

join me in honoring George Hampton. I am proud to have had him in my Congressional district and wish him never-ending success in his future endeavors.

Thank you, George Hampton, for your decades of dedicated service to the community.

HONORING BESSIEFRANCES J.
MEADOR

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 23, 2007

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life of Bessiefrances J. Meador of Riverdale, New York. The residents of California's 9th Congressional District remember Beth as a brilliant woman, an astute politician, a dedicated community activist, an accomplished attorney, and a loving friend to many. Beth passed away on March 30, 2007.

Beth spent her early years in Independence, Missouri and Colorado Springs, Colorado. In 1955, she and her family returned to the Kansas City area. There, they joined the Olivet Institutional Baptist Church where Beth was very active as a youth and young adult.

Upon her graduation from Sumner High School in 1961, Beth began her undergraduate studies at the University of Kansas. After earning her B.A., she obtained her law degree from the University of California at Berkeley, and was admitted to the bar in California and New York.

Beth led a distinguished career in the legal profession, serving in a number of important roles. She was an administrative attorney in the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in New York, and also maintained a private law practice. Beth worked as a litigation compliance officer for the New York City Child Welfare Administration and as Minority Business Specialist for the State of New York and the New York City Transit Authority. She previously worked as Assistant Director in the Office of Legal Services of the State Bar of California. In the last years of her life, Beth was a teacher in the New York City Public School System.

Beth was active in politics throughout her life. Living in Oakland, California in the 1970s, she ran for the State Assembly, and was actively involved in many local campaigns. She participated in the 1972 National Black Political Convention in Gary, Indiana, as well as numerous State and national political conventions. Delegates always sought her counsel, for as much as she was an idealist, she was also very practical in seeking strategies and initiatives for making the United States a better country.

Always actively involved in her community, Beth was centrally involved in a number of organizations. An accomplished concert pianist, she contributed her talent as the youth music director at the historic Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, where she was also a member. Beth belonged to the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and the Coalition of 100 Black Women.

On a personal note, Beth was my roommate for a year, and I was privileged to benefit from her wise counsel, her musical genius, and our thought-provoking discussions. After Beth moved into her own apartment, as a generous

gesture of gratitude she gave me a beautiful set of dinnerware which I use to this day. Her memory and her love are deeply etched in my heart and in the hearts of many.

The last time I saw Beth was in September 2006, when we celebrated my sister Mildred's birthday in New York City. We enjoyed our evening with Congressman CHARLIE RANGEL, who welcomed us with open arms and generous hospitality to his district in Harlem. Beth was delighted to be with Congressman RANGEL and enjoyed the evening tremendously. Little did we know that these would be our last moments together.

Today, California's 9th Congressional District salutes and honors a great human being, our beloved Beth Meador. We extend our deepest condolences to Beth's family, and our deepest gratitude for sharing this great woman with us. She will be deeply missed. May her soul rest in peace.

CELEBRATING THE PROMULGA- TION OF MINORITY AND WOMEN OWNED BUSINESSES

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 23, 2007

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to enter into the RECORD an article titled "Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce Joins New York City in Promoting Minority and Women Owned Businesses," published in CaribNews on the week ending April 3, 2007.

The article celebrates the partnership between the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce and the great City of New York and efforts to increase the number of and provide necessary support to minority and women owned businesses. The partnership has been forged in an effort to help minority and women owned businesses become certified to provide goods and services to the City of New York. According to the article, "companies that become certified obtain greater access to and information about contracting opportunities, receive technical assistance to better compete for those opportunities, and benefit from inclusion in the City's Online Directory of Certified Firms." Each of these benefits is essential to the success of minority and women owned businesses, many of whom face considerable challenges in starting and sustaining their operations.

I applaud the partnership between the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce and the great City of New York and look forward to the continued growth of minority and women owned businesses in New York City.

**GREATER HARLEM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
JOINS NEW YORK CITY IN PROMOTING MINORITY
AND WOMEN OWNED BUSINESSES**

Harlem, USA—The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce (GHCC) has joined with the NYC Department of Small Business Services in a partnership to help Minority and Women Owned Businesses become certified to provide goods and services to the City of New York. The New York City Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) Program certifies, promotes, and fosters the growth of the City's minority and women-owned businesses. Companies that become certified obtain greater access to and information about contracting opportunities, re-

ceive technical assistance to better compete for those opportunities, and benefit from inclusion in the City's Online Directory of Certified Firms.

GHCC began actively promoting this initiative in the Fall of 2006. Early outreach activities included the Miller Urban Entrepreneur Series at Terrace In The Sky Restaurant on December 9, 2006 and the End of Year Reception at Pier 2110 Restaurant on December 20, 2006.

On February 20th the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce hosted a special workshop on the importance of M/WBE's being certified with the city at the Marriott Marquis Hotel on Broadway and 45th Street prior to its Quarterly Membership meeting. That workshop was the first in a series of seminars and individual training sessions that will take place through June 2007 in an effort to get more Minority and Women Owned Businesses to be certified with the city and make it possible for more minority companies of all kinds to do business with NYC.

Firms based in New York City or certain surrounding counties are eligible for certification if they have been in business for more than one year and are at least 51 percent owned by a member of an ethnic minority group or a woman. Certified M/WBEs have access to free business assistance and seminars to help them make the most of their certification status. All companies are listed in a searchable public online directory that purchasing officers and contracting agencies use to find the goods and services they need. GHCC begins hosting individual training sessions on M/WBE certification with the City every Thursday and Saturday starting through June.

INTRODUCING THE SECURE VISA WAIVER TRAVEL ACT OF 2007

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 23, 2007

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, today, I am introducing the Secure Visa Waiver Travel Act of 2007. Dating back to the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) has been a highly successful program that allows nationals of designated countries to travel to the United States visa-free for up to 90 days for temporary business or tourism. VWP countries are required to grant reciprocal visa-free travel to Americans. The VWP has been a boost for tourism and commerce between the United States and the 27 countries that currently participate. For this reason, many other countries hope to join the VWP. There is strong support within the Administration, the business community, and among our allies and friends for Congress to take up legislation to expand the VWP.

I also support expansion of the VWP, and that is why I am introducing this bill. The VWP has been beneficial to American tourism and businesses. However, the VWP also has serious security vulnerabilities; both "shoe-bomber" Richard Reid and convicted al-Qaeda operative Zacarias Moussaoui traveled under the VWP. As we consider ways to expand the VWP, I believe security considerations must be foremost in our minds. The United States must enhance partnerships with VWP countries to ensure that terrorists and those who would violate our laws cannot travel visa-free. I believe my bill accomplishes this.

As a prerequisite to expansion, my bill requires the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to implement an effective biometric air border exit system, US-VISIT air exit, so we can know at all times who is in our country. My bill also requires that VWP travelers be screened against terrorist and criminal watch lists and that VWP countries report all lost and stolen passports, so these passports cannot be used by terrorists and criminals. We must also improve information-sharing with our VWP partner countries to be able to know whether a traveler might present a threat to the U.S. In addition, before admitting new countries to the VWP, DHS must consider other security factors, such as the country's passport standards, airport security, whether the country has an effective air marshal program, and whether its nationals have a history of compliance with our immigration and other laws.

My bill maintains the requirement that the nationals of a VWP country demonstrate they will comply with our immigration laws. Some who advocate expanding the Visa Waiver Program say that preventing terrorism should be our only concern and that we should not consider whether a country's nationals have a history of immigration violations or visa over-stays. While preventing terrorist travel is our primary security concern, it is not our only security concern. As we have seen in recent worksite enforcement actions, persons living and working in the U.S. illegally can also present security risks to our citizens and our economy, such as engaging in identity theft, or they can be exploited by criminal or terrorist elements. Robust border security, where we have control of who enters and leaves our country and know they are here for legitimate purposes, must be central to any expansion of the VWP. To that end, I am pleased to offer an approach to accomplishing this goal—the Secure Visa Waiver Travel Act of 2007.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RUSS CARNAHAN

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 23, 2007

Mr. CARNAHAN. Madam Speaker, due to being unavoidably delayed, I missed votes on H.R. 1677 (rollcall No. 214) and H. Res. 196 (rollcall No. 215). I would have voted in favor of both H.R. 1677 and H. Res. 196, had I been present to record my vote.

HONORING THE AFRICAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 23, 2007

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the African American Association. Throughout its extraordinary history, the Association has been known for promoting equality, diversity, social justice, and African American community empowerment. This year the Association celebrates the 45th anniversary of its founding.

The African American Association was first organized in the early 1960s by African Amer-

ican students at the University of California, Berkeley. Among the founding members were community leaders such as Khalid Al-Mansour (known then as Don Warden); future Judges Henry Ramsey and Thelton Henderson; future Congressman and Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums; and future Black Panthers Huey Newton and Bobby Seale.

The Association's founding occurred in the midst of a turbulent time for African Americans and for our country. Malcolm X was fearlessly expressing his views on race relations. Many African nations were being liberated after years of colonial rule and oppression. The civil rights movement was gaining national momentum, and many young African Americans were feeling a newfound source of pride in their African heritage. A primary impetus for the group's establishment was an interest in learning the real history of Africa and slavery in the United States. Not having the resources for a mass media campaign, group members took their message to where the people were: they took their message to the streets.

Of central importance to Association members were questions related to the African American self-image. Members wanted to address the negative light in which many African Americans viewed themselves, specifically in the context of their African heritage and physical features. Moreover, the Association's mission was to help African Americans cultivate the sense of self-love that for many had been missing as a result of slavery's destructive legacy within the African American community and throughout our country.

After being met with skepticism initially, the Association began to reach more and more people with their message of empowerment. Members began reaching a wider audience by broadcasting a half-hour radio show on Oakland KDIA, entitled *We Care Enough To Tell It Like It Is*. After approximately a year of meeting in various locations, the Association established regular meeting facilities on Grove Street in Oakland. The best known and most attended events were the Association's weekly Monday Night Lectures and Friday Night Forums. These gatherings featured discussions of books on African and African American history, religion, architecture, current events, and other topics. People of all ages attended these lively meetings because they always represented an opportunity to learn, and to look at things from a new perspective.

Over the years, the Association continued its advocacy for social, political, economic, and educational equality for African Americans. Members urged African Americans to establish businesses, and the Association formed its own employment office to match members with job opportunities. The Association also remained centrally involved in the struggle to promote education among young African Americans, urging them to not only complete their education but to obtain the highest grades at the highest level of education that they could. In addition, the Association organized to address countless other issues, including community safety, the devastating impact of the Jonestown Massacre, and social justice in African countries.

Today the members and supporters of the African American Association have come together to celebrate not only the organization's 45th anniversary, but also the group's permanent and positive impact on our community. On this very special day, I join all of the mem-

bers in thanking and saluting the Association for its profound contributions to California's 9th Congressional District, our country, and our world.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 23, 2007

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I missed rollcall votes during the week of April 16, 2007. On rollcall vote No. 214, the motion to suspend the rules and pass, as amended, H.R. 1677, the Tax Payer Protection Act, I would have voted "yea"; on rollcall vote No. 215, the motion to suspend the rules and agree to H. Res. 196, supporting the goals and ideals of World Water Day, I would have voted "yea"; on rollcall vote No. 216, the motion to suspend the rules and agree, as amended, to H. Con. Res. 100, condemning the recent violent actions of the Government of Zimbabwe against peaceful opposition party activists and members of civil society, I would have voted "yea"; on rollcall vote No. 217, the motion to suspend the rules and agree to H. Res. 273, supporting the goals and ideals of Financial Literacy Month, I would have voted "yea"; on rollcall vote No. 218, the motion to suspend the rules and agree to H. Con. Res. 76, honoring the 50th Anniversary of the International Geophysical Year, I would have voted "yea."

On rollcall vote No. 219, ordering the previous question, I would have voted "yea"; on rollcall vote No. 220, agreeing to H. Res. 301, the rule providing for consideration of H.R. 1257, Shareholder Vote on Executive Compensation Act, I would have voted "yea"; on rollcall vote No. 221, the motion to suspend the rules and agree to H. Res. 306, offering heartfelt condolences to the victims and their families regarding the horrific violence at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia, I would have voted "yea"; on rollcall vote No. 222, agreeing to the Chabot of Ohio Amendment No. 1, I would have voted "nay"; on rollcall vote No. 223, agreeing to the Chabot of Ohio Amendment No. 2, I would have voted "no"; on rollcall vote No. 224, the motion to recommit, with instructions, H.R. 1361, the Relief for Entrepreneurs: Coordination of Objectives and Values for Effective Recovery Act, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall vote No. 225, passage of H.R. 1361, the Relief for Entrepreneurs: Coordination of Objectives and Values for Effective Recovery Act, I would have voted "yea"; On rollcall vote No. 226, the motion to suspend the rules and agree to H. Res. 300, commending the achievements of the Rutgers University women's basketball team and applauding the character and integrity of their student-athletes, I would have voted "yea"; On rollcall vote No. 227, the motion to suspend the rules and agree to H. Res. 293, supporting the goals and ideals highlighted through National Volunteer Week, I would have voted "yea"; On rollcall vote No. 228, ordering the previous question on H. Res. 317, I would have voted "yea"; On rollcall vote No. 229, agreeing to H. Res. 317, providing for consideration of H.R. 1905 and H.R. 1906, I would have voted "yea"; On rollcall vote No. 230, the motion to recommit with instructions H.R. 1905, I