

Maroney, Melvin Mason, Myesha Mason, Tara Mathews, Cici McCormick, Brittney McDuffie, Emily McDuffie, Aaron McGowen, William McGowen, Shelby McIntosh, Michael Meacham, Josh Merbitz, David Miller, Tyler Mingle, Josh Moore, John Morris, Zach Murray, Kayla Nickel, Michael Pagan, Stephanie Parker, Aaron Parris, Ashley Patten, Shelby Perkins, Shamikia Perry, Charlie Prazak, Darrin Pugh, Zach Pugh, Briana Rainey, Josh Raymond, Lacey Reade, Shinead Riddle, Lucas Rigo, Rivera Rico, Brett Runge, Nick Sargent, Shannon Schmitz, Tyler Shapard, Jordan Shurmer, Ashley Sledge, Corey Smathers, Devon Smith, Logan Smith, Sammy Stack, Lauren Stanley, Mary Taylor, Lindsey Tedford, Alison Thatcher, Jesse Thurgood, Curtis Vandever, Latoya Wade, Lane Waddell, Marissa Waddell, Cory Waters, Lamar White, Tandra Wilson, and Jacob Wood.

HONORING MSGT. JASON BILLIOT

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to MSgt. Jason Billiot, as he retires from the United States Air Force. MSgt. Jason Billiot entered the Air Force in 1988. After completing Basic Training at Lackland AFB, TX, AB Billiot went to Chanute AFB, IL to be trained as a Special Vehicle Mechanic. After completion of tech school he was assigned to the 363rd Transportation Squadron, Shaw AFB, SC. While at Shaw AFB he not only honed his skills on Firefighting and Refueling Equipment, but also attended Airmen Leadership School.

In 1994, after five years at Shaw, SRA Billiot got his first assignment to the 345th Training Squadron at Lackland AFB. He completed ASE requirements for master medium/heavy truck technician and was also awarded his CCAF degree in vehicle maintenance. Two years later, as a result of BRAC realignment, the school house was moved to the Naval Construction Training Center in Port Hueneme, California.

While in California, Sgt Billiot performed duties as MTT instructor, world training instructor, special vehicle instructor, and aircraft refueling vehicle instructor supervisor. In 1999, Sgt Billiot and his wife, Jeanne, received the blessing of the birth of their daughter, Elizabeth. In 2000, Sgt Billiot received his orders for the 354th Transportation Squadron Eielson AFB, Alaska.

While in Alaska, Sgt Billiot was supervising and running shops such as NCOIC of customer service, NCOIC of special purpose vehicle element, and superintendent of the dispensing element. He also attended the NCO Academy at Elmendorf AFB. In 2003, MSgt. Billiot was again assigned to the school house in Port Hueneme, CA. As Master Sergeant, Billiot took leadership roles as diesel phase head, gas phase head, interservice mechanic curriculum developer and skills knowledge test author. MSgt. Billiot finishes out an outstanding and eventful career after 20 years of faithful service to his country as interservice mechanic school superintendent.

It is my pleasure to recognize the character and dedication of MSgt. Billiot upon his retirement.

KENYA ELECTION CRISIS

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I wish to express my deep concern regarding the current crisis in the nation of Kenya. Approximately 600 people were killed in violent clashes across Kenya, following disputed presidential elections that took place on December 27, 2007. Violence erupted in Kenya after President Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner of the election and opposition leader Raila Odinga disputed the results. European Union observers have said the presidential poll was flawed and the Government of Kenya has acknowledged that voting irregularities took place.

Unfortunately, the effects of post-election violence in Kenya continue to echo throughout the country. An estimated 250,000 people have been forced from their homes and are in need of food, shelter and medicine. Human rights activists and aid workers are concerned that families displaced by the conflict will be unable to return to their homes—many of which were burned down—in the near future. Though the fighting has subsided from its peak immediately after the elections in late December, tension remains high between political opponents divided along ethnic lines. There continues to be incidences of violence, demonstrations, and looting in several neighborhoods of Nairobi and Mombasa and in large parts of the westernmost provinces.

The time has come for both the government and the opposition to enter into a good faith dialog for the benefit and welfare of the Kenyan people, who deserve a political process that reflects their dedication to transparency, democracy and progress. Therefore, it is vital for President Kibaki and Raila Odinga to come together without preconditions to discuss how to end the post-electoral crisis in a way that reflects the will of the Kenyan people. Additionally, both leaders must take steps to end the violence and ensure respect for the rule of law and respect for human rights. The full restoration of freedom of the press and freedom of peaceful assembly is an integral part of this goal.

Madam Speaker, our hearts go out to the people of Kenya who have suffered throughout the post-election ordeal and I urge the Kenyan Government and the opposition to resolve this crisis for the benefit of their people.

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA DISTRICT AWARD OF MERIT

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor three constituents from South Texas: Heather Blakemore, Rene Hernandez, and Sue Stachowiak.

The three have been awarded the District Award of Merit from the Boy Scouts of America, and it is the highest award bestowed upon volunteers in a district that symbolizes their exceptional and noteworthy service to youth in the Boy Scouts of America.

Heather's involvement with scouting began as an assistant tiger cub den leader in Pack 59 for her son, Jess. Since then she has served as den leader, assistant den leader, pack committee member, and assistant scoutmaster. She has also served as the Mistress of ceremonies for the District Recognition Dinner for 2 years and Mistress of ceremonies for the Council Banquet for 1 year.

Rene's scouting career began as a den leader for his son, Rene, in Pack 25. Since then he has served as Webelos den leader and cubmaster. In 4 years, Rene has served on Cub Scout Day Camp staff, Cub Adventure weekend staff, Pinewood Derby staff, Scoutorama staff, and the district training team. He has also served as a unit commissioner and assistant district commissioner, the round-up staff, and participated in multiple Scoutreach recruitments initiatives the last 4 years.

Sue has been involved in scouting for 7 years, beginning with serving as assistant tiger cub den leader in Pack 5 for her oldest son. Since then she has served as den leader, assistant den leader, Webelos den leader, assistant Webelos den leader, assistant cubmaster, assistant scoutmaster, and troop committee member.

The Boy Scouts of America continue their tradition of providing quality programs for boys and young men. I am proud of all three parents for taking an active role in lives of our youth. These parents serve as shining examples of love and duty in our communities.

HONORING THE FORREST HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize the Rocket Band of Blue of Forrest High School in Chapel Hill, TN, for winning the Division I State Championship. The Rocket Band of Blue's field commanders were also state champions, and the band took first place each for soloist baritone, high music, and high visual.

The Governor's Cup, the championship trophy they received, is one of many accolades the marching band has earned this year. The Rocket Band of Blue is the Grand Champion of the Montgomery Central Marching Contest, the Trousdale County Marching Band Yellow Jacket Invitational, and the Highland Rim Marching Contest. The band received a superior rating at the Middle Tennessee School Band and Orchestra Association Marching Festival and third place at the Mid-South Marching Invitational.

I am sure it must be very gratifying to the students, staff, parents, and supporters to see the rewards of countless hours of practice. I congratulate the Rocket Band of Blue on their accomplishments and wish them continued success in the future.

I commend the 2007 Rocket Band of Blue: Madeline Bell, Kimber Luna, Taylor Blanchett, Crystal Cannon, Rachael Harris, Kim Meachem, Brooke Russell, Caleb Boone, Lauren Fatherly, Tyler Hargrove, Tyler Mierecki, Tyler Williams, Jared Blanchett, Paul Caraglio, Matt Kline, Jana Bunkall, Jed Hall,

Brittani Stewart, Bryan Hartley, Travis Ryder, Stacey Ryder, Stacey Byrd, Devin Barnes, Shawna Crafton, Brianna LaFleur, Sam Hartley, Sarah Stemple, Lindsay Gaskill, Jon Fleet, Josh Hall, Gunner Warlick, James Luna, Audra Mobley, Matt Cryer, Zach Brown, Megan Baker, Amber Scott, Katie Freeman, Chelsea Moore, Amber Barnes, Lauren French, Keisha Sherrill, Sara Lubieski, Reilly Rowland, Learyn Miller, Bethany Gamble, Taylor Herron and Jessie Baker.

HONORING ELEANOR WRIGHT

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the memory of Eleanor Wright; a distinguished member of the Santa Barbara community. Eleanor's life was marked by service to our society and love for her family.

Eleanor Wright, a native of Ohio and a long-time Santa Barbara resident, attended the Ethel Walker School and Bennington College where she earned a bachelor of arts degree in psychology. Over 50 years ago, she married Clifford Ramsey Wright Jr., who served honorably in our Nation's armed services.

The Wrights moved to the Santa Barbara area in 1959. Immediately upon arrival, Eleanor proved herself to be a key leader in the community by advocating for social justice in a variety of fields. The Santa Barbara Mental Health Association, the Citizens Planning Association, the Family Service Agency, the Community Counseling Association, and the Santa Barbara Civil Service Commission benefited from Eleanor's tireless work on many of her committees. She also co-founded the Phoenix House of Santa Barbara, a facility designed to help mental health patients transition back into the community. In addition to her devotion through service, Eleanor supported a large number of community based action groups which work to make Santa Barbara a healthy and vital community.

Eleanor's legacy will be remembered by her husband, 4 sons, daughter, 12 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren, and all of her extended family. As a woman who committed her life to serving others, Eleanor's passing has been deeply felt by the many that were touched by her life. The Santa Barbara community will miss an invaluable community leader and a friend. Please join me in honoring this exemplary American.

CONDEMNING ASSASSINATION OF FORMER PAKISTANI PRIME MINISTER BENAZIR BHUTTO AND REAFFIRMING COMMITMENT OF UNITED STATES TO ASSIST PEOPLE OF PAKISTAN

SPEECH OF

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I support H. Res. 912, a resolution condemning the assassination of former Pakistani

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and reaffirming the commitment of the United States to assist the people of Pakistan in combating terrorist activity and promoting a free and democratic Pakistan.

The 27th of December will be remembered as a mournful day for all of the people of Pakistan and people of goodwill the world over. My deepest sympathies and condolences are with them. As a member of the United States Congress' Congressional Pakistan Caucus, I am deeply saddened by this dastardly effort to circumvent the democratic process which has claimed the life of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

The assassination of former Prime Minister Bhutto is viewed by many as an attempt to thwart Pakistan's efforts to help restore stability and democracy. Regrettably, since 2001, the security situation in Pakistan has grown increasingly unstable. There have been at least six assassination attempts against President Pervez Musharraf over the past several years.

Additionally, former Pakistani Prime Minister Bhutto was the target of numerous threats and a previous assassination attempt. In route to a rally in Karachi on October 18, 2007, two explosions occurred shortly after Bhutto left Jinnah International Airport. She was not injured, but the explosions, later found to be a suicide-bomb attack, killed 136 people and injured at least 450. The dead included at least 50 of the security guards from her Pakistan Peoples Party.

Mrs. Bhutto represented the hopes and aspirations of numerous Pakistanis who wished to turn the page on instability and extremism. Mrs. Bhutto sought to change Pakistan with a determination that should have been challenged with ballots, not bullets and bombs.

The Pakistani government's decision to request that the United Kingdom's Scotland Yard Counter Terrorism Command provide support and assistance in the investigation into the murder of Benazir Bhutto will not be enough if the Pakistani people want more. It is exceedingly important that the people of Pakistan believe that a credible transparent investigation is conducted and that all lawful efforts are pursued to bring the perpetrators of the atrocious crime to justice. One of the best ways to accomplish this is to establish a "Truth Commission" of a capable, competent, and credible cross section of Pakistanis. Additionally, it is of the greatest importance that elections be conducted in a fair, transparent and democratic manner after considered input about the process from political parties.

The future of Pakistan will effect our global security. Pro-Taliban militants and their al-Qaeda allies must not find refuge. Homicidal extremists pose a threat to Pakistan and its neighbors and must not be allowed to offset the winds of democratic change. We in the United States can offer support to Pakistan conditioned on free and fair elections along with a credible transparent investigation.

The noble cause of perfecting the democratization of Pakistan is in the hands of the people of Pakistan. Although international partners can assist in this effort, the future of Pakistan must be hammered out by the people of Pakistan.

Although, this tragic event may call into question the future of democracy in Pakistan, people of goodwill in Pakistan, regardless of political persuasion, must continue the movement to enhance democratic institutions

across their nation knowing that freedom, justice, and democracy are difficult to achieve.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF RAY ALEXANDER

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Ray Alexander on his retirement from KRGV television station in Weslaco, TX. His dedication to providing and bringing the news to the Rio Grande Valley has been an invaluable service.

Mr. Alexander has served as general manager for KRGV for 26 years. During his time at the television station, KRGV has become a leader in both national and local news, covering the most important stories and issues of the Valley community. The station has been honored with several regional Edward R. Murrow awards, one National Edward R. Murrow award and an Emmy award. The station has also received the Texas Association of Broadcasters Bonner McClain Award.

The tremendous responsibility of managing a TV station has not stopped Mr. Alexander from serving in civic affairs. He has served in leadership positions for both the National Association of Broadcasters and Texas Association of Broadcasters. He won two of the Texas Association of Broadcasters' most prestigious awards—"Broadcaster of the Year" in 1988 and the "Pioneer of the Year" in 2002.

Mr. Alexander has also gained prominence for his community and charitable work. He has dedicated much of his time to the South Texas Chapter of the United Way; the McAllen, TX chapter of the Boys and Girls Club; and won the Easter Seals Society Rio Grande Valley Chapter "Humanitarian of the Year" in 2001.

As the area continues to grow and face new challenges, it is important to always have dedicated journalists to better inform our citizens. I have had a great working relationship with Mr. Alexander and KRGV throughout my congressional career. As Mr. Alexander moves on, I look forward to working with KRGV in the future in keeping our community abreast of the important issues.

There is no doubt that Mr. Alexander will continue to be an inspirational leader in south Texas. I wish him and his family the best as he moves on to another fulfilling chapter in his life.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION EXPANDING SECTION 179 SMALL BUSINESS EXPENSING

HON. WALLY HERGER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Mr. HERGER. Madam Speaker, in Congress's rush to enact some manner of short-term economic stimulus, we should not lose sight of the bigger picture, that is, that the long-run prosperity of the American worker and his or her family depends on sustained and not one-time economic growth. In general, while economic growth is dependent on many