

54th Massachusetts Regiment the Buffalo Soldiers, to the Tuskegee Airmen. Service in the greatest war or World War II was the culmination of much collective sacrifice and many individual acts of patriotism. The decision to issue Executive Order 9981 which integrated the armed forces confirmed that diversity is our strength and not our weakness. Since the signing of Executive Order 9981, I can forthrightly say that our country has been stronger and a better society overall.

President Truman and his advisors recognized that complete racial integration at all ranks is an essential prerequisite to a cohesive and highly effective fighting force. We see success with the challenges of diversity as being critical to national security. One poignant example is the way our armed forces were hampered with racial conflict in the ranks during the Vietnam conflict in the 1960s and 1970s. This serves as an effective lesson on the importance of inclusion and equal opportunity at all levels of leadership.

However, there has been progress, and I believe that the U.S. Military is a pioneer in providing equal opportunity for its uniformed members above and beyond what is usually seen in the civilian workforce. In truth, a senior military boardroom is a much closer semblance of our society than the average corporate boardroom. But, we can and should do better because it is simply the right and necessary thing to do. Senior military leadership diversity is a matter of strategic importance to the future well-being of our fighting forces. I have initiated dialogue with the senior leadership of each service branch to lay this issue on the table for a healthy discussion.

Of particular note and at their request, I have met with the Commandant of the Marine Corps (General Conway), the Chief of Naval Operations (Admiral Roughead) twice, the Secretary of the Army (General Casey) and plan to meet with the new Secretary of the Air Force (nominee General Schwartz) in the very near future. Their willingness to discuss difficult topics and issues is a testament to their dedication to finding a suitable and long-standing resolution to establishing diversity within DoD. We collectively believe that diversity within DoD and more specifically at the most senior or Flag officer level is critical to recruiting and retention as well as the national security of this nation.

Over the past few years there has been some progress in terms of promotion of Flag level officers and assignment to high profile positions critical to national security. Two examples are Lieutenant General Lloyd Austin currently serving as Commander Multi-National Forces (MNF) in Iraq and Major General Walt E. Gaskin who served as the Commander Multi-National Forces (MNF) West in Iraq.

It is prudent that we accept the fact that diversity is a necessary component within the officer corps of the services and more specifically the Flag officer pool. Of greatest importance is the most senior flag level rank, which represents the major decision-making and influential officer level population within the Department of Defense.

Rather than substituting my interpretation of the myriad ideas discussed in my recent meetings, I think it is best to provide a forum for all of the principal stakeholders and subject matter experts to delve deeper into the issue and provide the Committee on Armed Services

with their recommendations. I have respectfully laid before the House Armed Services Committee language creating a Commission on senior military leadership diversity in the House FY09 NDAA.

The Commission will review current policy and programs to provide recommendations to the Pentagon to insure that qualified minority and female officers are given the same career advancement opportunities as their counterparts.

As you know, of the 39 active four-star Generals, there is currently only one minority, General Kip Ward of Africa Command (AFRICOM). Of the 141 three-star level or 0–9 rank Flag level officers, there are only six minority Generals and five female Generals. Minorities of African-, Hispanic-, Asian-, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, and Native Alaskan decent represent slightly over 19 percent of the over 207,000 officers in the four service branches, but make up over 38 percent of the enlisted ranks.

I believe that just as President Truman had the courage to sign Executive Order 9981 that integrated the armed services in 1948 that it is now time to take a holistic look at the makeup of our officer corps from the most junior to the most senior leadership position to insure that it is diverse and balanced.

We now have the opportunity in our nation's history to begin to put in place a long term solution to the long term challenge of establishing diversity at all levels within our military.

I believe that the onus falls our shoulders to provide a continuation of the courageous initiative that President Truman undertook in order to fully realize integration at all levels within the armed forces and in particular at the senior leadership level.

I respectfully request that the Congress continue to support the establishment of a Commission to discuss diversity in the officer corps and insure equal access to opportunities for the most senior leadership ranks of our Armed Forces.

AVIATION SAFETY ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 2008

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, today, we are considering H.R. 6493, the Aviation Safety Enhancement Act of 2008.

This important legislation was introduced in a bipartisan manner and I want to thank Chairman OBERSTAR and Ranking Members MICA and PETRI for working with me on this legislation.

The United States has the safest air transportation system in the world; however, I have said time and again, we must not become complacent about our past success.

The Committee's April 3 hearing on the failure of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to properly oversee air carrier maintenance programs demonstrates the need for this Committee to ensure vigorous oversight by the FAA to maintain the highest level of safety.

Following the April 3 hearing, the Department of Transportation Inspector General

(DOT IG) made several recommendations to the FAA to ensure proper safety oversight. The FAA's reluctance to accept the IG's recommendations, including establishing an independent entity within the FAA to review FAA employee safety concerns and rotating certain safety inspectors to ensure objective safety oversight is unacceptable. That is why I strongly support H.R. 6493, which establishes an independent Aviation Safety Whistleblower Investigation Office within the FAA; rotates principal supervisory inspectors every 5 years; mandates modification to FAA's customer service initiative; and requires monthly reviews of the FAA's Air Transportation Oversight System (ATOS) database. H.R. 6493 is a positive first step to ensure that FAA maintains safety as its highest priority.

In my capacity as Chairman of the Aviation Subcommittee, I have noticed a pattern with the FAA—the FAA is a reactive agency—not a proactive agency. We have seen it in the area of runway safety; improving conditions at our air traffic control facilities; congestion and delays at our airports and in the sky; and now in safety oversight.

It is a continuous pattern—the FAA only acts when pushed into action by the Aviation Subcommittee or the Full Committee. It is my hope that H.R. 6493 spurs the FAA to be proactive instead of reactive and make the necessary changes to ensure effective oversight of our Nation's aviation system. The American traveling public deserves no less.

With that, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 6493.

CONDEMNING 1994 ATTACK ON ARGENTINE JEWISH CENTER

SPEECH OF

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 15, 2008

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the resolution, condemning the attack on the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association (AMIA), and I would like to thank my friend from Florida, the Ranking Member on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN for sponsoring this meaningful resolution.

Mr. Speaker, on July 18th, 1994, a huge explosion rocked the city of Buenos Aires—marking the second murderous attack against Israeli and Jewish targets in Argentina, which is home to the largest Jewish community in Latin America. The first occurred 2 years prior and was aimed at the Israeli Embassy. The second was the bombing of the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association—where 85 people were murdered and hundreds more wounded.

It has been 14 years since the Jewish Mutual Association was attacked. Yet, the culprits have not been brought to justice. Part of the reason is there is extensive evidence linking the planning of the attacks to the Government of Iran and the execution of that attack to Hezbollah, an umbrella organization of radical Islamic Shiite groups with strong links to Iran and Syria. Iran and Hezbollah have a history of supporting and sponsoring terror, and they have been unwilling to cooperate with investigators.

I have denounced their actions, particularly Iran for being the engine behind these attacks

by financing, training, and arming terrorist organizations like Hezbollah. And, the time has come for all nations to fully cooperate with the AMIA investigation.

Too many lives have been lost. Too many families have been ripped apart. Too many have suffered.

It is time for the world to join together to move peace forward in the Middle East, to end violence against the Jewish community at-large, and to foster respect and understanding for all people throughout the world.

I believe we can start by bringing the perpetrators of the attacks on Argentina to justice. By punishing those who caused death, harm and conflict in Argentina, we will set a clear signal to the world that killing will not advance their cause.

Thanks again to Congresswoman ROSELEHTINEN for sponsoring this resolution. It is important for the Argentinean government to know that we support their efforts to bring the perpetrators of this horrific crime to justice. And again, my deepest condolences and sympathy to the people of Argentina and Israel for the grave loss of life and vast destruction caused by this attack.

HONORING ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate St. Joseph's Catholic Church in celebrating its 100th anniversary. The congregation had its centennial celebration on Saturday, June 21, 2008.

St. Joseph's Catholic Church is located in Twain Harte, California. The origin of this community can be traced back to some of the original settlers in 1907. The area began as a small mining and logging town in the high Sierra Nevada foothills. The church was founded in 1908 with the construction of St. Joseph's Church in Tuolumne City. The church itself not only sets the tone for the present generation but is a proud symbol of the dedication of the pioneer ancestors who built it.

St. Joseph's was originally a member of Sonora's St. Patrick's Parish. Because of the distance to travel between Tuolumne City and Sonora, and the large number of worshipers, the people of northeastern Tuolumne County applied to the Chancery several times for the building of a new parish. Reverend Hugh A. Donohoe, the Bishop of Stockton, decided to go forth with the new parish. The parish in Twain Harte was formally erected and completed on June 20, 1962. The task of forming the Parish was effectively executed by the late Fr. George Lacey, who served the community for 21 years. Fr. William Ryan served the Parish for 10 years and worked to enhance and complete the Parish plant. The parish is now part of Twain Harte's All Saints Parish.

Three generations of worshipers make up the 200 parishioners, headed by Fr. John Fitzgerald and Deacon Ed Zoma. Deacon Zoma is ordained in the Chaldean Rite and can claim to be the longest serving deacon in the country. The Alter Society has now grown into the All Saints' Parish Ladies' Guild and has about sixty members.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate St. Joseph's Catholic Church on its centennial celebration. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing the congregation of St. Joseph's Catholic Church many years of continued success.

TRIBUTE TO RICHAEAL YOUNG ON BEING ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE STUDENT SENATE FOR CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COL- LEGES

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, it is a privilege for me to honor Richael Young of Foster City, California, on being elected president of the Student Senate for California Community Colleges (SSCCC).

At the young age of 20, Richael has already accomplished much and demonstrated tremendous leadership skills. When she was 14 years old she began attending the College of San Mateo where she, along with two other students, founded their school's chapter of the National Community College Honor Society, Phi Theta Kappa. By 16, Richael was vice president of operations of this prestigious honor society and just a year later, at age 17, she was elected president. That same year, Richael was elected a student trustee of the San Mateo County Community College district, holding this leadership position for nearly 2 years.

In May of 2008, Richael ran a successful campaign for the at-large senator of the Student Senate for California Community Colleges. On July 13, 2008, the Student Senate for California Community Colleges held officer elections, and I am proud to announce that Richael was elected president. Richael is not only the youngest person to ever hold this position, but she is also the first woman to do so. In this prominent role, she will be representing California's 110 community colleges and 2.6 million students.

Madam Speaker, I ask the entire House of Representatives to join me in honoring Ms. Richael Young whom I am so proud to have interning in my Washington, DC office serving the people of the 14th Congressional district. We have all benefited from her intelligence, diligence and dedication to excellence. We wish her our best as the president of the Student Senate for California Community Colleges and the contributions she will no doubt make to California and our country.

REMEMBERING THE LIFE OF STICKBALL HALL OF FAMER, CHARLES EDWARD BALLARD III

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Charles Edward Ballard III an outstanding son of Harlem who passed away on February 14, 2008, Valentine's Day. As I speak with profound sorrow, I ascend to cele-

brate a life well lived and to remember with fondness the accomplishments of a remarkable man who, over his many years and under much adversity, fought to preserve the good-old pastime game of stickball.

The death of Charles brought immense sorrow and loss to his family and friends, and to the countless individuals associated with the legendary game of stickball. The game he fought to preserve often served to unite young people of different races and nationalities from the many diverse neighborhoods around the city of New York. The All-Star Charles Ballard was a celebrity among the many that played stickball on our city's streets, taking part in ten stickball championships.

Within the New York City stickball community, Mr. Ballard is widely considered a legend whose bat has launched more than 10,000 line drives over a 50-year career. Therefore, it was no surprise that Mr. Ballard was the first inductee into the Stickball Hall of Fame in 1973. The Hall was founded with the most modest of goals: to formally recognize the sport. The founders—all members of the Old Timers, including their manager, Carlos Diaz—picked the top players from throughout the city, including those who parlayed their street skills into professional baseball careers, like Phil Rizzuto, Joe Torre, Willie Randolph and Rusty Torres.

"Charlie" as he was affectionately known, was an inspiration and true symbol of commitment and sportsmanship to the game he truly loved and its faithful players for more than 50 years. Mr. Ballard was a shining example of selfless love for the many generations of young bucks that came to play the game before and after. He derived significant gratification teaching the sport to kids, spending many hours in the streets and parks of the community with them. He also gladly spent equal, if not more time, mentoring youth about the game of life, offering them his wisdom, compassion, and support.

Mr. Ballard was also a member of the "Greatest Generation" as a veteran of World War II. He proudly fought for his country, serving in the Navy from 1942 to 1945. In addition, he had the distinction of being one of only a few African-Americans to serve as a radio operator in the Navy. Charlie achieved so much during his lifetime that his comrades will continue to benefit from his work even as they miss his ongoing presence.

Madam Speaker, rather than mourn his passing, I hope that my colleagues will join me in celebrating the life of Charles Edward Ballard III by remembering that he exemplified greatness in every way.

TRIBUTE TO THE TURKISH CYPRIOT PEOPLE

HON. ED WHITFIELD

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

Mr. WHITFIELD of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, the meeting of the two Cypriot leaders on March 21, May 23, and July 1, 2008 and the agreement reached by them to launch full-fledged negotiations, which will aim to find a comprehensive settlement to the long-standing Cyprus problem, have been welcomed by the international community, including the United States, the European Union,