

a mission specialist after completing two years of training and evaluation. The STS-121 mission in July will be Ms. Nowak's first mission into space.

During the STS-121 mission to the International Space Station, the crew of the space shuttle Discovery will test new equipment and procedures that increase the safety of the space shuttle. Its mission will be to complete an analysis of safety improvements that debuted on the Return to Flight mission, STS 114, and build upon those tests.

Mr. Speaker, I offer my warmest congratulations to Ms. Nowak. Her work plays a vital role in continued advances and improvements to our space program. Her courage, hard work, and accomplishments serve as an inspiration to us all.

TRIBUTE TO FIRE DEPARTMENTS FROM WASHINGTON, CLINTON, MARION AND JEFFERSON COUNTIES IN ILLINOIS

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the twenty fire departments from Washington, Clinton, Marion and Jefferson Counties in Illinois that, through strength and courage, worked together to put out a massive fire at a warehouse in Nashville, IL. The paint, aerosol cans and paint solvent in the building made the fire especially dangerous. 190 firefighters, of whom 180 were volunteers, worked to put out flames in 800 degree heat to stop the fire from spreading past the 18,000-square-foot section of the warehouse where it initially started.

Under the leadership of Nashville Fire Chief Alan Holt and Assistant Chief Ric James, these men spent 12 hours fighting the fire and accomplished their goal of keeping it contained. Most of the 104,000-square-foot building was saved, and the room next to the fire suffered only smoke and water damage.

I am pleased to thank the fire departments of Nashville, Centralia, Mount Vernon, Hoyleton, Addieville, Okawville, Ashely, Bartelso, Breese, Aviston, Carlyle, Beckemeyer, Germantown, Wheatfield Township, Hoffman, St. Rose, Trenton, Albers, New Baden, and Huey/Ferrin/Boulder for their tremendous effort. I commend them on their display of bravery and dedication.

FISH STOCKING IN THE NORTH CASCADES NATIONAL PARK COMPLEX

HON. DOC HASTINGS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing legislation that will enable the continued stocking of fish in certain alpine lakes in the North Cascades National Park Complex, which includes the North Cascades National Park, Ross Lake National Recreation Area, and Lake Chelan National Recreation Area.

For many decades, volunteer groups—working with the State of Washington have stocked trout in a number of lakes in this area. This provides enhanced recreation and tourism opportunities in the North Cascades.

As you may know, the National Park Service as a general policy is moving away from artificially stocking fish. In this case, however, a 12-year university review indicates that the fish stocking program can be carried out in such a way as to not adversely affect the environment.

In order to protect this longstanding practice in the North Cascades, I am introducing legislation today that affirms that fish stocking can continue under certain conditions. While I believe the National Park Service already has the authority to do this under the act that established the park in 1968, the agency requires further clarification from Congress in order to proceed with a proposed management plan revision that would allow this practice to continue under the auspices of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

I am pleased to be joined today upon introduction of this bill by RICK LARSEN, NORM DICKS, and CATHY MCMORRIS. I look forward to working with my colleagues from Washington to make sure that our constituents can continue to enjoy the recreation opportunities created by fish stocking in the North Cascades.

RECOGNIZING JOSHUA WEST

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Joshua West a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 249, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Joshua has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Joshua has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Joshua West for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

A TRIBUTE TO SAME RACADIO FOR 18 YEARS AS CITY MANAGER OF HIGHLAND, CALIFORNIA

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like today to pay tribute to a longtime public servant, Sam Racadio, who as city manager has been a guiding force in the growth of Highland, California from an unformed new city into a municipality known for a dedication to a high standard of living.

For the past 35 years, Sam Racadio has been a hard-working and energetic public servant in city government. He went to work as an intern in the City of Riverside just after graduating from the University of Redlands, and even spent several years in the Peace Corps as a municipal advisor in Maracay, Venezuela.

After some years in city government in Tulare, California, Sam Racadio returned to the Inland Empire as city manager for three years in Banning, California—a fast-growing city in my district.

The late 1980s were a boom time for new cities in San Bernardino County, and one of the most promising, but least organized, of those new municipalities decided to hire Mr. Racadio as its first city manager. When he joined Highland in 1987, he was just the second employee of the city of 28,000, and the city government worked out of a small trailer.

Highland had a small commercial tax base and few businesses of any size when it gained cityhood, and some analysts warned that the new city would have a shaky budget and could fail. To save money for the future, Mr. Racadio vacuumed floors, cleaned bathrooms and gathered up trash.

By continuing that dedication to saving taxpayer dollars, Sam Racadio has helped build Highland into a thriving city that now has a population of more than 50,000. There are three new parks, a City Hall, and a community center. Coming soon are a municipal pool, a library and athletic center.

Mr. Speaker, I was delighted to work with Mr. Racadio on the development of a city environmental learning center, which will provide access to hands-on, state-of-the-art science facilities for school children and city residents. When it is completed, it will be a model for cooperation between city officials, schools and federal agencies.

As my colleagues can imagine, Mr. Racadio's visionary work as a city manager has been widely recognized among his peers. He has served on the League of California Cities Board of Directors, and was president of the City Manager's Department of the League in 1999. He was president of the San Bernardino County City Managers Association from 1990 to 1998. He was the inaugural recipient of the James A. Thalman Memorial Public Service Award from the Inland Division of the league of cities and received numerous other awards.

Mr. Speaker, after 35 years of public service and 18 years of dedication to the City of Highland, Sam Racadio is retiring to travel with his wife of 36 years, Len. Please join me in thanking him for all he has done to make his community a better place, and wish him well in his future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO MIKE VADALA

HON. JAMES T. WALSH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to recognize the retirement of Mike Vadala as the Chairman of the National Association of Federal Credit Unions (NAFCU). Elected to the NAFCU Board in 1997, Mike has been a leader in the

credit union community both nationally and within my great State of New York.

For the past 9 years, Mr. Vadala has been balancing his time as a NAFCU Board Member including this past year as the Chairman of the NAFCU Board, along with his responsibilities as President/CEO of The Summit Federal Credit Union. With over 67,000 members in northern New York, The Summit FCU has fostered many savings programs targeted to today's youth by teaching the importance of saving through targeted programs ranging from kindergarten through college. Mr. Vadala has worked hard to promote financial education programs and has armed his members with protecting themselves against identity theft.

Throughout his tenure as Chairman of the NAFCU Board of Directors, Mr. Vadala worked tirelessly to enhance the federal credit union charter by working with Congress for regulatory relief legislation for credit unions. As Chairman, he has also helped maintain NAFCU's status as a leading credit union trade association.

Mr. Vadala has proven himself to be a true gentleman. I have seen him walking the halls of Congress many times carrying the torch for the credit union industry and he has testified before this Congress on multiple occasions on issues important to credit unions. Although there might have been occasion where we may have not agreed, this did not deter Mr. Vadala from continuing his loyal service to NAFCU.

Many would think that the work he does for credit unions would be enough to fill a day, but that is not the case. He is also a dedicated family man, as well. Mr. Vadala and his family have played a huge role in fundraising for the United Way in upstate New York. He was also the former Chairperson of the March of Dimes Walk America. His work with these organizations has made a huge impact on thousands of lives in New York and beyond. Also, Mr. Speaker I could refer to Mr. Vadala without mentioning that he is one of the biggest Syracuse Orange fan that I have ever had the privilege to meet. And I would like to share one more "Go Orange" with Mr. Vadala as he concludes his time on the NAFCU Board.

I rise today to congratulate Mr. Mike Vadala on his fine work throughout his illustrious tenure as Chair of NAFCU. I have worked with him on issues that are important to the credit union community in the past and I am committed to continuing this relationship. With more than 20 years experience in the credit union community, there is no doubt in my mind that our good friends at NAFCU will feel a great void once he steps down. Congratulations on your retirement from the NAFCU Board Mr. Vadala.

RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that Congress act now to raise the minimum wage. In 2004, 37 million Americans lived below the poverty line, a 1.1 million increase from the year before. In 2004, 13 million children in America lived below the poverty line and more than one in six children was poor.

Yet in the richest country on earth, there is no guarantee that a full time job will lift a family out of a situation of dire poverty and need. That's because full-time year round minimum wage earnings of \$5.15 an hour equal leaves a family of three 31 percent below the poverty line. A minimum wage worker, working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year earns \$10,700 a year, \$5,000 below the poverty line for a family of three.

The current minimum wage fails to provide enough income to enable minimum wage workers to afford adequate housing. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, an employed full time worker would need to earn an hourly wage of at least \$15.78 to afford a two-bedroom rental nationally. At the current minimum wage, a family with two full time year round minimum wage earners would fall short of this standard by \$5.48 collectively. It's no wonder that so many families struggle to put a roof over their heads and food on the table. A 2005 study found that 40 percent of adults seeking emergency food aid were employed.

We can directly help these families and children by increasing the federal minimum wage. It is estimated that over 7 million workers would receive an increase in their hourly wage if the minimum wage were raised to just \$7.25 an hour, as proposed in Congressman MILLER's legislation, the Fair Minimum Wage Act. An additional 8.2 million workers earning up to a dollar above the new minimum wage would also benefit.

What kind of Nation have we become when work ceases to be a bridge out of poverty? A nation in which a basic full time job doesn't protect against hunger, homelessness, or poverty. It is a travesty that in the face of these realities, the realities that working Americans confront daily, Congress has not raised the minimum wage since 1997. We can and must change this by increasing the minimum wage now.

RECOGNIZING CHAD THOMAS STEPHENS FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Chad Thomas Stephens, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 395, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Chad has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. He has camped at the H. Roe Bartle Scout Reservation for 6 years and attended the National Jamboree in 2005 while serving as the Senior Patrol Leader for Heart America Troop 1211. Over the many years Chad has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commanding Chad Thomas Stephens for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

TRIBUTE TO BRITTANY GILBERT

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Brittany Gilbert, who had the great honor of presenting her exhibit, "John James Audubon: The American Woodsman Taking a Stand," at the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery before the National History Day contest. Brittany, a student at North Kingstown High School, and 18 other students were chosen out of more than 2,000 participating finalists.

The National History Day program allows students to create exhibits, documentaries and performances, by using their critical thinking and research skills in the subject of history. A basic knowledge of history is essential for our Nation's children to become informed participants in our democracy, and National History Day is promoting history education in Rhode Island and throughout the Nation. National History Day empowers teachers to improve history education so that every student will have historical knowledge and skills to contribute to the public good of our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Brittany, and may she have continued success in all her future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO THE MACOMB COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE AND THE MT. CLEMENS REGIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the Macomb County Clerk's office and the Mt. Clemens Regional Social Security office for an innovative new partnership which is expected to improve customer service, reduce unnecessary administrative work, and save Social Security over \$257,000 over the next 5 years alone.

As you know, the Immigration Reform and Terrorist Prevention Act required the Social Security Administration to verify all birth records before issuing Social Security cards. In most offices, that means Social Security staff have to go in person to the county clerk's office with stacks of birth records, which the clerk's staff then manually verify. The process is time-consuming and labor-intensive for both offices, and sometimes results in unnecessary delays for people waiting for new or replacement Social Security cards.

Macomb County Clerk Carmela Sabaugh, in cooperation with Social Security Administration District Manager William Seaman, has implemented a very different system. Under Macomb County's system, Social Security employees are able to instantly verify birth record authenticity using a secure Internet page available only to Social Security employees with federal security clearance. The first-in-the-nation Macomb County process builds on the digital imaging for vital records that Sabaugh implemented last year. It's faster and easier, but no less effective and secure than the old way.