

that include proven strategies such as structured mentoring, common lesson-planning, and intensive professional development. This bill also helps veteran teachers improve their skills through peer mentoring and review programs.

My bill also addresses the problem that poor children are far less likely to be taught by expert teachers. Nearly three-quarters of math classes in high-poverty middle schools are taught by teachers who lack a major—or even a minor—in math. The TEACH Act provides higher pay for outstanding teachers and principals who transfer into the hardest-to-staff schools where they can help the children who need them most. Making sure these children are taught by a well-trained teacher is crucial.

The TEACH Act also helps create true career ladders that allow teachers to advance in the profession as they gain new knowledge and skills. The bill would augment the salaries of teachers who seek out opportunities to advance their own professional development and to mentor colleagues who are new to the profession.

We also know that nothing is more important in attracting—and keeping—outstanding teachers than outstanding principals. My bill raises standards and improves recruitment and training for new principals.

Teaching is not just another job. Teaching is a career that must be satisfying itself, that must attract the best people, and that must instruct our children to succeed in an increasingly competitive world.

We can have a dynamic and exciting future for America's schools and their students. We have the national resources. Now, we must make the commitment.

We must dedicate the necessary resources, demand the necessary results, and stay with it to the end to make sure that every child in America has a teacher we can all be proud of and that every teacher in America can say they are proud of us too for the support we give them.

I would also like to acknowledge three reports that were particularly useful. The Teaching Commission's report, *Teaching at Risk: A Call to Action*; the Center for American Progress report, *Ensuring a High Quality Education for Every Child by Building a Stronger Teaching Force*, and the National Academy of Education report *A Good Teacher in Every Classroom: Preparing the Highly Qualified Teachers Our Children Deserve*. All three reports were extremely instrumental, particularly in identifying practices that are working well and need to be taken to scale.

The TEACH Act will take us where research and experience say we need to go: stronger teachers, stronger principals, and stronger schools. I look forward to achieving the vision of a better school system for all of our children.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF VAL MCCOMIE, FORMER AMBASSADOR OF BARBADOS AND FORMER ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANISATION OF AMERICAN STATES

**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 8, 2007*

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the life of my friend, Val McComie, who after a distinguished career and a lifetime of service, passed away on May 4, 2007, and to enter into the RECORD his obituary.

Ambassador McComie dedicated his life to public service. He served as a secondary teacher, and then embarked upon a career in diplomacy that saw him reach and contribute at the very highest levels. He began at the entry level of the Barbados Diplomatic Service, then rose quickly through the ranks to become his nation's ambassador to Venezuela from 1974 to 1976, and Assistant Secretary General of the Organisation of American States from 1980 to 1990. His dedication to public service is noteworthy. I'm particularly proud of his interest in human rights and environmental issues. His legacy within the inter-American community will live on.

I will keep his wife, Elia Garcia McComie and daughter Gail McComie in my thoughts and prayers.

OBITUARY—VAL MCCOMIE, FORMER ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANISATION OF AMERICAN STATES

Val McComie, 87, a former ambassador of Barbados to the United States and Assistant Secretary General of the Organisation of American States, died May 4 after a lengthy illness at the Washington Home hospice in Washington, DC.

Ambassador McComie was born in Trinidad and received his secondary education in Trinidad and Barbados. He attended the University of London, graduating in Modern Languages. He completed post-graduate studies at the University of Bordeaux and the University of California, Los Angeles.

Val McComie taught at secondary schools in Barbados, Arizona, and Ghana, and then joined the Barbados diplomatic service after the country became independent in 1966. He was appointed as ambassador to the United States and permanent representative to the OAS in 1968. He was instrumental in negotiating Barbados' entry into the OAS and the Inter-American Development bank. He subsequently served as ambassador to Venezuela from 1974 to 1976.

Ambassador McComie was elected as Assistant Secretary General of the OAS in 1979, and served with distinction for two successive terms from 1980 to 1990. He retired in 1990.

He was well known in inter-American circles for his outstanding and successful efforts at creating greater links of understanding and practical cooperation between the Latin American countries and the countries of the English-speaking Caribbean. He also encouraged the promotion of human rights and environmental concerns in the hemisphere.

His first wife, Margery Clarke McComie, died in 1956.

Survivors include his wife of 32 years, Elia Garcia McComie of Washington; a daughter from his first marriage, Gail McComie of Fort Lauderdale, FL, and two sisters.

A THANK-YOU TO OUR NATION'S TEACHERS ON NATIONAL TEACHER DAY

**HON. GWEN MOORE**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 8, 2007*

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Teacher Day and in strong support of our Nation's teachers.

As the daughter of a teacher and now the mother of a teacher, I know firsthand the importance of quality education for all children and understand the dedication of these committed professionals to our children. Teachers are the driving force behind our Nation's responsibility to provide a high quality education to every child. I know from personal experience that education can be the key to a better life.

I commend our Nation's teachers and their dedication to our youth. Teachers are on the front lines of our education system, working tirelessly to ensure that our children have the skills to reach their maximum potential.

I want to give just one example of an extraordinary teacher from my district—the Fourth District of Wisconsin. Ms. Andrea Payan of Morgandale Elementary School in Milwaukee was recently awarded the nationally-recognized Milken Educator Award.

Ms. Payan has motivated and inspired her students, her colleagues, and her community. Not only has Ms. Payan dedicated herself to her students, but she also serves as a mentor to new teachers, providing support and advice to those who have chosen this challenging and rewarding profession.

On this day of National Teacher Appreciation, I encourage my colleagues to not just "talk the talk," but to "walk the walk" and strengthen our investment in public education.

I thank and congratulate Ms. Payan, as well as the thousands of teachers in my district who may not have been nationally recognized, but who share that same commitment and dedication. I encourage everyone to remember and thank a teacher who has made a difference in their life.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. HEATH SHULER**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 8, 2007*

Mr. SHULER. Madam Speaker, on Monday, May 7, I was unable to vote on rollcall votes Nos. 302, 303, or 304 due to a family obligation. Had I been present I would have voted "yes" on each vote.

POWER SHARING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

**HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 8, 2007*

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I come to the floor this evening to discuss the historic

power-sharing agreement in Northern Ireland as leaders today were finally sworn in to the Northern Ireland Assembly outside of Belfast.

The people of Northern Ireland are long past ready for the assembly to meet and take the final steps towards lasting peace, prosperity and devolved government. It is important for the members of the assembly—particularly party leaders Martin McGuinness and Ian Paisley—to not dwell in the past but rather get to work on building a strong economy and providing for the people of Northern Ireland.

We must remember the 3,500 people that died and thousands more that were injured during the Troubles over the last 30 years. But now is a time of peace and a time for the people of Northern Ireland to look forward.

Taoiseach (tay-shuck) Bertie Ahern and British Prime Minister Tony Blair are to be commended for their lasting commitment to permanent peace and justice in the North of Ireland. It is my hope that the next Prime Minister of Great Britain will share Mr. Blair's passion and perseverance for lasting peace in Northern Ireland.

The progress made in Northern Ireland is absolutely remarkable considering the violent past it has had. I would like to commend Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams for taking the steps necessary towards completely disbanding the IRA and supporting the policing institutions so that an agreement could be made.

I would also like to thank Ian Paisley for finally saying "yes" and sitting at the table with

Gerry Adams. Both sides made difficult concessions during this process but the concessions are worthwhile to bring an end to the tragic violence.

It is now time for the two sides to fully work together to improve schools, roads, hospitals and the economy so that the people of Northern Ireland can have the representation they deserve.

Madam Speaker, this truly is a historic day for Northern Ireland as it steps into a future of peace and diplomacy and steps out of a past filled with violence and unease.