

County Federal Credit Union, membership numbered 800 and assets were \$2.5 million. As Ralph enters retirement, he leaves the Old West Federal Credit Union in excellent shape with over 7,500 members in four branch offices serving eight counties in eastern Oregon and assets of over \$80 million. The positive growth under Ralph's leadership is remarkable, and a testament to how Ralph has always conducted business.

A true believer and advocate in the credit union movement, Ralph Goodwin's contribution to the communities of eastern Oregon and credit union philosophy is second to none. Through the World Council of Credit Unions, Ralph has participated in and been an indispensable part of efforts to bring credit unions and credit union philosophy to underdeveloped countries in the world, traveling to the Philippines and Uzbekistan to further this goal. Ralph's many years of civic leadership and steadfast commitment to the rural communities he has served has made a rewarding impact on many credit union members and employees that have benefited from his financial guidance and leadership example.

Throughout the credit union movement in Oregon and nationally, Ralph Goodwin is recognized as a leader and visionary whose passion and commitment to the credit union motto of people helping people is a core attitude of how credit union business is conducted. The high regard Ralph's colleagues have for him is exemplified by the service he has delivered and acknowledgment he has received on the state and national level, including being chosen as the Advocate of the Year by the Credit Union Association of Oregon as well as receiving the association's Distinguished Service Award, the highest honor bestowed upon an individual. Ralph is also well known and respected by many members on both sides of the political aisle in the Oregon Legislature and United States Congress as they can always rely on solid and straightforward information from him regarding credit union policy.

I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Ralph Goodwin, and delivering our thanks for the tremendous good he has fostered in the credit union movement and throughout Oregon. Ralph can now finally take a break with his lovely wife, Toni, and their seven children and 15 grandchildren.

Thank you for all that you've done, Ralph. I'm very proud to count you and Toni as my good friends, and wish you both the best over many happy years to come.

HONORING JONATHAN MICHAEL
ROSSI

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 11, 2007

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor PFC Jonathan Michael Rossi, who was killed on July 1, 2007, in Baghdad, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Jonathan was part of the B Company, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division stationed in Fort Bliss, Texas, and was killed when his patrol encountered an insurgent attack involving an improvised explosive device and small-arms fire.

I did not have the privilege of knowing Private Rossi personally, but by all accounts he

was a courageous young man who was devoted to serving his country and family. Jonathan grew up in Safety Harbor, Florida. Following his longtime dream and strong sense of duty to country, he joined the Army only two months after graduating from Countryside High School in 2005.

Jonathan was reserved young man who had spent much of his youth with the goal of service his country. Having lost his mother at a young age to cancer, he demonstrated a sense of courage and strength, which he brought to the battlefield.

During his short time as an Army infantryman, Jonathan earned a great deal of recognition for his service. Among his many awards and honors are a Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Combat Infantrymen Badge, Parachutist Badge, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon and the Overseas Service Ribbon.

Madam Speaker, my heart aches for Jonathan's family. He leaves behind his father, Michael, who also faithfully served his country for 20 years, and seven siblings and step-siblings. May God bless the Rossi family and continue to watch over the country that Private Rossi so loved. We shall never forget him.

ON THE 12TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE SREBRENICA GENOCIDE

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 11, 2007

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, this week the world paused to remember and reflect on the horrific acts of brutality, wanton cruelty and mass murder committed in Srebrenica a mere 12 years ago.

On Sunday, I joined a distinguished group of leaders and survivors to honor those brave Bosniaks who suffered and died—victims of the genocide.

Among those who led the solemn ceremony was Dr. Mustafa Cerić, the Reis-ul-Ulema, President of the Council of Ulema in Bosnia. Reis Cerić is an inspiring man of God and internationally recognized as a man of peace and extraordinary compassion—and a friend.

Also there was President Haris Silajdzic, a Bosnian leader I have known and deeply respected since the early 90s. Dr. Silajdzic, throughout the darkness and moral confusion of the Balkan war was a powerful, persistent, reasonable and dynamic voice for peace, human rights, the rule of law and accountability for genocide.

In my remarks, I tried to convey to our Bosnian friends that Americans and others of goodwill throughout the world again extend their deepest condolences and respect to the mothers and surviving family members who have endured unspeakable sorrow and loss that time will never abate. I assured the survivors of our earnest prayers.

Madam Speaker, the international community must recommit itself to apprehending and bringing to justice once and for all those who perpetrated these heinous crimes, including Mladić and Karadžić.

Justice is the essential prerequisite to sustainable reconciliation. No matter how long it

takes, we must never tire or grow weary in the pursuit of justice. Renewal and a further consolidation of democracy must be rooted in systemic reform, including police reform. Perhaps some of the lessons learned from successful initiatives in Northern Ireland might have application there.

Looking back, it is almost beyond comprehension that the Srebrenica genocide occurred at all.

Future historians, Madam Speaker, will be hard pressed to ever understand how a UN Security Council designated "safe area," guarded by a significant deployment of UN peacekeepers, backed up by NATO's superior air power, could have capitulated in the face of unmitigated evil and enabled one of the most despicable acts in human history.

After Bosnian Serb forces attacked elements of UNPROFOR beginning in early July 1995, a series of gross miscalculations, mistakes and betrayal quickly led to the systematic slaughter of over 8,000 Bosniaks, mostly men.

Adding unnecessary insult to injury some in the international community further exacerbated matters by employing euphemisms that masked the reality of the genocide. Somehow, they just couldn't utter the word genocide.

Nevertheless, the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia found "beyond any reasonable doubt that a crime of genocide was committed in Srebrenica." More recently, the verdict of the International Court of Justice that genocide occurred in Srebrenica begs the question: What are the consequences?

Two years ago, I authored a resolution that overwhelmingly passed the U.S. Congress that clearly and unambiguously condemned the Srebrenica genocide and stated in part that "all persons indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) should be apprehended and transferred to The Hague without further delay, and all countries should meet their obligations to cooperate fully with the ICTY at all times . . ."

Madam Speaker, the genocide would like nothing better than that we forget. And that, of course, is something we cannot do. Ever.

LINKS BETWEEN OIL, POVERTY,
AND CORRUPTION ON CON-
TINENT OF AFRICA

HON. DIANE E. WATSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 11, 2007

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address the links between oil, poverty, and corruption that plague too many people on the continent of Africa.

Kensington International is a United States-based firm that is owed money by the Government of the Republic of Congo. In an effort to collect on its debts, Kensington took the Government of the Republic of Congo to Court in Hong Kong. The Government of Congo, based in Brazzaville, had claimed that, because of the poverty of their nation, that they were unable to pay their debts.

I would encourage my colleagues to examine the documents produced as evidence in this court case. They are available on the Internet at www.globalwitness.org, under the heading, "Congo: Is President's son paying for

designer shopping sprees with country's oil money?"

The documents online include:

1. Bill for credit card spending by Mr Christel (son of President, head of Cotrade) on luxury items and other apparently personal expenses.

2. Bank letter indicating that Long Beach Ltd is paying credit card bills for Mr Christel.

3. Corporate record identifying Mr Christel as the owner of Long Beach.

4. Credit card bill for Blaise Elenga, counsel to Cotrade, also indicating apparently personal expenses.

5. Bank letter indicating that E Investments Ltd is paying credit card bills for Mr Elenga.

6. Corporate record identifying Mr Elenga as the owner of E. Investments, formerly known as Elenga Investments.

7. Document indicates business relationship between Long Beach, Elenga Investments and Sphynx Bermuda, the latter a company controlled by Denis Gokana, found by the London High Court in November 2005 to be involved in selling state oil through shell companies, a facade intended to deceive Congo's creditors, from which he personally profited and at considerable cost to the Congolese Treasury.

8. Documents indicating payments to Long Beach and Elenga Investments by Pan Africa, a company involved in oil-related transactions with the Congolese state oil company.

9. Bank documents indicating payments to Elenga Investments by Africa Oil and Gas Corporation (AOGC), which was described by the London court in 2005 as a "sham company" involved in "sham transactions", the profits of which ended up in AOGC.

10. Bank documents indicating payments to Long Beach from AOGC.

11. Documents indicating that Long Beach received payments related to sales of Congolese oil by the state oil company.

These documents are important because they raise serious questions about what appears to be personal financial transactions to the benefit of public officials with funds that may derive from state oil sales. This comes at time when 70 percent of Congolese citizens earn less than a dollar a day. Because commitments to prevent conflicts of interest in the oil sector are a key condition for Congo to receive full debt relief, I am concerned that these documents show a blatant failure to comply with the commitments they made as part of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, also known as "HIPC". The Republic of Congo committed to the United States, and the international community, in March 2006, that, in return for progressing towards full HIPC debt relief, that it will carry out reforms of the oil sector including "preventing conflicts of interest in the marketing of oil [and] requiring officials of SNPC [the state oil company] to publicly declare and divest any interests in companies having a business relationship with SNPC." The context of this commitment is strong U.S. Congressional and international

concern about corruption in the oil sector in Congo. One of the conditions of the HIPC program is the completion of a diagnostic study on SNPC's marketing of oil by independent auditors, which is not yet completed. The U.S. supports the strengthening of the HIPC triggers in relation to oil sector transparency and anti-corruption measures. These concerns are particularly acute given the Congo's reputation for serious corruption.

Madam Speaker, too many African governments are unable to serve their people because of the crushing burden of international debt. Debt relief for Africa needs to be a top priority for the United States, in order to enable these governments to serve their people. But we owe it to the people of Africa to do debt relief right. We need to make sure that we are not rewarding governments that are not serving as good stewards of their citizens' national wealth. I urge my colleagues to join me in pressing forward to relieve current African debt while simultaneously working to prevent the debt cycle from starting all over again.

SUPPORTING HOME OWNERSHIP AND RESPONSIBLE LENDING

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 10, 2007

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in proud support of H. Res. 526, as offered by my distinguished colleague from Maryland and fellow member of the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Congressman ELIJAH CUMMINGS. This resolution seeks to recognize and support home ownership and responsible lending.

Ownership of property is an exciting prospect, especially when individuals acquire property that they can truly call "their" own. As once stated in *Essence* magazine, "ownership gives a sense of power and permanence; you are the ruler of your castle and not the pawn of a landlord." For many Americans, home ownership is an important attribute to realizing the American dream. Whether it means buying a home for the first time or refinancing, home ownership is a powerful economic stimulus, both for the individual homeowners, as well as the national economy. It benefits neighborhoods by raising property values and providing economic and social capital in previously distressed communities.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation recently experienced a housing boom from 2001 to 2006, due to historically low mortgage rates, rising home prices, and increased liquidity in the secondary mortgage market—factors that led to the growth of the sub-prime mortgage industry. In the year 2006 alone, more than

75,000,000 Americans owned homes, and the home ownership rate reached a near record high of nearly 69 percent. For non-Hispanic whites in 2006, the home ownership rate was 76 percent, while the rate for African Americans fell at only 48.2 percent. Hispanic home ownership rate was at 49.5 percent, and that of Asians, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders were at 60 percent.

The buying of a home is usually the largest purchase that most people will ever make in their lifetime. To many individuals, this is known as a "huge responsibility with great benefits." Sub-prime market has created home ownership opportunities for lower-income people, families without access to down payments and people with little or no credit histories. On the other hand, it has also created opportunities for "predatory" lending, where unscrupulous lenders hide the true cost of sub-prime loans from unsophisticated borrowers.

Higher cost sub-prime mortgage loans are most prevalent in lower income neighborhoods with high concentration of minorities. This is simply unacceptable. In the past few months, it has become increasingly clear to the American people that irresponsible sub-prime lending practices have contributed to a wave of foreclosures, which are in essence, harming our communities and disrupting housing markets. In 2005, 53 percent of African Americans and 37.8 percent of Hispanics took out sub-prime loans.

Home ownership is critical in building wealth because it signifies the accumulation of appreciable assets. It has been proven consistently that property usually constitutes one's greatest financial asset because ownership of property is one of the single largest investments that an individual can make. On the other hand, foreclosures can be detrimental to an individual, legally and administratively. The average foreclosure causes lenders to lose thousands of dollars and costs the borrower an average \$7,200 in administrative charges. For the local government, abandoned homes cost districts tax revenues.

As a public servant and a representative of the people, I strongly urge my colleagues to vote in favor of H. Res. 526. The time has come for us to raise awareness about the dangers of risky loans and to protect homeowners from unscrupulous lending practices from mortgage brokers and lenders. We must demand the enforcement of rules eliminating unfair and deceptive practices in sub-prime mortgage lending, as well as the establishment of clear minimum standards for mortgage originators. Among many things, H. Res. 526 would help in the reduction and elimination of abuses in prepayment penalties, as well as increase opportunities for loan counseling.

Knowledge is the remedy for fear, however knowledge is not enough. We must apply that knowledge to achieve change.