

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE YOUNG SCIENTISTS FROM CLOUDCROFT MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS

**HON. STEVAN PEARCE**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 28, 2008*

Mr. PEARCE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize young scientists from the Cloudcroft Middle and High schools in my district who recently competed against over 3,000 students from across New Mexico in the New Mexico Science Olympiad. Each school placed third in the overall team awards. Leading to their third place finishes, these students from Cloudcroft were also recognized in almost all of the 40 different science categories. These categories range from those we are most familiar with like biology and chemistry, to the newer fields in science and technology like robotics and forensic science.

Just like the students before them who competed and raised the bar, these two teams from Cloudcroft have risen to the challenge, and in so doing, push future students to even greater success. As these teams continue to push the envelope and inspire other students, I have full confidence that future teams from Cloudcroft will soon find themselves at the national competition held each year in Washington, DC.

Among the highlights of Cloudcroft's showing at the NM Science Olympiad are the achievements of two seniors, Sean Henry and Ann Birch. These students received highly sought-after scholarships to the New Mexico Institute of Technology. Only 10 of these awards are set aside for top scoring students. I am pleased their talents have been recognized and wish them the best of luck as they continue their education.

New Mexico has a rich history of conducting cutting-edge science research and development, and these students embody the innovative spirit that we associate with science and technology in New Mexico. These talented students will play an increasingly important role in our society. They are the future of science and technology in our State and I am impressed with their accomplishments. On behalf of the people of the Second District of New Mexico, I congratulate these students, their teachers, and families for their tremendous achievement.

FREEDOM FOR JUAN BERMÚDEZ TORANZO

**HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 28, 2008*

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about

Juan Bermúdez Toranzo, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Juan Bermúdez Toranzo is vice president of the Cuban Foundation for Human Rights. On November 21, 2007, Mr. Bermúdez was participating in a peaceful fast at his home in support of the political prisoners kept in repressive and inhumane conditions in Cuba's gulags. That evening 30 police and state security thugs stormed Mr. Bermúdez's home and dragged him into a police car.

According to Amnesty International the arrest of Mr. Bermúdez was part of an increasingly arbitrary crackdown against dissidents because of their involvement in peaceful protests. The unjustified arrests by the totalitarian regime's goons were aimed at discouraging demonstrations against the government, particularly on December 10, International Human Rights Day. International Human Rights Day honors the day of the United Nations General Assembly's adoption and proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the first global declaration of human rights.

Just last month a sham regime court held proceedings in secret, "convicting" Mr. Bermúdez of "revealing state secrets," and sentencing him to 12 years in prison. But the regime hooligans were not content with the 12-year prison sentence. They wanted to send a message to future political dissidents by first putting Mr. Bermúdez in a punishment cell and denying him clothes and water. They also constantly subjected Mr. Bermúdez to psychological torture.

The inhumane conditions in the totalitarian regime's prisons took their toll on Mr. Bermúdez and he allegedly attempted to commit suicide.

This is not the first time Mr. Bermúdez has faced the brutality of the Cuban totalitarian-gangster regime. Last March while leaving the Rosa Parks Independent Library at the U.S. Interests Section, the regime's secret police arrested Mr. Bermúdez. After his release he said that he would continue his opposition to the dictatorship and his work for human rights.

After Mr. Bermúdez's arrest by regime thugs, known as the "National Revolutionary Police Unit," between 15 and 25 human rights activists carried out a sit-in in front of the "National Revolutionary Police Unit," demanding the release of Juan Bermúdez Toranzo. The sit-in included Ms. Nery Castillo, the wife of Mr. Bermúdez Toranzo. Because of her participation she has been subjected to harsh intimidation by regime goons. These goons warned her that if she did not leave the sit-in they would take away her children.

Madam Speaker, it is unconscionable that human beings are locked in a barbarously inhumane gulag because they believe that all men and women have a right to freedom and democracy. My colleagues, we must demand freedom and human rights for all people, including those who live under the darkness of totalitarian tyrannies. We must demand immediate and unconditional freedom for Juan

Bermúdez Toranzo and every prisoner of conscience in totalitarian Cuba.

TRIBUTE TO JOHNNIE L. ALBERTSON

**HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 28, 2008*

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and achievements of Johnnie L. Albertson, a 32-year employee of the Small Business Administration who died on December 26, 2007, at the age of 83. She leaves behind a legacy of leadership, especially in her dedication to equal rights and the development of programs to improve the success rate of minority- and female-owned small businesses.

Following a career in business and advertising, Ms. Albertson served at the Small Business Administration from 1973 until her retirement in 2005. She was the first Associate Administrator for the Small Business Development Center program and proved instrumental in the success of the initiative, which assists more than 600,000 small businesses every year. In recognition of her outstanding service, Ms. Albertson was the first recipient of the SBA's Lifetime Achievement Awards, and was honored with the Silver Medal for Meritorious Service for her work developing a national training program for women entrepreneurs.

Johnnie Albertson broke through gender and class barriers at every stage of her life. During World War II, she served in the Women's Air Force Service Pilots corps as a pilot and ferried replacement aircraft across the Pacific. She later became the first female to sell advertising space for three major newspapers: The Washington Post, The New York Times and the New York Herald Tribune. At the Small Business Administration, she rose to become the first female Senior Executive—the highest rank possible for a civil servant without a congressional appointment.

Born in North Carolina, Ms. Albertson was self-educated and a voracious reader. She overcame many difficulties in her life, including the loss of her parents at a young age, to achieve great successes. Beloved by all who met her, she is remembered by her friends and family for her outrageous and irreverent sense of humor, owl glasses, love of jazz music, generosity, and fierce determination.

It is my honor, as chairwoman of the Small Business Committee, to acknowledge Johnnie Albertson's life accomplishments and celebrate her contributions to small business, entrepreneurship, and our nation as a whole. She was an inspiration to many and a friend to all. Her pioneering spirit, courage, and leadership will be missed, but her legacy will endure.

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