

music, dance, theater, film, and literary arts. (3) Sustainable Resources—Leadership and funding from public and private sector guarantee the program's strength and growth.

MEASURE O PUBLIC SAFETY QUARTER-CENT SALES TAX MEASURE

A quarter-cent public safety sales tax measure was placed on the November 2004 ballot, which came to be known as Measure O. The measure generates approximately \$7 million per year for Police, Fire, and Gang Prevention and Intervention efforts. The ordinance set up a citizen oversight committee and has strict rules preventing any "supplanting" of existing services or funding in the General Fund. This project has allowed significant progress to be made in vital areas at a time when core public safety was threatened.

MAYOR'S GANG PREVENTION TASK FORCE

Four years ago, the city of Santa Rosa took aggressive steps to address the rise of local gangs. The city began with a public outreach campaign to educate the community on the growing threat, and followed that up with trips to other cities where staff and policy leaders were able to learn from their programs. In addition, the Mayor became actively involved by establishing the Gang Prevention Task Force in order to confront the issues and the risk to youth. The Task Force consists of policy leaders from throughout Sonoma County, school officials, law enforcement and officials from non-profit and social service organizations. In addition the move was not a drain on existing public resources, and was primarily funded by a quarter-cent sales tax measure that dedicates 20 percent to gang prevention and intervention measures.

While the Santa Rosa delegation brought home the top honors, every member of the delegation was able to learn from the other finalists. As a result they have returned to Santa Rosa, not only energized, but armed with fresh ideas to improve their community. I am very proud of their achievement, Madam Speaker, and invite all of my colleagues to visit this lovely community in the Sonoma County wine country just north of San Francisco.

HONORING STAFF SERGEANT MICHAEL BECHERT

HON. MIKE PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 18, 2007

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of Indiana's native sons who served his country honorably in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. I was deeply saddened to learn that Staff Sergeant Michael Bechert of New Castle had succumbed to wounds he suffered in Baghdad last month when his vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device.

Staff Sergeant Bechert served in the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Division, 1st Infantry Division since 2001. He received numerous meritorious citations during 2 enlistments and 6 years in the Army, all stationed in Germany where he lived with his wife and young son. He was serving his second tour in Iraq.

The infantry is the oldest of the combat arms. From the dawn of time, wars have been predominantly fought by men on foot. Staff Sergeant Bechert continued that proud tra-

dition as an expert soldier who had mastered the skills of an infantryman and served bravely in combat.

Staff Sergeant Bechert was the recipient of the Expert Infantryman Badge and Combat Infantryman Badge, highly regarded decorations in the U.S. Army that certify his elite skills and service to his country in combat. His other medals include an Army Commendation Medal for heroism and a Purple Heart for a previous injury. He will be awarded posthumously with a Bronze Star and a second Purple Heart because he died in the line of duty.

We all owe a debt that can never be repaid to Staff Sergeant Bechert's family and friends for the tragic loss of husband, father, son, friend, citizen, soldier and hero.

Madam Speaker, I wish to express my profound sadness to the community at the loss of this talented young Hoosier who made the ultimate sacrifice to preserve and protect these United States. Let us remember Staff Sergeant Bechert, his family and friends in our thoughts and prayers.

RESOLUTION IN HONOR OF THE
RIGHT REVEREND PHILIP
AQUILLA BROOKS II

HON. CAROLYN C. KILPATRICK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 18, 2007

Ms. KILPATRICK. Madam Speaker, I respectfully submit the following resolution, this 18th Day of June, in the Year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Seven.

Whereas, Bishop Philip Aquilla Brooks II has rendered a lifetime of devoted service to his ministry in Detroit, Michigan. He is the founding Pastor of New St. Paul Tabernacle Church of God in Christ in Detroit, Michigan, where he has served for over 54 years. Since 1975, Bishop Brooks has been the presiding prelate of the Historic First Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of Michigan, which is also known as the Northeast Michigan Jurisdiction. In 1984, and each quadrennial since, the Lord has honored Bishop Brooks' dedication and loyalty to His work through the favor of men, by elevating him to the presidium of the Church of God in Christ, Inc., and the largest African-American Pentecostal Denomination with an estimated 6.5 million members in over 59 countries. He now serves the Church as the Second Assistant Presiding Bishop;

Whereas, Bishop Philip Aquilla Brooks II is an individual with great vision and focus. Bishop Brooks established the March of Faith Telecast and Radio Ministry, which has ministered to countless millions across the nation in their homes, hospital rooms and behind prison bars for nearly three consecutive decades. Always the innovator, Bishop Brooks was the first among his peers on the General Board to establish a presence for his local church and Jurisdiction on the World Wide Web. He was among the first to broadcast his Sunday morning worship services via the Internet in a live Web cast every Sunday morning;

Whereas, Bishop Philip Aquilla Brooks II compassion for all of God's children has caused him to expand his local church ministry into the areas of education, senior housing, food programs and other community out-

reach programs. He is the founder of the Grandmont-Rosedale Christian School and Day Care. He is the president of the New St. Paul Non-Profit Housing Corporation. This is a Community Development Corporation responsible for the building of Faith Manor Senior Citizens Apartments on the campus of New St. Paul Tabernacle. Under Bishop Brooks' visionary leadership, New St. Paul Tabernacle distributes hundreds of Thanksgiving baskets to needy families each year, offers tutorial services to students, and provides business incubator programs to foster entrepreneurship;

Whereas, Bishop Philip Aquilla Brooks II is the third-longest serving Church of God in Christ bishop in the 93-year history of the church's influence in the State of Michigan, and is the senior Bishop in the mid-west region, including Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana and Ontario, Canada. He was consecrated Jurisdictional Prelate of Northeast Michigan Jurisdiction in 1975 by the late Presiding Bishop J.O. Patterson, Sr. During his tenure, Bishop Brooks' programs and initiatives have benefited all citizens of the State of Michigan. His latest contribution is the formation of the first black-owned Mortgage Company in the Church of God in Christ—Faith Community Mortgage LLC;

Whereas, Bishop Philip Aquilla Brooks II established the nation's first Blue Cross/Blue Shield Program for local pastors, life insurance for local pastors and a Compensation Program for widows of local pastors. He lead the Jurisdiction in purchasing and renovating Northeast Michigan's jurisdictional headquarters, Cathedral Conference Center. He is directly or indirectly responsible for purchasing, financing, renovating, or building new churches for over 50 pastors within the jurisdiction;

Whereas, Bishop Philip Aquilla Brooks II has served for almost a quarter of a century, as a member of the Presidium of the Church of God in Christ, Inc. First elected in 1984, Bishop Brooks is now serving in his sixth term. In addition to these duties, Bishop Brooks served for 12 years as a member of the board of directors of First Independence Bank; and serves on the board of directors for the famed Museum of African American History based in Detroit, Michigan;

Whereas, Bishop Philip Aquilla Brooks II was inducted into the International Gospel Music Hall of Fame and Museum as a result of his contributions to the field of music in years past as a musician, and Music Department President, and presently, a worshiper; and

Whereas, Bishop Philip Aquilla Brooks II, on April 11, 2007, was elevated to the Office of Second Assistant Presiding Bishop of the Church of God in Christ, Inc. by Presiding Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr.

Whereas, we the Members of the Congressional Black Caucus extend our sincere appreciation and highest respect to Bishop Philip Aquilla Brooks II and the entire COGIC Denomination.

Therefore, be it resolved, that we celebrate and honor the elevation of Bishop Philip Aquilla Brooks II for his lifetime of devotion, dedication, dignity and honor; his faithful service to all human beings, and for being a worldwide spiritual leader, especially within the Church of God in Christ.

Be it finally resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Bishop Philip Aquilla Brooks II, the family and that a copy be placed in the records of the Church.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF CAROL DUMAINE

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 18, 2007

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the accomplishment of Mr. David Williams of Arlington, Virginia and a proud member of our civil service. Mr. Williams revamped outreach efforts for the Earned Income Tax Credit, helping hundreds of thousands of additional Americans receive vital benefits, and oversaw the Telephone Exercise Tax Refund—the largest one-time tax refund in history.

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is widely recognized as our Federal government's most effective anti-poverty program. Despite the program's overall success, studies revealed an erroneous payment rate of roughly 25 percent, and millions of eligible workers were not claiming the credit. David Williams, who heads the EITC office at the Internal Revenue Service, led the effort to revamp the program. Thanks to his leadership, as many as 500,000 more people each year are receiving vital benefits.

Today, under Mr. Williams' leadership, the IRS works with more than 150 nonprofit and community-based organizations to host EITC awareness events in more than 50 cities, creating volunteer tax assistance sites at banks, businesses and community centers. He also used news conferences and local media to help drive people to seek out this assistance.

In just 1 year, more than 2 million tax returns were prepared at these volunteer tax assistance sites. The tax credits low-income working Americans receive help them cover the essential costs they face every day—from child care to fixing the car. One person who attended a workshop reported that the tax credit helped her go from being an apartment renter to a homeowner. Since David Williams launched these new outreach efforts, the number of eligible taxpayers receiving the credit has increased by 500,000 people a year, and last year, more than 22 million people received \$41 billion in EITC payments.

As a senior official at the IRS, it would be easy to think of David Williams as a numbers guy. But his people skills, strategic approach and ability to lead diverse groups to achieve shared public policy goals have distinguished him as one of our government's most outstanding employees and have helped him positively affect the lives of millions of Americans.

Madam Speaker, I commend Mr. Williams for his leadership, and I am proud to have him live in Virginia's 8th Congressional District as he contributes to the greatest civil service in the world. I wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

HONORING WILLIAM "BILL" CLIFTON FRANCE, FORMER PRESIDENT, CEO AND CHAIRMAN OF NASCAR

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 18, 2007

Ms. CASTOR. Madam Speaker, I am pleased today to introduce a resolution honoring the esteemed former President, CEO, and Chairman of NASCAR, William "Bill" Clifton France, Jr. Sadly, Bill France passed away June 4 after an extended illness. Bill was well known in Florida, leading NASCAR for 31 years before retiring in 2003. He was, like his father, "Big Bill," a giant in the racing world. He was also a super citizen whose interests and influence went well beyond the racing world. Bill lived life to the fullest and will be remembered with both admiration and fondness.

Today, the Daytona International Speedway is a landmark in the international motorsports community. However, when the France family settled in Daytona Beach, Florida, in 1934, the track was nothing but packed sand. Bill's father, William H.G. France, was known for his innovative perspectives and entrepreneurial skills in building the legacy that is the Daytona International Speedway. Bill Jr. took the same business savvy his father exhibited, and made NASCAR the legend it is today.

As President, CEO, and Chairman of NASCAR, Bill France transformed the International Speedway Corporation (ISC) into the third ranked professional sports entity on television. His leadership led the ISC to promote more than 100 annual racing events, own and/or operate thirteen of the Nation's major motorsports entertainment facilities, and own and operate MRN Radio, the Nation's largest independent sports radio network. In addition to his business achievements, the philanthropic initiative of Bill France and the France family founded the NASCAR Foundation Family of Charities, a group of more than 30 organizations that supports children's programs, animal welfare and conservation.

I know his wife, Betty Jane, and his children Brian and Lesa and their children, will miss him terribly. I know, also, that they are proud of the contributions Bill made to make motorsports not only a successful venture in Florida, but around the world. I am proud to pay tribute to Bill France, his numerous accomplishments, and his dedication to the Florida community and the motorsports industry.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO BRIGADIER GENERAL JAMES C. HALL

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 18, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Brigadier General James C. Hall, Colorado National Guard (Retired).

James C. Hall was born into a coal mining family with 10 children in Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania on April 14, 1926. He is the youngest son and followed in the footsteps of five of his older brothers when he joined the Army during World War II at age 17. He served as an air-

borne radio operator and later a flight engineer throughout his service in the Pacific theater. After returning from World War II, Mr. Hall re-enlisted in the Army Air Corps and was awarded a direct commission into the new United States Air Force. Mr. Hall received his Bachelor's degree from the University of New Mexico and is a graduate of the Army Parachute School at Fort Benning, GA, the Advanced School at Fort Bragg, NC, and U.S. Forest Service Smoke Jumper's School.

Throughout 36 years of military service and the rest of his civilian life, he became a pioneer in parachuting. Mr. Hall is a Master Parachutist with more than 1800 jumps. He started the parachuting program at the United States Air Force Academy which is the safest program of all similar service schools. In 1959 Mr. Hall and a partner organized the first professional parachuting firm in the world which led to many innovative advances in its field. His hit television show "Ripcord" has been noted as starting the modern conception of parachuting as a sport. He pioneered the "Buddy System" for free falling and the "4-line-cut" for emergencies in parachuting. Mr. Hall has been honored and cited numerous times. He has received such accolades as the AFA Medal of Merit, the Citation of Honor for his MIA/POW program, the Exceptional Service Plaque, the AFA Presidential citation, the Colorado Man of the Year, Leo Stevens Parachute medal, and the Colorado Meritorious Service Medal. As a founding member of Colorado's Wright Brothers Memorial foundation, he was inducted into the Colorado Aviation Hall of Fame in 1985.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Brigadier General James C. Hall. I thank him for his honorable service to our country.

NICS IMPROVEMENT AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 13, 2007

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I think it is appropriate for the House to approve this bill in the form that it comes before us today.

As I said at the time, I do not think additional federal legislation dealing with firearms can prevent tragedies such as the killings at Virginia Tech. However, the changes this bill would make would improve the current federal law and are worth making.

The bill will create incentives for states to submit to the National Instant Background Check System (NICS) legal records about individuals who are ineligible to obtain firearms. This closes a loophole in the current background check system. In addition, and importantly, it will require states and federal agencies to allow individuals to appeal their status if they are currently considered ineligible to acquire firearms. And it will bar agencies from sharing mental health records that are irrelevant to the background check system.

The bill has been significantly revised since its introduction. As it comes before the House, it would prevent use of federal "adjudications" based on medical diagnoses without a finding of dangerousness or mental incapacity. To understand what this means, consider the fact that the NICS currently accepts Veterans' Administration decisions that a veteran or other