

benefits that became the envy of the Nation's labor movement.

With housing costs rising, Lillian approached Mayor Bloomberg with a proposal to give DC 37 members and municipal workers an affordable way to meet the City's requirement that they live in the 5 boroughs. The result is the innovative DC 37 Affordable Housing Program. This program allows DC 37 members and city workers preference for 5 percent of units in city-sponsored lotteries for affordable homes and apartments, down payment grants through the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development, and homebuyer training and education through Neighborhood Housing Services.

Lillian's leadership is rooted in the lessons she learned while growing up on welfare on Chicago's South Side and fighting for better working conditions as a Nurse's Aide. Growing up as 1 of 5 siblings in conditions of poverty, she was instilled with a deep concern for the needy and a passion for fighting social injustices.

Lillian has been a member of numerous boards including: Board of Trustees of the College of New Rochelle; the State University of New York, the National Equal Rights Committee and the National Committee for Labor Israel.

Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize this labor activist for all of her accomplishments and her empathy for area workers.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Lillian Roberts.

U.S. TROOP READINESS, VETERANS' HEALTH, AND IRAQ ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 23, 2007

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my thoughts on H.R. 1591: the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health and Iraq Accountability Act of 2007. After a great deal of reflection, I have decided to support this legislation. With today's vote, we are taking an important step toward ending the war in Iraq and bringing our troops home.

This legislation does not go far enough for me. I pushed for a vote on a course of action that would have gotten us out of Iraq much sooner and stipulated that all funding go toward drawing down troops. The House Rules Committee did not allow a vote on this position, and even if they had, I know that there are not enough votes to support it.

Today's vote was a very difficult one for me and I have been carefully weighing the impact of this legislation for weeks. In the final analysis, I decided that H.R. 1591 carried enough practical and symbolic weight that if it needed my vote to pass the House, then I should support it.

For me, the most important component of this legislation is that it stipulates the withdrawal of troops must begin no later than March 1, 2008 and be completed within 180 days. It also establishes specific benchmarks that the Iraqi government must meet, benchmarks that mirror the criteria President Bush himself set forth in his 2007 State of the Union

address. If real progress on these benchmarks is not made by July 1, 2007, then U.S. troop redeployment will begin immediately and must be completed within 180 days.

President Bush has been threatening to veto this bill for weeks and I fully expect he will do so if it reaches his desk in its current form. Regardless, the House is sending an important message to the President today by passing this legislation. In the weeks and months ahead, I will continue to do everything I can to end this war. There may not have been enough votes today to bring a faster end to this war, but there were enough to establish a date certain for withdrawal. With today's vote in the House we are closer than we have ever been to ending this war.

U.S. TROOP READINESS, VETERANS' HEALTH, AND IRAQ ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. WILLIAM J. JEFFERSON

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 23, 2007

Mr. JEFFERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1591, the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health and Iraq Accountability Act.

In order to have an open and honest debate on the war in Iraq, we must differentiate between the situation that existed in Iraq when we first arrived there, and the situation that exists today. No longer do we find ourselves facing a united front, the clearly identifiable enemy of insurgents and Saddam loyalists. The current instability in Iraq has become a sectarian civil war, a war in which we have no business participating. We cannot use the parameters of a war that have since changed. We are not aiding the enemy in any way by setting reasonable, logical benchmarks, nor are we 'micromanaging' our war effort. The situation has changed, and so must the course we take.

This bill gives us the framework needed to focus our efforts on those who actually mean us harm, and extricate us from a situation in which we are nothing more than a police force, caught in the middle of a sectarian conflict. By committing to a gradual plan of benchmarks and a firm date of withdrawal, we create an environment in which the Iraqi people themselves become responsible for their future. No longer will they be reliant upon our presence to establish their own nation. The United States will be an important ally of the new Iraq, not an enforcer of the status quo in their nation.

I am also pleased that this bill includes several measures to aid our communities along the Gulf Coast. Waiving the local match requirements and forgiving Community Disaster Loans will help the city of New Orleans recover financially from the effects of Katrina. These financial troubles have since been compounded by the Administration's stubborn refusal to treat our disaster, the worst the Nation has ever seen, the same way that all others have been treated. For all previous localities receiving Community Disaster Loans, ranging from Hurricane Andrew to 9/11, 97 percent have been forgiven. This bill would take the long overdue step of forgiving the loans that

were extended to communities along the Gulf Coast. Free of this burden that has been unfairly put upon them, our communities can continue their extensive rebuilding efforts.

Our hurricane protection system, battered by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, is still not in the condition it was in before the storm. With hurricane season beginning again just a few months from now, we cannot afford to leave the city unprotected for another year. The money included in this bill for the Corps of Engineers ensures the safety of all citizens in the New Orleans area. The Corps should not be forced to delay action on critical hurricane protection projects because they lack the necessary funding. We have already seen the devastation that can be wrought by a hurricane; it is crucial that the Corps have the resources it needs to protect our city.

I also wish to highlight several other important programs within this bill whose importance cannot be overstated. We face a housing crisis in New Orleans, with public units drastically reduced in number, and no suitable plan for replacing such units in the short term. Eighty million dollars is provided in this bill for HUD tenant rental assistance so that our citizens can return home as soon as possible. Our elementary education system is in dire need of experienced teachers and administrators. Our colleges and universities were closed for months, and sustained significant physical damages. Sixty million dollars has been provided in this bill, and represents another step in the rejuvenation of our educational establishments. Additional funding for the Small Business Administration's disaster loan program has been provided, and is sorely needed for future disasters. The slow pace at which such loans were administered in the immediate months after Katrina was shameful, and by supporting this bill we have committed to ensure that it never happens again.

I urge my colleagues to support this supplemental appropriations bill, which provides everything needed by our troops in Iraq, while setting a course for our necessary disengagement. The people of this great country eloquently expressed their disapproval regarding the course of this war in the November elections and, on their behalf, we should do no less than heed their wishes.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO JOANN STRAND

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 26, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate Mrs. Joann Strand for being awarded National Board Certification in Adolescence and Young Adulthood Secondary Language Arts by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Joann is 1 of 2 educators at Foothill High School in Henderson, Nevada to become nationally certified. National Board Certification is a process that requires 1 to 3 years of preparation and testing. Mrs. Strand completed an extensive portfolio of assignments, essays, and videotapes as well as tests which assessed her knowledge of the individual subjects she teaches. Once obtaining National Board Certification, a teacher is given the

highest honor of professional teaching excellence. Only 116 of more than 20,000 teachers in the Clark County School District, less than 1 percent, have earned this distinction.

Mrs. Strand has a long and distinguished career as an educator beginning with a Bachelor's Degree from Bemidji State University and a Master's Degree in Secondary Language Arts from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She has been an employee of the Clark County School District for 19 years and has spent the past 8 years at Foothill High School as a member of the English Department. Mrs. Strand is also a co-creator with a fellow teacher of Young Entrepreneur Services, Inc., YES, Inc., is a unique company classroom which has been recognized throughout the district for its unique approach to instructing students. This class applies real world business work situations with the necessities of an English class. Mrs. Strand is known by her colleagues as a tireless worker who is both inspiring and relentless in her pursuit of excellence. Joann has made a profound difference in our community and we are most fortunate to have this leadership which positively impacts student achievement.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Joann Strand. Her efforts to improve the educational experiences of the student at Foothill High School are commendable. I congratulate her on her much deserved recognition and I wish her continued success.

A TRIBUTE TO MS. AURORA
BROWN

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 26, 2007

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Brooklyn resident Aurora Brown. Ms. Brown is a native New Yorker and a third generation West Indian who sites education as the strength of her lineage. The Amsted's (family name) were the first black school teachers in Virginia. Ms. Brown taught scholastic and college preparatory classes to youth for employment opportunities. Her students have successfully gone on to colleges and universities such as Morehouse, Spelman and Hampton through her mentoring.

As the Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder of S&B Cleaning Services, Inc., Ms. Brown's mission to incorporate was derived from previous experiences of managing several janitorial companies and being employed by federal affiliates including 26 Federal Plaza, New York, New York.

Ms. Brown received The Council City of New York Proclamation Award in December of 2005 and the Partner in Education Award from the Occupational Training Center of New York in June of 2004. Known for her generosity and fairness when dealing with clients and employees, she makes it her business to oversee personally the human resources development of employing disadvantaged and handicapped individuals.

Ms. Brown's work ethic serves as encouragement for women to venture out and become business owners. She states, "through long hours, trials, and tribulations, moments were grueling, but definitely worth the effort." She also admits the company motto was her

driving force when faced with opposition and adversity. Tedious daily functions of operating a business, she makes time to give to her community as a facilitator of public functions, contributing donations, fundraising for the welfare of child care. Ms. Brown, in conjunction with public officials and local affiliates, has donated toys to the Young Minds Daycare Center for the 2005 holiday season. Her personal choice for donations in 2006 was Family Life Foster Care.

Ms. Brown has others to thank in establishing herself, such as family, friends, and associates, but likes to acknowledge that her Executive Vice-President Edwin Santiago is a key component in the developmental operation of rapid growth of this organization; she also takes pride in acknowledging that her employees are the backbone of S&B Cleaning Services, Inc. There is much more you can expect to see that Ms. Brown has yet to reveal. Just like her company motto "There's not much we don't do."

Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize Ms. Aurora Brown for her accomplishments in business.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Ms. Aurora Brown.

HONORING ANDREW WISE

HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 26, 2007

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Andrew Wise of the Neighborhood Housing & Development Corporation in Gainesville, Florida.

On Tuesday, March 20, 2007, Andrew Wise was honored with the Dorothy Richardson Awards for Resident Leadership from NeighborWorks America.

Mr. Wise combined his passion for Neighborhood Housing & Development Corporation (NHDC) and his networking skills to recruit a remarkable stream of community, business and educational leaders who have become active in the NHDC organization. NHDC is a non-profit homeownership center that has been in existence since 1982. The organization's goal is to promote and provide decent and affordable housing for low-to-moderate income residents of North Central Florida.

Mr. Wise has been an eloquent NHDC ambassador to the many church, community and civic organizations to which he belongs. Within NHDC, his board tenure and experience have made him the go-to person for new board members—especially community residents—in understanding the array of NHDC programs and their many and varied funding sources. He has been invaluable in helping new members move past this steep learning curve by getting them to focus on the mission of the organization and how its board and staff are so instrumental in transforming lives and uplifting the community.

Created in 1991, the Dorothy Richardson Awards for Resident Leadership celebrate the outstanding contributions of dedicated community leaders across the United States. Each year, the NeighborWorks network honors residents who exemplify the qualities of Dorothy Richardson, a Pittsburgh activist who helped advance the community-based development

movement that informed the formation of the NeighborWorks network.

My congratulations and respect go out to Mr. Wise on his lifetime of work and commitment to earn this award.

HONORING THE CAREER OF
DENNIS GJERDINGEN

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 26, 2007

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, today I wish to recognize and honor a dedicated and innovative educator, Mr. Dennis Gjerdingen, upon his retirement after 26 years as principal of the Clarke School for the Deaf in Northampton, Massachusetts.

Dennis became interested in childhood deafness when, in 1964, he learned that his newborn son was deaf. He trained as a teacher of social studies and English at Minnesota State University, received his masters in Speech and Hearing at Washington University in St. Louis and did post-masters work there in Educational Administration. He spent 14 years at Central Institute for the Deaf in St. Louis, as a classroom teacher, researcher, associate professor, assistant to the director and as headmaster, before coming to Clarke School for the Deaf in 1981. He is the 6th president in Clarke's 140-year history.

Clarke School is an international leader in teaching listening, speech, language and academic skills to deaf children and assisting families and training professionals to work with them. During his tenure, Mr. Gjerdingen has reorganized the Clarke School and its structure to position Clarke for a rapidly changing future. He designed and administered new Clarke programs, including the creation of the Center for Oral Education on the Northampton campus that helps people of all ages with hearing loss. In the last 10 years, Mr. Gjerdingen spearheaded a strategic plan to expand Clarke to 5 campuses with 4 new schools for young children in Boston, MA, Jacksonville, FL, New York City, and Philadelphia, PA. Clarke School for the Deaf now impacts the lives of more than 10,000 children and adults annually through its educational programs, research, curriculum development and professional training.

The author of more than 30 articles in professional journals, Mr. Gjerdingen is widely recognized as an expert in the field. In 1987 he was appointed by Congress to the Commission on the Education of the Deaf that reported directly to Congress and the President. During this appointment, he helped author a report from which major legislation was adopted. He has also served as president of the International Alexander Graham Bell Association.

It is my great privilege to honor Mr. Gjerdingen for his commitment to providing greater educational opportunities for deaf children and their families and professionals around the country.