

House lifted the moratorium on off-shore oil exploration and oil shale production. If the moratorium is lifted in the Senate as well, America will be one step closer to energy relief.

Lastly, the House passed legislation last week to uphold the landmark Supreme Court's decision in *DC v. Heller*. *DC v. Heller* upheld the 2nd Amendment rights of residents of Washington, DC that had been trampled on for over 30 years. I would have proudly supported the Childers amendment to H.R. 6691 and supported the amended bill on final passage. As a matter of fact I am a co-sponsor of legislation very similar to the Childers Amendment, H.R. 1399, the District of Columbia Personal Protection Act. I am glad to see that the House has taken a bi-partisan step to protect the Constitutional right to keep and bear arms.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to continue providing relief to those suffering from Hurricane Ike and I appreciate the speed with which this Congress has acted to help provide that relief thus far. However, just as we learned after Hurricane Rita, this process will be on going and it will take the continued effort of Congress, Texas, local communities and individual citizens to complete the recovery effort. I ask that all Americans continue to offer their thoughts and prayers to those along the gulf coast.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF WAYLAND BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

HON. RANDY NEUGEBAUER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 3, 2008

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of a fine educational institution in the 19th Congressional District of Texas. This year, Wayland Baptist University, located in Plainview, Texas celebrates its 100th anniversary of excellence in education.

Wayland Baptist University is a 4-year university with a total of 14 campuses and a student body of more than 6,000. Founded in Plainview in 1908 by Dr. James Wayland, the University has become one of the largest Southern Baptist institutions of higher education in the country.

Throughout its 100 years, Wayland Baptist University has seen much progress and growth. While maintaining its commitment to providing a quality Christian education, Wayland has been at the forefront of change. It was among the first universities in the country to admit women and minority students, offer distance learning programs, and to create programs directed toward military students.

Wayland places a strong emphasis on student success and provides an excellent learning environment. The school offers a wide variety of disciplines, from fine arts to engineering, as well as a wide variety of extracurricular activities. Athletics at Wayland provide a constant source of pride for the community, producing more than 800 All-Americans and 100 individual national championships in the last century.

Dynamic vision and devotion to students are the true marks of an exceptional educational institution. On this occasion of its 100th anni-

versary, I congratulate Wayland Baptist University and look forward to watching this institution thrive in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO ST. JOHN'S HEALTH SYSTEM

HON. ROY BLUNT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 3, 2008

Mr. BLUNT. Madam Speaker, today I rise to congratulate St. John's Health System in Springfield, MO, for their work to improve the quality of health care services provided to our seniors. St. John's Health System was recently recognized by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for their outstanding commitment to improving Medicare patient outcomes as participants in a new chronic disease management demonstration program.

Nearly 70 percent of all deaths in America are attributable to chronic diseases. Chronic diseases like heart disease, cancer, and diabetes are some of the most common diseases but they are also the most preventable diseases. Working to prevent these diseases from being acquired in the first place should be our top priority. Managing these diseases so that adverse outcomes are minimized should be next on the list.

Unfortunately, most of the health insurance programs that the Federal Government operates do not place the same prioritization in its payment policies. We don't encourage individuals to seek preventative care and we barely reward individuals who change their lifestyles when diagnosed. We pay in the end with the final bill, but the Federal Government doesn't pay for the course of treatment that will deliver better health outcomes and a longer, more productive life. Ultimately all Americans pay the price for the high costs of chronic diseases.

Over the past 2 years St. John's Health System has participated in a national demonstration program. The results of this project will help to identify new, innovative models to deliver higher quality health care. St. John's was one of only five physician groups that achieved benchmark quality performance for all measures used during the evaluation. I am pleased that St. John's is being recognized nationally for their excellent care for the citizens of southwest Missouri. I hope that, following St. John's leadership, the final results of the demonstration program will bring meaningful changes in delivery of health care services for all of our seniors.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE VETERANS OF OSS GREEK OPERATIONS GROUP II ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR RECEIVING THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL FOR VALOR

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 3, 2008

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the brave men of the Office of Strategic Services' Greek Op-

erations Group II who fought to liberate occupied Greece during World War II. This month, these heroes are being awarded the Bronze Star Medal for Valor for their service in defense of freedom.

In February 1943 at the height of World War II, the Greek government in exile sought help from the United States for Andartes, the Greek Resistance against Nazi occupation. In response, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the forerunner of the CIA) formed top-secret Greek Operations Groups (OGs) from the 122nd Infantry Battalion. After undergoing rigorous training, almost 200 largely Greek-born or Hellenic-American soldiers launched their secret mission, undeterred by warnings that most would not likely survive the perilous fighting behind enemy lines. Chosen for their fluency or near-fluency in Greek, their physical fitness and ability to endure arduous service in rugged mountain terrain, and their intense motivation to oust the Nazi occupiers from the land of their ancestors, these teams were inserted behind enemy lines. From April to September 1944, the men of OG II fought alongside the Greek Resistance, delaying and harassing the Nazi withdrawal, eliminating enemy troops, and destroying their equipment in order to weaken the final defense of Germany against the Allies.

Operations Group II, led by Lt. John Giannaris, operating chiefly out of the tiny remote village of Pappas, conducted military operations primarily against the railroad in the mountains between Lamia and Domokos. During a four-month period the team participated in 14 missions during which they destroyed three locomotives and 31 railway cars, blew up 7,400 yards of rail line, and inflicted 675 casualties on the enemy. On September 8th, 1944, as the group approached a heavily patrolled area, it came under point-blank enemy machine gun fire.

OG II member Michalis Tsirmulas was hit. Under a withering assault, Lt. Giannaris ordered a withdrawal while himself crawling to aid Tsirmulas, only to learn he had been killed. After being severely wounded, Lt. Giannaris narrowly escaped capture, passing within earshot of German soldiers hunting him down. He was found by two local shepherdesses, who cared for him and contacted his men. In a daring daylight escape, Lt. Giannaris was spirited to safety in a British aircraft.

The story of the Greek-American OGs was highly classified for more than 40 years. The full account of these soldiers and their accomplishments was unknown even to the surviving participants. After fighting in Greece ended, most of them went on to other assignments in Europe and Asia. They returned home never knowing the enormous impact their mission had on events in Greece. Most never spoke of their experience with the O.S.S for many years, even to their families. Many years later, Giannaris, since promoted to Captain, recommended his men for an award. The Defense Department agreed and authorized the Bronze Star Medal for valor.

Recently, a search began for survivors and descendants of the deceased of OSS Greek OG II, undertaken by Dr. Robert Perdue, OG II historian and a retired agricultural research scientist. This month at a ceremony in Astoria, New York, the 22 enlisted men of OG II will be honored at a ceremony. One surviving enlisted member of OG II will attend as will families of six deceased members of the Group,

with all receiving the Bronze Star Medal from Captain Giannaris.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the extraordinary bravery and devotion to their country of the courageous men of OSS Greek Operations Group II on the occasion of their receiving the Bronze Star Medal for Valor.

TYRIK JOHNSON

HON. TRAVIS W. CHILDERS

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 3, 2008

Mr. CHILDERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of young Tyrik Johnson of Coldwater, Mississippi. At the tender age of four, Tyrik was taken from this earth in a tragic accident on September 26, 2008. Tyrik was a bright, fearless little boy and he will be missed by all who knew him in his short life. The loss of someone so young is a cruel tragedy and his community will be the lesser for his passing. Tyrik is survived by his loving mother, Adrienne Johnson, and his caring great-grandparents, Marshall and Jean Johnson, all of Coldwater, Mississippi. I ask my colleagues to join me in extending condolences to Tyrik's family and keeping all of his loved ones in our thoughts and prayers.

REMARKS IN HONOR OF CAPTAIN ROBERT VALLEJO II, TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 3, 2008

Ms. GRANGER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the courage of a brave and dedicated hero of the state of Texas and of our Nation.

Captain Robert Vallejo II was a soldier in the Texas National Guard and a true American hero. Robert gave his life in the service of his country on September 18, 2008, when the helicopter he was co-piloting went down near Tallil, Iraq.

Assigned to 2nd Battalion, 149th Aviation, 36th Combat Aviation Brigade as a pilot, Captain Vallejo did his part during a time of war, a fact that speaks volumes about his character and patriotism.

Robert graduated from Brewer High School in 1998 and graduated from Texas Christian University as part of the Reserve Officer Training Corps in 2005. After graduation from college, he attended flight school at Fort Rucker, Alabama. Becoming a pilot fulfilled his long-time dream of flying. Becoming a military pilot fulfilled his desire to, as his mother put it, "be a part of history and leave his mark."

He served as a soldier for nine years and was on his first overseas tour when he died.

Shortly after Robert's death, his family learned that the baby his wife is expecting in January would be a boy. Captain Vallejo's son will be named Robert Cale Vallejo III and will learn of his father through his family and friends, who described Robert as a kind, outgoing, and intelligent man with a wonderful sense of humor.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Captain Vallejo's wife, sisters, parents, and all of his family and friends. His community and nation honor his memory and we are grateful for his faithful and distinguished service to America.

Captain Vallejo will not be forgotten. His memory lives on through his family and the legacy of selfless service that he so bravely imprinted on our hearts.

TRIBUTE TO HORTENSIA "GUERA" ABRIL

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 3, 2008

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, I stand here today to honor a loving mother, supportive wife, adoring grandmother and doting great-grandmother, Hortensia "Guera" Abril.

Born in Nuevo Leon, Monterey, Mexico, she eventually moved to Colton, California where she grew up to become a longstanding, influential member of the community. A fulfilled homemaker thanks to her care, compassion and love for her family, Guera also proudly belonged to Colton's San Salvador Catholic Church. In addition to supporting her husband, Ray "Sonny" Abril, who served on the Colton School Board for many years, she too played an active role in the community as a longtime PTA member, well-respected and loved by all.

In addition to being survived by her husband Sonny of 53 years, her memory will be carried on by her three sons, Nick, Michael (Stella) and Dominic; her three daughters, Melinda Medina (Mike), Becky Gonzales (Reuben) and Nellie Carners (Joe); and one brother, Norberto Gasca. Guera will be sorely missed by 19 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren and many nieces, nephews and friends as well.

As a longtime friend of Ray's, I would like to express my greatest sympathies for his family's loss. She meant everything in the world to him and will truly be missed. Let us take a moment to remember this great woman and her admirable dedication to instilling positive change and leading an exemplarily life, one whose footsteps we all hope to follow. The thoughts and prayers of my wife Barbara, my family and I are with his family at this time.

God Bless Hortensia "Guera" Abril for love of country and mankind.

THE 2008 ANGELS IN ADOPTION

HON. NANCY E. BOYDA

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 3, 2008

Mrs. BOYDA of Kansas. Madam Speaker, This year, I have the great pleasure of seeing one of the finest constituents of Second District of Kansas honored as an Angel in Adoption. This award was given by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption, of which I am proud to be a member. The story of the Second District's Angel in Adoption, Michelle Reed, is a story of hard work, commitment, and humility. It is a story that I am proud to share today.

In addition to adopting two children from Kazakhstan, Michelle has become an advo-

cate for international adoption by facilitating support groups and by serving on the board of Two Hearts for Hope. Michelle is truly an Angel in Adoption.

Michelle's story begins in 2004 when a cousin and a friend announced that they were adopting children from Korea and China. To support her loved ones, she began looking into the process. As Michelle says, "My husband and I had not discussed adopting. We had two children. My son, Jonas, was just starting high school in the fall and our daughter, Libby, was in middle school. The pictures of the children available for adoption were endless on the Internet. I began to think that we could give a home—a family—to one of these children."

In March of 2004, the Reeds signed an agency contract to adopt their son Jess, who was 3 at the time, from Kazakhstan. They traveled to Kazakhstan in November 2004 and lived there for 6½ weeks. In May 2005, they signed a contract to return for a little girl that they met on their first trip who was also 3 years old. They left in October, 2005 and returned home in December with a new daughter, Jsera.

When Michelle returned from her adoption journey in Kazakhstan, she started working to help other families. "After our first adoption, we both became passionate about helping those that were thinking of adoption." She is now the moderator of three Internet groups that provide support for families that are in the process of adopting internationally or integration assistance for those that have already adopted. They try to facilitate heritage knowledge, for example, by teaching parents to cook their child's native foods. Michelle and her family also hosted an exchange student from Kazakhstan this year who taught them so much about their children's heritage.

Michelle is also a board member of the newly formed organization, Two Hearts for Hope, which raises donations to send supplies to orphanages in Kazakhstan. Most of the supplies she works so hard to find are those that many of us take for granted, like shoes and warm clothing. "The facilities aren't perfect—there are broken windows and sometimes there's no heat. Because it's just south of Siberia, the need for warm clothing is magnified."

When speaking about her visits to Kazakhstan she said, "Once you leave those other children behind, you are not allowed to forget them." The love, warmth, faith and passion for helping others that Michelle possesses shines through when you meet her. I am pleased to say that once you meet Michelle, you are not allowed to forget her or the joy she has brought to others.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 3, 2008

Mr. POMEROY. Madam Speaker, on September 29, 2008, I missed rollcall vote No. 673. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following manner:

Rollcall No. 673 "nay."