds of spirited debates over the years. While we may not have always agreed at the end of the day, each conversation was a learning experience.

I am extremely proud to call Owen Johnson a mentor, a friend, and the best State Senator New York State has ever had.

Here's to you Owen for all you taught me about conservative and family values.