

four high schools, as well as the Mercy Educational Resource Center Sacramento which opened in 1992. This center offers services to all in need, especially those who are emotionally distressed and educationally disadvantaged due to learning disabilities and societal circumstances. It is a comfortable environment that offers students a wonderful place to learn.

Coming to Sacramento as teachers, the Sisters of Mercy also became the first visiting nurses in the region. In times of need, including the devastating floods in December of 1861 that kept parts of Sacramento under water for six months, the Sisters treated malaria, typhoid fever and tuberculosis. Their contributions did not go unnoticed as members of the medical community encouraged the Sisters to open a hospital in hopes of expanding their efforts. In 1896, the sisters added a hospital ministry. In 1897, to strengthen this new ministry, the sisters opened the first private hospital in Sacramento, the Mater Misericordiae Hospital, which also was known as the Sister's Hospital. Following the hospital's opening, a nursing school was added to train others.

The Sisters of Mercy's mission has been preserved and strengthened throughout the years. In 1925, the sisters opened the new Misericordiae Hospital, now known as Mercy Hospital in Sacramento. In 1950, Mercy Children's Hospital was opened. This hospital focuses on the special needs of the community's youth. Today there are four local Mercy hospitals, Mercy General Hospital, Methodist Hospital of Sacramento, Mercy Hospital of Folsom, and Mercy San Juan Medical Center, as well as five free healthcare clinics that continue to assist those who cannot pay for their medical care. The sisters have also created Mercy Housing, which develops affordable housing and support services for those in need. They have since created hundreds of affordable housing units across Sacramento.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to the Sisters of Mercy's distinguished commitment to the well-being of the Sacramento community. Their dedication has withstood both physical and financial hardships. Over the last 150 years, the Sisters have expanded their mission with the changing of times and have been true champions of the needy. As the Sisters of Mercy's colleagues, supporters, families and friends gather together at the 150th gala celebration, I ask all my colleagues to join me in wishing them continued good fortune.

TRADE AND GLOBALIZATION ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3920, the Trade and Globalization Assistance Act of 2007. This bill will provide American workers displaced by globalization and trade policy with the necessary tools and assurance to compete in the global economy.

Created in 1962, the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program offers trade-displaced workers up to two years of job training and in-

come support while they transition to different jobs often in new sectors. Unfortunately, for too long, thousands of our workers have been denied services they are otherwise eligible to receive because of a lack of funding or restrictive interpretations of current law. H.R. 3920 bridges this gap, by not only doubling training funds to \$440 million but also by providing states with funds for vital outreach to ensure that our workers are not lost or forgotten in this increasing global age. Eighty percent of all workers in the United States work in the service sector industry and I am proud that for the first time they will be fully eligible for coverage through this legislation.

H.R. 3920 also intends to protect our most vulnerable workers—women and minorities. While Latinos represent 12.6 percent of the total U.S. workforce, they account for 26 percent of textile and apparel industry workers. In California, Latinos make up an estimated 80 percent of the California garment industry, which has been especially hard-hit by NAFTA's impact. As a result, Latino workers have been significantly hurt by poorly crafted trade policy. According to the Department of Labor, 47 percent of individuals that applied for NAFTA's TAA program due to lay offs were Latino.

Unfortunately, President Bush is threatening to veto this legislation, continuing his policy of favoring wealthy Americans over middle-class workers. I believe that it is well past time to acknowledge the hard fact that trade policy has had a negative impact on our nation's workers and it is our job to give them the support they need to be active members of our workforce. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, so we can provide displaced workers with the tools and resources necessary to compete in the 21st century, and I urge President Bush to reconsider his callous threat and stand with us to support American workers and American jobs.

TRIBUTE TO CASA

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 1, 2007

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, I am enormously proud to rise in celebration of the 30th anniversary of one of Seattle's finest start-ups, one that is valued throughout the country today. You may initially think I am speaking of Boeing, or UPS, REI or Starbucks. Rather, I refer to the CASA movement—Court Appointed Special Advocates.

Every year more than 800,000 children enter the court system after being removed from their homes and placed in foster care. They have not committed any crime, instead, they are simply child victims of abuse, neglect, or abandonment. It is up to a judge to decide their futures—what healing services they will receive, where they should live and with whom, and if they can be safe. In order to reach such critical decisions, judges need to be fully informed about the child's situation.

In 1977, King County Superior Court Judge David W. Soukup of Seattle, Washington believed that he was not getting all of the facts he needed to make well-informed decisions affecting the futures of children coming before him in child welfare cases. The judge con-

vened a meeting of community representatives to discuss his idea for recruiting citizen volunteers to do the detailed research that judges could not. Judge Soukup envisioned trained volunteers who would speak to the children and their teachers, therapists, foster parents, and family members, then write reports for the court including the volunteer's recommendations for the child's best interests. This vision was the impetus for the first CASA program.

Before coming to Congress, I sometimes had occasion to testify as an expert witness in Judge Soukup's courtroom. He was both a thorough and caring jurist. He explained that he founded the CASA movement because he wanted someone in his courtroom whose only job was to provide a voice for the children. Caseworkers are obligated to their agency, the parent, and others. An attorney appointed as the child's legal representative cannot testify about privileged, and potentially harmful, information that the child may have revealed. Attorney guardians ad litem simply could not afford the time to do a thorough investigation of all the facts, interview significant adults in the child's life, and advocate for the mental and social needs of the child.

Judge Soukup's innovative vision has grown to become a strong and respected national program of advocacy for children. It is estimated that CASA volunteers serve 30 percent of children who are in foster care and court systems because of abuse and neglect. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the founding of that first CASA program in Seattle—it is also the year in which the two millionth child will be served by a CASA volunteer.

Many of my colleagues are equally proud and supportive of the remarkable work that CASA volunteers perform within their districts to assure that a child's needs are recognized and addressed by the courts and social service systems. There are more than 900 CASA programs in 49 states. Nearly 60,000 CASA and volunteer guardians ad litem served 220,000 children in 2006 alone.

Several studies demonstrate the effectiveness of CASA advocacy for children. Judges appoint CASA volunteers to their most difficult cases, in which children face an even higher-than-normal factor of risk. In spite of the difficulty of their cases, children with a CASA volunteer are substantially less likely to spend more than three years in foster care or ever to re-enter foster care. A greater number of targeted services are ordered for children and their families when the child has a volunteer. In four out of five cases, all or almost all of the CASA volunteers' recommendations are accepted by the court. Judges today identify a great need for more volunteers to be assigned to children's cases.

I thank Judge Soukup for his inspiration. He must feel enormously rewarded by the knowledge that his idea has helped provide better outcomes for two million children today. Congratulations to the King County Dependency CASA Program on this 30th anniversary. I applaud the National CASA Association for its leadership in expanding that single program in Seattle to more than 900 offices in 49 states today. I salute Washington State CASA, also located in Seattle, for undertaking the largest expansion of CASA within the state. Finally, I congratulate and thank the hundreds of thousands of citizens who have served as CASA volunteers over these last 30 years for their steadfast advocacy to assure that the interests

and needs of the children remain the focus of our child welfare and court systems.

SMALL BUSINESS CONTRACTING PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3867) to update and expand the procurement of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes:

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3867, the "Small Business Contracting Program Improvements Act." I support this legislation because it provides for much needed contracting opportunities for small businesses that would otherwise escape them. H.R. 3867 encourages participation by qualified small businesses, particularly veteran owned businesses, in the appropriate contracting programs offered under the supervision of the Small Business Administration. The Act aims to assist small business participation, prevent fraud and bring consistency to the operation of the main contract assistance programs. While I applaud the efforts to increase opportunities to veteran-owned small businesses, I believe that it is particularly important that doing so does not adversely affect contracting opportunities for women and HUBZones.

H.R. 3867 ensures government contract opportunities for small businesses owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans. The least that we can do is provide our veterans with opportunities to fulfill their dreams of owning successful businesses so that they can support themselves in an ever-growing, competitive business arena. By expanding procurement opportunities for service-disabled veteran-owned businesses, a group that currently receives only a small fraction of their contracting goal, we say thank you to those brave heroes who sacrificed much so that all Americans can enjoy the fruits of their labor, freedom and security. The bill also protects those veterans for whom the opportunities are created by establishing penalties for misrepresentation of a service-disabled veteran owned business classification and adopts a roadmap for providing information, advice and training to service-disabled veterans as prescribed by the President.

Finally, it provides discretion to contracting officers in cases that must now be set aside for HUBZones but that could, with these amendments be used for service-disabled veteran-owned businesses. But as I stated at the outset, the exercise of such discretion must be judicious so as not to frustrate the purpose set out in the Small Business Act to provide for opportunities for HUBZones.

Mr. Chairman, this bill has safeguards to ensure that the benefits provided reach the intended recipients. Under H.R. 3867 provides that the Administrator perform the necessary checks on applicants for participation in the various contracting assistance programs to ensure their business integrity and qualifications. Most programs already require this but this makes it uniform.

The Small Business Contracting Program Improvements Act also expands opportunities for women entrepreneurs. The bill establishes requirements for the SBA to implement the Women's Procurement Program immediately. Because it has taken too much time for the SBA to implement the Women's Procurement Program, this bill is intended to provide agencies with sufficient information to immediately begin competing contracts among women business owners. Seven years is far too long for the women who have been waiting for these business opportunities. As a result of this unwarranted delay, women have lost tens of billions of dollars in contracting opportunities but thanks to H.R. 3867 they will not have to wait any longer. I am particularly pleased to know that women small business owners will finally receive the long anticipated contracting opportunities that were intended for them under the Small Business Act.

Mr. Chairman, this bill will also strengthen Community Development. Title IV strengthens the HUBZone program by verifying that small businesses receiving contracts under its authority are qualified. It further requires construction contracts to be performed within a reasonable distance of the particular HUBZone the contractor is to benefit.

This legislation has bipartisan support within the Small Business Contracting Program Improvements Act Committee and includes the input from a number of Members. There is remarkably broad support on this legislation, ranging from the National Black Chamber of Commerce to the National Federation of Independent Business and the Associated General Contractors of America. Also supporting the legislation are the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and AMVETS. The United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce and the National Defense Industrial Association also.

While this bill goes a long way to provide much needed contracting opportunities for small businesses, my amendment would have greatly enhanced such opportunities. My amendment to H.R. 3867, which updates and expands the procurement programs of the Small Business Administration. My amendment provides that it is the sense of Congress that the Administrator should encourage the components of the administration, as well as appropriate State and local government agencies, to competitively bid and negotiate contracts and prices for services, including debris clearance, distribution of supplies, reconstruction and other assistance, in advance of an act of terrorism, natural disaster, or other emergency; and work toward a goal of awarding to qualified firms located in a county, parish, or other unit of local government within the affected area, but only to the extent that the goal does not interfere with the ability of the Administrator to provide timely and effective assistance.

Mr. Chairman, we have learned from the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma that severe consequences can result from not having the proper disaster recovery plans in place prior to such a disaster. We also know that having in place a comprehensive written response plan to give support to small businesses so that they may rebuild their businesses and in turn help to rebuild the affected areas is an essential component of a good recovery plan.

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma small businesses and in particular minority and disadvantaged businesses, in the affected areas were severely and negatively impacted because they did not receive financial support necessary to rebuild their businesses and participate in the rebuilding of the affected community.

I understand that a major purpose of H.R. 3867 is to encourage participation by qualified small businesses, particularly veteran owned businesses, in the appropriate contracting programs offered under the supervision of the Small Business Administration. The Act also aims intend to assist small business participation, prevent fraud and bring consistency to the operation of the main contract assistance programs. My amendment would further support the goal to support small businesses by encouraging SBA to establish a program that provides for pre-negotiated contracts with small businesses, in advance of an act of terrorism, natural disaster, or other emergency. Thus, the small business owners from the affected areas will not only be included in the recovery and rebuilding process but also maintain viability in a competitive economic environment.

I hope that in the future we will consider the devastating impact that disasters can have on small businesses as well as the affected communities. I urge my colleagues to support small businesses by supporting H.R. 3867.

A TRIBUTE TO SAMUEL J. CORNELIUS

HON. WM. LACY CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 1, 2007

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Samuel J. Cornelius. His longstanding commitment to the citizens of Missouri has earned his place among the ranks of past inductees into the Missouri Walk of Fame.

Mr. Cornelius has been passionately devoted to promoting minority businesses and being engaged in the political process. A graduate of Anderson University, Mr. Cornelius got his start in business when he organized the Sacramento Street Businessmen's Association in Berkeley, California. During his time with the Businessmen's Association, he developed cooperative buying, promotion, and advertising programs for minority business owners.

Mr. Cornelius has been remarkably persistent in developing minority business leaders. After taking leave from his privately-owned business, he implemented the Economic Development Assistance Center for Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America. There he administered three national programs: The Anti-Poverty Program, the Minority Business Program, and the \$16.5 Billion Feeding Program.

Mr. Cornelius has served as Vice-President of the NAACP Board of Directors and a member of the United Way, the United Black Fund and the Boys and Girls Club of America. In addition, he is listed in Who's Who in Black America. He is married, a proud father of four and a Veteran of the United States Navy.

Madam Speaker, it is with great privilege that I recognize Samuel J. Cornelius today before Congress. His life and his career are