

Project, an initiative underway by a coalition including the U.S. Department of Energy, the Ukrainian government, Duke University, the University of North Carolina at Asheville, and RTI International. By studying the effects of human exposure to radiation, this project has a number of critical objectives. In addition to protecting the health and welfare of workers involved in the Chernobyl clean-up effort, the Chernobyl Research and Service Project aims to provide information that will lead to the development of more sensitive tests to detect and measure radiation exposure and its effects in the human population, as well as the development of more powerful treatment for victims of radiation exposure, among other things.

Today, as we remember the Chernobyl disaster, it is my sincere hope that programs such as the Chernobyl Research and Service Project continue in an effort not only to improve the lives of those affected by the catastrophic event that took place 20 years ago this month, but also to ensure that we are better prepared in the future.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this significant resolution.

INTRODUCTION OF THE WORKFORCE HOUSING ACT OF 2006

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 6, 2006

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Workforce Housing Act of 2006.

Finding a moderately priced home used to be a concern solely for those with low incomes. Today, as the median price for a home in some parts of the United States is over \$400,000, it has become an issue for all workers. This is especially true when only about 18 percent of the working population has enough income to purchase such a home. Other workers simply do not have the down payment needed to buy a home.

When large numbers of Americans are priced out of the housing market, it affects more than just a working family's ability to purchase a home. Communities that fail to provide affordable housing leave employers straining to find employees. The price to attract prospective workers ultimately makes essential jobs and services more difficult and more expensive for everyone.

Workers who cannot find affordable housing in or around places of employment are pressured to move further away. They endure longer commutes, use more gasoline, increase the levels of greenhouse gases, and spend more of their hard earned money on transportation. The financial impact is especially hard on low-income families who can spend 40 percent of their incomes on transportation alone.

In other cases, people are forced to seek less expensive homes elsewhere. Many of the housing alternatives they have to choose from are often built from older materials, emit more pollution, and require up to 50 percent more energy. Faulty ventilation and energy hungry appliances also increase the costs to heat, cool, and power a home. Rising energy costs required Americans to spend 24 percent more for energy in 2005 than in the previous year.

Such expenditures quickly deplete any savings that working families hope to use when trying to buy a home.

Left unchecked, the shortage of affordable housing, combined with higher energy prices and increased transportation demands paralyzes employment, holds back economic growth, and leads to inflation. The Workforce Housing Act successfully addresses the challenges faced by America's current housing crisis. This bill provides badly needed assistance to help individuals and families purchase their first home and to encourage developers to build affordable workforce housing.

For those looking to purchase a home, the Workforce Housing Act creates two forms of assistance that can be used for the down payment, service charges, appraisal, and other acquisition costs to purchase a single-family home or condominium.

First, the bill creates a tax-exempt mortgage down payment account to be used for purchasing a home. This account works much like an Individual Savings Account, but can be used regardless of age and allows contributions of up to \$10,000. Taxpayers that earn income up to 125 percent of the area median income will receive a tax credit equal to the amount of their annual contributions. The maximum credit is \$2,500 for either single or married-filing-joint taxpayers. Those making below 80 percent of AMI can also receive an additional \$500 credit to start the account.

Once the home is purchased, it is also possible to use any remaining funds for the future repair or replacement of items such as roofs, water heaters, or major appliances. This provision helps to ensure families can pay for these types of expenses without jeopardizing their mortgage payments.

Those who purchase homes using assistance from the Workforce Housing Act must use the home as their primary residence. To preserve the supply of homes created under this act, ownership of these homes can only be transferred to those with incomes that meet the stated affordability requirements.

Second, the Workforce Housing Act provides potential homebuyers with finance counseling and up to \$15,000 in down payment assistance. Local communities have the discretion under the bill to give teachers, first responders, certain service workers, the elderly, and low-income families priority for this part of the program.

For builders, incentives are available for the construction of affordable workforce homes. Developers are allowed base incentives in the form of expedited building permits and density allowances that are above current limits when at least 25 percent of the units are priced affordably. Affordability is based on homes with a sale price that does not exceed the median purchase price for a specific area.

Additional incentives are provided in the bill for affordable workforce homes that are built near mass transit lines, with energy efficient technologies and appliances, and using active and/or passive solar technology. These incentives can be used individually or in any combination not to exceed 15 percent of the base incentive value. Local jurisdictions will determine how to utilize these incentives based on the needs of their communities.

The Workforce Housing Act is necessary to ensure there is an adequate supply of affordable housing for the people who need it most. It also provides reasonable alternatives that

reduce some of the negative effects of increased energy demands. These are factors that threaten our economy, our ability to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, and the viability of our cities and towns.

I ask my colleagues to support this legislation and urge the House leadership to bring it swiftly to the House floor for consideration.

TRIBUTE TO SAINT HYACINTH ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 6, 2006

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Saint Hyacinth Roman Catholic Church, in Detroit, MI on its centennial anniversary. Since 1907, Saint Hyacinth has served as a place of worship and gathering point for the Polish community in Detroit.

Saint Hyacinth was established in 1907 by a small group of Polish immigrants. At the beginning of the 20th century, this new parish served the large and growing Polish immigrant community in Detroit. During World War I, the congregation came together in order to provide solidarity for their brothers and sisters in Poland, as well as to contribute to the overall war effort. With a growing population Saint Hyacinth built a new church in 1924. This beautiful Byzantine-Romanesque church building towered over all other local buildings, serving as a deep source of pride for the Polish community.

World War II brought another opportunity for Saint Hyacinth to serve its country, community, and loved ones in Poland. With its strong connection to Poland, there was no doubt that Saint Hyacinth and many of its parishioners would play an active role in the American war effort. Their bravery and sacrifice was honored with an honor roll installed in the church vestibule.

The post-War years brought change to the surrounding community, but Saint Hyacinth remained steadfast in its dedication to serving the community. Following WWII, then Bishop Monsinger Woznicki appealed to the Church's many Polish parishioners to retain their family names, instead of changing them, as had become the custom. He also called on his parish not to flee to the suburbs, but stay in the surrounding neighborhood.

Saint Hyacinth was honored with its listing in the State of Michigan's Historical Site Registry on September 21, 1988. In January 2001, Saint Hyacinth was honored by the City of Detroit and its 300th Anniversary Committee, with a Heritage Award. It also received a granite paver, inscribed in both English and Polish, on the Riverfront Promenade. This serves as a testament to the great contributions this parish has provided to the city of Detroit and its people.

Mr. Speaker, for one hundred years Saint Hyacinth has served as the heart of Detroit's Polish community. Innumerable parishioners have passed through its doors through the years and the lessons they have learned helped shape their values and beliefs. Saint Hyacinth has stood as an example of all the hard work, determination, sacrifice and love that the surrounding community provides. For generations, the parish of Saint Hyacinth has

turned a beautiful building into something much more, the heart of a community. I want to congratulate the congregation of Saint Hyacinth; the good works they have done serve as an example of all that a community can and should be.

TRIBUTE TO ELBERT GARCIA, RECIPIENT OF THE LATINO ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY'S TRAILBLAZER AWARD

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 6, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Elbert Garcia, an extraordinary gentleman to whom I was first introduced when he was an American Political Science Association fellow in my congressional office, and who is now a media and policy analyst currently employed at my New York District Congressional office.

I commend the Latino Alumni Association of Columbia University on their decision to bestow their first annual Trailblazer Award on a group of exceptional individuals that included Elbert Garcia.

I was very pleased to find that this unique and very first annual Trailblazer award was presented April 1st during a celebration of the diversity and achievements of Columbia's Latino alumni appropriately called "El Regreso." The Columbia University alumni honorees consist of Marcel Agueros, Rafael Collazo, Jennifer Duran, Michael Maldonado, Vivian Santiago, and last but certainly not least, Elbert Garcia. The group was cited because "their dedication, vision, and representation of a wider movement were instrumental to the creation of the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race."

In 1995, this group of Latin American students at Columbia were frustrated that the initiatives to bring the history of ethnic studies to their campus continued to result in failure. They were determined to draw attention to their plight by staging a non-violent hunger strike. The strike ended in the arrest of 22 students and the resulting media coverage of the arrest finally propelled Columbia and its lack of ethnic studies into the national spotlight. This publicity served as a wake-up call to the powers that be and ultimately led to change which resulted in the creation of Columbia's Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race. That Elbert was a leader of a group who had the strategic vision, self-discipline, determination and persistence to succeed is not a surprise to me because these are qualities which Elbert exhibits in his professional and personal life.

I know Elbert to be a dedicated family man with great conviction.

A Washington Heights-born freelance writer, Elbert has written about politics, music and culture for such publications as *The Source*, *Urbanlatino Magazine*, *The New York Post* and the *Manhattan Times*. The 31-year old son of Dominican immigrants has also worked as Web producer at MSNBC, the *New York Times*, and Philadelphia-based Latino news Web site, LATNN.com.

Elbert earned a B.A. in Urban Studies with a specialization in Political Science while

being an active student leader at Columbia University. In addition to helping to establish the school's Latino Studies program and the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, he served as one of founders of Columbia University's undergraduate Dominican organization, *El Grupo Quisqueño* and managing editor of the multicultural magazine *Roots & Culture*.

Prior to entering the field of journalism, Garcia worked several years as alumni counselor and supervisor at the Prep for Prep program, a New York City leadership development organization that works with students of color from fifth grade through college. He was also one of the early organizers of the New York International Latino Film Festival.

Elbert spent a year working on Capitol Hill as a 2002-2003 American Political Science Association Congressional (APSA) Fellow, the oldest and most prestigious Capitol Hill fellowship program. Elbert rejoined my New York staff on a part-time basis in January, 2006. A product of the Ethical Cultural Fieldston School and the community's gifted and talented magnet school, Mott Hall, Elbert currently resides in the Upper Manhattan neighborhood of Inwood with his wife, Grissel.

Elbert's background in media relations and journalism has proven to be an invaluable asset as he assists me in communicating and implementing the role of government in the lives of the constituents of the 15th congressional District. Elbert is a non-assuming, focused and savvy analyst who genuinely cares about people. He is dedicated to ensuring that the needs of our constituency are met. I am particularly proud of the great strides Elbert Garcia has made not only at Columbia University but also in his service to the residents of the 15th District of New York City.

I salute and congratulate Elbert Garcia along with the five other honored Columbia alumni for the fortitude and bravery displayed in 1995 that brought about positive change that continues to benefit Columbia University to this day. I also salute Elbert for his continued work for the public in his chosen field.

At a time of sharp difference between us on the question of immigration policy, we all should keep in mind these words of Elbert Garcia. To quote Elbert, "A nation steeped in ethnic studies would not be in such a hurry to punish its immigrants."

TESTIMONY OF STEVE GRANDSTAFF

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 6, 2006

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, my constituent Steve Grandstaff is shop chairman of the United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 651, which represents hourly workers at Delphi East in my hometown of Flint, Michigan.

For the record I would like to read an excerpt of the electronic testimony that Steve wrote for the Education and the Workforce Committee e-hearing on the impact of the Delphi bankruptcy filing:

I am the Shop Chairperson of UAW Local 651 in Flint, servicing Delphi Flint East and representing 2,800 hard working people. Early on in this whole saga I had a realization what the whole issue boils down to.

I refer to it as the promise; the promise was part of the deal. The deal was that you came to work and did your job for 30 years and at the end of that time you could have the opportunity to go on your way with a somewhat comfortable pension to see you through your later years.

The workers' end of the promise was that they worked the off shifts for the first decade of employment. This meant working the hot days in the summer and the cold ones in the winter. That in itself meant that you were at work when your family and your friends were working normal hours and enjoying life.

The promise meant that you worked in the grimy, dangerous conditions. You did boring, monotonous jobs. You suffered the labeling by society because you worked in a factory.

You would work the extra hours so that you could get the nice things that life offered. The things that seemed to come easier to other people but in your case you had to do a little extra to get them. . . .

Over the years many of us had the opportunity to make a decision, should I stay or should I move on to something else. Many, many people stayed on because of the promise.

They made decisions not to go to a new career because they were many years into the equation of which the promise weighed oh so heavily.

The promise was always out there.

The company always reminded anyone that would listen about how they were funding our pensions and used that as a bargaining chip when our wages or benefits were on the table.

It was always figured in as a benefit cost even though now some wonder if the company ever really intended to fulfill the promise.

Now here we are near the end of our careers, not as young as we used to be, many of us broken. When so many of us are so close to being able to cash in on the promise, the company is attempting to take it away from us. . . .

Mr. Speaker, this Congress has failed to protect American workers while focusing on protecting the privileged few.

It is time for these workers' stories to be heard and I am pleased to have this opportunity to share one of these stories.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL AND SMALL BUSINESS TELEWORK PROMOTION ACT

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 6, 2006

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the "Federal and Small Business Telework Promotion Act" to assist our Nation's small businesses in establishing successful telework programs for their employees and to secure energy saving opportunities, like teleworking for our Nation's Federal employees.

Across America, numerous employers are responding to the needs of their employees and establishing telework programs. In 2000, there were an estimated 16.5 million teleworkers. By the end of 2004, there will be an estimated 30 million teleworkers, representing an increase of almost 100 percent.

Unfortunately, the majority of growth in new teleworkers comes from organizations employing over 1,500 people, while just a few years