

would have voted "aye." Had I been present for rollcall No. 376, I would have voted "aye." Had I been present for rollcall No. 375, I would have voted "nay." Had I been present for rollcall No. 374, I would have voted "aye." Had I been present for rollcall No. 373, I would have voted "aye." Had I been present for rollcall No. 372, I would have voted "aye." Had I been present for rollcall No. 371, I would have voted "aye." Had I been present for rollcall No. 370, I would have voted "aye." Had I been present for rollcall No. 369, I would have voted "aye." Had I been present for rollcall No. 368, I would have voted "aye." Had I been present for rollcall No. 367, I would have voted "aye."

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE HOME OFFICE DEDUCTION SIMPLIFICATION ACT OF 2008

**HON. JOHN M. McHUGH**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 9, 2008*

Mr. McHUGH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation, the Home Office Deduction Simplification Act of 2008, which is designed to reduce the complexity of the tax code and provide Americans with the ability to take a standard deduction for home office expenses.

The tax code currently allows a deduction for home office expenses for self-employed taxpayers and employees who must use their home for business purposes at their employer's request. However, according to the Internal Revenue Service's Office of the Taxpayer Advocate, only 2.7 million of the nearly 20 million Schedule C filers in tax year 2003 took a deduction for home office expenses, despite the fact that some 8.4 million Americans indicated they had one or more rooms used only for business.

The Office of Taxpayer Advocate reports that the data raises the question as to whether or not eligible taxpayers are taking the deduction to which they are entitled. In addition, the Taxpayer Advocate notes that private industry has indicated that the rules and related forms regarding the home office deduction are too complex.

As is often noted, our Nation's nearly 27 million small businesses are the backbone of our Nation's economy. They provide 51 percent of our Nation's private sector employment and 45 percent of its payroll and produce approximately 50 percent of the Nation's private, nonfarm GDP. Without question, they certainly are vital to the economy of New York's 23rd Congressional District, which I have the privilege of representing.

To ensure that my constituents and those other Americans who are eligible to deduct home office expenses but have been deterred by the complexity of the current tax code actually take a deduction, I now introduce the Home Office Deduction Simplification Act. This bill would provide a standard deduction of \$1,500, indexed to inflation, for home office expenses. Accordingly, I ask my colleagues to join with me to enact this important measure.

HONORING ROSTEEN STRASSNER

**HON. GEORGE RADANOVICK**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 9, 2008*

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Rosteen Strassner upon her 106 birthday. Mrs. Strassner's birthday will be celebrated on Friday, June 6, 2008.

Mrs. Strassner was born March 20, 1902 in Newark, Arkansas. In her long life she has witnessed many historical events that not only shaped the United States, but the world as well. She has been able to achieve amazing things in her lifetime. In 1940 she moved to Fresno, California. She became a member of the Fresno Temple COGIC, and remains a member of the church. In 1974 Mrs. Strassner opened her heart and her home to mentally challenged adults when the Central Valley Regional Center was recruiting foster parents. She was one of the first African-Americans to engage in this type of work. She remained a foster parent until 2005, when her physical health began to decline. Mrs. Strassner also has an extensive background as a healthcare professional and businesswoman. She is a retired dietitian from St. Agnes Hospital. She also owned and operated two cafés in the Fresno area.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Rosteen Strassner on 106 years of life. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Mrs. Strassner health and happiness.

#### HONORING THE USS PONCHATOU- LA SHIPMATES ASSOCIATION

**HON. JOE SESTAK**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 9, 2008*

Mr. SESTAK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 2008 gathering of the USS Ponchatoula Shipmates Association. As these remarkable Sailors, their families and friends spend time together this week, they represent over sixty years of dedication to the Navy's core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment.

These patriotic Americans keep alive the memory of their courageous predecessors who sailed into harms way aboard namesakes of USS *Ponchatoula* from 1944 until 1992. In that timeframe Sailors of that proud ship fought in WWII, the Vietnam War, the Cold War and other crises around the world. It is important that we all pause to imagine the courage and stamina it took to sail AOG-38 almost immediately from shakedown cruise into the battle of Okinawa. Carrying over a thousand tons of highly flammable fuel and limited to a maximum speed of ten (10) knots, the crew of only 62 brave souls spent days defending their precious cargo, and one another so that innumerable ships and small craft could support the invasion of Okinawa. All the while they knew that a torpedo, Kamikaze attack, or a simple electrical or propulsion fire could cause their ship and all on-board to be quickly lost in a conflagration of the most devastating form. With her mission complete AOG-38 got underway 14 Decem-

ber 1945 to transit home to the United States for deactivation.

Thankfully, it is a custom of our great Navy to reward the courageous performance of a ship and crew in combat by renaming a successor to that ship. And so it was, when USS *Ponchatoula* (AOG-38 and later T-AO-148) was built by proud craftsmen, some no doubt from the 7th Congressional District of Pennsylvania, in Camden, NJ and commissioned in January 1956. From 1956 until 1992 new generations of U.S. Navy Sailors and Military Sealift Command Mariners served proudly over most of the globe in supporting the ever expanding striking power of our naval forces.

In my thirty-one years of naval service, I was often reminded that "tactics are for amateurs and logistics are for experts." It has been ships and crews like the USS *Ponchatoula* who have been the foundation of our nation's sea power by affording naval commanders and planners the logistics, mobility, flexibility and persistence necessary to win every engagement and deter many more.

Madam Speaker it gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the efforts of my constituent and Navy Veteran, Mr. John J. Bury of Media, PA and the officers of the USS *Ponchatoula* Shipmates Association for their commitment to their ship, one another and the future Sailors who will answer our nation's call to go down to the sea in defense of our precious freedoms.

To the USS *Ponchatoula* Shipmates Association our nation says "Bravo Zulu" and God Speed.

#### RECOGNIZING VICTORIA MANFREDI ON HER RETIREMENT

**HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 9, 2008*

Mr. LIPINSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Victoria Manfredi on the occasion of her retirement from St. Louis de Montfort School in Oak Lawn, Illinois. An outstanding educator and a resident of Oak Lawn, Illinois, Vicky now celebrates over 35 years of involvement in her school and community.

Today, with the support of family: Frank, Lisa, John, and Anna Victoria, we honor Vicky for her outstanding contribution to the field of Catholic education. Over the past 35 years, Mrs. Manfredi has proven a trusted colleague, an active volunteer, a Christian role model, and a teacher who has opened hearts, touched lives, and enlightened the young minds of countless students.

Vicky Manfredi began her work while her daughter attended St. Louis de Montfort over 30 years ago. Vicky served as a volunteer coach, instructional aide, and Eucharistic minister. Seven years ago, Vicky accepted a new challenge: working as a kindergarten teacher. In her new role she earned the praise of the administration, colleagues, parents and students alike. Her classroom was a happy place, a safe haven for children and an environment where students excelled academically.

Madam Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Mrs. Victoria Manfredi, an exceptional teacher and pillar in my community. I am honored to

have such an exceptional educator in my district. We offer heartfelt congratulations to Vicky for a job well done as we wish Vicky and her family a joyous celebration of this milestone as she begins a new chapter in her life.

RECOGNIZING THE 2008  
EXPLORAVISION AWARD WINNERS

**HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 9, 2008*

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate Timothy Zako, Enzo Fantin-Yusta, and Ahsan Mahmood for their outstanding performance in the 2008 ExploraVision Award. These seventh graders from West Hills Middle School in West Bloomfield, Michigan, along with their coaches Paul Sanchez and Amy Burke embody the innovative spirit of America. Together this team succeeded in capturing second place in this prestigious regional competition.

The ExploraVision Awards, which are sponsored by Toshiba and the National Science Teachers Association, are awarded to students of all ages for combining their imaginations with the tools of science to create and explore a vision of tomorrow's technology. Students of different interest, ability, and skill levels develop new technologies utilizing their creative thinking and problem solving skills.

The students from West Hills Middle School sought out to find a new method for treating lazy eye and strabismus, a condition where ones' eyes are misaligned. These conditions, which affect roughly four percent of children in America, are often treated with eye-patches or in some instances surgery. These treatments limit the activities that children can participate in, can lower the child's self esteem, and in the most severe cases require extremely invasive surgery.

Utilizing existing technologies, the students were able to develop a prototype that could be worn like eyeglasses, and could be turned on and off as needed so that the child could use both eyes together and see in three dimensions at least some of the time. The Strabismus Glasses, as they named them, would help a child's self-esteem by allowing them to treat their condition without having to use an eye-patch.

Madam Speaker, I wish to congratulate these students for their amazing and creative work. I am proud of the initiative these young people have shown. Theirs is a shining example of what we are all capable of achieving with just a little imagination and some hard work.

ONE WORLD NOW

**HON. JIM McDERMOTT**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, June 9, 2008*

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, I submit the following:

WHAT I CAN DO

(By Philmon Haile)

First of all I would like to thank Kirstin Hayden and all of the One World Now folks

for inviting me to speak here today; and for bringing me home from our nation's capitol.

When I was a younger man I dreamt I could change the world. However, as I grew older and wiser I realized that the world was too big and immovable and would not change. Consequently, I decided to take on a narrower target and change my country. However, as I grew older and wiser, I realized my country was too big, too fixed in its way of doing things, immovable and would not change. I therefore decided to address my city and community. However, once again as I grew older and wiser I realized that my city and community were too large and immovable and would not change. So, I decided that one last time I would try and change those nearest to me: my friends and family. But, as I had learned so many times before, those nearest to me—my friends and family—would not change. The problems I saw in the world included violence, intolerance, and racism. Broken and divided schools and cities, racial slurs, being spoken and glorified through the media. Growing up I heard phrases like “you're not black enough”, to any African-American who stepped outside the circle and made white friends and listened to any other music other than Rap, or played any other sports besides basketball. I think “you're not black enough” is just another way to say you don't have sufficient hate for others. If being black means to hate, then I would rather be green. Of course this isn't what it means to be black. I've heard of genocide and gang violence. When I was born, my home country Eritrea had just finished a thirty-year war for independence from Ethiopia. A war is still going on today between the two countries, with a tense border conflict plaguing the people. I am close to this war because both parents were involved in it, a facet of my personal and family history. These problems are so real to me I pray every night for the safety of grandparents, who—as I speak—continue to live in a war torn country run by a dictator. Because these issues are so real, I spend a lot of time thinking about why this happens.

I found the problem. People hurt each other because they had no idea what it felt to be the other party. I knew the answer too, and I thought the best way to end all of this was through education; uniting people through education; giving them a chance to learn about each other so they can coexist peacefully.

Now, as I stand here, old and tired at the ripe old age of 17, I finally get it. Perhaps if I abolished my own stereotypes, I could have impacted my friends and family. Their change in turn may have influenced more people and could have changed my city and community and—who knows—maybe even my country and the world: a ripple effect like a pebble in the pond.

Let's be honest with ourselves—anyone who grows in this world has certain established mind sets and we all need to tear them down before we can progress and accept people for who they are.

In order to be a successful leader, one must be willing to give up certain ideas, decisions and a degree of popularity in order to negotiate, mediate and decide what is in the best interest of the whole. The persona you create around you is how people perceive you. Without a positive attitude I've learned the ability to lead others confidently and work together is greatly diminished. Qualities of tolerance, openness, and optimism are what One World Now represents and instills in all their students, qualities that will reside and resonate forever.

When I came to Garfield High School, I never thought that I could take Chinese especially for free, or much less use those skills and afford to study abroad. You know,

my brother studied abroad just as I hope to. I know my family couldn't afford to send both my brother and me abroad. I know this is the case for many other people traveling on a One World Now! Scholarship. After my older brother, Robel discovered One World Now! I wanted to do it. We have a “typical” older-younger brother relationship, so he tells me that only upper classmen can be involved, so being the gullible freshman I was, I believed him, only to learn my sophomore year that freshmen were enrolled in One World Now! classes. It is amazing what One World Now! is doing, offering high school students classes in the two most critical world languages: Arabic and Chinese. Believe me, in my position as a Congressional Page, I hear about the Middle East and China in debates almost every day. If our leaders knew Chinese and Arabic and understood their cultures, this world would be a much different place. If they could have been involved in One World Now, they would have a better understanding. One World Now is more than just Chinese and Arabic classes and the free food at Friday leadership meetings: it is a melting pot—a place where I was exposed to many different cultures, races, and religions; a place where I made many good friends. Every week that I went to One World Now classes, I grew a little bit. I sometimes got tired of them saying “get out of your comfort zone” and “be passionate”, but that was what really happened, at every meeting I felt I was stripped of all the walls I put up and just showed the bare and true Philmon. That's how you really gain social skills and grow as a person. There are so many different types of people you don't know how to act, so just act like yourself. That's how you really build character. The change that has occurred in me is something I can't describe, something deep within has changed. I am now able to communicate my ideas better, more powerfully. The only thing I can't communicate is the change that has occurred because it so deep within me, but resonates and I can always feel it. This is all because of One World Now and the opportunities offered me from their influence. Through One World Now, I've really walked a thousand miles. I am a different person than when I was a sophomore.

When I was invited to be a U.S. House of Representatives Page and I accepted, I felt both sad and happy. The sadness came when I realized I would not be able to take One World Now classes every other day. Before I accepted, I went to the One World Now office and asked how this would affect my membership at One World Now. They told me that I will always be a part of the One World Now family, and that I could even apply to go to China with them this summer. I came to DC sad that I wouldn't be able to take Chinese in a formal Chinese class setting provided by One World Now, but I was determined I would not give up. I found the Chinese Cultural Center, and learned I could take Chinese there. So I went over there and they asked questions like “how long have you been taking Chinese?” and I told them one year, so they gave their second year test because they only offered up to Chinese level the level I should have been at. I took the test and they told me that I was too advanced to take their classes, so Teacher Sun (find her in the audience) if you're in the room, you taught me well. So I decided to become a volunteer and asked if they could only speak to me in Chinese. While in DC I still called my old Chinese classmates and teacher, to make sure I was caught up to where I needed to be. I was now ready to reap the benefits of the Congressional Page program.

In this program I am able watch the debates of our country's architects. I think it