

budget division. He later served as DLA Comptroller, as Administrator of the Defense National Stockpile Center, and as the Director, DLA Support Services.

Mr. Connelly grew up in Boston and graduated from Boston College in 1968. He attended Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma where he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Signal Corps, and served one year in Vietnam. Mr. Connelly attended Stanford University Graduate School of Business as a Sloan Fellow and received a Master of Science degree in management in 1978.

Mr. Connelly became Director of Defense Energy Support Center (DESC) on November 3, 2003, directing the Department of Defense organization that is responsible for purchasing and managing all petroleum resources used by the United States military. In addition, Mr. Connelly has guided the growing mission of total energy support by developing strategies to buy and sell deregulated electricity and natural gas to federal agency customers.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. Richard J. Connelly on his retirement from Federal Civil Service. He epitomizes the dedication and professionalism that make our Federal government a model all over the world.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE TROOPS TO TEACHERS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2007

#### HON. THOMAS E. PETRI

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, January 29, 2007*

Mr. PETRI. Madam Speaker, today, I am introducing the Troops to Teachers Improvement Act to improve opportunities for veterans to transition into second careers in teaching. I am pleased to once again be joined in this effort by Congresswoman DORIS MATSUI. I have been a supporter of the Troops to Teachers program since its authorization, and I am proud of its success over the last decade. Since 1994, this program has placed nearly 10,000 veterans in our nation's classrooms.

Troops to Teachers is a unique program that provides retiring military with a \$5,000 stipend to help cover the costs of teaching certification in exchange for three years service in a high-need school, which until recently was defined as receiving grants under part A of Title I. To further encourage participants to teach in schools with the greatest need, a \$10,000 bonus is offered to those who agree to teach for three years in a school with 50% of students below the poverty level.

This structure has proven very effective in transitioning qualified retiring military personnel into second careers in teaching. Indeed, Troops participants fill several critical needs among educators: eighty-two percent are male, over one-third ethnic minorities, and a majority bring an expertise in science and math to the classroom. In an increasingly globalized economy, these valuable characteristics provide a vital resource for schools across the country.

However, this success is now in jeopardy due to a drafting error in the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act which has inadvertently restricted the number of schools at which partici-

pants may fulfill their service. The applicable definition for "high-need local education agencies" for Troops to Teachers was inadvertently changed as it was included in the section of the legislation regarding other alternative programs that had a different definition. This stricter definition requires a higher threshold for "high-need," requiring the school to have either 10,000 students or 20% of students from families below the poverty level. However, the original Title I definition of high-need was also retained in the law in the section specifically detailing the Troops program. Essentially, Congress inadvertently created two conflicting definitions of "high-need" with regard to this program.

Early on, the Department of Education and the Troops to Teachers program recognized this unintended change in law and worked together to address it. From 2003–2005, while discussions were being held on how to reconcile this discrepancy, the program continued to operate under the original and intended definition. However, after the completion of a negotiated rulemaking process in September 2005, the Department issued a regulation stating that the new, stricter definition was not an error but congressional intent. As one of the leading supporters of this program during the drafting of No Child Left Behind, I can assure my colleagues that this was clearly not the intent of the supporters of the program.

Madam Speaker, the unfortunate result of this, aside from limiting the number of schools at which veterans may teach and honor their obligation of three-years service, is that it has disproportionately impacted western and rural states. In my home state of Wisconsin, the number of eligible school districts has been reduced from approximately 400 to 11. Not surprisingly, participation in the program has fallen significantly since the implementation of the new definition last year. This decision, although understandable given the conflicting definitions contained in the law, is a disservice both to veterans wishing to continue their service to our nation as educators as well as children who stand to benefit from their unique expertise.

The bottom line is that we are losing out on great teachers because they cannot accept the certification stipend due to a lack of schools meeting the higher needs threshold in their community. The more we restrict opportunities for participation, the fewer teachers we will be able to bring into public education, and the fewer teachers we will eventually be able to attract to the schools with the greatest need. Further, given the President's recent focus on the need for more math and science teachers, as well as his support for adjunct and alternative routes to teaching programs, we should be removing, not creating, restrictions that prevent qualified teachers in these areas from teaching in our Nation's classrooms.

Madam Speaker, with Troops to Teachers, the Department already has an established program that is well-funded and successful. Rather than restricting it, we should be maximizing this program's potential. This bill would still require participants to teach in high-need schools, as defined by the Department, but if no such school exists within a 50-mile radius of the participant, that participant will be eligible to fulfill the obligation in a school that serves low-income students under the original definition. This ensures that Troops partici-

pants teach in high-need schools first and foremost, but are not locked out of the program based on the demographic make-up of their communities.

This is a pragmatic solution that is perfectly consistent with the spirit of No Child Left Behind while also supporting our veterans and students by maximizing opportunities for participation. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this successful program and restoring the opportunity to "serve again" to our Nation's veterans.

#### TRIBUTE TO FIRST GRADE CLASS AT RACCOON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

#### HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, January 29, 2007*

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the first-grade students at Raccoon Elementary School in Centralia, Illinois. In just 2 weeks, these young boys and girls raised \$111 to buy care packages for local soldiers serving in the Middle East.

With the guidance of their teachers, Wendy Bookhout and Amy Verble, the first-graders were the first participants in the Raccoon PRIDE program. This character building education plan challenges students to praise, encourage, and respect others as well as to get involved in their community, help others, and to do the right thing.

The students donated the money they raised to Steve Smith's Second Soldier Christmas Drive. Mr. Smith then sent the care packages containing quilts, phone cards, bibles, cookies, and socks, as well as many other items for the holidays.

I am pleased to congratulate the following Raccoon first-grade class for their hard work and dedication to helping others. God bless them for their service.

Jimmy Dale Allison, Dillion Michael Adams, Abraham August Applegate, Jonathan Altom, Jeremy Joseph Cameron, Mara Kalyn Bookhout, McKenzie Christine Card, Timothy Tyler Donoho, Paige Danielle Gooden, Anna Draper, Abbie Elaine Harris, Alyssa Finley, Skylar Elizabeth Keele, Autumn Dawn George.

Devon Michael Dwain Milburn, Cameron Tyler Hoard, Anastasia Marie Moistner, Kelsey Marie Littleton, Caleb Emmerson Michael Page, Valarie Marie Meadows, Shianne Alexis Smith, Shawn M. Morton, Molly Ann Thompson, Barbara Shiann Pauley, Justin Kyle Tindall, Rex Nicholas Rexilius, Katlyn Paige Whipple, Ryan Lloyd Tate, and Carter John Wilson.

#### TRIBUTE TO BARBARO

#### HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, January 29, 2007*

Mr. CASTLE. Madam Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to remember the brave and heroic life of Barbaro. This magnificent racehorse connected with so many Americans because of his drive and determination.

A Rocky Balboa figure, Barbaro continued to fight even when the odds were strongly stacked against him. While many veterinarians said that a horse could not survive with the type of injuries Barbaro sustained at the Preakness, he fought for over 8 months, greatly exceeding expectations. What followed the injury was an outpouring of support not frequently seen in our world today. Letters, donations and gifts came in from all over the world, all because of what this wonderful horse embodied.

Barbaro had a strong connection to my home State of Delaware as he raced at Delaware Park and was trained by local trainer Michael Matz. The Barbaro story is an inspirational tale that will be remembered for generations. While a racing champion many times over, Barbaro's greatest talent was bringing people together and inspiring them.

IN HONOR OF MICHAEL L.  
PHILLIPS

**HON. BRAD ELLSWORTH**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, January 29, 2007*

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Michael Leo Phillips, a man who spent the past 37 years serving the students of Indiana State University, ISU, in Terre Haute. Mr. Phillips passed away on January 18, 2007 at the age of 60.

After graduating from ISU in 1969, Mr. Phillips remained in Terre Haute to work in the university's financial aid office, of which he would later become director. In 1995 Phillips became the student ombudsman at his alma mater, a role which allowed him to personally interact with and assist students.

Beyond all of his hard work at ISU, Mr. Phillips was actively involved in the Terre Haute community. He served as trustee and treasurer for the Spruce Street AME Church. His community involvement included serving as president of the Young Men's Civic Club; membership in the NAACP, I-Club, and 100 Concerned African American Men; and volunteering with the Vigo County Youth Football League, and Bambino youth baseball. He served on the board of directors of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America and as a trustee of the Stewart Lawn Cemetery Association. He was an adviser to many student organizations at ISU and a mentor to students at Sarah Scott Middle School.

In college Phillips played both basketball and baseball. He was on the 1967–68 Sycamores basketball team, which reached the NCAA Tournament championship game and was inducted into the ISU Athletics Hall of Fame in 2005.

Michael Phillips will be greatly missed by his wife Rita, four children, and his many friends and family in Terre Haute and beyond. Mr. Phillips will be remembered as a dedicated advocate for students, a community leader, an accomplished student-athlete, and a loving family man.

IN HONOR OF CHIEF ERNEST  
MENDOZA

**HON. NICK LAMPSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, January 29, 2007*

Mr. LAMPSON. Madam Speaker, I stand here today to pay tribute to the life of Chief Ernest Mendoza. Chief Mendoza was a dedicated public servant, whose spirit and drive impacted the lives of all of those he encountered. On January 19th Chief Mendoza was on his way home from work when he was killed by a drunk driver. His sudden and tragic death has brought sadness and sorrow not only to his family but also to the students and staff of the Needville Independent School District and the communities of Fort Bend and Wharton Counties.

This 54-year-old father of seven was a Christian and military veteran who led an honorable life. As a part of the Needville Independent School District Police for the past 10 years, and a law enforcement officer for 25, Chief Mendoza's drive and passion for public safety touched many of his fellow officers on the police force. Students and teachers in Fort Bend County will always remember his welcoming smile and that he protected them with care.

His family has established The Ernest Mendoza Law Enforcement Scholarship Fund in his honor. This fund is representative of the commitment and sacrifice which characterized Chief Mendoza's years of service, his character, and integrity. In death, as in life, he and his family continue to be dedicated to educating our Nation's youth in safe and adequate public schools.

My sincerest condolences go to the family, friends, and colleagues of Chief Ernest Mendoza. May God provide peace and comfort to his loved ones, and to those he protected.

I ask you, Madam Speaker, to join me in honoring Chief Mendoza and his family by entering his name and legacy into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

FULLY FUNDING IMPACT AID

**HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, January 29, 2007*

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce The Government Reservation Accelerated Development for Education Aid Act, GRADE-A, H.R. 701, a bill to ensure the Federal government fully funds the Impact Aid program.

In 1950, President Harry Truman established the Impact Aid program to meet the revenue shortfalls in school districts and communities that occur in districts with federally owned land, which are exempt from State and local property taxes. Public schools are required by law to accept all children from military families, Native American reservations or other Federal establishments. This puts a severe financial burden on school districts that educate a significant number of federally connected children, diminishing the overall quality of education, and increasing the funding burden on local taxpayers.

For years Impact Aid was fully funded and offered some of the strongest direct assistance to military families across the Nation. Unfortunately, over the last decade we have fallen behind on this commitment. GRADE-A has garnered bipartisan support and offers the opportunity to reverse this negative trend.

Earlier this Congress I introduced H.R. 12, in order to ensure that students in my district continue to receive the resources needed to succeed. I introduced this bill to help North Chicago continue to qualify as "heavily impacted" and therefore, receive maximum funding, and to ensure that Glenview and Highland Park receive fair compensation.

I believe that it is crucial for schools outside of my district that are affected by the presence of the Federal government to receive support from the Impact Aid program as well. This funding is necessary to maintain school quality, protect surrounding communities from financial burden and to fulfill an obligation to our men and women serving overseas, by caring for their families at home.

TRIBUTE TO JIM HAMILTON

**HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, January 29, 2007*

Mr. CLYBURN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a legend in South Carolina aviation, community activist, and real humanitarian, Jimmie L. "Jim" Hamilton. Jim is a true friend to me and to many other South Carolinians whose lives he has touched through his work and his service.

Although Jim Hamilton has been recognized as South Carolina Aviator of the Year, been awarded the Order of the Palmetto, the highest civilian honor in South Carolina; and received the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas Walt Disney Award, he remains a humble man whose big heart and bigger personality mask the adversities he has faced.

The son of a commercial fisherman and ship maintenance father, Jim grew up in Florida's Lower Matecumbe Key, where he was the only school-aged child. He took a boat to school, until his family relocated to Miami, where he attended high school. After graduation, he enlisted in the U.S. Army.

Jim's career in the military would change the course of his life. He became a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division, but he always wanted to be a pilot. Since the Army required officers to fly, Jim applied to officer training school and was sent to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. From 1949–1958, he flew spotter planes for the Army. Jim maintains that learning to fly shaped his character and taught him honor and determination.

When Jim left the Army in 1958, he became a flight instructor and Jack-of-all-trades with Aircraft Sales and Service at the Metropolitan Airport in Columbia, South Carolina, but he always wanted to own his own business.

In 1961, Jim's life changed completely when his wife, Geraldine, died in a car accident. He was left to care for 3 young boys. His mother moved to Columbia from Florida to manage the household, and just a few months later, Jim was managing Owens Field airport.

The next year, he opened Midlands Aviation in a 1-room office in the Five Points area of