

Michael Bilirakis served the Ninth Congressional District of Florida from 1983–2006. Michael was a standout member of the United States House of Representatives, and his presence is surely missed on Capitol Hill. A native of my home State of Florida, Michael worked steadfastly for his constituents for 23 years, and his lifetime of civic-minded public service has not gone unnoticed.

I had the pleasure of serving on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee with Michael, and his leadership as chairman of the VA Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations was unparalleled. A veteran of the United States Air Force, Michael spent his career working hard to serve the best interests of our Nation's veterans. Michael's strong traditional values and service-oriented spirit were always visible in his everyday work on Capitol Hill.

It is truly appropriate and deserving then, for Congress to name the VA spinal cord injury center in Tampa, Florida after Michael Bilirakis, and I thank my colleague and fellow Florida delegation member JEFF MILLER for sponsoring this legislation.

RECOGNIZING THE LAND OF LAKES BOYS CHOIR FOR A SILVER AT THE WORLD CHOIR GAMES

HON. MICHELE BACHMANN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 14, 2008

Mrs. BACHMANN. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the Land of Lakes Boys Choir, headquartered in Elk River, Minnesota, for their exemplary musical achievements and the pride and inspiration they instill in our community.

The Land of Lakes Boys Choir is an extremely talented group of boys who have brought global recognition to the great State of Minnesota. These children have worked tirelessly to perfect their skills and talents, participating in many prestigious competitions. They attended the World Choir Games in Germany, France, and Austria and recently received a silver medal there. And they will also be going to the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, China.

Since 1976, this choir program has helped many boys pursue their passion for music. In 2004, the Land of Lakes Boys Choir received the International Trebby Award for "Best Boys' Choir Album" with its CD "Steal Away." And most recently, in 2006, it was awarded the Grand Champion of Cruise Festivals Music Festivals, for their outstanding performance.

This organization has been a helpful extracurricular program for many young boys, teaching them self-discipline, character and leadership. The individuals who have sacrificed their time to train and work with these boys should also be recognized for their continued efforts to mentor these children.

Madam Speaker, it is my honor to recognize and congratulate the Land of Lakes Boys Choir for its tremendous achievements in music and community service. I know that I join so many in Minnesota when I say that I am proud to have these boys as American ambassadors at this year's Olympic Games.

IN RECOGNITION OF JOHN M. HAIRSTON

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 14, 2008

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of John M. Hairston and in recognition of his outstanding leadership, vision and dedication to empowering those around him at the NASA Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio.

Mr. Hairston earned his first degree in English from Bluefield State College and later went on to earn his master's degree in Education Administration from Cleveland State University. He also attended the John F. Kennedy School of Public Policy at Harvard University. Prior to working at NASA, Mr. Hairston worked in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District for almost thirty years, where he served as an English teacher, Staff Development Director and Chief of the Community Relations Department.

Mr. Hairston's leadership has been vital in the success of the NASA Glenn Research Center. He worked tirelessly to promote scientific literacy and to develop outreach programs that help economically disadvantaged communities and businesses. Mr. Hairston worked within NASA as the Acting Assistant Administrator for the Office of Education. His guidance helped to ensure that NASA's educational programs were effective. Mr. Hairston has worked to make manifest NASA's vision of educating the next generation of explorers by developing criteria to ensure that their programs are effective and that they attract students from all of Cleveland's diverse communities. He succeeded in developing strong partnerships between the NASA Glenn Research Center and Greater Cleveland Community.

Mr. Hairston has been the recipient of numerous awards for his outstanding work at the NASA Glenn Research Center. NASA honored him several times by awarding him with the Exceptional Achievement Medal, the Medal for Outstanding Leadership, and their Education Distinguished Service Award. He has also been the recipient of the Presidential Rank Award and the Leadership Cleveland Civic Volunteer of the Year award.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor of John M. Hairston and in recognition of his outstanding leadership and vision. May his dedication to his work and to the community serve as an example for us all.

HONORING THE LIFE OF DR. JAMES ROBERT "BOB" WOOLSEY, JR.

HON. TRAVIS W. CHILDERS

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 14, 2008

Mr. CHILDERS. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay respect to the life and accomplishments of a fellow Mississippian who was tragically taken from us Wednesday, July 9th, 2008. Dr.

James Robert "Bob" Woolsey, Jr., 72, was a man of great accomplishment. He is survived by his wife, five sons, two daughters, and his four grandchildren. Dr. Woolsey was involved in community and civic activity throughout his life. He was a member of the United States Navy as well as an Eagle Scout, a Mason, and a member Oxford University United Methodist Church. He was dedicated to his chosen field and went on to become the Director of the Center for Marine Resources and Environmental Technology and the Seabed Technology Research Center at The University of Mississippi. Throughout his life, Dr. Woolsey served his country, his state, and even the international community during his tenure with the United Nations as a consulting geologist. I thank my colleagues for remembering Dr. Woolsey and his family at this time.

TRIBUTE TO AMBASSADOR ROY HUFFINGTON

HON. DAVID DREIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 14, 2008

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, last Friday marked the passing of a tremendous life. Ambassador Roy Huffington lived 90 very full years. He was larger than life. Roy was an entrepreneur, a veteran, a philanthropist, a husband and father, and a patriot. To me, he was a dear friend.

He first served his country in the Navy in World War II. When he returned, he struck out on his own in the energy business and pioneered the development of the industry in Indonesia. He was enormously successful in everything he did, and he used his success to give back to society. The charities he founded and supported raised millions for good causes.

President George H.W. Bush appointed Roy as Ambassador to Austria in the early 1990s, a critical time for the region. His tenure saw the fall of the Berlin Wall and the beginnings of real democracy in Eastern and Central Europe. Roy used his position to forge relationships between Eastern and Western Europe and to encourage the investment that was necessary to build up former Soviet states and create new opportunities for the people who had lived so long under tyranny. He continued this work until his passing. I have fond memories of times we spent together in Davos at the World Economic Forum. He never missed one of those annual meetings.

I had the privilege of getting to know Roy and his wonderful wife Phyllis as we campaigned for their son, our former colleague Michael, as he was running for the United States Senate. Roy and Phyllis were incredibly warm, boisterous, funny and down-to-earth. When Phyllis passed away 5 years ago, everyone who knew her felt the terrible loss. Roy's unexpected passing on Friday was a tragic loss for the family and friends who loved him. We take comfort in the fact that he lived every day with a tremendous zeal for life.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE TIME-LY DUE PROCESS FOR THE DISABLED ACT

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 14, 2008

Ms. CASTOR. Madam Speaker, today I rise to begin to address an overwhelming problem currently faced by far too many of our most vulnerable neighbors by introducing the Timely Due Process for the Disabled Act.

Every year, thousands of Americans lose the ability to work due to illness or injury. But as paychecks stop coming in, bills do not. For many of these people, the only thing that can prevent them from having to share their time between medical treatment and phone calls from collection agencies and attempts to avoid foreclosure is Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).

But, today, the system of enrolling in SSDI is broken. The average wait for an Administrative Law Judge hearing to contest a faulty disability determination has climbed in the past 8 years from an already outrageous 275 days to 481 days, with 28% of claims taking over 600 days to receive a hearing. This figure does not even include the initial determination, and reconsideration phases, which together push the average wait time for an Appeals Hearing case to well over 2 years.

One of my constituents called my office in Tampa, frantic that his home was in foreclosure proceedings, and though he knew he was eligible for Disability, he simply had not been given a hearing. Facing the prospect of homelessness with a young daughter, he still was not able to break through the crushing bureaucracy that has taken over the Disability appeals process.

One woman I worked with had had multiple surgeries due to debilitating problems with her spine. She was in excruciating pain, and was completely unable to work, but was denied disability payments. The Social Security Administration eventually conceded that she was, in fact, eligible for disability payments. But before that happened, she had to endure three long years of financial uncertainty, near bankruptcy, and the near repossession of her home.

Another constituent of mine was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. She started to have balance problems. At one point she lost her balance and was injured in a bad fall. Still, she was denied disability. Her husband had to come out of retirement to take a part-time job in order to avoid financial ruin while they waited, and waited, and waited for their appeals hearing. Finally, the Social Security Administration came back and said that yes, she should have been receiving payments for years.

A system that leaves our neighbors in limbo while their financial problems continue to mount is not a system that is working. The Timely Due Process for the Disabled Act will begin to move us in the right direction by setting a standard of treatment for disability patients. It instructs the Social Security Administration to, within 5 days of receiving an appeal, set a date for a hearing. After a 60-day time period for claimants to prepare and gather evidence, the hearing must be held within 15 days. A final determination will be required in

another 15 days. These benchmarks are ambitious, but they are not out of line with timeliness requirements in other agencies.

The Timely Due Process for the Disabled Act will also allow a more complete picture of the magnitude of the problems inherent in the system. It requires local offices to share more data about the first phase of the appeals process, the reconsideration phase. While SSA already reports data about the initial claims phase, the Administrative Law Judge hearing phase, and the appeals council, which is the last level of appeals, there is far less data available about the reconsideration phase that takes place at the State disability offices. This is the first level of appeal, and in many cases, is a formality where the same office that denied the claim looks at the same material again, eating up an additional average of about 2 months time. This bill will give a clearer idea of how long these reconsiderations are taking, and how we can speed them up.

Ultimately, the way we treat people with disabilities reflects the values we have as a nation. Over the past 8 years, that treatment has gone from bad to worse, leaving thousands of Americans who need help to struggle on without it. I urge my colleagues to support the Timely Due Process for the Disabled Act and begin to place a priority on doing right by our neighbors who need us the most.

INTRODUCTION OF THE RECREATIONAL PERFORMANCE OUTERWEAR APPAREL ACT OF 2008

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 14, 2008

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the Recreational Performance Outerwear Apparel Act of 2008. This bill eliminates import duties on recreational-use performance outerwear apparel while simultaneously enhancing an established, U.S.-based training and education program for American textile and apparel workers. The legislation is the result of a successful partnership between importers of performance outerwear and the U.S. domestic textile and apparel industry.

In a recent report, the U.S. International Trade Commission recently found that there was no commercially viable U.S. production of performance outerwear used for skiing and snowboarding, hunting and other outdoor activities. This legislation reflects the findings of that report, while also investing in U.S. jobs. It provides duty free treatment for qualifying recreational-use performance outerwear and it establishes the Sustainable Textile and Apparel Research, STAR, fund.

The STAR fund invests in a training program that specializes in lean manufacturing technologies and supply chain analysis, including helping companies work towards minimizing energy and water use, reducing waste and carbon emissions and incorporating sustainable practices into a product's entire life cycle.

By reducing tariffs, my legislation reduces costs for American consumers and for American companies importing these goods; by investing in the textile industry, my legislation supports American jobs and competitiveness; and by researching environmental aspects of

textile manufacture and supply, my legislation improves environmental outcomes.

UPHOLDING THE KEMP-KASTEN AMENDMENT

HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 14, 2008

Mr. ADERHOLT. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from New Jersey, the Honorable CHRIS SMITH for his work on this important issue. It is a privilege to work alongside him in the fight for the lives of the unborn children in our country and around the world.

I want to remind this body and the American public about the need to spend taxpayer funds in a responsible manner by upholding the provisions of the Kemp-Kasten Amendment.

According to the Congressional Research Service, "In 13 of the past 22 years the United States has not contributed to the [United Nations Population Fund] as a result of executive branch determinations that UNFPA's program in China was in violation of the Kemp-Kasten amendment banning U.S. aid to organizations involved in the management of coercive family planning programs."

On June 26, 2008, President Bush issued a determination that because China continues its policy of coercive abortions and forced sterilizations, the provisions of the Kemp-Kasten Amendment continue to prohibit the funding of UNFPA. Nearly \$7 million of the \$39.6 million appropriated for this organization in the Fiscal Year 2008 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Act will now be transferred to the Global Health and Child Survival account.

U.S. foreign aid is meant to help those in less fortunate circumstances with the generosity and goodwill of America; it must not be tainted with coerced abortion, forced sterilizations, and draconian family-limiting policies. We seek to eliminate human rights abuses, not promote them under the guise of our aid.

Since China initiated its one-child policy in 1980, countless women have been traumatized and terrorized by their government. A 2005 article in Time magazine by Hannah Beech, detailed one family's situation: "When family-planning officials came to fetch [Hu] in May for a forced sterilization, [she] escaped with her two daughters to her parents' home in another village. Several days later, seven officials showed up, she says, grabbed her younger child and shoved the girl into a car. Afraid that her daughter would be abducted, Hu jumped into the vehicle with them. The car drove to the local family-planning clinic, where, Hu says, nurses threw her onto an operating table. 'Other people were fine after their operations, but it hurt me so much, I could barely stand up,' says Hu, 33. Two weeks later, doctors operated again and promised things would heal better. But even today, Hu doubles over in pain after just a few steps. 'They told me they were doing this for my own good,' says Hu. 'But they have ruined my life.'"

In April 2007, National Public Radio (NPR) uncovered evidence of dozens of forced abortions in southwest China, even as late as 9 months into the pregnancy. According to the NPR report, one family had one child and believed that—like many other couples—they