

Classification Repair Activity Depot of the Connecticut National Guard are preparing for the unit's second deployment abroad to Iraq. Although my duties in Washington prevent me from joining the send-off ceremony today in Groton, I want the members of the 1109th AVCRAD, and their families, to know that all of Connecticut is proud of them and look forward to their safe return.

Connecticut's AVCRAD plays a critical role in supporting our military. The unit provides maintenance and logistics for aircraft and equipment help to 14 across the Northeast states and supports Connecticut's fleet of Black Hawk helicopters. Last year, I had the chance to visit their facility and see their operations up close. I walked away from that experience deeply impressed with the professionalism, skill and dedication they have for their mission.

Overseas deployment is not new to the AVCRAD. Yet, as we know all too well, any military deployment is hard not only on our men and women in uniform, but also on their families and loved ones waiting at home for them to return. In my visit last year, I was briefed by the unit's leadership about the scope and impact that this deployment will have not only on the unit as a whole, but also on the families of those preparing to deploy. As I did then, today I continue to offer my unconditional support and assistance to them and their families throughout the length of this deployment.

I am proud to represent the 1109th AVCRAD in Congress. I join Connecticut's Adjutant General, Major General Thaddeus Martin, the unit's commanding officer, Colonel Tom Boland, and the people of southeastern Connecticut in wishing the 1109th AVCARD good luck and eagerly awaiting their safe return.

GEORGE HADDAD FOR HIS OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION

HON. CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 2008

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Madam speaker, I rise today in honor of the commitment to public service that a constituent of mine from Waterbury, Connecticut has made throughout his career as a teacher in the Waterbury school system. George Haddad spent his entire 56-year career serving the students of the Waterbury community, working nights as an adult education instructor.

Education is a stepping stone to prosperity and is absolutely essential in today's rapidly-changing economy. Ours is a Nation that simply cannot thrive and flourish without a well-educated citizenry. Unfortunately, there are still many barriers to a good education that confront scores of Americans.

Mr. Haddad had some of the toughest cases a teacher can have. There have been gang members and young people who have been expelled from other schools that are among those he has counted as students. Yet for 56 years George Haddad refused to give up on these students, never backing down from a challenge. He is renowned and beloved among his colleagues and former pupils as an

educator who truly has the best interests of his students at heart. Having served his country bravely in World War II, Mr. Haddad carried those same virtues of duty and responsibility throughout his entire life.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to George Haddad and others like him who have spent their lives ensuring that those who may have otherwise slipped through the cracks get the education that they deserve. I congratulate Mr. Haddad on his proud record of service to his community and to our country. He is an excellent role model to all, and his example is one to which we should all aspire.

YOUTH CO-OP'S CELEBRATION OF WORLD REFUGEE DAY

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 2008

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to extend my sincere greetings to all the attendees of the Youth Co-Op "World Refugee Day, Celebrating Human Rights". As you gather today to celebrate the contributions of refugees throughout the world, I would like to thank the executive director, Maria Rodriguez, and all of Youth Co-Op for their commitment to the betterment of the entire south Florida community and the many refugees who have made new homes here. Since its inception, the Youth Co-Op has been a pioneer institution in assisting refugees in translating their strengths, skills and past experiences into assets in their new communities. I would also like to personally applaud the men and women of the Youth Co-Op for working closely with community members to providing a warm and secure welcome to all refugees.

Unfortunately, in a prison cell not much larger than a portable toilet, without a window to watch the days pass him by, or even another human being to soothe the pangs of loneliness, the prisoner lies helpless as we celebrate. He has lived his entire life in a world, just outside, where liberty has been suffocated and injustice reigns. Dr. Oscar Biscet is one of many prisoners of conscience incarcerated in Cuba and around the world for not cooperating with the government's unjust practices. Like Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Jose Marti before him, Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, has become universal symbol of dignified activism, liberty, peace, and resilience. The policies of the totalitarian regime which he dissented from are blatant violations of the human rights which we so cherish. Biscet has demonstrated the courage and resolve that has earned him international recognition as a champion of human dignity, even while denied a voice in his own homeland.

On this day, June 20, World Refugee Day, we must keep in mind what it means to be a refugee, an asylum seeker, and a political prisoner. Uprooted from their homes and livelihoods, escaping in the night with only that which you can carry, or beaten and humiliated into submission, refugees sacrifice everything in hope of a better future. By definition, a refugee is an individual who flees their country because their lives are jeopardized by an inability to feel free and secure in their homeland. A 2007 Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient, Dr. Biscet represents the very prin-

ciples for which any individual would become a refugee. His plea for justice and freedom for his people are resoundingly similar to those reverberated throughout history and across the world by anyone who has experienced oppression, especially those who are forced to resort to fleeing their country.

Biscet's physical incarceration exemplifies the figurative imprisonment of all Cubans and the worldwide struggle of every refugee. His commitment to his cause is demonstrated by his refusal to denounce his pleas for justice in return for release from prison. Even given the opportunity for freedom in exile, Biscet has chosen not to abandon his people saying "I will continue to resist until realizing freedom for [all] my people." On this day, we unite to recognize and honor the continual struggle for basic human rights by people like Biscet. It is difficult to imagine that in many places around the world, including just 90 miles across our Florida straits, simply reading these words and advocating this cause could would easily result in being confined to a windowless, 3-by-6 foot cell.

Unfortunately, even as prisoners of conscience remain incarcerated and opposition movements like Las Damas de Blanco stage peaceful demonstrations challenging the governments crackdown on 75 dissidents in 2003, our country grows increasingly complacent. We cannot forget the systematic abuses being committed by oppressive regimes in places like China, Burma, Zimbabwe, and Cuba. A movement of low expectations only assumes that other fragments of freedom and democracy will follow. We must remember that small concessions to liberty are not a full and just realization of freedom. As a long time member of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, I believe that this is simply not enough. We must demand basic, internationally recognized human rights for all.

Today, as the world stand behinds us in solidarity, we must not forget that millions of people are still fighting for the rights which we take for granted in this country. It is unjust that the human conditions be constantly subjected to a tug of war between the tribulations brought about by oppression and the sanctity of human rights. It is paradoxical for human rights to exist on signed declarations alone but for those same signatories to forgo these same principles of life liberty, and security which are innate within every person. Jose Marti once wrote that "We are free, but not to be indifferent to human suffering. Man is not free to watch impassively the enslavement and dishonor of men, nor their struggle for liberty and honor." We do not need to be enduring abuses and imprisonment in order to advocate for human rights. In fact, today on World Refugee Day, our liberty can serve as our best weapon against oppression

IN HONOR OF SENIOR AIRMAN JASON DORIAN NATHAN

HON. JIM MARSHALL

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 2008

Mr. MARSHALL. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Senior Airman Jason Dorian Nathan on the first anniversary of his death due to hostile fire while stationed in Iraq.

Senior Airman Nathan was a 2004 graduate of Central High School in Macon, Georgia. His strong sense of patriotism, honor, and commitment to excellence led him to proudly enlist in the United States Air Force. He planned to resume his studies at Fort Valley State College and University, where he pursued a degree in Criminal Justice prior to his enlistment in 2005.

Madam Speaker, on June 1, 2008, the 48th Fighter Wing dedicated a Vehicle Entry Gate at RAF Lakenheath in honor of Senior Airman Nathan. The plaque which commemorated the event reads, "This gate is memorialized in the name of Senior Airman Jason D. Nathan who was assigned to the 48th Security Squadron, 48th Fighter Wing, RAF Lakenheath, England. Senior Airman Nathan was mortally wounded by an improvised explosive device on 23 June 2007 while on a combat patrol in Tikrit, Iraq in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. He gave his life providing courageous support to his squad while protecting the people of Iraq in their pursuit of freedom from oppression and terror. Senior Airman Nathan's heroic actions and unselfish dedication upheld the highest traditions of the Security Forces career field and the United States Air Force." Senior Airman Nathan was also honored at ceremonies in Iraq and in Afghanistan.

Senior Airman Nathan's selfless service to his country, his willingness to pay the ultimate sacrifice so that all of us can enjoy the fruits of liberty, his desire to see the Iraqi people live in a free and democratic society, are all attributes of an outstanding young American to whom we all owe a great debt of gratitude and respect.

Madam Speaker, I am confident my colleagues will join me in recognizing the heroism, patriotism and fidelity of Senior Airman Jason Dorian Nathan.

ON THE PASSING OF THEO BAARS, JR.

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 2008

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to recognize the passing of Theo Baars, Jr. Over several decades, Theo helped shape the Pensacola community and contributed greatly to making this area a great place for people to live and work.

During the 1960s, 1970s and beyond, Theo played a great role in bringing some important businesses and services to the Pensacola area, located in my district in Northwest Florida. Through his active work in the real estate community, several buildings that are now considered landmarks were built, including Sacred Heart Hospital and Pensacola Junior College. Theo was instrumental in locating these two landmarks and numerous other buildings in areas where they would serve the greatest amount of people.

Theo's projects not only benefitted great numbers of people but also the community as a whole. From health care to higher learning to consumer goods to state parks, he made sure that development was not done for the sake of development, but to directly benefit those living and working in the area. His dedi-

cation to the community's well-being extended into his involvement with several civic organizations as well, including the Pensacola Bay Area Chamber of Commerce, the National Naval Aviation Museum and his role as a founding member of Junior Achievement.

Madam Speaker, Northwest Florida will long remember the legacy of Theo Baars, Jr. His influence in the area will not only be seen but also felt on a daily basis as people travel through the area. My thoughts and prayers are with Marge, his wife of 30 years, and all his family. We will miss this man who helped make our world a better place.

RECOGNIZING IAN GIBSON OF VIRGINIA BEACH

HON. THELMA D. DRAKE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 2008

Mrs. DRAKE. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the outstanding achievements of Ian Gibson of Virginia Beach, and to commend him on becoming a Congressional Award Gold Medalist. This recognition by the United States Congress is the highest honor bestowed upon America's youth. It serves as a testament to Ian's strength of character and commitment to our national values of dedication to public service and the cherished qualities of personal growth, initiative, and achievement, all of which are cornerstones of the Congressional Award.

Ian's volunteer efforts are tremendous, speaking very highly of him and his level of commitment to the community and to public service. Ian completed over 600 hours of Voluntary Public Service and earned the rank of Eagle Scout, working with Strawbridge Elementary School to provide school supplies to orphans in Bolivia and Russia, and 25 local children. In addition, he continues to be active within the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Tidewater Council, serving as Junior Assistant BSA Tidewater Council Venturing Leadership Award, and participating in the 2007 National OA Leadership and Conservation Summit at Indiana University.

Ian has devoted time and energy to excellence in the sports of baseball and football, honing his speed and endurance, and earning a selection as First Colonial High School's "Male Student Athlete of the Week." By maintaining his own physical well-being, he has balanced the challenges of public service with his own personal welfare and developed a well-rounded persona.

Ian has become a role model, not only for those young cub scouts he assists and tee-ball players he coaches, but also for the large community around him. Upon receiving the Congressional Medal, he joins a most elite group of our nation's youth who have set and achieved this very commendable goal. I am certain Ian's incredible accomplishments, dedication to service, and evident leadership talents will continue to speak highly of him, as they do now.

HONORING PADMA VELIGATI

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Padma Veligati of St. Joseph, Missouri. Padma is active in the community through work and in her spare time and she has been chosen to receive the YWCA Women of Excellence Award for Woman in Volunteerism.

When asked what Padma Veligati gives back to her community through volunteerism, answers vary, but the themes are the same. She is compassionate, committed, and her focus is always on those she serves. Padma has spent one day off each month for the past three years volunteering at the city's Social Service Board whose mission is to serve the health needs of those in poverty, lacking health insurance and not covered by Medicare or Medicaid. She takes on the most difficult gynecological cases, and her colleagues say that she has saved the lives of many women. Having grown up in a third-world country, Padma feels strongly about the lack of availability of medical services to certain segments of the population, especially considering how wealthy our nation is compared to the rest of the world.

Padma was recently admitted into the Masters in Public Health program at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. While Padma will have to give up volunteering in the short-term in order to balance her studies and a busy OB/GYN practice, her new degree will help her achieve her goal of working in international public health and impacting even more women in need.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in recognizing Padma Veligati. She has made an amazing impact on countless individuals in the St. Joseph Community. I am honored to represent her in the United States Congress.

IN ANTICIPATION OF VIETNAMESE PRIME MINISTER NGUYEN'S OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE U.S.

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 19, 2008

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, next Tuesday, Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen will visit the White House. I sincerely hope that the President will seize this opportunity to be bold and make Vietnam's deplorable human rights record a point of focus. Any further cooperation between the U.S. and Vietnam should be contingent upon establishing benchmarks for improved human rights and increased religious freedom in Vietnam.

Vietnam's human rights record remains a disgrace despite its ascension to the World Trade Organization—a move that many believed would help liberalize the political as well as the economic situation. The citizens of Vietnam today remain unable to change their government. Last November, the government arrested and imprisoned two Vietnamese citizens and three foreign citizens for preparing