

pieces of disposable property to slave owners. Further, to add insult to injury, they were treated horribly by their masters throughout their lives. For those that survived the voyage, their strength is still unbelievable and nothing short of a miracle. For these and other reasons, Americans and people all over the world should be reminded of their immeasurable suffering and how the abolishment of the Transatlantic Slave Trade impacted the end of that atrocity.

The abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade was a pivotal step to the full abolishment of slavery in Great Britain and the United States. Since this action was monumental, it needs to be commemorated. A commemoration offers an opportunity to educate youth and remind others of the importance of ending the Transatlantic Slave Trade. There simply is not enough attention given to educating people on the history of slavery. Although it represents a dark part of history, it needs to be highlighted and explained.

It has been said and it is true, that America is a melting pot. Since our great country is so diverse and will continue to grow, every opportunity to commemorate and share history should be seized. I encourage my colleagues to support this important resolution.

ADDRESS GUN CONTROL NOW

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 2, 2007

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, two weeks ago, our Nation suffered an unspeakable tragedy when a deranged gunman indiscriminately killed 32 students and teachers at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA. Our prayers and thoughts are with the surviving victims, families, and the entire Virginia Tech community who are determined to not allow one crazed individual to ruin the school's Hokie spirit and strength. This horrific, senseless act was committed because a mentally ill individual could easily buy two handguns and as many rounds of ammunition clips as he desired. I cannot stress to you how important it is that we reauthorize the federal assault weapons ban, close the existing loopholes, and strengthen the background checks requirements.

I want to submit for the record a Letter to the Editor that was posted in the Washington Post on April 21, 2007. This letter was written by Jay Wind of Arlington, VA, and Robert Weiner of Accokeek, VA. I agree with their contention that now is the time for Congress to address gun control and get these semiautomatic weapons off the streets.

[From the Washington Post, April 21, 2007]

REFLECTIONS AFTER THE KILLINGS

(By Robert S. Weiner and Jay Jacob Wind)

As a national political public affairs consultant and the father of a Virginia Tech student who knows five of the dead and was best friends with one of the first two shot, we are outraged and dismayed that congressional leaders of both parties are running for cover from handgun control after the worst gun violence in American history. Instead of using this sad opportunity to stop such shootings by barring handguns, as other civilized countries do, Congress and the White House are pandering to the politics of the

National Rifle Association because of potential votes in swing states.

Why are our political leaders not speaking out against handguns instead of asserting that this is not the right time for such a debate? In unarmed Britain, fewer than 100 die a year from handguns. America is still the Wild West, with an average of 30,000 gunned down annually.

In September, the youngest Wind daughter will enter Virginia Tech. She thought she would be safe, near her older sister. It's time for Virginia's leaders—and the nation's—to act to prevent future massacres.

HONORING THE LIFE OF UNITED STATES ARMY CORPORAL MICHAEL MATTHEW ROJAS

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 2, 2007

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to the life of CPL Michael Matthew Rojas, who lost his life defending the freedom of our Nation in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

A native of Fresno, California, Michael was born on March 1, 1986. As early as his freshman year in high school, he made joining the military a goal in his life. He played 4 years of football at Clovis East and helped his team win the Central Section Division 1 Championship, a highlight of his high school career. Shortly upon his high school graduation in 2004, Michael attained his goal by enlisting in the Army. When asked why he decided to join knowing that our Nation was at war, he would reply, "Because it's the men and women before me that made it possible to live in freedom."

With that passion and drive Michael completed basic training at Fort Sill, OK as a cannon crewmember. In November of 2004, he reported to Fort Lewis where he was assigned to the 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division. Unfortunately, Michael's tour in Iraq ended when an improvised device detonated near his military vehicle during combat operations on April 18, 2007.

Michael is survived by his mother, Debbie Apodaca; his father, David Esquivil; his wife, Katrina; five sisters, Michelle, Melissa, Marissa, Samantha, Mariah; and one brother, David. Also surviving are his grandparents, William Rojas, Victoria Valenzuela, and Art and Gloria Esquivil; and his nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, cousins and numerous friends.

It is my belief that Michael's life symbolizes the ultimate sacrifice one can make for his country. His valor, strength, courage and pride in our nation will forever live in the thoughts and hearts of his family and Americans across the nation. CPL Michael Matthew Rojas' dedication to the principles of freedom and democracy will serve as an example to all of us, for generations to come.

INTRODUCTION OF BILL TO CREATE THE OFFICE OF CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER FOR THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 2, 2007

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, today I am once again introducing legislation that I sponsored in the previous two Congresses to provide for a Chief Financial Officer for the Virgin Islands. Having witnessed the example and record of what having such a position has meant to the financial management and fiscal health of the District of Columbia, I continue to believe that my district, the U.S. Virgin Islands, would also benefit from having a CFO.

When I first introduced the idea of a CFO for the Virgin Islands in 2005, I did so in response to the uncertainties and distrust of government voiced by my constituents and as a measure to prevent the territory, which was experiencing a serious financial crisis, from falling into the abyss of fiscal insolvency.

I believed then, as I do now, that having someone in our government free of political pressures and with the statutory responsibility and authority to certify revenue projections and prevent deficit spending could assist our government to establish sound financial practices which would put the Islands on the path to improved financial management going forward. Because of our long history of poor financial management and practices, an office such as this would also help to immediately restore the confidence of the Federal Government and others in our ability to be fiscally transparent and accountable.

There are those, Madam Speaker, who will ask why I am doing this at this time, particularly because the islands just inaugurated a new governor whose background is in financial management and who has been a good friend and political ally.

They will suggest that my introduction of this bill signals a lack of confidence in the governor to effectively steer the Virgin Islands' fiscal ship into calm financial waters. Nothing could be further from the truth. I have every confidence in Governor John de Jongh and his administration and believe that they will do a first rate job of managing the territory's finances. He has already begun to do so, but I also believe that every good manager, no matter how talented or committed he or she might be, can always do a better job if they had better tools with which to work.

When I first introduced this bill the territory's long-term debt totaled \$1 billion. Recently the Governor in an address before the League of Women Voters stated that "the government's financial structure is 'a house of cards' that has left the territory about \$3 billion in debt."

As has frequently been the case, the legislature questioned the governor's numbers. A CFO would take the uncertainty out of the equation and allow a legislature and governor to work better together because they would both get their numbers from the same independent source. Further, the departments of government, semi-autonomous agencies and labor unions would be better able to plan, and the people of the Virgin Islands in general would have reliable information on how the

millions of federal dollars coming to the Virgin Islands are being spent.

This bill was first introduced under the administration of Governor Turnbull and it is revised with respect to the financial management system because, to his credit, its implementation began under his tenure.

In recognition of and deference to the upcoming constitution to be drafted, approved by the Congress and then ratified by the people of the Virgin Islands, the prior bill is further amended in that the term of the Chief Financial Officer will expire at the implementation of the Constitution or in five years, whichever comes sooner.

Proposing this bill as a tool to help my islands better manage its finances has not been an easy journey for me. It has however, become very clear that the people of the Virgin Islands are behind me in this effort because they have long recognized the need for more accountability, transparency, and efficiency in the management of federal and local funds. The implementation of an independent CFO, while not the only way to achieve this, is the only viable proposal that has come forward over the last 10 years or more of increasing deficits and narrowly averted fiscal crises, crises which have only been delayed through repeated borrowing.

Such borrowing and debt creation is what has led to the \$3 billion debt reported by Governor Dejongh last month—a practice he has already stated he will not continue. This office is offered as a way to assist our governor in his stated goal of paying our obligations and bringing the territory's finances into balance, to give apolitical, reliable and trusted information on the financial state of our government, as well as a way to bridge any divisions between the administration and the legislature in the interests of expediting a positive and sustainable agenda for the people of the Virgin Islands.

I thank the Speaker for her support of this important legislation in prior Congresses and ask for her continued support to bring this legislation to passage once again.

RECOGNIZING PHILIP WILLIAM ISLEY FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 2, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Philip William Isley, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 376, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Philip has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the years Philip has been involved with scouting, he has earned 28 merit badges and held numerous leadership positions, serving as Troop Guide, Chaplain's Aide, Assistant Patrol Leader, and Patrol Leader. Philip is a Brotherhood Member in the Order of the Arrow and a Warrior in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say. His tribal name is Silent Crocodile of the North Shore.

Philip planned and directed the landscaping and remodeling of the entrance to the Mount

Memorial Cemetery at William Jewell College. Philip has also added a bench and statue to the landscaping in the cemetery.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Philip William Isley for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

RECOGNIZING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF MOUNT ZION TEMPLE IN ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 2, 2007

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, it is my great pleasure to rise today to recognize the 150th anniversary of Mount Zion Temple in St. Paul, Minnesota. Mt. Zion's long service as a faith home to generations of Minnesotans deserves special recognition. This year's celebration marks the temple's deep dedication to community, life-long learning, worship and social justice.

Mount Zion Temple has a proud history in Minnesota. Eight Jewish pioneers came together to found Mount Zion Hebrew Congregation in 1856, two years before Minnesota became a state. Now 150 years later, every Reform congregation in the Twin Cities can trace their beginnings to the original congregation of eight families.

Mount Zion has been a pillar not only for the faith community but also for generations of Minnesotans who have been touched by the temple's strong commitment to community involvement. In 1900, members of Mt. Zion founded Neighborhood House, a community center providing advocacy, support, and community building programs to St. Paul. Today, more than 100 years later, the new "Paul and Sheila Wellstone Community Center at Neighborhood House" serves a growing community in St. Paul. Our entire community shares pride in this legacy.

Madam Speaker, recognizing the countless contributions of Mt. Zion Temple to the people of Minnesota during the past 150 years, it is my honor to submit this statement for the official CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

HONORING KATE P. MORAN RECIPIENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH'S ACADEMY RECOGNITION FOR EDUCATION

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 2, 2007

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Kate P. Moran of Alexandria, Virginia, upon her receiving the Commonwealth's Academy Recognition for Educators (CARE) Award.

The CARE Award honors outstanding educators from across the country who are working to enhance the lives of their students. CARE Award recipients are recognized for their unrelenting work to enhance the lives of the students they serve. Kate Moran, a Special Education Coordinator, was honored for

her efforts to construct innovative ways to train special needs youth in Virginia.

Raised in Alexandria, Virginia Ms. Moran is a graduate of TC Williams High School. She went on to receive her Bachelor's of Arts in Theater from Catholic University of America, and received a Master's of Teaching in Special Education from University of Virginia. Currently a resident of Alexandria, Virginia Ms. Moran has taught in the Virginia school system for 6 years.

As a special education coordinator for TC Williams High School, Minnie Howard School, and the Secondary Training and Education Program, she has dedicated her career to educating students with learning disabilities, mental challenges, and health impairments. In her own words, she tries to "meet the needs of students and families by making special education accessible to all types of learners."

Ms. Moran's dedication to her special-needs students is unprecedented. Over the past 6 years she has made a lasting impression on her students giving them the skills and support to lead a fuller, more rewarding life.

I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding Kate Moran and congratulating her on this distinguished achievement.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 1, 2007

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 334, which will support the goals and ideals of National Community College Month. This resolution was passed on May 1, 2007 with bipartisan support.

Not only is a college education one of the best investments a person can make, it is the best way to ensure our children and grandchildren have a promising future regardless of socioeconomic status. The typical college graduate earns 80 percent more than a high school graduate, and this can add up to about one million dollars over one's career. Additionally, more educated people tend to have access to better health care, and often enjoy a better quality of life.

For these reasons, I am always looking for ways to improve access to a quality education for our area, and I have found that community colleges are one of the best ways to achieve this. For many years now, I have seen the benefits of these schools, and their collaboration with community partners in our area is critical. Whether it's through training programs or working with local businesses, community colleges focus on areas to make sure that their students have the components they need to be successful.

I am proud that the Congress has decided to honor our country's community colleges, their students, governing boards, faculty, and staff, not only for their contributions to education and workforce development, but for their vital role in ensuring a brighter, stronger future for our country.