HONORING DR. JERRY MCAFEE UPON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE COLUMBUS PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

HON. PATRICK J. TIBERI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 30, 2005

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join with many others in Central Ohio in honoring Dr. Jerry McAfee, who is retiring after nearly four decades of service in the Columbus Public Schools.

As a proud product of the Columbus Public Schools myself and as one of his students, I can attest to the impact Jerry has had on so many lives. Obviously, I learned much from Jerry about music, which he taught with distinction for years. But the lessons he imparted about leadership and service, in word and deed, were far more valuable. They were a major influence in my decision to seek elective office, and they continue to guide me as I do my job in Congress today.

For me and for so many others, Jerry McAfee has been an inspiration. While his days as an educator and administrator in the Columbus Public Schools are coming to an end, I am certain he will continue to play an important role in our community for years to come.

INTRODUCING THE PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT OF 2005

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 30, 2005

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with Representative GEORGE MILLER to introduce the Paid Family and Medical Leave Act of 2005.

More than a decade ago, the momentous and highly successful Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) became law. With the FMLA, Congress required large companies to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid family and medical leave to its employees. And while no one will argue with FMLA's success, there remains room for improvement.

On July 1, 2004, California became one of five states to improve FMLA by providing 6 weeks of paid leave. A study found that by providing wages during periods of leave, the new program worked even better than the original. A higher percentage of workers returned to their jobs after taking paid leave, and businesses were having no trouble shifting the workload absent employees left behind.

Prudently, the Paid Family and Medical Leave Act introduced today builds on the successes of both FMLA and the California paid-leave program. This new bill provides workers nationwide with up to 55 percent of their wages for as long as 12 weeks. This leave can be used to care for a newborn or adopted child, disabled family members, or to take care of their own short-term disability.

Since unpaid leave has worked well to reduce worker turnover and improve workers productivity, there is every reason to believe that paid leave would improve the lives of families and increase the profits of companies further.

In addition, the Harvard School for Public Health reports that the education and health of children improves when their parents have paid sick leave and work flexibility. Of children whose math and reading scores are in the bottom 25 percent, more than half have parents who lack paid sick leave and work flexibility. These same children were more likely to suffer from sickness, infection, chronic illness and under-immunization.

A Canadian government study demonstrated that extended time off for parents with their newborn child is directly associated with the successful social and cognitive growth of the child.

I'm pleased to have worked closely with a wide range of worker and consumer organizations to develop this bill. The legislation is endorsed by the AFL–CIO, United Auto Workers, National Partnership for Women and Families, and others.

With continued rhetoric focusing on ''family values,'' this bill gives Congress a concrete opportunity to strengthen both families and businesses.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor the Paid Family and Medical Leave Act, and look forward to enacting this bill to strengthen families, make businesses more competitive and create a stronger America for the future.

HONORING GILBERT ARENAS CASTILLO ON HIS 80TH BIRTHDAY

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 30, 2005

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a constituent of mine, Gilbert Arenas Castillo on the occasion of his 80th birthday.

Like many immigrant-Americans, Mr. Castillo came to this country as a young adult seeking to fulfill his dream of a better life in a new land. His story is the classic immigrant tale of leaving the comforts of family and home behind in the adventurous and challenging pursuit of the American Dream.

In attaining his version of the American Dream, Mr. Castillo purchased a home and together with his devoted wife Delia Gutierrez Castillo raised a family of 6 children, 12 grandchildren, and 5 great grandchildren; became a United States citizen; exercised his civic duties including voting regularly; became a land lord; retired following a successful career; became a certified television technician; and recently earned his high school diploma—at the age of 79!

I can think of no better honor to salute Mr. Castillo's achievements on the occasion of his 80th birthday than to enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the story of his life as he wrote it on the recent occasion of his high school graduation.

Mr. Speaker, I extend my best wishes to Mr. Castillo and his family on his 80th birthday, and I hold him up as a model example of the American Dream come true.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF GILBERT CASTILLO

I was born in Mexico City, Mexico on July 18, 1925. I had a very difficult childhood. At the age of ten I began hearing stories about the United States of America, the land of promise. It was soon my dream to go to the United States. I was told that there your dreams can be achieved.

In 1943, when I was 18 years old, I had the opportunity to come to the United States as a contract worker. I came to work in Texas at the Santa Fe Rail. I was one of many Mexican Immigrants working for the railroad. It was hard work laying rails down and the weather was unforgivable. It was either extremely cold or extremely hot but nonetheless I fell in love with this great country.. I was only able to work under contract for six months then I had to return to Mexico.

A few months later I signed another contract to come back to work in the U.S. I was working in the fields of Madera, California as a field hand or as we were referred to back then as a ''bracero''. I did this for six months.

For the next year and a half I worked in several different restaurants as a bus boy. Those jobs took me from Sacramento to San Francisco. They were very exciting times. I was happy to be living in the U.S.A.

In 1946 I returned to Mexico. I spent the next two years in Mexico dreaming of returning to this country. In 1948 I returned to the United States.

I was working in a restaurant in 1949 when I met a beautiful lady named Delia. We fell in love and got married. We spent 52 years together. Delia was a wonderful wife and mother. She was completely dedicated to the family. She passed away in December of 2001 and is greatly missed. We had a total of six children. Our eldest son Gilbert Jr. works for Southern California Edison, Evelyn our eldest daughter works for the County of San Bernardino County, and her husband David is a CPA for the City of Redlands. Our two other daughters Blanca Stella and Judith are both police officers as is my son-in-law Rudy. Our son Victor works for U.S. Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard and was a member of the 1992 Presidential Electoral College, and our youngest son Christopher works in the home construction industry.

In 1955 I started working for General Motors in South Gate California. I worked there for 28 years assembling automobiles. While I was working for G.M. I went to night school and received a certificate in electronics. It took me two years to complete that course, but at the end I was a certified television technician. On my spare time I repaired televisions, radios and stereos.

I became a U.S. citizen in 1976 and have exercised my voting power ever since. My wife Delia also became a citizen in 1995 and was also very proud to be an American.

In 2002 I decided to return to school and work towards attaining my high school diploma. Going back to school has been very beneficial for me. It has kept me busy, attending five days a week. It has kept my brain sharp and eager to learn more. It has also given me the opportunity to make new friends. In fact, I met a wonderful lady named Josephine. She is very special to me and we have become very close companions.

My goal is to continue my education. I would also like to learn a new trade. I'm looking in to a refrigeration course. I will be eighty years old in July of this year, and I still believe that you can achieve your dreams at any age. I love this country and the opportunities it has given me. With a little hard work and dedication you can accomplish anything in this great country no matter how old you are. I am proud to be an American. May God bless the United States of America.