

and social fabric have been torn apart due to enduring violence, war that persisted for more than a decade, and debt incurred by misguided and corrupt leaders are tremendous. Moreover, establishing institutions and systems designed to ensure that a country will not fall back into a cycle of indebtedness, while simultaneously attempting to repay an existing debt, is an extremely lofty task. In Liberia debt and monetary conditions are debased and the demands of an increasingly global market economy continue to threaten the fragile base upon which Liberia's current economy stands. More than simply being unable to pay back the debt owed to other countries, unsustainable debt will perpetuate Liberia's inability to achieve economic independence, social harmony, or to realize a truly democratic state, now or in the future.

I commend Secretary Rice for her effort to bring much needed relief to the people of Liberia; her participation in the Liberia Partners' Forum as well as her continued work in the region serves as a shining example for us all. Let us not forget the work that remains to be done in helping to rebuild Liberia. Let us begin by calling for complete debt forgiveness.

IN RECOGNITION OF RICHARD E.  
PINKSTON

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 28, 2007*

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Richard E. Pinkston for his 25 years of federal service to this country, and to celebrate the expertise and enthusiasm he has brought to the Federal Aviation Administration, the Cleveland Hopkins Air Traffic Control Tower, and the National Air Traffic Controllers Association.

Richard began his federal career as an Air Traffic Control Specialist with the Federal Aviation Administration in 1982, and in June 1982 he started working for the Indianapolis Air Route Traffic Control Center in Indianapolis, Indiana. After a year, he transferred to Grand Forks Air Traffic Control Tower in Grand Forks, North Dakota, before he started working for the Cleveland Hopkins Air Traffic Control Tower in 1988.

Richard is a highly valued colleague due to his multiple skills and personality. His vast knowledge and experience in air traffic skills, management style, leadership skills and problem resolution has made him an invaluable asset to the Cleveland Hopkins Air Traffic Control Tower,

Throughout his career, Richard has been an outstanding team player. He has been elected the union facility representative and has served on numerous national, regional and local committees, as well as work groups for both the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Air Traffic Controllers Association. During his career he has received numerous performance awards, letters of commendation, and incentive awards.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring Richard E. Pinkston for his 25 years of federal service. His expertise and team spirit is an inspiration to all who cross paths with him.

HONORING HAROLD LEE DAVIS

**HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 28, 2007*

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Madam Speaker, I rise before you today to honor Harold Lee Davis, who was awarded the 2006 Congressional Volunteer Recognition Award by the Second Congressional District of Maryland's Veterans Advisory Group.

For over 18 years, Mr. Davis has provided a variety of activities and amenities for the veterans at the Department of Veterans Affairs Baltimore Rehabilitation and Extended Care Center. From monthly entertainment shows to cookouts, crab feasts and puppet shows, Mr. Davis puts smiles on the faces of many veterans each month. During the long periods of a veteran's stay at the center, he often brings his grandson along to brighten their day. They work as a team to pass out snacks, provide some bedside entertainment and friendly smiles to the veterans they visit. Mr. Davis truly has the ability to communicate with veteran patients in a very caring and compassionate way.

Mr. Davis began his volunteer work for veterans by pushing wheelchair-bound veterans from the Fort Howard Community Based Outpatient Clinic to the local area carnival. He quickly learned of the veterans' needs for a friendly smile and someone to talk to during their stay at a veteran's facility. He now spends days assisting veterans at the Department of Veterans Affairs downtown Baltimore Medical Center, the Baltimore Rehabilitation and Extended Care Center and the Perry Point Medical Center. He often travels to the USO International Gateway Lounge at Baltimore-Washington International Airport, Dover Air Force Base, the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home and the Elsmere, Delaware VA Hospital.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join with me today to honor Harold Lee Davis. He is a remarkable volunteer for Maryland's veterans. Through his tireless efforts, he has helped hundreds of veterans receive their medical care from the Department of Veterans Affairs. He has gone above and beyond the call of duty to aid those who have dedicated their lives to serve our great country.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**HON. JOE BACA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 28, 2007*

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to revise and extend my remarks.

I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 198, a resolution commemorating Black History Month.

Black History Month is a time for us to explore, highlight, and create awareness about the history of African Americans. It is an opportunity to celebrate their development and growth as a community, as well as a chance to recognize their contributions to society. Black History Month is also a time to acknowledge that the struggle for social justice and equality for all is a battle we continue to fight.

The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) founded Black History Month. They have chosen this year's theme to be, "From Slavery to Freedom." This theme is dedicated to the struggles of peoples of African descent to achieve freedom and equality in the Americas during the age of emancipation. It is also a time to recognize the achievements of countless African Americans that influenced our Nation's history throughout the periods of reconstruction, the Harlem Renaissance, the Great Depression; the civil rights movement, and to present day.

Individuals such as Harriet Tubman, who led the Underground Railroad, Frederick Douglas, who launched a newspaper to advocate abolition, Hiram Revels, who became the first Black U.S. Senator in 1870, W.E.B. Du Bois, the NAACP forerunner, the artists and writers of the Harlem Renaissance, Thurgood Marshall, who became the first Black Supreme Court Justice, and civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. are just a few African Americans who have helped provide a path to freedom.

During the month of February, we should remember and learn from the past, while continuing to learn in the present to prepare for a brighter future. Knowing and understanding Black history is important not only for African Americans, but also for our entire nation. Black history is American history, so let us recognize these individuals for their great contributions.

I urge the rest of my colleagues to stand with me and support H. Res. 198.

INTRODUCTION OF THE TEACHING  
GEOGRAPHY IS FUNDAMENTAL  
ACT

**HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 28, 2007*

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Teaching Geography is Fundamental Act, a bill to help ensure that all young people acquire the vital global knowledge they need to compete in today's increasingly-connected world. I thank my colleague, ROGER WICKER, for his leadership and hard work on this issue.

Madam Speaker, our nation is facing a crisis in geographic knowledge. Sixty-three percent of young adults cannot locate Iraq on a map of the Middle East. Seventy-five percent cannot find Iran. Half cannot locate New York on a map of the United States.

These statistics are emblematic of a general lack of knowledge about the world that is troubling in a time when the United States must compete in a global marketplace. We need Americans to know and understand the countries and cultures that are or could become our political and economic partners. It is unacceptable that seventy-one percent of young Americans do not know that the United States is the world's largest exporter of goods. It is unacceptable that, despite the fact that it is the world's largest democracy, nearly half of young adults do not know where India is located.

We need to improve our children's understanding of their world both within and beyond our country's borders. The Teaching Geography is Fundamental Act will do just that. It

would authorize federal funding to improve student achievement, increase teacher training, encourage education research, and develop effective instructional materials and strategies for geography education. It will leverage and expand support for geography education partnerships. And it will prepare America's students to move forward and succeed in a rapidly-changing, competitive, global economy.

It is time to be sure that American citizens are informed citizens of the world. I ask my colleagues to join Congressman WICKER and me and support the Teaching Geography is Fundamental Act.

RECOGNIZING THE 116TH AIR  
CONTROL SQUADRON

**HON. DARLENE HOOLEY**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 28, 2007*

Ms. HOOLEY. Madam Speaker, today I rise to praise the courage, dedication, and selflessness of the following 116th Air Control Squadron volunteers.

The "Fighting Longracks" from Camp Rilea, Warrenton, Oregon answered the call of service and stood up, so their active duty counterparts could temporarily stand down for the holidays.

From September 2006 through January 2007 the Oregon Air National Guard in association with citizen-airmen from Air National Guard units from Hawaii, Ohio, Puerto Rico, and Wisconsin provided tactical command and control for all combat assets within Afghanistan.

Unfortunately, too often we stand here in this chamber to publicly acknowledge the contribution of our military and their families after a tragedy—we honor our fallen—and often forget the living, our veterans.

Lieutenant Colonel Timothy Olson, Lieutenant Colonel Jim Gregory, Major Paul Evans, Major Keith Townsend, Captain Leon McGuire, Captain Bryan Habas, Captain Victoria Habas, Senior Master Sergeant Robert Birman, Senior Master Sergeant Ralph Lehman, Senior Master Sergeant Leslie Wright, Master Sergeant William Baer, Master Sergeant Randy Dickenson, Master Sergeant Donald Hillgaertner, Master Sergeant Gary Gudge, Master Sergeant Cory Jackson, Master Sergeant Albert Luquette, Master Sergeant Adam Melerski, Master Sergeant Troy Mitchell, Master Sergeant Richard Murren, Technical Sergeant Ann Chancey, Technical Sergeant Edwin Corcoran, Technical Sergeant Carl Domingo, Technical Robert Foreman, Technical Sergeant Bryan Garret, Technical Sergeant Matthew Gudge, Technical Sergeant George McMahan, Staff Sergeant Michelle Nelson, and Staff Sergeant Laurence Rose raised their hands, willingly accepted duties in war-torn Afghanistan, and served us with honor.

These airmen worked with our allies in the region to provide command and control that sustained complex, time critical air sovereignty missions in support of International Stabilization Assistance Force (ISAF) priorities. Their contributions cannot be overstated, nor in truth measured.

As a Congresswoman from Oregon, I am proud of what these citizen-airmen accom-

plished, and humbled by their continued willingness to answer the call of a nation that is in need far more often than anyone expected.

I ask this chamber to recognize and applaud these airmen who like hundreds of thousands of their peers ask for little, give everything they can, and believe our America is worth the sacrifice.

Thank you for standing a post that few even know exists.

TRIBUTE TO MR. DAVID GIBSON

**HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 28, 2007*

Mr. SERRANO. Madam Speaker, as the nation reflects and commemorates the myriad of ways in which African Americans have shaped the social, economic, cultural and political landscape of our nation, I rise today in honor of Mr. David Gibson—a distinguished human service professional whose daily stewardship of people's health related needs reminds us of the impact a single individual can have in improving the lives of many.

Presently, Mr. Gibson serves as the Director of the Highbridge Facility at Samaritan Village, a leading substance abuse center in the Bronx. Educated at the Hunter College School of Social Work, Mr. Gibson graduated with honors and was later accepted into Hunter's prestigious Doctoral Program. A New York State Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a Credited Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor, Mr. Gibson brings to Samaritan Village more than twenty-five years of experience within the social and human services field.

In addition to his daily work as an administrator, Mr. Gibson's extensive involvement in the community and civic life of both the Bronx and New York City is reflected in his numerous educational and organizational affiliations. Mr. Gibson acts as an adjunct professor at both the City and State University of New York, the College of New Rochelle, and the Metropolitan College of New York City. Moreover, he is presently affiliated with: the Health and Human Services Committee of Community Board 4 (Member); the Morrisania Revitalization Corporation (Member, Board of Directors); and the Association of Substance Abuse Providers of New York State (Executive Board Member, former Chair of the Cultural Diversity Committee).

Madam Speaker, Frederick Douglass is quoted as saying, "Man's greatness consists in his ability to do and the proper application of his powers to things needed to be done." This statement, seemingly so self-evident, nevertheless reminds us that those who act righteously in support of others face the prospect of one day realizing their own greatness. Madam Speaker, for a life dedicated to honorably serving people in need, I am pleased to recognize Mr. David Gibson.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL  
MENTORING MONTH

**HON. DANNY K. DAVIS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 28, 2007*

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, as we celebrate February as National Mentoring Month, I am reminded of the words of Martin Luther King, Jr.: "Occasionally in life there are those moments of unutterable fulfillment which cannot be completely explained by those symbols called words. Their meanings can only be articulated by the inaudible language of the heart."

Mentoring is one of those moments in life that cannot be truly appreciated with words. It is a valuable activity that gives all involved a sense of happiness and connection that material things cannot. By reaching into the hearts of children, mentoring opens young people's eyes to a brighter future, and every young person deserves that opportunity.

A mentor, of course, is often an adult who, along with parents, gains a sense of fulfillment when making a positive difference in the quality of life for that young person. The average mentor spends about 8 to 10 hours a month with his or her mentee on activities such as reading a good book aloud, visiting museums, or going to the playground.

I am proud of the many mentoring programs that are already in place in the Chicagoland area, such as Mercy Home's Friends First Program and Sinai Mentoring Program, which links Mount Sinai Hospital professionals with youth from North and South Lawndale High Schools.

I also want to commend the Chicago Public School system and the Board of Education for the development of a program called Cradle to the Classroom. This program involves mentors who work individually with young parents and students who are pregnant and who have children. These youth, with the help of a mentor, finish their high school education and graduate.

When a young person is matched with a caring, responsible individual, this relationship often makes for a counsel, friendship, and constructive example. For too long we have focused on providing remedies to problems that only address negative behavior, rather than looking at ways to promote the positive and healthy development of our young people. National Mentoring Month focuses on what children need in order to grow into healthy, safe, and well-educated adults.

In Chicago and across the country, it is clear that the mentoring framework is in place. Now we just need more people to volunteer their time to help change the life of a child. Research shows that young people who are mentored have a stronger attachment to school, higher graduation rates, and decreased involvement with drugs, gangs, and violence.

Mentoring is a strong investment in our children and in the future of our country. Therefore, Madam Speaker, I am indeed pleased to join with my colleagues in celebrating the essential role that mentoring plays in the lives of our young people during this National Mentoring Month.