

challenges, it is important for us to be able to look to exemplary institutions such as Merritt for encouragement and inspiration. On behalf of the 9th Congressional District, I salute and congratulate Merritt College for 50 extraordinary years of service to our community. Merritt's students and stewards have demonstrated that an institution of higher education can not only be dynamic and innovative, but can truly be a force for hope, community empowerment and social change.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY MONTH

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2005

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, just last week, our nation recognized April as Occupational Therapy Month. Occupational therapy is a health, education, wellness, and rehabilitation service that helps individuals engage in everyday activities, or "occupations." More than 100,000 licensed occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants provide services to children and adults in a variety of settings across the nation, including 766 in my home state of Rhode Island. Services are provided by qualified professionals whose training includes anatomy and physiology, sociology, and psychology, including how disability affects an individual's ability to develop "skills for the job of living."

Occupational therapy focuses on performance of meaningful daily life activities, such as education, work, play, leisure, and social participation, despite impairments or limitations in physical or mental functioning. Occupational therapy not only helps children with disabilities to learn in school, but, also assists adults recovering from stroke to lead full and productive lives.

With its roots in mental health, occupational therapy focuses on the relationship between the client and their performance abilities, the demands of the activity, and the physical and social contexts within which the activity is performed. An individual's performance is evaluated through their psychological, social, and emotional responses, which assists the therapist in implementing specific treatments to address the patient's current needs and problems. Occupational therapy was recently profiled by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) on its National Mental Health Information Center's website.

I am pleased to recognize the importance of occupational therapy and the valuable service that it provides for millions of individuals and families.

IN HONOR OF THE CINCO DE MAYO CELEBRATION AT PIKE PARK

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2005

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Cinco de Mayo celebration at Pike Park in Dallas, Texas.

Cinco de Mayo is a day for special pride and remembrance for the Hispanic community.

It's a reminder of the proud heritage of many Americans and the warm and growing friendship between two great nations. It's a day worth celebrating. Today we recognize the continuous efforts to bring the community together through the Pike Park Advisory Council and the Pike Park Preservation League.

Originally called Summit Play Park, Pike Park was constructed in 1915 and through the efforts of the Consul General from Mexico. The Mexican American children of the neighborhood were finally allowed to use the park and swimming pool in the mid 1930's.

The name changed in 1927 to Pike Park Recreation Center named after Mr. Edgar Pike, a member of the Dallas Park Board. Pike Park has served as the site of the "Fiestas Patrias" (Cinco de Mayo and Dies y Sies de Septiembre) since the late 1930's.

Pike Park has also served as the bastion for civic and social events of the Mexican-American community for over 65 years.

It is with great pride that I recognize the Pike Park Advisory Council and the Pike Park Preservation League are duly recognized as the future coordinators of the "Fiestas Patrias".

VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION FOR THE FUTURE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. ENI F. H. FALEOMAVAEGA

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 366) to amend the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 to strengthen and improve programs under that Act:

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 366, the Vocational and Technical Education for the Future Act. I want to commend my esteemed colleague, Mr. CASTLE, for his leadership on educational issues and particularly for sponsoring this important legislation.

Vocational and technical education is critically important in American Samoa. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, only 13 percent of 18 to 24 year-olds were enrolled in college classes, leaving a large number of the Territory's youth out of school, but unprepared for the skilled labor market.

In order for American Samoa to continue our economic development, our youth need skills training in construction skills, including carpentry, welding, and electrical engineering. We need architects, engineers and auto mechanics. The funding H.R. 366 provides will allow American Samoa to give our people the necessary skills to compete in this economy.

I support this legislation and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 366.

RECOGNIZING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF VICTORY IN EUROPE (V-E) DAY DURING WORLD WAR II

SPEECH OF

HON. STEVE BUYER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 3, 2005

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, today the Congress recognized the 60th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day. World War II was a defining moment in the lives of our Nation's Greatest Generation. Men and women whose early youth was shaped in the ordeal of the Great Depression showed the values formed in that crucible when tyranny threatened a world. More than 4 million Americans served in our armed forces in the cauldron of Europe. Nearly 200,000 of them made the ultimate sacrifice there serving the cause of freedom. Today, as we must every day, we recognize and honor the service and sacrifices made by them and by our allies fighting by their side. Their legacy—and the legacy of their generation—is a freer world of opportunity and equality, which we inherit with gratitude and serve with humility.

HONORING THE SERVICEMEMBERS LEGAL DEFENSE NETWORK (SLDN)

HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2005

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the hard work and dedication of Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), a national non-profit organization dedicated to ending the military's failed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

SLDN was co-founded by Dixon Osburn and Michelle Beneke in 1994 as a legal service agency with the mission of providing counsel to service members discharged under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Since that time, SLDN has assisted more than 6,500 gay and lesbian troops and obtained thirty-five improvements to military regulations related to the policy.

Today, SLDN is the Nation's leading advocacy organization dedicated to repealing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and ensuring open service in our armed forces. Through tenacity and strong leadership, the organization has made significant steps forward in breaking down the barrier that bans gays and lesbians from serving openly in the military. The gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community looks to SLDN as a model for accomplishing policy change.

2004 was a groundbreaking year for the organization. SLDN filed a monumental lawsuit on behalf of twelve veterans of the War on Terror, challenging the constitutionality of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" in federal court. SLDN's legal expertise also paved the way for two victorious cases before the Army Court of Criminal Appeals, overturning military sodomy convictions. And the staff mobilized veterans and supporters from twenty-two states to meet with 90 Congressional offices on their annual "Lobby Day."

I have had the pleasure of working with SLDN since my freshman term in Congress.

Most recently, we came together to draft the Military Readiness Enhancement Act, historic legislation to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and replace it with a nondiscrimination policy. Because of SLDN's staunch efforts to win support in Congress, I introduced the bill with more than fifty cosponsors on March 2, 2005. We now have more than eighty cosponsors of this bipartisan bill today.

As SLDN celebrates its national dinner on May 7th, I commend the staff, board, and supporters for their commitment and perseverance. Just as the advocacy of civil rights groups paved the way for desegregation in the military, I am confident that SLDN's hard work will soon lead to the demise of the discriminatory and counterproductive "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

"THE BIG SHOTS WALK"

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2005

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, many Americans continue to be gravely embarrassed by our country's failure to address in a forthright manner the abuse of human rights which occurred at Abu Ghraib prison under our control. Clearly the great majority of Americans who have served in Iraq are innocent of any such pattern of abuse, but it is simply a defiance of common sense and the facts to hold accountable only a handful of low-level military personnel on the scene, while exonerating those in charge who are in various degrees culpable for either encouraging or allowing this to happen.

Bob Herbert's column in the New York Times on April 27 makes this point forcefully, noting that "under Commander in Chief George W. Bush, the notion of command accountability has been discarded. In Mr. Bush's world of war, it's the grunts who take the heat. Punishment is reserved for the people at the bottom. The people who foul up at the top are promoted."

Mr. Speaker, our country deserves better of its leadership, and so do the men and women in the armed services who should not see a small number of their comrades held accountable for their actions while those in charge suffer no such penalty. I ask that Bob Herbert's thoughtful discussion of this matter be printed here.

ON ABU GHRAIB, THE BIG SHOTS WALK

(By Bob Herbert)

When soldiers in war are not properly trained and supervised, atrocities are all but inevitable: This is one reason why the military command structure is so important. There was a time, not so long ago, when commanders were expected to be accountable for the behavior of their subordinates.

That's changed. Under Commander in Chief George W. Bush, the notion of command accountability has been discarded. In Mr. Bush's world of war, it's the grunts who take the heat. Punishment, is reserved for the people at the bottom. The people who foul up at the top are promoted.

It was a year ago today that the stories and photos of the shocking abuses at Abu Ghraib prison first came to the public's attention. It was a scandal that undermined the military's reputation and diminished the standing of the U.S. around the world.

It would soon become clear that the photos of hooded, naked and humiliated detainees were evidence of a much larger problem. The system for processing, interrogating and detaining prisoners at Abu Ghraib and elsewhere in Iraq was dangerously out of control, and the command structure responsible for it had collapsed. Detainees were beaten, tortured, sexually abused and, in some instances, killed. Many detainees should never have been imprisoned at all, as they had committed no offenses.

So what happened? A handful of grunts were court-martialed, a Marine major was cashiered, and the Army plans to issue a new interrogation manual that bars certain harsh techniques. There was no wholesale crackdown on criminal behavior.

We learned last week that after a high-level investigation, the Army had cleared four of the five top officers who were responsible for prison policies and operations in Iraq. The fifth officer, Brig. Gen. Janis Karpinski of the Army Reserve, had already been relieved of her command of the military police unit at Abu Ghraib. (She has complained, and not without reason, that she was a scapegoat for the failures of higher-ranking officers.)

As Eric Schmitt wrote in *The Times*: "Barbing new evidence, the inquiry by the Army's inspector general effectively closes the Army's book on whether the highest-ranking officers in Iraq during the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, should be held accountable for command failings described in past reviews."

This is the way atrocities are dealt with in Mr. Bush's world of war. The higher-ups responsible for training, supervising and disciplining the troops—in other words, the big shots who presided over a system that ran shamefully amok—escaped virtually unscathed.

The abuses at Abu Ghraib, which seemed mind-boggling at the time, turned out to be symptomatic of the torture, abuse and institutionalized injustice that have permeated the Bush administration's operations in its so-called war against terror. Euphemisms like rendition, coercive interrogation, sleep adjustment and waterboarding are now widely understood. Yes, Virginia, it is the policy of the United States to kidnap individuals and send them off to regimes skilled in the art of torture.

Two things are needed. First, a truly independent commission, along the lines of the bipartisan 9/11 panel, should be set up to thoroughly investigate U.S. interrogation and detention operations and make recommendations to correct abuses.

Second, the U.S. government should make it clear, beyond any doubt, that torture and any other inhumane treatment of prisoners is wrong, just flat wrong, and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

"In our contemporary world, torture is like the slave trade or piracy was to people in the 1790's," said Michael Posner, executive director of Human Rights First, which is suing Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld over the prisoner abuse issue. "Torture is a crime against mankind, against humanity. It's something that has to be absolutely prohibited."

If the president made it clear that men and women up and down the chain of command would be held responsible for the abuses that occur on their watch, the abuses would plummet. Instead, the message the administration has sent is that its demands for accountability will be limited to a few hapless, ill-trained grunts.

The big shots who presided over behavior that has shamed America in the eyes of the world can count on this president's embrace.

IN HONOR OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AICPA'S JOURNAL OF ACCOUNTANCY

HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2005

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the Journal of Accountancy, the Journal of record for the accounting profession, on its 100th anniversary this year.

The Journal of Accountancy, which is published by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, is read by nearly 400,000 readers each month. Its contents include official releases of technical requirements for CPAs as well as news and information that enlighten readers about important relevant developments in and outside the profession and that enhance their professional competency.

As a CPA, I am keenly aware of the value of this publication. CPAs play a vital role in our economy, and since 1905 the Journal of Accountancy has helped keep them informed about key business trends.

I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution that the JofA has made during its first century and to recognize its editors, authors and art and production staff for their hard work. I extend my best wishes to the JofA for its continued success.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO AND HONORING 75 YEARS OF INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY BANKING

HON. COLLIN C. PETERSON

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2005

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, on May 9, 1930, a group of Minnesota community bankers held their first official meeting in Glenwood, Minnesota, in my district. The agenda that day was to focus on how to respond to the broad challenges facing the nation, as well as the specific challenges to community banks—the stock market crash the year before, a nation struggling to get back on its economic feet, a rash of bank foreclosures, and the rapid growth of chain banks.

This meeting of 28 bankers grew from a one-state organization, focused on state issues, into today's Independent Community Bankers of America (ICBA), the largest constituency of community banks in the nation. 2005 marks ICBA's 75th anniversary. In 1962 the bankers returned to their original mission and set up the Independent Community Bankers of Minnesota (ICBM), to focus again on issues specific to Minnesota.

This year also denotes a special milestone for the state association, ICBM. Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty proclaimed May 9th Independent Community Bankers of Minnesota Day, commemorating the founding of the only state association that exclusively serves the independent community banking industry.

Initially, industry consolidation and interstate banking heightened the need for legislative representation of community bankers. Today that need remains strong as community banks continue to serve a vital role in our state and