

COMMENDING NAHRO

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 8, 2008

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) and their partners in the non-profit, governmental, and private sectors for embarking on their 2008 Housing America Campaign.

The affordable housing issues that the Housing America Campaign raises affect every Congressional district in this country. The statistics are grim: 750,000 Americans are homeless on any given night and 3½ million experience homelessness at some point in each year. I'm worried that these numbers will only increase as the foreclosure crisis continues.

More than 15 million American families now pay more than half of their income for housing. Too many of these families also make less than 50 percent of their area's median income and yet still are stuck on waiting lists for government assistance. Where I live in Seattle there are thousands of families on waiting lists for Section 8.

In Seattle the "fair market rent" established by HUD is over \$900 a month for a 2-bedroom apartment. In order to be able to afford this, without paying more than 30 percent of their income on rent, someone in Seattle would have to be making \$37,000 a year or about \$18/hour, which is more than double the minimum wage in Washington State and about triple the current Federal minimum wage.

I am relieved that the House has taken meaningful action to address the affordable housing shortage by passing legislation to create an Affordable Housing Fund. This critical fund will provide about \$500 million per year to finance construction, maintenance, and preservation of affordable housing throughout the country.

In addition, the House has passed legislation that increases the loan limits for government-backed loans, helps homeowners in trouble refinance their home loans and to provide funding to revitalize neighborhoods where foreclosures have been rampant, and to modernize and expand the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.

We have more work to do in Congress and it will probably require an administration with a greater commitment to addressing the affordable housing crisis in the U.S. But we should all be grateful to NAHRO and their partners for sounding the alarm and raising awareness both in the Congress and around the country. They make our jobs much easier.

I look forward to continuing to work with the Housing America Campaign as we fight for affordable housing opportunities for every family in this country.

RECOGNIZING MR. JACK HOPKINS

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 8, 2008

Mr. UPTON. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Mr. Jack Hopkins of Kalamazoo,

Michigan, for his 25 years of distinguished service to the Kalamazoo Community Foundation and the greater Kalamazoo area.

Jack began working with the Kalamazoo Community Foundation in 1983 and was named its president/CEO in 1994. Under his esteemed leadership, the foundation's assets have grown exponentially, allowing millions to be invested in the local community. At the same time, Jack has volunteered with more than 30 local nonprofit organizations dedicated to enhancing the economic vitality and cultural richness of the Kalamazoo region. Further accomplishments include his work to help create the Arts Fund of Kalamazoo County, establish an active Youth United Way program, and initiate the Community Foundation's BetterTogether/Kalamazoo social capital initiative.

Apart from his work in Kalamazoo, Jack has also been a leader at the regional and national levels. He was the first chair of the Council on Foundations' Community Foundation Leadership Team and board vice chair of the Council of Michigan Foundations. He has also served on the board of the Community Foundations of America and was former chair of Michigan Community Foundations Ventures.

The Kalamazoo Community Foundation was established for the betterment of the greater Kalamazoo community. Jack's personal and professional legacy is one that exemplifies this mission. Jack Hopkins has been a truly exceptional asset to the Kalamazoo community.

Once again, I would like to personally congratulate and thank Jack for his many years of service. Southwest Michigan is and will forever be a better place to live and work because of his contributions.

IN HONOR OF JASON DALE LEWIS

HON. CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 8, 2008

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Madam speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of Jason Dale Lewis, who was killed in combat just over a year ago on July 6, 2007, in Baghdad. Petty Officer 1st Class Lewis called Brookfield, Connecticut, his home, along with his wife Donna and their three children.

Just 30 years old, Petty Officer 1st Class Lewis was a uniquely skilled member of an elite Navy SEAL unit. Highly decorated, he earned the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, the Navy "E" ribbon, two Good Conduct Medals, the Navy and Marine Corps Overseas Service ribbon, the Expert Rifleman Medal, and the Expert Pistol Shot Medal. Petty Officer 1st Class Lewis was truly an elite among elites.

A year has passed since Jason left us. But the example he set, for his family, for his community, and for his Nation, will last forever. Our society is beset by those who live lives defined by unmet, wasted potential. That wasn't a problem for Jason. He knew how great he could be, as a man, as a father, and as a SEAL. And in 30 short years, he achieved that greatness.

As Americans, we hold dear the values of honor, courage and commitment. Petty Officer 1st Class Lewis embodied those characteris-

tics on and off the battlefield. His valor in defense of his country and his unceasing love for his community and family lend credence to the notion that the fullest lives are those lived for the greater good.

INTRODUCING THE ENERGY EFFICIENT AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY AUTOMOBILE TAX CREDIT ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 8, 2008

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Energy Efficient and Environmentally Friendly Automobile Tax Credit Act, legislation that will help Americans reduce pollution and the amount they pay for gas. My legislation accomplishes these important goals by providing Americans a tax credit of up to \$2,000 when they sell or trade in a car and obtain a vehicle that has at least a 20 percent higher average fuel economy than the sold or traded-in car. The bill also creates a Federal tax deduction for any State or local taxes paid on the purchase of the more fuel-efficient automobile and makes interest on loans to purchase the more fuel-efficient automobile tax deductible.

This legislation will help Americans cope with high gas prices by making it easier for them to obtain more fuel-efficient cars. I hope my colleagues would agree that Congress should provide free market incentives to make it easier for Americans to exchange their current cars for cars that create less pollution.

Providing tax deductions and tax credits to make it easier for Americans to purchase fuel-efficient automobiles is a win for American consumers, a win for the environment, and a win for those of us who favor free market solutions to pollution and high gas prices. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

A TRIBUTE TO MATTIE STEPANEK

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 8, 2008

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute today to Mattie Stepanek, an extraordinary young man who touched thousands of people with his messages of hope and peace.

Mattie was afflicted with dysautonomic mitochondrial myopathy, a form of muscular dystrophy, which took his life at age 13 in 2004. Despite his illness, Mattie dedicated his life to promoting hope, peace and tolerance through his role as a national goodwill ambassador for the Muscular Dystrophy Association and through his advocacy for people with disabilities through his inspiring words of poetry.

Mattie is remembered for his kindness, grace and vitality. He saw his disease not as a hindrance but as a vehicle to reach out to the hearts of many. He shared his message of peace and tolerance with school children, business leaders, medical personnel, religious groups and so many others throughout the world. Indeed, his message touched people of

all ages, races, nationalities, faiths, abilities and aspirations. He lived by the words of his timeless philosophy, "Remember to play after every storm."

Mattie is being remembered in my congressional district this week, which has been proclaimed "Mattie Stepanek Week" by the city of Rockville, Maryland. The week's primary event is the second annual Heartsongs Swim, hosted by the Rockville Municipal Swim Center, which will raise money to expand the handicapped accessibility of the Mattie J.T. Stepanek Park in Rockville and for the completion of statues of Mattie and his service dog Micah, which will be installed and dedicated this fall in the park.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to remember with fondness and humility Mattie Stepanek, an ambassador of peace for all humanity, and to join my constituents in commemorating Mattie Stepanek Week in Rockville, Maryland.

IN RECOGNITION OF REVEREND
CLANSTON SEYMORE UPON HIS
40TH ANNIVERSARY AS PASTOR
OF GREATER PEACE MIS-
SIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 8, 2008

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is an honor for me to rise today in recognition of Reverend Clanston Seymore upon his 40th anniversary as pastor of Greater Peace Missionary Baptist Church.

For the past 40 years, Reverend Seymore has been passionately committed to his community. Prior to serving as the fourth pastor of Greater Peace Missionary Baptist Church, Reverend Seymore had already ministered five other churches. He was ordained in 1965 and immediately began what he knew was his calling.

His dedication to the area has resonated in leadership positions in civic activities as well as community service projects. From 1975 to 1977, Reverend Seymore served as president of the Okaloosa County branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP. Additionally, multiple community outreach organizations have taken root through the efforts of Reverend Seymore, including Community Love Center of Fort Walton Beach, Florida, and Positive Encouragement and Character Enhancement, PEACE. Reverend Seymore also serves as an advisor to the Martin Luther King Holiday Celebration Committee.

The civic duties Reverend Seymore has performed, as well as his outstanding tenure as pastor of Greater Peace Missionary Baptist Church, is a reflection of his dedication to the First District of Florida.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to honor Reverend Seymore for his enduring allegiance to our great Nation and the State of Florida.

HONORING ALBERT CAREY
CASWELL

HON. MARILYN N. MUSGRAVE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 8, 2008

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Albert "Burt" Carey Caswell, who for 22 years has been giving tours of our Capitol building.

Burt Caswell was born in Baltimore, MD, in 1953. He graduated from the University of Maryland and obtained a master's degree in education from Bowie State. Mr. Caswell went on to teach physical education, health, and science to K-6th graders in a private school in Washington, DC. He also served as the assistant lacrosse coach at the University of Maryland for 5 years.

In 1986, Mr. Caswell joined the Capitol Guide Service. Burt is well known by members and staff for the enthusiasm he brings to his work, and for his love for members of the United States military. For approximately 14 years, he has given personal Capitol tours to injured soldiers from Walter Reed Army Hospital. Several times each week, Burt picks up soldiers in the evenings to give them tours in his free time.

Another demonstration of Mr. Caswell's love for his country is his poetry. He has written numerous works on various patriotic themes. His poems pay homage to soldiers, Members of Congress, and the Capitol building. His eloquent tribute to Martin Luther King, titled "A King Among Men," was printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD in 2002.

Mr. Caswell's enthusiasm for the Capitol is an extension of his passion for life. He is the proud father of Jennifer Maxine Caswell, and according to him, "The greatest thing in my life is my daughter."

I want to thank Burt for 22 years of service to our Capitol, and for his sacrificial love for the men and women of our armed services.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND
IDEALS OF BLACK MUSIC MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 23, 2008

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the tremendous contributions of black music to American culture. From times of slavery to the Civil Rights Movement, Black music has served the Black community as a source of inspiration and strength and continues to serve as a narrative of Black History and culture.

Spirituals that grew from the cries of slaves have evolved over hundreds of years to the Gospel, Soul, R&B, Jazz, Blues, and Rock & Roll we know today. Black music is enjoyed by the larger community in the U.S. and by an ever larger global community.

Black music was and continues to be a tool to reveal the very soul of the black man to the rest of America. In times of division and hate, black music was one of the few cultural artifacts that was shared with all Americans. "Freedom Songs" used during the civil rights

movement like "We Shall Not be Moved," "Lift Every Voice and Sing," and "We Shall Overcome," were sung by all and served as unifiers rather than dividers.

Many of the most celebrated musicians in the history of Jazz, Soul and Blues were African Americans; Lena Horn, Billie Holiday, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Duke Ellington and John Coltrane are all legends in their own right and have brought innovation and freshness to music that continues to inspire musicians today.

Black music is much more than words and rhythm: it is an encapsulation and reaffirmation of a cultural identity that was formed out of years of struggle and triumph. It is distinctive in the way that it uplifts the spirit and enralls the intellect. We must recognize that black music has served for generations as more than a pastime; it has been a source of strength and inspiration for a brighter future.

HONORING MERCY SISTERS ON
10TH ANNIVERSARY OF CASA

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 8, 2008

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Sisters of Mercy on the 10th anniversary of their establishment of Casa de Misericordia (CASA), a shelter that provides safety, planning, education, and support for victims of domestic violence and their children.

In 1997, Sister Rosemary Welsh and her staff of health care providers from Mercy Primary Health Care Programs recognized the lack of existing community support for victims of domestic violence and their children in Laredo, Texas. A starting grant and local community support enabled them to open the doors of Casa de Misericordia. The shelter provides court accompaniment, assistance with VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) applications, and takes in victims of domestic violence and their children, not just from Webb County, but from other counties and states as well.

CASA obtained independent non-profit status by becoming a 501(c)3 in 1999, and became an annual contracting agency with the State (TDHS) in 2001. CASA received funds from the United Way and from the Office of the Attorney General. It is due to the efforts of Sisters of Mercy and to the hardworking staff that CASA has been able to help thousands of victims of domestic violence and their children. CASA is committed to involving the community in changing the perception of domestic violence, and has dozens of volunteers from Laredo Community College, Texas A&M International University, and local high schools in raising awareness about the mission behind CASA through the new Lamar Bruni Vergara Education Center, which was opened in 2004. The Education Center provide counseling, support groups, educational classes, and summer activities to members of the community who suffer from domestic violence but do not need shelter services.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to have had this time to recognize the dedication of Sister Rosemary Welsh and the Sisters of Mercy, and their staff, on the 10th anniversary of the establishment of Laredo's only domestic violence shelter, Casa de Misericordia.