

military, and would clearly demonstrate our country's commitment to defending human rights. To even suggest that the U.S. government would condone the use of torture should shame every one of us in this House. Members of my community in Minnesota stand in shock and disbelief at the mere suggestion that our government would seek approval for acts similar to those that have shattered their own lives.

America must remain a beacon of hope and justice in this world. It must be our role as policymakers to restore our nation's reputation and our role in promoting peace and democracy around the world. We cannot allow the fear of the unknown to force our country to turn from our long record of upholding and strengthening the human rights of all people everywhere. Our citizens deserve a better path to security. The best way to restore our Nation's reputation and ensure the safety of Americans, and people everywhere, is to promote human rights, hope and opportunity across the globe. This bill helps to restore our reputation by aiding in the recovery and rebuilding of lives devastated by torture.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to support this bill, and would like to thank Representative CHRIS SMITH for his tireless work in supporting victims of torture, by introducing this reauthorization. I would also like to thank Ranking Member LANTOS and Chairman HYDE for their strong support of this vital legislation in the House International Relations Committee. In addition, this bill would not be what it is today without the amazing and inspiring work of Doug Johnson, John Salzberg, their associates at the Center for Victims of Torture, and all those working in the field around the world. It is my hope that this bill allows their good work to continue for years to come.

HONORING THE PACIFIC GAS &
ELECTRIC COMPANY BLACK EM-
PLOYEES' ASSOCIATION

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 22, 2005

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Pacific Gas & Electric PG&E, Company's Black Employees' Association on the occasion of its 25th year of service to our community.

The PG&E Black Employees' Association, BEA, was founded in 1980 by a group of African American PG&E employees who wanted to enhance the social and intellectual exchange of ideas among the growing number of African American employees at the company. Over the past 25 years, this exchange has resulted not only in networking, collaboration and workplace adjustment opportunities for African American employees, but has also been integral to PG&E's outreach efforts to the African American Community and our community at large.

The primary focus of PG&E's outreach efforts in this regard has been on providing educational opportunity, namely in the form of college scholarships. Since its founding, BEA has awarded upwards of \$700,000 in college scholarships, with the majority of those funds coming directly from BEA member contributions.

In addition to the significant contributions it makes to nationwide educational funds, BEA

reaches out to young people and members of our community in a variety of other ways. In addition to its consistent support of the National Society of Black Engineers, the Black Employees Associations of Northern California, the Museum of African Diaspora and numerous diversity awareness efforts within PG&E, BEA provides mentoring and job shadowing opportunities to young people seeking career guidance. Furthermore, BEA sponsors regular events which address issues related to retirement, financial management and other forms of career management for current employees.

In addition to its efforts in the areas of education and professional development, BEA is known for its charitable involvement with a number of local community organizations, as well as its members' regular volunteer efforts. Recently BEA awarded \$25,000 to five community based organizations through its partnership with PG&E and other groups, and has also awarded funds to local hospitals and community service organizations.

BEA is a regular participant in events and fundraisers at local K-12 schools and projects, such as the Beacon Project and E. Morris Cox Elementary School in Oakland. BEA members also volunteer regularly for major health initiatives such as the AIDS Walk, Juvenile Diabetes Fund, the Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign, and many other community building efforts.

This year marks the PG&E Black Employees' Association's 25th Anniversary. On behalf of the California's 9th U.S. Congressional District, I salute all BEA for their many years of invaluable service to the African American community and to the community at large. I congratulate BEA on this very special occasion, and thank its members for their invaluable contributions to California's 9th Congressional District and to our country.

PEACE ON EARTH

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 22, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to enter into the RECORD "Witness for Justice #245" entitled My Christmas List, published on December 5, 2005, by the United Church of Christ of Cleveland, Ohio. The article eloquently written by Bernice Powell Jackson the Executive Minister of this Church on 700 Prospect Avenue in Cleveland is a fervent wish for Peace. Her wish, her prayer, is one that many of us share with her and I hope is in the hearts and on the lips of every minister, rabbi and imam when he or she stands before a congregation. Minister Jackson believes that for Christians the call to work for peace comes from the Prince of Peace. Those of other faiths, she says, are called "by our Creator to work for a world of peace not only at this time of year, but all year long."

Minister Jackson's first wish on her Christmas list is for peace on earth. I join with her in this wish for all of us; but I wish the God's peace especially for the least among us for these are the first victims when peace is absent. These victims are the women, the children, the child soldiers, the soldiers and their families, the poor, the invisible, the uncounted,

the sick, the forgotten, and those whose dignity, even humanity, is not acknowledged—the enslaved, the trafficked, and the tortured.

Minister Jackson's second wish is for young people who are ready and willing to take up the struggle for a world of peace and justice. She states this article, number 245, is her last Witness for Justice Column. She hopes for young people like the ones who struggled for civil rights in the U.S., in the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, in the people power struggle in the Philippines, and in Tiananmen Square in China will arise to take on the causes for which she has been such an effective advocate. Minister Jackson recognizes the struggle continues against poverty.

I join Minister Jackson in her second wish and add a second wish of my own. I wish that we will see the end of extreme poverty in our lifetime. I commend the work and advocacy of Jeffery Sachs, Bill and Melinda Gates, Bono and Presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton and wish with them that childhood AIDS can be treated, that the AIDS Pandemic in Africa can be stopped, that treatable diseases that cause blindness in Africa can be eradicated and that people who are too poor to live can receive simple remedies like mosquito nets that will save 5000 children a day in Africa, clean water and enough food to flourish not just survive.

The third wish on Minister Jackson's Christmas List is for health care for every American. I join her in this wish. Ours is the richest country in the world and yet 45 million Americans cannot afford health care. Minister Jackson says the health care system is "imploding all around us." It is failing us. As a nation, America can no longer afford not to have health care for all Americans. The lack of universal health care for Americans represents a failure of our government and of our priorities; both must be changed.

Finally, Minister Jackson wishes for a return of a value which she writes "seems to be disappearing from our landscape—the value of integrity." Integrity she says is "a value which can only be earned through a life of honesty, fairness, forthrightness and a commitment to the common good of all humankind. It is a value which seems to be sorely lacking in government, in politics, in media, in business, even in religion. Integrity means standing up for what is right and just and true, no matter which way the winds of the world blow. It means speaking the truth, not words of political spin . . . It means matching your words with your life. My Christmas wish is for an increase in integrity in our world." I join Minister Jackson in this wish with all my heart.

Witness for Justice #245, Dec. 5, 2005

MY CHRISTMAS LIST

(By Bernice Powell Jackson)

Every year for the past eleven years I have shared my own Christmas list with you. Most years it has included a wish for even a day of peace in the world—when war ceases, when domestic violence pauses, when guns are laid down in homes and cities and nations. It hasn't happened yet, despite the prayers and the hard work of so many of you. Nevertheless, I believe, that those of us who are Christian are called to work for peace by the Prince of Peace. Those of other faiths are also called by our Creator to work for a world of peace not only at this time of year, but all year long. So my first wish is for peace on earth.

As I write my last Witness for Justice column, I wish for young people who are ready and willing to take up the leadership in the struggle for a world of peace with justice. I am reminded that there has been no viable struggle for justice and peace which did not include young people in the leadership in the last century and I am sure that will be true for this century as well. Young people were a part of the leadership in the civil rights struggle in the U.S., in the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, in the people power struggle in the Philippines, even in Tienanmin Square in China. We need young people willing to say war is not the answer, poverty is not the solution and racism can be no more and to do the difficult work of making such a world a reality. That may mean using old tried and true methods of protest like marches and demonstrations and letter-writing, and it might include new 21st century high-tech methods of protest driven by the internet. We need the energy and enthusiasm of young people in the work for peace and justice and my Christmas wish is that each one of us who are elders will mentor a young person to take the lead in this millennia-old struggle.

My third wish is for health care for every American. If there is one issue which can impact every one of us and which can be won in the next two years, I believe it is national health care. Simply put, the health care system is imploding all around us. Corporations large and small know it, labor unions know it, non-profit organizations know it, retirees know it, those 45 million Americans with no health care insurance know it, the medical profession knows it, and hospital administrators know it. Even the politicians know that the health care system we now have is not working for any group in America except possibly the insurance industry, but unless we DEMAND an immediate change, however, politicians will not do anything about it until it collapses around us. Maybe the total collapse of General Motors or maybe the influx of Asian bird flu into the U.S. with millions unable to afford treatment or maybe millions of retirees losing their promised health care benefits or millions of workers being required to pay higher and higher deductibles will be what propels the collapse of our present-day system, but my Christmas wish is that Americans demand that our nation come up with national health insurance before the system collapses not afterwards.

My wish is for a return of a value which seems to be disappearing from our landscape—the value of integrity. Integrity is a value which can only be earned through a life of honesty, fairness, forthrightness and a commitment to the common good of all humankind. It is a value which seems to be sorely lacking in government, in politics, in media, in business, even in religion. Integrity means standing up for what is right and just and true, no matter which way the winds of the world blow. It means speaking truth, not words of political spin. It means looking out not just for oneself, but for the whole community, especially those who are powerless and can't stand up for themselves. It means being willing to admit mistakes and to ask for forgiveness, knowing that we are all human and fallible. It means matching your words with your life. My Christmas wish is for an increase in integrity in our world.

My Christmas wish list this year is for health and wellness for every reader, for laughter and joy, for strength and comfort in the days ahead. In the words of the great American writer, Maya Angelou, "I wouldn't take nothing for the journey".

The struggle continues!!!

REVERSE MORTGAGES TO HELP AMERICA'S SENIORS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2005

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2892, the Reverse Mortgages to Help America's Seniors Act.

By removing the cap on the number of these loans that HUD can guarantee, this bipartisan bill allows the program to grow with demand.

A reverse mortgage is a creative financing tool that allows seniors to take some of the equity out of their homes without having to sell the home, or take on a new monthly mortgage payment.

Because it allows seniors to remain in their homes and provides them an income, it has proved very popular. These funds can be used for the everyday demands that many seniors face and that can become particularly urgent for those surviving on a fixed income, such as paying off existing debts, paying health care expenses, or paying daily living expenses.

When the statutory cap of 150,000 loans was reached this spring, there was consternation that the program would be suspended even though it is a win-win: it makes money for taxpayers and benefits seniors.

As those events demonstrate, the cap serves no useful purpose and should be removed. There is no reason to deny seniors this benefit if they decide it works for them, especially since it makes substantial money for the government—almost \$40 million annually after the first year.

I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 2892 and make this financial tool available to any senior who wants to use it.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1815, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, December 18, 2005

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support for H.R. 1815, the Department of Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006.

Mr. Speaker, torture can never be tolerated. As a country that has historically stood for the promotion and strengthening of human rights, our government must not be allowed to blur the line, bend the rules or otherwise distort the truth on acts that are clearly degrading, inhumane and cruel. Senator JOHN MCCAIN's amendment to the Fiscal Year 2006 Defense Authorization, and subsequently Appropriations, bills, was overwhelming supported in the Senate, and had bipartisan support in the House. Regardless of who we are fighting, and regardless of how the war is going, as Americans, we must never allow ourselves to again be accused of torture. Torture destroys the lives of those who are its victims as well as the lives, moral authority and strength of those who commit such devastating acts or support them.

As a cosponsor of the Interrogation Procedures Act of 2005, H.R. 3985, which is identical to Senator MCCAIN's amendment, I am pleased that conferees were able to come to a good agreement in regard to Senator MCCAIN's amendment. This amendment deserved the utmost support and respect, and I believe that in the end, the conferees were able to incorporate a clear, unambiguous statement on the unacceptability of torture by the U.S. government and military.

As media reports of alleged torture and extraordinary rendition become increasingly common, and as reports continue of "secret" CIA prisons operated throughout Eastern Europe, I am extremely pleased that the Administration has finally, publicly supported the MCCAIN ban on torture. I was appalled earlier this month, and in November, to hear of Vice President CHENEY's lobbying of Members of Congress to have this provision stripped, arguing that the provision would restrict the "flexibility" of the intelligence and military communities to wage an "effective" war against terror.

With this conference report, the United States has made a clear, unambiguous, and strong statement condemning torture and outlawing its use by any U.S. military personnel or on any U.S. facility in the world. This is to be greatly commended and I thank my colleagues for their support of this provision.

WELCOMING THE KOREA INTERNATIONAL TRADE ASSOCIATION TO WASHINGTON

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 22, 2005

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, the Korea International Trade Association (KITA), which has had offices in New York City since 1967, is expanding its presence in the United States by opening up a major office in the Nation's Capital.

Founded in 1946 with 105 members, KITA now represents more than 80,000 Korean businesses seeking to sell their products and services overseas, and in turn buying products and services from foreign countries.

Mr. Andy Mun, the president of KITA's branch in the United States, has said that having a presence in Washington will be important now that South Korea and the United States are engaged in negotiations to create a U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement.

In order to create a more prominent profile in Washington, DC, the Korea International Trade Association has purchased a building at 1660 L Street, NW., in the heart of the bustling commercial center of the city. While KITA will occupy several floors of the building, which will be designated the Washington Hankook Center, the rest will be used by American companies, law firms, non-profit groups, trade associations, and business consultants. The building is part of KITA's effort to build trade centers around the globe. In fact, KITA participates in the World Trade Centers Association, which has more than 300 members in 101 countries. It works closely with virtually all World Trade Centers to promote trade by providing facilities and services on a reciprocal basis.

In addition, to promote bilateral economic cooperation, KITA sponsors the Korea-U.S. Economic Council, the Korea-Japan Industry