

serves as an honorary board member. He also serves on the board of Lighthouse Ranch for Boys in Hammond, LA.

Through his leadership and dedication, Pastor Paul Welch has honorably and spiritually served the church and the northwest Florida community. But he is also a loving husband and father, and Pensacola is truly blessed to have him as one of her own.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the U.S. Congress, I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to a man who has served as an inspiration to us all. A deep sense of personal service to his faith for so many years is something to truly be admired and honored.

HONORING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF COPPELL HIGH SCHOOL BAND

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2007

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Coppell High School Band for their accomplishments and commitment to the City of Coppell. The Coppell High School Band represents one of the finest organizations in Texas and in the City of Coppell. The band, which is composed of over 350 members, represents the school with pride and dedication that is shown through their hard work, perseverance, and achievements. The Coppell Band has received a variety of National and local awards and honors such as the Tournament of Roses Parade and has been a 7-year consecutive winner of the Texas State Solo and Ensemble Championship. I commend the Coppell Band of past and present for their dedication during challenging periods of growth and laud their accomplishments of becoming a premier north Texas organization for families and students to become involved in. I honor the Coppell High School Band on this milestone and look forward to the future as the city and this organization continues to be a shining example in north Texas. It is with pride that I serve such a distinguished city in my congressional district and give my sincere congratulations to the Coppell High School Band.

FREEDOM FOR OSCAR SÁNCHEZ MADAN

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2007

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about Oscar Sánchez Madan, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Sánchez Madan is an independent journalist who has been a contributor to the independent press agency Cubanet since 2005. His straightforward articles as an independent journalist in totalitarian Cuba have helped interested observers of the Cuban tragedy throughout the world to learn the truth about the nightmare that is the Castro regime. Because of his commitment to accurate reporting, he persistently chronicled the brutal violence and rampant corruption of the Cuban

tyranny. Mr. Sánchez reported the truth in totalitarian Cuba, with the knowledge that any freedom of the press, any effort to shed light on the regime's atrocities, is met with brutal repression.

According to a Cubanet report, Mr. Sánchez Madan was arrested and detained by state security thugs on February 25, 2007 because of articles he had written describing problems confronted by the oppressed people of Cuba on a daily basis. He also reported on corruption by a government official in the town of Pedro Betancourt. After being detained, several state security agents questioned Mr. Sánchez Madan, demanding to know whether he was an independent journalist or had studied journalism. All the documents he carried on him pertaining to a story he was working on were confiscated.

Despite being forced to endure incessant repression, beatings and several unwarranted detentions in the last year alone, he remained committed to the people of Cuba and to exposing the truth concerning the tyranny. According to reports, on April 13, 2007, state security thugs confronted Mr. Sánchez Madan with trumped-up charges that he posed a "pre-criminal social danger". In little over one day, he was arrested, tried and "sentenced" to 4 years of torture in a totalitarian dungeon without even so much as the presence of a relative or a defense lawyer.

Mr. Sánchez Madan finds himself in an infernal cell in the totalitarian gulag whose depraved conditions are described by the U.S. State Department as "harsh and life threatening." The State Department also reports that police and prison officials beat, neglect, isolate, and deny medical treatment to detainees and prisoners. It is a crime against humanity that people who work for freedom, who expose the truth and who work for the restoration of human rights to the Cuban people, are locked up in these condemnable conditions.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Sánchez Madan is one of the many heroes of the Cuban democratic movement locked in the dungeons of a maniacal tyrant for exposing the truth about the realities of totalitarian Cuba. No matter how horrifically brutal the consequences of a dignified struggle for liberty, these men and women represent the best of the Cuban nation. My colleagues, we must demand the immediate release of Oscar Sánchez Madan and every political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

HONORING THE MESQUITE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT EDUCATION FOUNDATION

HON. JEB HENSARLING

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2007

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, today I would like to honor the Mesquite Independent School District Education Foundation for their dedication to the Mesquite community where they enrich the education and development of the city's 35,000 children. The Foundation promotes community awareness and student development, provides educational funding and encourages creativity. Their work has supplied valuable funds through grants for programs to supplement school budgets. Their efforts help students in Mesquite have access to the best educational experience possible.

The Foundation has been instrumental in financing many programs that kids enjoy today. Such funds have been used to purchase "hands-on consumable science lab materials" to provide students with interactive laboratory equipment. Other grants have secured reading materials for pre-school children to increase pre-kindergarten reading readiness levels.

To date, the Foundation has raised over \$800,000 and has awarded more than \$200,000 in grants to campuses and individuals. Soon, the Foundation will be formally announcing their next round of grants totaling an additional \$200,000.

As the Congressional representative of Mesquite, Texas, it is my distinct pleasure to honor the Mesquite Independent School District Education Foundation today in the United States House of Representatives.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIMOTHY J. WALZ

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2007

Mr. WALZ of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from the chamber yesterday, April 25, 2007. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 259.

THE VIRGINIA TECH TRAGEDY

HON. JAY INSLEE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2007

Mr. INSLEE. Madam Speaker, in the aftermath of the terrible tragedy at Virginia Tech, as people try to make sense of this senseless act, we must remember to find strength in community. Last week, I spoke to Korean-American leaders in my district who expressed their deepest sympathies to all those affected by this tragedy—the same sense of sorrow shared by all Americans. I expressed my hope that the Korean-American community would not be targeted in any way, in the aftermath of this situation.

I am proud that so far this fear hasn't materialized, but I rise today to remind Americans not to place blame on this or any other group. Korean Americans should feel no communal sense of guilt or responsibility for this act. Their own pride in their achievements and contributions to American society should remain undiminished.

Rather, we all should keep the victims, their families and the Virginia Tech community in our thoughts and prayers at this difficult time. We can do this by supporting efforts like that of Washington State Senator Paull Shin, who has been working with local Korean Americans to start a fund for the victims' families. We also should work together to make sure that college campuses across our Nation retain their openness and continue to be bastions of hope and opportunity.

URGING ALL MEMBER COUNTRIES
OF THE INTERNATIONAL COM-
MISSION OF THE INTER-
NATIONAL TRACING SERVICE TO
EXPEDITE RATIFICATION PROC-
ESS

SPEECH OF

HON. VITO FOSSELLA

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 25, 2007

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, for generations, Israel has been defending itself against hostile nations and terrorism in the midst of a region long plagued by turmoil and instability. The United States, now more than ever, must stand by its relationship with Israel. I want to take this opportunity to address in more detail my support of recent legislation before Congress regarding Israel.

I am pleased to see a key piece of legislation pass the House this week that I have cosponsored, H. Res. 125. The resolution expresses deep concern over the use of civilians as human shields in violation of international humanitarian law and the law of war during armed conflict. During the summer of 2006 conflict between Hezbollah and the State of Israel, Hezbollah routinely used this brutal and illegal tactic of embedding its forces among civilians to use them as human shields. This bill calls upon the international community to recognize the breaches of international law through the use of human shields and calls upon the State Department to make recommendations to prevent the future use of human shields during armed conflicts. The majority of civilian casualties of that conflict might have been avoided and civilian lives saved had Hezbollah not employed this tactic.

I am also very concerned about an issue facing the rapidly shrinking population of Holocaust survivors, and their right to research the facts of the unspeakable tragedy. Earlier this year, I signed letters addressed to the Ambassadors from Great Britain, France, Greece, Belgium and Italy urging them to expedite the process of releasing the Holocaust archival records of the International Tracing Service (ITS) located in Bad Arolsen, Germany. These millions of extensive records have remained inaccessible to Holocaust survivors, their families, and researchers alike for decades. Al-

though progress was made last May when the International Commission of the ITS amended the Bonn Accords to allow each Commission member country to receive a digitized copy of the archives, some of the nations have yet to ratify the amendments. For the sake of these survivors and their families, I joined my colleagues in urging these governments to ratify this critical treaty amendment without delay. These letters led to the introduction of H. Res. 240, of which I am an original cosponsor and that passed the House this week. Mirroring the letters, the bill urges all countries that have not ratified the amendments to abide by their May 2006 treaty obligations and expedite such ratification. The bill goes on to urge all members of the International Commission of the ITS to consider the short time left to Holocaust survivors and unanimously consent to open the ITS archives should all countries not ratify the amendments by May 2007.

Since I was first elected to Congress, I have always supported strengthening the partnership between the United States and Israel. I am pleased to see these two important bills pass the House, and throughout the 110th Congress, I will continue to look for opportunities to bolster the relationship with our key ally, Israel.

TRIBUTE TO CPL TYLER S.
TROVILLION, UNITED STATES
MARINE CORPS

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2007

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I pay tribute to Cpl Tyler Seth Trovillion, USMC. Corporal Trovillion, a 23-year-old resident of Richardson, Texas, answered his country's call and paid the ultimate price.

He belonged to the 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, Alpha Company, 2nd Platoon of Camp Pendleton, California. He died on June 15, 2005, when his vehicle hit an improvised explosive device while conducting combat operations near Ar Ramadi, Iraq.

We Texans are so proud of the men and women we have serving in Iraq and appreciate their dedication to defending freedom and promoting democracy.

To his family, our prayers are with you, and we are grateful for Tyler's courage and service to the United States of America.

As President Ronald Reagan once said, "Some people spend an entire lifetime wondering if they made a difference in the world. But, the Marines don't have that problem."

Tyler, God bless you and God bless America. Semper Fidelis.

HONORING PENNSYLVANIA TEACHER
OF THE YEAR LOIS REBICH

HON. JASON ALTMIRE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 26, 2007

Mr. ALTMIRE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Lois Rebich, the 2007 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Rebich is an Instructional Support teacher at Ross Elementary School in the North Hills School District in Pennsylvania. She began her teaching career seventeen years ago in the Pittsburgh City School District, but has been teaching in the North Hills School District for the past fifteen years.

Through individual assistance and one-on-one tutoring, she provides support to students who have academic, behavioral or organization issues. Mrs. Rebich has excelled by coordinating her efforts with parents, teachers, administrators and other students. As one parent said, "Mrs. Rebich does whatever it takes for the student and teacher to orchestrate a successful learning experience."

Pennsylvania has participated in the "Teacher of the Year" program since 1965. The program is co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania State Department of Education and the Pennsylvania chapter of the National State Teacher of the Year. Each year one teacher is recognized for excellence in education.

I am honored to have the chance to recognize Mrs. Rebich's extraordinary accomplishment of becoming the 2007 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year. She is representative of all the great teachers in the state of Pennsylvania. These selfless men and women spend every day educating our children and helping them to become happy and productive citizens of this great country.