

audiences to various aspects of Native American culture. Princess Pocahontas is accompanied by her court of Indian maidens and chieftains during the festival, and they pay homage to the Great Spirit with Native American rituals and dances. One quintessential part of the Princess Pocahontas tradition is that she rides on a horse, with the key to the City of Laredo in her hand as a reminder of the first ceremony in which she saved the citizens of Laredo in the first Washington Birthday Celebration. This year, Princess Pocahontas will be portrayed by Ms. Liza Nicole Gonzalez at the 111th Princess Pocahontas Pageant and Ball on February 16, 2008.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to have had this time to recognize the long history behind the Princess Pocahontas Pageant and Ball.

#### HONORING ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY OF AMERICA

**HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 7, 2008*

Mr. SERRANO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority of America on the occasion of its centennial anniversary in January, 2008. The Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) Sorority is the first African American sorority in America to reach the milestone of 100 years, and represents the first Greek-letter organization in this country founded by, and for, African American college women. The AKA motto is to "provide service to all mankind." Over the years, AKA members have broken barriers and attained positions in American society of tremendous distinction. The AKA sisterhood prides itself on achievement, sacrifice, and a strong belief in the limitless potential of women of color. Together, the AKA's strive for the betterment not only of themselves, but their families, their neighborhoods, and the larger global community.

From its founding in 1908, through 1921, Alpha Kappa Alpha underwent a period of significant growth. Chapters were first established throughout the Northeast and Midwest, and beginning in the mid 1920's, AKA founded new chapters in the Southeast. One of the most remarkable aspects of the AKA sorority is the history of its original nine founding members. Born during the Reconstruction era, and enrolling at Howard University at the turn of the 20th century, the founding AKA women embodied courage and soaring intellect. During a time in our nation's history when African Americans, and women especially, were viewed as second class citizens, the original AKA sisters coalesced around an affirmation of their own dignity. They taught women of color across the Nation that belief in one's self, in one's potential, is the essential building block upon which anything is possible. In a dark chapter of our history, theirs was a message of light—of hope, sacrifice and hard work in the pursuit of self-determination.

This summer, more than 20,000 members of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority will come together on the campus of Washington, DC's

Howard University to honor this legacy. Sorors from around the world will retrace the steps taken by the founding members ten decades ago in what is being called the "Walk Through History." Discussions and plenary sessions will be convened, where together, members will rededicate themselves to the founding principles of the AKA tradition and chart a new course for the next 100 years.

Madam Speaker, I am moved by the Alpha Kappa Alpha's prodigious historical narrative. The redoubtable strength and prescient vision of the founders paved the way for a sorority which today claims more than 200,000 members, 975 chapters, and a presence not only in the United States, but also the Caribbean, Canada, Germany, Korea, Japan, and the continent of Africa. Their unifying mission remains to serve others, while also challenging themselves and their fellow sisters to reach higher for the possible. On behalf of the nearly 3,000 members of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority who reside throughout the 16th Congressional District of New York, and the surrounding counties, as well as myself, I ask that my colleagues join me in paying tribute to this most storied American sisterhood.

#### EXTENDING PARITY IN APPLICATION OF CERTAIN LIMITS TO MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS

SPEECH OF

**HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 6, 2008*

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, today I stand in support of H.R. 4848, extension for 1 year, parity in the application of certain limits to mental health benefits.

H.R. 4848 would amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), and the Public Health Service Act to extend until December 31, 2008, mental health parity provisions, which require group health plans to treat equally mental health benefits and medical and surgical benefits for purposes of lifetime limits or annual limits on benefits covered by the plan.

Approximately two-thirds of individuals with potentially diagnosable disorders do not seek treatment. A majority of insured and uninsured individuals suffering from untreated mental health disorders mention cost as the primary reason that they do not use or seek mental health treatment. This is due in part to unequal health insurance coverage for mental health services, which results in significant cost-shifting from private insure to individuals.

As a former social worker, I personally know untreated mental illness is associated with a number of societal problems. Such as, higher rates of unemployment, crime and increased welfare cost.

Parity for mental health is needed because, left on their own very few employers would offer mental health benefits at a level that is equal to medical and surgical benefits in their group health plan.

Mental health is a serious issue facing many Americans. The goal of H.R. 4848 is to make

sure everyone gets effective quality treatment for mental illness. In order for that to happen, mental illness needs to be treated just like other surgical and medical treatments.

#### IN CELEBRATION OF THE 74TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COLUMBUS ALUMNAE CHAPTER OF DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC.

**HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 7, 2008*

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 74th anniversary of the Columbus, Ohio Alumnae Chapter of my beloved sorority Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. Chartered on May 20, 1934, the Columbus Alumnae chapter was the 66th chapter of the sorority. Additionally, Delta Sigma Theta, a public service, non-profit organization, will celebrate 95 years of service, locally and globally, this year.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is a sorority of predominantly Black college-educated women founded here in Washington, DC at Howard University in 1913. The major programs of our sorority revolve around our Five Point Thrust of: economic development, educational development, international awareness and involvement, physical and mental health, and political awareness and involvement. With over 250,000 members, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority works to continue the vision of our 22 Founders.

This year, during their annual Founder's Day Luncheon, the Columbus Alumnae Chapter highlight the many activities they have been engaged in that have contributed to the betterment of the Columbus area including youth Read-Ins, Scholarships to High School graduates, mentorship, and art and culture programs. Additionally, they will recognize African American women in the Columbus area who have demonstrated a strong commitment to the community during their annual Founders Day Luncheon.

Therefore, I commend the Columbus Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. for their commitment to the people of Columbus, Ohio and across this country. I join with them in this celebration and thank them for their enduring commitment to the sisterhood, scholarship, and service of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. PAUL RYAN**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 7, 2008*

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 29, H. Res. 867, commending the Houston Dynamos for winning the 2007 Major League Soccer Cup, I was absent due to inclement weather grounding flights in Wisconsin.

Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

# RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEFENSE ADVANCED RESEARCH PRODUCTS AGENCY

## HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 7, 2008*

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, today I join a bipartisan team of my colleagues to introduce a resolution to recognize the 50th anniversary of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

October 1957, the Soviet Union ushered in a new dimension to the Cold War with the United States when it successfully launched Sputnik I, the world's first artificial satellite, into space.

So, on this day, in 1958 the Department of Defense established the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) to serve under the secretary of Defense as the specialized technical engine for the United States Military. The threat of Soviet technological superiority and space domination could not be tolerated amid the growing tensions and developing arms race between the two superpowers. DARPA was tasked to confront this threat.

As DARPA focused its technological strengths on the space mission, the agency achieved the unimaginable. The Saturn V rocket, which enabled the United States to launch the Apollo missions to the moon originated on a DARPA drawing board. Perhaps more important, DARPA developed the first surveillance satellites that gave our Nation accurate intelligence on Russian missile program activities throughout the world.

As the military mission evolved throughout the last half century, so too did the DARPA focus. Recognizing the changing nature of warfare well in advance of today's battles, DARPA revolutionized the way our Nation fights wars. Instead of sacrificing more troops by putting them in harm's way, our military now uses stealth technology in our aircrafts, advanced precision munitions that can be dropped into theater without dropping in troops, and now the Predator and Global Hawk unmanned air vehicles dominate the world's airspace.

DARPA's ongoing commitment to the military is not limited combat. The agency's programs are developing real-time accurate language translation, prosthetics that can be controlled by the brain, and alternative fuel sources for military vehicles that will help eliminate our Nation's dependency on foreign sources of oil.

Of course, DARPA's success has not been limited to military innovation. ARPANET, the world's first operational packet switching network, led to the development of today's Internet. Since DARPA engineers first started to connecting remote computers to each other to talk about their shared ideas and work, the Internet has revolutionized the world with the creation of endless possibilities.

The reason that DARPA's work engages the cutting edge of technology is a result of its unique business model. By limiting project managers to 4 to 6 year terms, DARPA optimizes the flow of new ideas by empowering industry experts to take risks, think outside the box and advance ground breaking research projects.

DARPA continues to meet the growing needs of the Nation as it develops significant cutting edge technology elevates the U.S. to the forefront of innovation and propels our military to be the most superior fighting force in the world.

I am proud to recognize DARPA's 50 years of innovation, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

# INTRODUCTION OF THE AUTOMOBILE ARBITRATION FAIRNESS ACT OF 2008

## HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 7, 2008*

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Automobile Arbitration Fairness Act of 2008. This legislation will extend to certain consumers what Congress granted to automobile dealers in 2002: freedom from mandatory binding arbitration agreements.

Automobile manufacturers imposed mandatory binding arbitration clauses in their dealer contracts to forego forums otherwise available under state law. Unfortunately, states could not effectively address the increasing imposed use of mandatory arbitration clauses because the Federal Arbitration Act preempts such state laws. As a result, auto dealers had no legal recourse and were bound to using arbitration. Automobile dealerships voiced their plight to Congress, which in 2002 passed the 21st Century Department of Justice Appropriations Authorization Act. This legislation included language to allow arbitration only if both parties to a motor vehicle franchise contract consented in writing to arbitration and if the consent was done after a controversy arose out of that contract.

Although automobile dealerships now have the option not to enter into mandatory binding arbitration agreements, many dealers require such binding agreements in their sales or lease contracts with automobile purchasers and lessees. This legislation would connect the chain from manufacturers to dealers and from dealers to consumers, by requiring the consent of both parties to enter into contracts with binding arbitration clauses in automobile sales and lease contracts.

I urge my colleagues to join as cosponsors of this legislation.

# PERSONAL EXPLANATION

## HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 7, 2008*

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, February 6, 2008, I was not present for votes due to a delayed United Airlines flight.

Had I been present for rollcall 29, Commending the Houston Dynamo soccer team for winning the 2007 Major League Soccer Cup, I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for rollcall 30, Recognizing the significance of Black History Month, I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for rollcall 31, Remembering the space shuttle *Challenger* disaster

and honoring its crew members, who lost their lives on January 28, 1986, I would have voted "aye."

# PERSONAL EXPLANATION

## HON. PAUL RYAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 7, 2008*

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 30, H. Res. 942, recognizing the significance of Black History Month, I was absent due to inclement weather grounding flights from Wisconsin.

Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

# ARLENE PIAZZA

## HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 7, 2008*

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, I stand here today in remembrance of a distinguished member of the Fontana community and a dear friend, Arlene Piazza.

Due to complications following surgery, Arlene passed away the night of February 5th. Her death comes 3 years after the death of her beloved husband, Mr. John Piazza. Together the Piazas were key players in our Fontana school district and city governments. Their absence will be felt by many.

For 18 years Arlene worked in business and industry. Later this dedicated woman extended her talents to our Nation's academics where she dedicated 20 years to education. We were honored to have her in our Fontana Unified school system for 13 of those years. Her zeal and passion for educating our children is reflected in those 20 years through the numerous roles she took on.

Arlene served as a gifted counselor and in 2003 was elected to the Fontana School Board. There she served as a caring and committed member who was known for loving every child. Her work ethic was continuously commended and her priorities were always focused on what was best for our young students. Her passions were to open doors of opportunity and extend a helping hand as she pushed our youth to explore a fulfilling educational future. This commitment was made apparent in 2006, when she fought to ensure voters approved a \$275 million bond measure going towards the physical improvement of schools.

While it is with sadness that we say goodbye to an incredible woman, we remember the positive change she made while she was with us. The use of her life to benefit her community is unquestionable and has served to nurture a sense of priority towards education and our young generation's future opportunities. Although now gone, in her absence she will continue to serve as an inspiration to us all.

I thank Arlene Piazza for dedicating her life to service in the Fontana community. I am honored to consider Arlene a colleague in the fight to improve education and I truly appreciate all she has given to our community and our country. She will be greatly missed. Barbara, my family, and I extend our deepest condolences to her family.