

CITY COUNCIL OF MOUNT VERNON
SUPPORTS THE FAMILY OF
AMADOU DIALLO

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 12, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of this chamber a resolution adopted March 9, 2005 by the City Council of Mount Vernon, New York, supporting relief for the family of Amadou Diallo. The resolution calls on Congress to grant permanent resident status to the family of the young African immigrant who was shot 41 times by four plainclothes New York policemen.

The full text of the resolution of the Mount Vernon City Council follows:

Whereas, Amadou Diallo, a 24 year old immigrant from Guinea, was tragically gunned down in a hail of 41 bullets on February 4, 1999, by officers of the New York City Police Department as he attempted to enter his residence in the Bronx; and

Whereas, Amadou Diallo, an innocent man, was found to be unarmed at the time of his shooting; and

Whereas, the tragic story of Amadou Diallo garnered international attention, and an unprecedented outcry and weeks of demonstrations by New Yorkers who sympathized with his family;

Whereas, the Diallo family currently resides in the United States under "deferred action status" and are vulnerable to deportation in the upcoming months; and

Whereas, the Diallo family wishes to remain in the United States; and

Whereas, the Honorable United States Congressman Charles Rangel has proposed legislation, namely H.R. 677, which would grant permanent resident status to Amadou Diallo's family members: Kadiatou Diallo, Laouratou Diallo, Ibrahima Diallo, Abdoul Diallo, Mamadou Bobo Diallo, Mamadou Pathe Diallo, Fatoumata Traore Diallo, Sankarela Diallo and Marliatou Bah; and

Whereas, granting permanent resident status to the Diallo family would be a proper and just recognition of the tragedy they have suffered, and it will allow the Diallo family to pursue the opportunities promised by the American Dream; and

Whereas, the City Council of the City of Mount Vernon fully supports Congressman Rangel's proposed legislation and commends his efforts to keep the Diallo family in the United States; Now, Therefore, be it resolved that the City Council of the City of Mount Vernon, New York:

Hereby, fully supports Congressman Rangel's proposed legislation, H.R. 677, which would grant permanent resident status to Amadou Diallo's family members: Kadiatou Diallo, Laouratou Diallo, Ibrahima Diallo, Abdoul Diallo, Mamadou Bobo Diallo, Mamadou Pathe Diallo, Fatoumata Traore Diallo, Sankarela Diallo and Marliatou Bah.

Resolved, that the City Council of the City of Mount Vernon, New York, calls upon the United States Congress to support Congressman Charles Rangel's proposed legislation, H.R. 677, which would grant permanent resident status to Amadou Diallo's family members: Kadiatou Diallo, Laouratou Diallo, Ibrahima Diallo, Abdoul Diallo, Mamadou Bobo Diallo, Mamadou Pathe Diallo, Fatoumata Traore Diallo, Sankarela Diallo and Marliatou Bah.

I extend my personal thanks to Mayor Ernest D. Davis, City Council President Karen Watts, City Councilman William R. Randolph,

and the rest of the Mount Vernon City Council for this resolution.

Surely, this Congress can heed the advice of the City Council and truly embrace the Diallo family for the loss of their son and brother.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF SAN MARCOS CITY COUNCIL-
MAN ED MIHALKANIN

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 12, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ed Mihalkanin for his nine years of service to the people of San Marcos, Texas.

In addition to serving the City of San Marcos on the Council, Mr. Mihalkanin works at Texas State University as an Associate Professor of Political Science. He has been teaching at Texas State since 1990, and previously taught at Gettysburg College in Gettysburg, PA.

He received a Master's Degree in 1985 and a Ph.D in 1991 from American University in Washington, DC. Mr. Mihalkanin is originally from Hanover Park, Illinois, and he received his undergraduate degree at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois.

Mr. Mihalkanin was first elected to the Council in 1996, and currently represents the City Council on the Economic Development Council. He has served as Mayor Pro Tempore in 1999 and Deputy Mayor Pro Tem in 2003–2004.

Mr. Mihalkanin is a member of the Downtown Association, the Greater San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce, and many other organizations that help to better the San Marcos community as a whole.

Mr. Mihalkanin is a model of hard work and dedication to the city and to his students. By working as project director for the "Civitas Project," Mr. Mihalkanin helped to revive civic life in the communities of Lockhart, San Marcos, and Wimberley, Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have had this opportunity to recognize the many achievements of San Marcos City Councilman Ed Mihalkanin.

DR. WILLIAM SCHWARTZ HONORED

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 12, 2005

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. William Schwartz as the co-founder of the Samaritan House Free Medical Clinic, as well as his dedication to the clinic since its inception in 1992. Dr. Schwartz was awarded the Jefferson Award for his work at the clinic that is located in San Mateo, California, in my district. His friends and colleagues have praised him for his selfless acts and hard work in trying to make our community a better place, and I hope the acknowledgment that comes from this award will inspire others to devote more of their time to helping those in need.

Thirteen years ago, Dr. Schwartz and Dr. Walter Gains started a free clinic for those

who could not afford health care. They treated patients in the conference room at Samaritan House one or two nights a week after spending the day at their own offices. The clinic provided free care through the generous contributions of lab work and x-rays by Mills Peninsula Hospital. Now open 6 days a week in two separate locations in San Mateo and Redwood City, the clinic serves 8,000 patients a year through donations that range from \$25 and \$50.

Mr. Speaker, small contributions and volunteers have kept this free clinic thriving. Ninety percent of the staff members donate their time after they leave their own jobs or after retirement. Dr. Schwartz worked as an internist in San Mateo for the 32 years in private practice and was preparing to retire when he got the idea to start the clinic. Now most of the doctors, nurses and translators running the clinic are retired. They include specialists in dentistry, gynecology, oncology, optometry, psychology, and orthopedics.

Dr. Schwartz has seen many free clinics disappear over time with people turning to more mainstream medical facilities, yet the number of needy people has risen. Most of the patients have extremely low incomes of less than thirty percent of median income. The Jefferson Award is bestowed by the American Institute of Public Service for making a difference in one's community. Dr. Schwartz has done just that. His clinic even has been able to relieve some of the stress on overcrowded emergency rooms that many poor people have come to rely on for many non-emergency situations.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me in thanking Dr. William Schwartz for his contributions to my community. He has devoted his time to making a difference, beginning as a clinical professor at the University of California at San Francisco and now giving to the people of San Mateo and Redwood City medical attention. I rise today to congratulate him on winning the "Nobel Prize of Community Service." He and his wife, Florette, deserve a long vacation and the nation's thanks.

CONGRATULATING THE FALCONS
ROBOTICS TEAM OF CARL HAY-
DEN HIGH SCHOOL ON ITS
ACHIEVEMENTS

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 12, 2005

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to proudly draw your attention to the Falcons Robotics Team of Carl Hayden High School in my district. This talented group of students has succeeded in winning numerous robotics competitions, even beating the MIT team last year in a contest sponsored by NASA and the Office of Naval Research.

Teachers Allan Cameron, Fredi Lajvardi and Sam Alexander, with the help of other Carl Hayden faculty, wanted to create a club where students could engage in science, engineering, and math related activities that were educational as well as fun. Through the club, the students also had opportunities to meet professionals from science-oriented fields. The robotics team is small, made up of four students: Cristian Arcega, Lorenzo Santillan,

Oscar Vazquez and Luis Aranda. The Falcons Robotics Team provides these students from low income neighborhoods a positive option for after school activities. One of the team members was failing most of his classes before joining the robotics club and credits the club from keeping him off of West Phoenix streets and avoiding trouble.

The Falcons Robotics Team's first mission was to put together a robot to compete in the Marine Advanced Technology Remotely Operated Vehicle Competition, the underwater robotics contest sponsored by NASA and the Office of Naval Research. They needed a remote-controlled robot that could explore a sunken mock-up of a submarine. Thus, Stinky was born. Constructed of plastic tubing, propellers, lights, cameras, a laser, depth detectors, pumps, and other equipment, Stinky was capable of recording sonar pings and retrieving objects 50 feet under water. Stinky got its unflattering moniker from the foul-smelling glue that kept it together. The team went into the competition feeling intimidated, but they won the grand prize, beating out MIT and other college teams with slicker robots and corporate sponsors.

Since their competition victory last year, the team has gone on to compete in the For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) Robotics Competition, where it won the highest award, the Chairman's Award, at the Arizona Regionals in March. Dean Kamen, inventor and founder of FIRST, a multinational non-profit organization that aspires to make science, math, engineering, and technology cool for kids, presented the award. As Mr. Kamen explained, the FIRST Robotics Competition is about much more than the mechanics of building a robot or winning a competitive event. The FIRST mission is to change the way America's young people regard science and technology and to inspire an appreciation for the real-life rewards and career opportunities in these fields.

In his remarks, Mr. Kamen echoed the sentiments of many in Arizona who are following the progress of this team of innovators. The impact from the team's victory is priceless. Participation in the Falcons Robotics Team, and its competition successes, has changed the students' appreciation of engineering and science, and their attitude towards education. These students are now hoping to pursue higher education and are inspiring other students to strive for similar goals. The team's accomplishments are countering stereotypes of innercity students from Hispanic neighbor-

hoods, and demonstrating that innercity "tough kids" can be just as talented and capable as the best from MIT. The Falcons team has become the subject of articles in *Wired Magazine* and the *Washington Post*, primetime stories on shows such as NPR's *Here and Now* and ABC's *Nightline*, and Warner Brothers is even planning a movie.

As the team now prepares to compete in the FIRST Championship from April 21 to 23 at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, I wish to honor the Falcons Robotics Team and the students, teachers, and community of Carl Hayden High School. The successes of Cristian, Lorenzo, Oscar and Luis demonstrate the accomplishments students can achieve, given a little inspiration from devoted teachers. I ask my colleagues to join me today in congratulating the Falcons Robotics Team, and wishing the students and teachers at Carl Hayden High School much continued success in their future endeavors.

PRESERVING ACCESS TO
AFFORDABLE DRUGS ACT

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 12, 2005

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to be introducing a revised version of the Preserving Access to Affordable Drugs (PAAD) Act. Unfortunately, the misguided Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 threatens to reduce or eliminate the prescription drug benefits that millions of seniors across the country already have. And if the law isn't bad enough as is, the Administration has ignored the recommendations of the President's State Pharmaceutical Assistance Transition Commission and denied New Jersey's request to automatically enroll those Medicare beneficiaries currently enrolled in New Jersey's PAAD and Medicaid programs into a preferred Medicare prescription drug plan.

This ruling effectively blocks New Jersey's efforts to preserve the generous prescription drug coverage the state currently provides to the 190,000 seniors enrolled in New Jersey's PAAD program and the 140,000 seniors and disabled enrolled in the state's Medicaid program when the new Medicare prescription drug benefit goes into effect on January 1, 2006.

In an effort to right this wrong, the bill I'm introducing today will ensure that our seniors have a seamless transition to the new Medicare Part D drug benefit, without a reduction or disruption in their coverage.

The PAAD Act will allow states to automatically enroll PAAD and dually eligible Medicaid beneficiaries in one or more preferred prescription drug plans to ensure that these beneficiaries are enrolled in a Medicare drug plan that maximizes both their federal and state prescription drug coverage. This will ensure that New Jersey seniors who currently receive prescription drug benefits under PAAD or through the state's Medicaid program are not made worse off by the new Medicare law.

In addition, the PAAD Act will allow New Jersey to provide supplemental Medicaid prescription drug benefits to low-income seniors and disabled who currently receive generous prescription drug benefits under the Medicaid program and who will now receive their prescription drug benefits through Medicare.

With approximately six million seniors nationwide, including 140,000 in New Jersey, who are dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid, it is absolutely critical that they do not lose access to their Medicaid prescription drug benefits, which are more generous than the new Medicare benefit will be. Not to mention, hundreds of thousands of seniors across the country, and 200,000 seniors in New Jersey, currently are enrolled in state pharmacy assistance programs, and will be forced into a private Medicare drug plan. We need to make sure the new Medicare Modernization Act transition happens with the least amount of confusion and loss of coverage possible. With this bill, we will solve these outstanding problems.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 12, 2005

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, on March 21st, 2005, I was traveling overseas with Minority Leader PELOSI on officially authorized travel. Had I been present during roll call vote 90, a motion to suspend the rules and pass Senate bill 686, for the relief of the parents of Mrs. Theresa Marie Schiavo, I would have voted "aye" in favor of passage.