

greatly missed, he deeply touched the lives of everyone he knew.

Mr. D'Angelo was a true renaissance man, whose mastery of the carpentry trades, artistry in the boxing ring, and expertise in the field of aeronautical mechanics belied his kind and compassion heart. His main focus was always his family. Together, Mr. D'Angelo and his beloved wife of 54 years, "Millie," raised their five children.

A devoted husband and father, Mr. D'Angelo worked diligently to provide for them. Whether driving a truck, climbing into the boxing ring, or creating the Prehistoric World Diorama at Disneyland, Mr. D'Angelo did so with commitment, heart and grace. Though unimpressed by awards and accolades, his work at Disneyland captured the attention, honor and respect of Mr. Walt Disney himself. In addition to Mr. Disney, Mr. D'Angelo captured the honor, respect and love of those who loved and knew him best—his family and friends.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor and remembrance of Gregory Anthony D'Angelo. I offer my deepest condolences to his wife and companion of 54 years, Millie; his children, Joseph, Kathleen, Annie, John and Susan; his daughters-in-law, Robyn and Susan; his sons-in-law, Charles, Willie and Curt; his 12 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren; his sister, Stella; and to his extended family and many friends. Mr. D'Angelo left this world with a legacy that shines love and light upon his family, friends and community. His joy of life, caring heart and concern for others defined his life and will live on in the hearts of all who knew and loved well, today, and for all time.

THE INDENTURED SERVITUDE
ABOLITION ACT OF 2005 INTRO-
DUCTORY STATEMENT

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2005

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Indentured Servitude Abolition Act of 2005. At a time when the President and many Members of this House are discussing legislation to greatly expand the number of foreign workers who come to the United States legally for work, we must ensure that they are not indentured servants who owe unconscionable fees to recruiters.

One hundred and forty years ago, the American Civil War ended. Slavery and involuntary servitude were prohibited throughout our nation by the adoption of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution. And yet, as has been well documented in the press, thousands of men (and especially women) endure abuse as indentured servants because, as a condition of securing a job, they must pay exorbitant fees to labor recruiters—fees it can take years to payoff. The problem of recruiter-related indentured servitude has been well publicized in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, but it is a problem throughout this country, and it will grow as more guest workers are permitted. Foreign labor contractors lure workers to the United States by promising them a better life with decent wages and good jobs in

exchange for thousands of dollars in fees. Instead, workers arrive in the U.S. only to find that they were cruelly deceived. They earn unlivable wages for menial jobs to which they never agreed, with no insurance or health care, and deeply in debt to the recruiter for bringing them to their new home.

Sadly, those are the least of their worries. Workers endure sweatshop conditions and back-breaking work for inhumanly long hours. They are forced to work through illness and injury with only one day of rest per week. Employers automatically deduct the majority of their weekly pay for room and board, often for living situations not fit for animals and starvation rations, leaving workers with a few dollars if not further in debt. And that is when their wages are not withheld, a frequent occurrence. Most distressing of all, many workers suffer physical violence at the hands of their employers and are threatened if they should try to leave. Unable to pay off debt manufactured by the recruiters and their employer and fearing for their lives, workers are trapped.

This is not an exaggeration: it is the disturbing reality for thousands of workers in this country. This is not employment opportunity: it is indentured servitude, and it should not be occurring in the United States in 2005. Just this week investigations into La Mode Inc., a Saipan company that unlawfully suspended operations while owing workers back wages of more than \$395,000, revealed that Chinese employees were required to pay recruitment fees of \$4,500 to \$8,000 for the privilege of working at a job that pays barely \$3 an hour, and then being unlawfully terminated before the expiration of their contract, cheated out of their pay, and abandoned in a strange land.

This deplorable practice not only undermines living standards, it ruins lives. It is a violation of basic human rights that leaves workers as indentured servants, forcing them to endure a form of modern day slavery. The Indentured Servitude Abolition Act of 2005 will end this cruel practice by providing for tough legal accountability for foreign labor contractors and employers.

The "Indentured Servitude Abolition Act of 2005" holds recruiters and employers responsible for the promises they make to prospective employees, and discourages employers from using disreputable recruiters. The bill requires employers and foreign labor contractors to inform workers of the terms and conditions of their employment at the time they are recruited. It makes employers jointly liable for violations committed by recruiters in their employ. It imposes fines on employers and recruiters who do not live up to their promises and authorizes the Secretary of Labor to take additional legal action to enforce those commitments. Employers and recruiters are prohibited from requiring or requesting recruitment fees from workers and are required to pay the costs, including subsistence costs, of transporting the worker.

The bill discourages disreputable labor contractors by requiring the Secretary of Labor to maintain a public list of labor contractors who have been involved in violations of the Act and by providing additional penalties if employers use a contractor listed by the Secretary as having been involved in previous violations of this Act and that contractor contributes to a violation for which the employer may be liable. The remedies provided under the "Indentured Servitude Abolition Act" are not exclusive, but

are in addition to any other remedies workers may have under law or contract.

The legislation I am introducing has been endorsed by the Farmworker Justice Fund, the National Employment Law Project, and the AFL-CIO. The National Employment Law Project notes that "labor recruiters currently enjoy a near total lack of accountability for the workers' job conditions" and that the bill performs "an important service by requiring both the users of the labor and the recruiters themselves to inform workers on the job conditions they can expect."

The Farmworker Justice Fund notes that the legislation addresses, "the new reality of global labor migration. . . . In many cases foreign workers who are recruited for U.S. jobs suffer harsh abuses in the form of huge debts, usurious loans, threats of violence, false promises, and illegal wages and working conditions. . . . We must gain control over labor migration and this is one important step toward that goal."

Is it too much to ask that people who live on American soil, making products for American consumption, be treated like American workers? Our basic respect for human rights demands that we act now to protect these workers. I am pleased that 24 of our colleagues have joined me as original cosponsors of this bill. I am hopeful that all of our colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, will add their support to this critical legislation to end the despicable practice of slavery in the United States once and for all. Mr. Speaker, I urge Members of the House to join me and co-sponsor the Indentured Servitude Abolition Act of 2005.

IN SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF MI-
CHAEL H. PERSIANI ON HIS AP-
POINTMENT TO ATTEND THE
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
ACADEMY

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2005

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to pay special tribute to an outstanding young man from Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. I am happy to announce that Michael H. Persiani of Perrysburg, Ohio has been offered an appointment to attend the United States Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Michael's offer of appointment positions him to attend the United States Air Force Academy this fall with the incoming cadet class of 2009. Attending one of our Nation's military academies is an invaluable experience that offers a world-class education and demands the very best that these young men and women have to offer. Truly, it is one of the most challenging and rewarding undertakings of their lives.

Michael brings an enormous amount of leadership, service, and dedication to the incoming class of Air Force cadets. While attending St. John's Jesuit High School in Toledo, Ohio, Michael has attained a grade point average of 3.90, which places him near the top of his class of nearly two hundred students. While a gifted athlete, Michael has maintained the highest standards of excellence in his academics, choosing to enroll and excel in Advanced Placement classes throughout high school. Michael has been a member

of the National Honor Society, Honor Roll, French Club and has earned awards and accolades as a scholar and an athlete.

Outside the classroom, Michael has distinguished himself as an excellent student-athlete. On the fields of competition, Michael has earned letters in Varsity Hockey and Tennis. He was named Captain of the Varsity Hockey team and served as President of the French Club. Michael's dedication and service to the community and his peers has proven his ability to excel among the leaders at the United States Air Force Academy. I have no doubt that Michael will take the lessons of his student leadership with him to the United States Air Force Academy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Michael H. Persiani on his appointment to the United States Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs. Our service academies offer the finest military training and education available anywhere in the world. I am sure that Michael will do very well during his career at the United States Air Force Academy. I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing him well as he begins his service to the Nation.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION
TO EXTEND ELIGIBILITY FOR
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
PENSION BENEFITS

HON. NICK J. RAHALL, II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2005

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing two bills that pay tribute to those service personnel who have nobly served our Nation in times of conflict. In both cases, the legislation extends pension benefits to those veterans who served in harm's way, though not in a time of declared war.

Under current law, you may only draw a full pension if you served in combat during a declared period of war. This distinction served its purpose well during many of America's 20th Century engagements, as our involvement in those wars was clearly defined. World Wars I and II and the Vietnam War are prime examples.

However, American service personnel have served—and faced heavy fighting—in conflicts that have not been declared “war” by our government. Case in point is Korea. Our Armed Forces lost 33,741 dead in that conflict, even though President Truman called our participation a “police action” and never asked Congress for a formal declaration of war.

The point of the matter is that while war is not always clearly defined, the sacrifice of our service personnel is.

With the support of the American Legion and noted West Virginia veteran John Peters, I introduce these bills to correct what many believe is an inequity in determining veterans' pension benefits. The first bill would provide the basic guarantee of a pension to those who served in Korea, Lebanon, Granada and Panama. In each case, American service personnel were faced with significant danger and, again in each case, American lives were lost. With this in mind, I believe it is imperative that our government provide veterans of those conflicts with appropriate pension benefits.

The second bill I am introducing would extend pension benefits to those servicemen and women whose actions earned them the Expeditionary Medal. For those who are unfamiliar with what an Expeditionary Medal is, or the actions for which it is awarded, the Joint Chiefs of Staff must determine that the service personnel is engaged where hostile action by foreign armed forces is imminent. Again, I believe those who have put their lives on the line in defense of our country, especially when recognized by the Joint Chiefs, deserve the benefits a military pension provides.

The United States has sent service personnel to all corners of the globe to defend our freedoms and way of life. In all cases, our troops have served nobly and honorably. In several cases, war has been declared officially—and those who participated in those actions certainly deserve to receive a military pension for their sacrifice. However, American personnel have also served in conflicts not officially declared war, and have been faced with incredible dangers. To these veterans I say you deserve the same pension benefits afforded your brothers and sisters in arms who participated in declared wars. I urge Congress to pass these critical bills.

WILLIAM “LES” BROWN: A LEGACY
OF INSPIRATION AND ACTIVISM

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2005

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, later this month, people in Chicago will gather to celebrate the life and achievements of William “Les” Brown. Les Brown had an enormous influence on the way our nation thinks about homelessness. He was a person of intelligence, creativity, passion and caring who showed that we can each make a difference in helping to create communities that provide support and opportunities for every individual. I am fortunate to have known and been inspired by Les and I, like many Chicagoans, will miss him.

Les Brown was best known as the founder of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, formed in 1980 with the help of the Travelers and Immigrants Aid Society, the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs, and other service providers. Karen Singer, executive director of the YWCA Evanston/North Shore, called him the “moral compass” of the movement to end homelessness. Ed Shurna, the current executive of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, acknowledges him as “the chief strategist and idea man behind most of the Coalition's successes” in providing housing, jobs programs and health care for the homeless.

A social worker, former Air Force medical corpsman and a blues pianist, Les Brown used all of his skills to push for solutions. While others ignored the problem, he taught us that homelessness can be solved and that individuals living on the street deserve to be treated with dignity. In 1983, he organized the first national conference on homelessness in Chicago. In 1984, he underwent a heart transplant but never let that slow him down or limit his dedicated activism. For his entire life, he fought to keep this issue at the top of the polit-

ical agenda, reminding us that the homeless are not nameless beings or numbers, but infants and children, working mothers and fathers, returning veterans and those living with illnesses who deserve our support and a safe, decent place to live.

Les Brown grew up in rural Georgia, where he learned his values from his parents, who taught him the values of fairness and social justice. It was the love of the land that he developed in childhood that gave him the inspiration for “Growing Home,” an initiative that helps the homeless learn job skills at an organic farm in Marseilles, Illinois. According to Les, “Homeless people often are without roots. They're not tied down, connected, not part of their family anymore. Our organic farming program is a way for them to connect with nature—to plant and nurture roots over a period of time.

When you get involved in taking responsibility for caring for something, creating an environment that produces growth, then it helps you to build self-esteem and feel more connected.”

There are concrete reminders of Les Brown's accomplishments throughout the Chicagoland area—low-income housing units that would not have been built without him, organizations and coalitions that would not exist but for his leadership, initiatives like Growing Home that grew from his vision. Some of the best evidence of his legacy can be found in the people he touched and motivated and who will carry on his work.

Les Brown had an enormous impact and influence on the people he met, creating a generation of advocates who will follow in his path. One of them, Fred Friedman, wrote the following in commemoration:

LES BROWN'S LEGACY

Les Brown died the other day. I did not know him very well or very long but he was very dear to me.

I first met Les when I was still living in a homeless shelter. As you might guess, it was at a meeting about homeless youth. Later, he was kind enough to see me in the office of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. I was trying to decide what, if anything, to do with my life. At that meeting, I told him that people, including myself, sometimes had trouble seeing me as anything other than a mentally ill homeless person. He said that he understood, and that some people had trouble seeing him as anything other than a person with a bad heart. I am sure that was a lie. Who could think Les had a bad heart? However, it was incredibly kind.

I got to know him a little better at many endless Continuum (of Care) meetings. Eventually, he nominated me for the Governing Board of the Continuum. Still later, he, along with Paul Selden and I, founded Next Steps, NFP. Still later, I got to hear him play a mean Jazz piano.

I do not know his family, or if he left any property to them, but I do know that he left me a great legacy. Les saw people without homes and tried to find them homes. He saw hungry people and tried to feed them. He saw people without power, and tried to empower them. He saw people without hope and tried to give them hope. He took his work, but not himself, seriously. He could disagree without being disagreeable. He understood that good people could disagree with him, and that he could be wrong. In short, Les left me a legacy of trying and working, even when trying and working seems silly. In other words, he left me legacy of hope. I promise to use that legacy to continue his fight, until no one