

veterans! Despite the actions of Congress last year, the Disabled Veterans Tax is alive and well.

Our Democratic Leader, NANCY PELOSI, recently stated: "On the battlefield, our soldiers pledge to leave no one behind. As a Nation, let it be our pledge that when they return home, we will leave no veteran behind. The Disabled Veterans Tax breaks that promise."

Some of the veterans left behind include:

A veteran of the Kuwait theater who had a below-the-knee amputation after being hit by a drunk driver while jogging near the Pentagon to maintain physical fitness.

A retiree who cannot work on a family farm because of pain, numbness and osteoarthritis of both feet due to exposure to cold during noncombatant military service.

A veteran who lost an eye when an air hose accidentally detached from an airplane being worked on and who cannot work as an airline pilot.

A female retiree who has weekly panic attacks and chronic sleep disturbances as the result of a sexual assault which occurred while on active duty.

My friends and colleagues, Congress did just okay by taking the first steps towards eliminating the Disabled Veterans Tax—it would give us a grade of C—, but we did not do A work.

During my years in Congress, I cannot recall more than or two other issues on which I have received so many letters, e-mails and phone calls. Our veterans have been telling us that this is an important issue to them. They deserve that we do A work.

I understand that there are costs to concurrent receipt. But I also understand that the now-disabled veterans did not hesitate when called to duty. Many have returned home with disabilities they have had to live with ever since. How can we doubt the imperative that we keep our promise and give them what they deserve? They earned their military retired pay. They deserve their VA disability compensation.

We cannot make them wait any longer for justice to prevail!

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF BELINDA ELLIS, TOM GREEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER OF THE YEAR

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 16, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the contributions of Belinda Ellis, Tom Green Elementary School Teacher of the Year.

Belinda's greatest influence is her mother, who taught her that things in life don't just happen—if you want something, you need to set a goal and work towards that goal a little at a time. This advice led Belinda to become the first in her family to graduate high school, and later college at Southwest Texas.

Mrs. Ellis has pledged over 18 years to teaching, and currently teaches math and science. She believes that having the support and involvement of a child's parent is the key to her success. During her time at Tom Green Elementary, Belinda has raised close to

\$3,000 to buy new flags, outdoor benches, and trashcans for her school.

This past year has been extremely hard for Belinda, who has remained strong, positive, and determined to continue working as normal despite her ongoing battle with cancer. Belinda hopes her enthusiasm for teaching and sponsoring extra-curricular activities touches each of her students.

I am honored to acknowledge Belinda Ellis, Tom Green Elementary School Teacher of the Year. Her passion and dedication are cherished by all in her community.

IN HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE OF MR. MIGUEL CONTRERAS

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 16, 2005

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and remembrance of Mr. Miguel Contreras, devoted husband and father; a dedicated labor leader whose exemplary work touched the lives of many Californians.

Mr. Contreras was born and raised in Dinuba, California. The son of migrant farm-workers, Mr. Contreras went to work beside his parents and five brothers in the agricultural fields of California's Central Valley at only five years of age.

As a young man Mr. Contreras worked with the United Farm Workers of America. It was here that he found his true calling by learning from Cesar Chavez the meaning of dignity and self-worth. Mr. Chavez saw the potential of Mr. Contreras and appointed him a staff member of the United Farm Workers. It was here that Mr. Contreras learned the importance of speaking up and standing up for oneself.

With this strong foundation Mr. Contreras fought tirelessly for the rights of immigrants. He was an inspiration to many, bringing a special pride to Latino workers throughout California.

In 1993 Mr. Contreras began his work for the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO as Political Director. In 1996 he became Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Federation, devotedly serving 345 unions with a collective 800,000 members. He held this position until his unexpected death on May 6, 2005. He will be missed greatly.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor and remembrance of Mr. Contreras. I offer my deepest condolences to his mother Esther Contreras; his wife, Maria Elena Durazo; his two sons, Mario Salazar and Michael Contreras, and his five brothers Alex, Antonio, David, Juan and Pablo Contreras.

HONORING METROPORT MEALS ON WHEELS

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 16, 2005

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Metroport Meals on Wheels as they celebrate 25 years of service to numerous communities within the 26th District of Texas. The Metroport Meals on Wheels program grew out

of the passion of one individual, Kelly Bradley, who saw the need to aid her neighbors. It was her dedication to others and the generosity of the First United Methodist Church of Roanoke which fostered this program and allowed it to grow into its current state; bringing dignity and respect to seniors in over 19 cities in the North Texas region.

The invaluable support and outreach that Metroport Meals on Wheels provides to these Texas communities is an integral connection for those who wish to stay independent. Last year alone this grassroots organization served over 54,000 meals without the aid of State or Federal funding.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my utmost thanks and congratulations to Metroport Meals on Wheels for their 25 years of service to my fellow Texans and those most in need of their support and their humble respect. The generosity of Ms. Bradley and the other volunteers at Metroport is truly making a difference in the lives of those they serve.

A SMARTER APPROACH TO THE BORDER

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 16, 2005

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, as California's Border Congressman, I rise today to deliver a simple yet important message to this Congress about how we handle affairs on our nation's southern border.

To my fellow Members of Congress, I implore you: Don't block clinics that want to help Mexican children with severe medical needs. Don't block border schools from hosting their Mexican neighbors. And don't block our tourism industry from welcoming Mexican field trips. Instead, join me in supporting the VISA Act!

Prior to September 11, 2001, the Valley Orthopedic Clinic in Calexico, California treated low-income Mexican children who suffered from cleft palates or other maladies. In fact, over forty years, they treated 125,000 children! The Port Directors at the border selectively issued humanitarian visa waivers so that these children could briefly visit the United States without paying for an unaffordable \$100 visa.

Since September 11, Port Directors have ceased issuing these visa waivers. As a result, children have been blocked from receiving specialized medical attention, participating in educational exchanges between border schools and taking field trips to tourist sites in border states.

That's why I have re-introduced the Visitors Interested in Strengthening America (VISA) Act (H.R. 2367). The bill gives Port Directors the discretion to issue humanitarian visa waivers to Mexican children making brief, pre-scheduled visits to the U.S. for medical, educational or recreational purposes.

In addition to clearing the way for American doctors who wish to provide specialized care to Mexican children, this bill would boost the economy in the border region and strengthen cultural and political understanding with Mexico.

The bill is identical to legislation that the Border Trade Alliance, National Council of La Raza, former U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Jeffrey Davidow and others supported in the 108th Congress.

I urge my colleagues to join me in fighting for this important legislation.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CARLA BANDY, DAHLSTROM MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER OF THE YEAR

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 16, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the contributions of Carla Bandy, Dahlstrom Middle School Teacher of the Year.

Carla Bandy considers herself lucky to have given teaching another chance—initially quitting after 2 years because she felt she wasn't cut out for the job. Carla now understands that she made the right choice, and currently teaches Art at Dahlstrom Middle School.

In class, Carla stresses friendship; she respects her students and earns their respect in return. She believes that once she can achieve the trust of her students, the “real learning” begins.

Carla does her best to reach students of all abilities, skills, and interests. She keeps all students equally engaged—from the timid and unsure to the extremely talented. She researches the psychology behind different types of learning in an effort to customize her teaching techniques for each individual student.

I am honored to recognize Carla Bandy, Dahlstrom Middle School Teacher of the Year. Her dedication and hard work reward her students everyday.

ON RECEIVING THE NORTHEAST OHIO COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS LIFETIME COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARD

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 16, 2005

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of Michael Foley, the executive director of the Cleveland's Tenants Organization (CTO), for his activism and dedication on behalf of Northeast Ohio's families who pay rent for their housing. Mr. Foley has proudly served the Cleveland community and has focused on meeting the housing needs and protecting the housing rights of Cleveland area tenants.

Mr. Foley has dedicated his entire professional career to fighting for social justice on behalf of Cleveland's residents. Mike received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Philosophy from the University of Dayton and his law degree from Cleveland Marshall College of Law. He has served as a community organizer for the St. Clair-Superior Coalition and was a Field Representative for the City of Cleveland Community Relations Board. From 1990 to 1996, Mike was the court administrator and personal bailiff for Judge William H. Corrigan at Cleveland Municipal Housing Court. In 1996 and 1997 he was an instructor with the Cleveland Marshall College of Law, Housing Law Clinic. In 1997 he began working with the

CTO—Cleveland's premiere organization focusing on the rights of tenants—as the Director of the Rental Information Center. He became the assistant director of CTO in 1998 and in late 1999 Mr. Foley became CTO's Executive Director.

Mr. Foley has worked collaboratively with me since I began serving in the US. House of Representatives. He was a guiding force and active participant in my Homelessness Summit, an advisory group with more than 200 Cleveland area activists working to end homelessness and advise me on legislative proposals. When out-of-state landlords bought one of the largest 55-and-over communities in Ohio's 10th Congressional District and immediately increased seniors' rent by as much as 25 percent, Mr. Foley worked with me, and the seniors, to organize one of the largest tenant organizations in the State. He went on to work with the seniors to organize the largest rent strike in Ohio's history. Mr. Foley has also facilitated the passage of a local landlord tenant act and extended the services his agency provides to include an eviction diversion program and a lead testing program.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition of Michael Foley. His long-time advocacy on behalf of rent-payers in the Cleveland area exemplify the Lifetime Commitment to Social Justice Award that he received from the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless at the NEOCH Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony on May 13. Because of the dedication and focus of Michael Foley, the lives of thousands of people have been lifted.

PHONE CALLS FOR THE TROOPS!

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 16, 2005

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, we are all committed to ensuring that our troops have the support they need to succeed in their mission and maintain high morale.

As part of this effort, we have taken important steps to ensure that the soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan can make free phone calls home to their loved ones. Last year, we passed a Defense Authorization bill that provided a \$40 per month calling program to these soldiers. And our military hospitals have created adhoc programs, largely based on privately donated calling cards, to ensure that hospitalized troops can call home as well.

In order to strengthen and expand these efforts, I have introduced the bipartisan “Troops Phone Home Free Extension” Act (H.R. 2366). This legislation would extend the calling program until the end of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. My bill would also extend the program to future contingency operations to ensure that our troops do not have to wait for the legislative process to catch up with their phone call needs. Finally, the “Troops Phone Home Free Extension” Act would extend the monthly calling card program to the wounded to ensure that the Federal government will provide the phone benefit if private donations are insufficient.

I invite you join me in fighting to maintain the morale of our troops, support our military families and give our soldiers the benefits that

they have earned through their sacrifice and courage. Please join me in co-sponsoring the “Troops Phone Home Free Extension” Act!

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF NANCY PHILLIPS IMPACT CENTER SCHOOL TEACHER OF THE YEAR

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 16, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the contributions of Nancy Phillips, Impact Center School Teacher of the Year.

Nancy's interest in teaching stemmed from her “lifelong love affair” with the language arts. Following a Bachelor's degree, a teaching certificate in English and two subsequent Master's degrees, she dove into a teaching career that has continued for the past 25 years.

Nancy Phillips teaches English at an alternative school, where students are sent because of past drug use or violent histories. She teaches grades six to twelve, and is challenged to stretch her creative capabilities and management skills every time she walks into the classroom.

Nancy does her best to lead her students gently towards the good things they can find in books, describing herself as a “combination tight rope walker and ring master.” She is humble, and acknowledges that when she stays late at work or comes in during the weekend, she is not alone.

I am honored to recognize Nancy Phillips, Impact Center School Teacher of the year. Through her drive and consistent hard work, she is able to set her students on track for whatever challenges the future may bring.

DEMOCRACY AND DR-CAFTA

HON. DAVID DREIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 16, 2005

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the importance that the Dominican Republic—Central America Free Trade Agreement will have on stabilizing the democracies of the participating nations. While we have witnessed firsthand the benefits than free trade has on emerging democracies, no one is in a better position to describe the benefits than President Enrique Bolanos of Nicaragua. His country continues to face serious challenges to democratic reform, yet he is unwavering in his commitment to DR-CAFTA because he knows it will lead to further democratic progress.

Last week, President Bolanos gave an address at the Nicaraguan Embassy here in the United States where he presented Senator RICHARD LUGAR and Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick with the Order of Ruben Dario, the highest honor of Nicaragua. I am including his remarks in the RECORD to reiterate to my colleagues that this trade agreement is about far more than trade.

**SPEECH BY H.E. PRESIDENT ENRIQUE BOLANOS
EMBASSY OF NICARAGUA—MAY 13, 2005**

Distinguished Guests and Dear Friends: I am in the United States this week with my