

friendship will always have a fond place in my heart and memories.

So, like many, I have lost a great friend. Unfortunately our nation has lost a great leader and patriot. We will all miss Tillie. But each day now without her, we can celebrate her life and better appreciate her many contributions that helped to make our country a better America for all.

HALABJA REMEMBERED

HON. DANA ROHRBACHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, on March 16, 1988 Saddam Hussein brutally attacked Halabja, Kurdistan in Iraq. When the bombing attacks were completed, over 5,000 were dead and over 8,000 injured.

The injured people were civilians. Families died together that day, orphans were made that day, a day that the Kurdish people will never forget.

As the poison gas largely cleared by noon that day, the deadly smoke lay close to the ground, sinking into the basements of the homes where people had gone to seek shelter.

They watched as their skin burned. Some were immediately blinded. Some took shelter among the corpses of their family members. The ones who were able to run, ran, stopping only when they were overcome with pain or exhaustion.

Today, I honor those men, women, and children who lost their lives at the hands of a ruthless killer, Saddam Hussein. The Halabja massacre represents 5,000 of the 200,000 Kurdish people who died or are missing during the genocide campaigns of the Saddam Hussein regime. Hundreds of thousands of other Iraqis were also killed or are missing.

Mr. Speaker, as our Armed Forces battle to build a democratic future for the people of Iraq, we should recall the horror of Halabja, and acknowledge that the hellish tyranny that shackled all but a few Baathist thugs is part of Iraq history and not part of its future. Let's recall the suffering of all Iraqis, especially the Kurds in Halabja, and honor our Armed Forces for the better future they are building in Iraq.

VERNA KING—AN INSPIRATION TO SAN DIEGO

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, Verna Lee St. Clair King, born and reared in Berwick, Louisiana, is the daughter of John Westley St. Clair and Florence Ellen Calvin St. Clair. Educated in Louisiana and Texas, she earned her A.B. degree from Wiley College in Marshall, Texas and later an M.A. from San Diego State University.

Verna grew up determined to make life better for others. She eventually became a teacher, making politics and helping others through community service her lifelong hobbies. Her

intelligence and insight led her to the political arena and the fight for equal education.

A professional educator in San Diego for thirty years, Verna has a long history of involvement with the San Diego Teachers' Association (SDTA). Through the SDTA, she represented the National Education Association and served as a member of the National Women's Caucus and Black Caucus.

Verna's unselfish nature led her to become increasingly involved in a wide array of civic activities: she was vice-chair of the 79th Assembly District Committee, served on the 44th Congressional Advisory Committee, and was a charter member of the San Diego Council of Democratic Women. In addition, she is a charter member and past president of Women Inc. She is also involved with Alpha Kappa Alpha, CTA, the YWCA, her church, and the Democratic Party. In addition, she has recently served on the Community Service Association Board as well as the San Diego Historical Site Board.

Verna's involvement in the community and politics has allowed her to interact and work with individuals such as Coretta Scott King, Andrew Young, Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter, Alan Cranston and Tom Bradley.

Verna is listed in prominent annuals and has received many awards in recognition of her professional and community service. In the past, she has been the recipient of the Democratic Committee's Golden Key Award and received a Key to the City of San Diego for her outstanding work in the field of human relations. For bridging the gap between parents and teachers, Verna was honored with an Honorary Service award by the Ninth District P.T.A. Her current honors reflect the esteem in which she is held by her fellow professionals and by those who have had the pleasure of working with her in political and community activities.

Verna's husband, Alonzo King, now deceased, shared her interests both politically and professionally. In addition, Verna and Alonzo were blessed with a close family that included five children: Joyce L. King Thomas, Verna Lee E. Bickerstaff, St. Clair King, Alonzo King, and Reginald King, the latter two of whom are deceased.

Verna has always been gracious in all of her endeavors, and her knowledge and experiences have been invaluable to professionals, friends, fellow committee members and the community.

She truly has been an inspiration to all San Diego.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE TRACY O. KING

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Texas State Representative Tracy King for his many accomplishments in business and in government.

Mr. King was born in Baytown, Texas, in 1960. After graduating from Carrizo Springs High School, he attended Southwest Texas Junior College for a year, and then transferred to Texas A&M University, where he completed his B.S. in Agricultural Engineering.

Upon his graduation, Representative King began working at the Beltone Hearing Aid Center in San Antonio. He moved up quickly, and was responsible for opening the branch office in Uvalde. In 1987, he became owner of the local Beltone Hearing Aid Center, serving 16 counties in Southwest Texas. He has been active in a number of nonprofit organizations, including the Kiwanis Club and the first Methodist Church, and he is a former president of the Texas Hearing Aid Association.

Tracy King was elected to the Texas House of Representatives in 1994, and is currently serving his fifth term. He is a member of the House Appropriations Committee, and is Chairman of Budget and Oversight for the House Regulation Committee.

Mr. Speaker, the life of Tracy King is an example of what hard work and responsible service can accomplish, and I am proud to have the opportunity to recognize him here.

A TRIBUTE TO MARY CAMMARANO, 29TH CONGRES- SIONAL DISTRICT WOMAN OF THE YEAR—2005

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Women's History Month. Each year, we pay special tribute to the contributions and sacrifices made by our Nation's women during the month of March. It is an honor to pay homage to outstanding women who are making a difference in my Congressional District.

I would like to recognize an outstanding woman in my Congressional District, the Honorable Mary Cammarano. For many years, Mary has brought an abounding spirit and energy to her service in the community. Those fortunate enough to meet and work with Mary instantly recognize her joy, enthusiasm and passion for helping others in her community.

A native New Yorker, Mary moved to San Gabriel in 1964 with her husband Mike. As a young mother, Mary was active in her children's activities, volunteering for 3 different Parent Teacher Associations, Little League, Girl Scouts of America, Boy Scouts of America and a foreign exchange student program. Her past involvement also included board memberships on the American Heart Association, the YMCA, the American Red Cross, and the Italian Catholic Federation, where she served as President.

Elected to the San Gabriel City Council in 1989, Mary served on the council for 16 years, serving as Mayor for 3 terms, until her retirement in 2005. She was a long-time member of the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments and the Independent Cities Association.

Ms. Cammarano's current volunteer service with the City of San Gabriel is extensive and impressive. A 30 year member of the San Gabriel Historical Association, where she provided her homemade lasagna for 15 years for the association's annual fundraiser; she also successfully brought the Ramona Museum to San Gabriel. For 35 years, she has been a member of the San Gabriel Coordinating Council and the Women's Division of the San Gabriel Chamber of Commerce, where she's brought her homemade minestrone soup for

the last 10 years. Additionally, she is active in the San Gabriel Kiwanis Club, serves on the San Gabriel Valley Medical Center Foundation Board, is President of the San Gabriel Valley Music Theatre, and assists at the La Casa Community Center's annual fundraiser, the San Gabriel Mission's Annual Fiesta and the Mission's St. Joseph's Day Festival.

Mary has received several awards over the years including the Woman of the Year from the 49th Assembly District, Woman of the Year from the City of San Gabriel, San Gabriel Business and Professional Women's Woman of Achievement, and a National Lifetime Membership in the Parent Teacher Association, as well as many others.

Mary and her husband Mike have been married for 47 years, have 5 children, and 11 grandchildren.

I ask all Members to join me today in honoring an outstanding woman of California's 29th Congressional District, Mary Cammarano. The entire community joins me in thanking Mary for her success and continued efforts toward making the 29th Congressional District a more enjoyable place in which to live and work.

IN HONOR OF JFK HIGH SCHOOL

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to today to honor the boy's basketball team, at John F. Kennedy High School in Kingsbridge, NY. These fine young men, whom critics called the underdogs, won the PSAL tournament in New York, defeating Lincoln High School at Madison Square Garden 62–57.

It has not been an easy season for the Knights, which makes their victory all the sweeter. Midway through the season, Coach Johnny Mathis nearly had to quit the team. In the past year, Coach Mathis, who has led the team for 18 years, lost three toes to diabetes and underwent three circulatory bypass surgeries on his legs. Yet, this dedicated coach only missed two games all season. He always believed in his team. Mathis called the team's win "very special" and said he always believed we were good enough and that the team worked pretty hard and in the team's minds they came in to win the game.

It takes an extraordinary team to beat a three-time champion like Lincoln, but the Kennedy Knights are such a team and did just that. The final game was close—and with the score tied and 5 minutes left, MVP Emilijano Kinaj sank a three-pointer and the Knights were on their way. They worked hard as a team and the results are obvious.

I congratulate the players and Coach John Mathis for their 28–4 season record and for winning the championship.

BOOST THE ECONOMY—COMPENSATE REAL VICTIMS; SUPPORT ASBESTOS LITIGATION REFORM

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, for almost two decades, Congress has unsuccessfully grappled with the challenge of assuring fair and timely compensation to workers who have become sick after being exposed to asbestos fibers. The pioneering work done by litigation reform advocates like Rep. HENRY HYDE laid the foundation for ongoing negotiations in the other body that may finally result in legislation that assures compensation to sick plaintiffs and allows defendant companies to move beyond the uncertainty of decades-long mass tort litigation.

In his State of the Union address, President Bush told us, "Justice is distorted, and our economy is held back, by irresponsible class actions and frivolous asbestos claims and I urge Congress to pass legal reforms this year." It is time for the House to enter the debate.

Many of you have heard how asbestos litigation reform has hurt workers and our economy. Over 8,000 defendants must spend time and money responding to asbestos lawsuits. Since the mid-1980's, 730,000 asbestos claims have been filed—and over 100,000 asbestos suits were filed in 2003 alone. Defendants point to examples of clever attorneys "working the system" to benefit certain plaintiffs, escalating the cost of litigation beyond reliable measure. For example, in 1998, a Fayette, Mississippi, jury awarded \$2 million each to five plaintiffs who had been exposed to asbestos fibers but had little or no symptoms of illness. In 2003, the Supreme Court has upheld a \$5.8 million award to plaintiffs with lung x-rays showing evidence of asbestos exposure, who successfully argued that they deserved compensation for living with fear of contracting an asbestos-related disease—or "asbestophobia," as some call it. The uncertain cost of asbestos litigation has driven at least 74 companies into bankruptcy. Employees of these bankrupt firms have watched the value of their 401(k) accounts drop by 25 percent. As many as 60,000 workers have lost their jobs.

This focus on numbers can make us forget that asbestos litigation reform is about people:

Mary Lou Keener watched her father die painfully from mesothelioma, a cancer he contracted from asbestos exposure while he served in the Navy during World War II. He filed legal claims years before he died, yet his widow has received almost nothing.

Workers who are sick from years of exposure to asbestos while working for Johns Manville Corporation might be told that approved compensation for their mesothelioma is \$700,000; however, since the bankruptcy trustee pays only five cents on the dollar, their claim is worth \$35,000.

David Coleman, exposed to asbestos as an infant when he inhaled fibers embedded in his father's work clothes, died of mesothelioma in 2002, at the age of 19. His family's lawsuit sits on the court docket in Cuyahoga County, along with another 34,000 claims.

Children who grew up in the asbestos mining town of Libby, Montana, breathing in asbestos fibers stirred up by the street traffic as they road buses to school, now, as adults, are experiencing asbestosis symptoms. Under the current system, they have no hope of compensation.

Ron Huber, who worked 35 years in a steel mill, joined an asbestos suit in 1995 although he had no symptoms of asbestos related illness. His attorney accepted a small settlement which, according to Huber, was wholly applied to legal costs. By 2002, he was truly experiencing symptoms of asbestos-related disease. He is suing the only person not released by settlement of the 1995 case—the attorney who recruited him for that suit.

Drew Anders, who spent 15 years working for a company that was forced to declare bankruptcy in reaction to growing asbestos litigation, watched his \$50,000 retirement account fall to \$1,500.

A small business owner in Louisiana who never manufactured anything containing asbestos once used a asbestos-threaded nut in a piece of machinery. Although there is no evidence that this nut causes asbestos related disease, this man's company pays \$75,000 to \$100,000 a year in asbestos-related claims.

A research company that released one of the first studies establishing the health risks of asbestos—a report that saved lives and improved working conditions—is named in over 60,000 cases every year. The principals of this firm, which never used or manufactured asbestos products, spend hundreds of thousands of dollars annually in settlements.

Today, I am introducing the FAIR Act of 2005. This bill is based on bipartisan asbestos trust fund negotiations carried out during the last months of the 108th Congress. It puts patients ahead of plaintiffs and would dramatically reduce the cost of asbestos litigation. I call on us to work together and pass a bill that helps victims and companies affected by asbestos litigation, while benefiting the economy and boosting the stock market.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "CLEAN SMOKESTACKS ACT OF 2005"

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2005

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I am again joining with Representative BOEHLERT in introducing the "Clean Smokestacks Act of 2005." This important legislation will finally clean up the Nation's dirty, antiquated power plants.

When I originally introduced the "Clean Smokestacks Act" with Representative BOEHLERT in the 106th Congress, we had a modest beginning. We had a total of 15 cosponsors and little attention.

But in the 107th and 108th Congresses, the bill's supporters grew to over 100 House members. During that time, Senator JEFFORDS successfully reported the companion legislation, the "Clean Power Act" from Committee. And even the Bush Administration, at least in rhetoric, recognizes that we urgently need to clean up these power plants.

Electricity generation is our Nation's single largest source of air pollution, including greenhouse gas emissions. Nationally, power plants