

professionals. Fully bilingual themselves, they provided area families an opportunity to learn about how parents can have a lasting impact in their children's education.

Mr. Chavez has been credited with elevating the district's English Language Learning program to a level of significant academic achievement among students.

I would like to personally commend Mr. Joachim Matthew Chavez for his tireless commitment to our community. His life and work are examples of service and of hope.

IN MEMORY OF MAJOR MATTHEW  
W. WORRELL

**HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 23, 2006*

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in memory of MAJ Matthew W. Worrell from my hometown of Lewisville, TX, located in the 26th Congressional District of Texas, for serving our country during Iraqi Freedom. Major Worrell died Sunday, May 14, after insurgents shot down his U.S. helicopter during a raid against Al Qaeda militants in Iraq. He was 34 years old.

MAJ. Matthew W. Worrell was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment at Fort Campbell, KY, better known as the "Night Stalkers." The 160th is an elite avian unit deployed in nearly every conflict and transports Special Forces units around the world by night in specially modified helicopters.

I would like to recognize and celebrate MAJ Matthew W. Worrell's life today. Major Worrell spent 11 years in the Army and served as a platoon leader for the special operations group after previously servicing in the 101st Airborne Division.

MAJ Matthew W. Worrell was a dedicated soldier who earned the respect of those around him. COL Kevin Mangum, the commander of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, said in a written statement, "They were warriors, heroes, fellow Night Stalkers and our friends," of Major Worrell and his fellow officer killed in the battle.

Major Worrell's family said he never doubted why he was there.

Today, I celebrate the life of MAJ Matthew W. Worrell. He was truly a soldier, a husband, a father and an American who understood his duty. It was my honor to represent MAJ Matthew W. Worrell, and I extend my deepest sympathies to his family and friends. He will be deeply missed and his service was greatly appreciated.

TRIBUTE TO SANDRA S. WALKER

**HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 23, 2006*

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mrs. Sandra S. Walker, principal of Rock Creek Forest Elementary School in Chevy Chase, MD, who is retiring after a long and distinguished career with the Montgomery County Public Schools.

Mrs. Walker attended Montgomery County public schools as a student and has now spent more than 30 years working for MCPS as a teacher and administrator.

For the past 18 years Mrs. Walker has been principal at a very challenging and complex school. Rock Creek Forest Elementary School has both an English community program and a countywide Spanish immersion magnet program. The school also blends a student body of great ethnic and economic diversity. Mrs. Walker has served this school with dedication and distinction.

On behalf of the students, parents, teachers and staff of Rock Creek Forest Elementary School, I am privileged to extend my gratitude and appreciation to Sandra Walker for her service to our children and our community. Congratulations on an exemplary career. You have my best wishes for an enjoyable retirement. You will be missed at Rock Creek Forest.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 23, 2006*

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, May 22, 2006, I was unavoidably absent due to a previously scheduled official commitment. Had I been present and voting, I would have voted as follows:

(1) Rollcall No. 177: "yes" on S. 1235—Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2005.

(2) Rollcall No. 178: "yes" on H.R. 3858—Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2005.

#### PALESTINIAN ANTI-TERRORISM ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

**HON. JIM McDERMOTT**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 22, 2006*

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, it is not very often that JIM McDERMOTT rises to support this President, but that is precisely what I am doing now.

The President does not want his hands tied by the passage of H.R. 4681. I couldn't agree more.

H.R. 4681, the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006, will not make Israel safer, will not meet the urgent humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people, and will not give our diplomats the tools they need to help find a path to peace in the Mideast.

For all of these reasons, I oppose it, and I urge my colleagues to reconsider.

I believe in diplomacy as a means to correct injustice around the world. I believe gifted diplomats can accomplish as much with words and deeds as the military can with guns and soldiers.

There is no question that the United States must take all appropriate steps to ensure that terrorists like Hamas are denied access to our financial aid. Not a penny should go to those who do not renounce terrorism.

Hamas is responsible for the deaths of hundreds of innocent Israelis before coming to

power. Since then, they have neither renounced the use of violence nor recognized Israel. This is unacceptable.

By all means, we must deny Hamas dollars that would buy hatred, but we must remember that Hamas and the Palestinian people are not one and the same.

Even as we deny any and all assistance to Hamas, we must not hurt those Palestinians who are working for peace. If we fail to support them, I have no doubt that Israel will pay the ultimate price: more instability in the West Bank and Gaza, more desperation, and more terrorism.

America's leadership is on the line in the Middle East, and more instability is something we need to avoid at all cost. We still have 130,000 American soldiers in harm's way in Iraq; we can't afford to make any more poor choices related to that region.

But, that's exactly what we will do if we pass this bill. It doesn't make sense for the United States to limit political and economic aid to moderates, like Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

He and others have met our government's requirements by recognizing Israel, renouncing violence and terrorism against Israel, and accepting all previously signed Israeli-Palestinian agreements. What happens if we turn our back on leaders trying to heal a millennium of hate?

And what can we expect if we turn our backs on the real and growing humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people? It doesn't make sense to put restrictions on funding the NGOs that provide the Palestinian people with hospitals and schools.

As a medical doctor, I am gravely concerned about the fate of millions of innocent Palestinians who rely on international aid for food, health care, and for developing their economy and businesses.

Recent news reports say that international sanctions are preventing hospitals in Gaza from providing dialysis machines for patients, and they may not be able to supply immunizations to children.

The World Health Organization sees a "rapid decline of the public health system . . . towards a possible collapse." If left untreated, these conditions will nurture a breeding ground for more hatred, more violence, and more terrorism.

This bill will only increase the restrictions on aid to the Palestinians and that will make the already dire situation even worse.

As a doctor I took an oath to heal. As a nation, we took an oath to lead. Allowing innocent Palestinians to go hungry, while denying them medical treatment cannot possibly correct injustice, or lead to peace.

If passed, this bill will be seen as anti-Palestinian, and the resulting chaos and animosity can only threaten the relative calm that Israel has enjoyed for the past year and a half. This bill does not help Israel.

Many of the Israeli leaders I've spoken to, think this bill goes too far by punishing all Palestinians, not just Hamas. They understand that a radicalized population will show more support for Hamas, not less.

During a recent trip to Israel and the Palestinian territories, I saw how both sides deeply yearn for peace. And I saw firsthand how they need the United States to do all it can to help them make peace. The Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act will make this task enormously difficult.

The harsh restrictions, and cutting off contacts with moderate Palestinians, will severely complicate our ability to assume an active role in helping both sides resolve the conflict.

If we cannot engage with moderates, and those trying to develop the Palestinian economy and build civil society, we forfeit our ability to nurture and strengthen the positive elements in Palestine.

We need a bill that allows us the utmost flexibility to help moderate Palestinians, to quickly get economic and humanitarian aid to places that need it, like hospitals and health clinics, and helps prevent the resumption of terrorism. This bill does not meet these criteria.

We need to isolate and weaken Hamas, and hopefully their tenure at the head of the PA will be a short one. But if we cannot distinguish between Hamas and the majority of the Palestinian people, we cannot possibly expect to have a role in creating what comes next.

Israelis and Palestinians realize that in the end, their fates are tied. When Palestinians' lives get worse, so do those of Israelis.

It's time to help the majorities on both sides reach their mutual goal—a peaceful two-state solution—rather than standing in the way by punishing one side.

Give our State Department an opportunity to nurture peace, or we will surely have to ask our military to counter more terrorism. Vote against H.R. 4681.

#### PALESTINIAN ANTI-TERRORISM ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

**HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 22, 2006*

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4681 Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006.

As an original cosponsor, I fully support this bill and would like to thank my friend from Florida, Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN and my Ranking Member TOM LANTOS for introducing this important bipartisan legislation.

This bill sends a clear message to Hamas that the United States will never support a terrorist organization cloaked as a democratically elected party.

The support Hamas, a designated terrorist organization by the United States, received shows many Palestinian people do not want peace with Israel and will continue to support terrorist operations on innocent civilians.

Hamas officials continue to endorse recent suicide bombing and continued violence against Israel, the only true democracy in the Middle East.

As long as Hamas chooses to continue down the path of terrorism, it will meet with financial and diplomatic isolation from the United States and our allies.

I have read the statements of several groups opposed to this legislation because this will create a road block towards negotiations. What I want to know is how do you negotiate with a government who is hell bent on your destruction.

Would any member of this House negotiate with al Qaeda? I would hope not. Hamas must be isolated, not coddled, and that is what this legislation will do.

Hamas would rather cling to the impossible dream of the destruction of Israel than work towards a two-state solution that will bring prosperity and an end to the bloodshed that has tainted this region for so many years.

This bill rightly ends direct aid to the Hamas-controlled government. Hamas refuses to change so they must be treated like the terrorists they are.

But I want to make clear that the goal of this legislation is not to cause a humanitarian catastrophe but to isolate this terrorist led government, this legislation will allow funding for the basic health needs of the Palestinian people.

I'm sure like me, my colleagues would rather be supporting a Palestinian Authority-led government working towards a peaceful two-state solution but instead we face the realities of a Hamas-led government bent on the destruction of Israel.

Until this Hamas-led government recognizes Israel's right to exist as a Jewish State, renounces violence, dismantles its terrorist infrastructure, and halts all anti-Israel incitement the United States should never provide assistance to the Palestinian-led government of Hamas.

#### VETERANS' HOUSING OPPOR- TUNITY AND BENEFITS IM- PROVEMENT ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

**HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD**

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 22, 2006*

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for S. 1235, the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2005.

This legislation will improve the benefits provided to our veterans and their families.

During war and equally importantly, after our soldiers come home and take off the uniform, we as a nation must support them fully. The Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2005 contains many provisions that will help us achieve this goal.

I would like to point out one particular provision that is similar to a bill, H.R. 821, which I have introduced.

Like H.R. 821, the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act will amend title 38 to extend the requirement for reports from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the disposition of cases recommended to the Secretary for equitable relief due to administrative error. Extending this reporting requirement will assist the VA in its efforts to properly care for our veterans and their families.

Administrative error should not prevent a veteran or their loved one from receiving the benefits they have fully earned.

I would like to thank and congratulate Chairman BUYER and Ranking Member EVANS as well as the other chairmen and ranking members from our committee who have worked so hard to move this important legislation forward.

It is my hope that we will also be moving a health bill forward with the same bipartisan spirit our veterans have come to expect from our committee.

I support this legislation and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. TOM COLE**

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 23, 2006*

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, May 17, 2006, I was unavoidably detained due to a prior obligation.

Had I been present and voting, I would have voted as follows: Rollcall No. 148: "no" (On Agreeing to the DeFazio of Oregon Amendment to H.R. 4200).

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. XAVIER BECERRA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 23, 2006*

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, May 22, 2006, I was unable to cast my floor vote on rollcall Nos. 177 and 178. The votes I missed included a motion to suspend the rules and pass S. 1235, the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2005, and a motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3858, the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2005.

Had I been present for the votes, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall votes 177 and 178.

#### TRIBUTE TO TELACU FOR ITS COMMITMENT TO SERVICE, AD- VANCEMENT, AND EMPOWER- MENT IN THE LATINO COMMU- NITY

**HON. JOE BACA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 23, 2006*

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, the people of this great Nation share a common spirit and heritage. Whether born on the soil of this land or having chosen to come here in search of a better life—one free of political, social, and economic oppression, we are a nation of pioneers. We believe in the American dream, and the promise that through our labors we can achieve educational and economic success. No barrier is too imposing, no obstacle too tall that it should stand in the way of pursuing this dream.

Two of my congressional predecessors, Senators Robert F. Kennedy and Jacob Javits, advanced legislation in the 1960s that promoted this dream by laying the foundation for an organization called TELACU. Since its founding in 1968, TELACU has become the largest community and economic development corporation in the United States. TELACU is a pioneering institution committed to service, empowerment, advancement and the creation of self-sufficiency. Brought to life through a small investment appropriated by Congress, TELACU has grown to become an organization with nearly \$500 million in assets, creating thousands of jobs, affordable homes, loans to small business people, and most importantly, numerous educational opportunities for young people and veterans.