

The duty Sergeant Rice has performed, as well as his outstanding tenure in the military, is a reflection of the dedication and valor he possesses. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to honor Sergeant Thomas Savage Rice for his enduring allegiance to our great Nation and the State of Florida.

### ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN GAZA MUST BE IMPROVED

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 14, 2008*

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, since late January 2008, the 1.5 million people in Gaza have been enduring an Israeli-imposed blockade. The blockade effectively restricts the entry of food, clean water, fuel, and medical supplies. The lack of basic goods has severely deteriorated Gaza's health, social fabric, and economy.

The World Bank reports that since Hamas ousted Fatah from Gaza last June, 90 percent of businesses have shut down, costing workers more than 100,000 jobs. Due to the closure of Gaza's borders and its inability to import raw materials, farmers and businesses are unable to produce and export their goods leaving nearly half a million people without an income.

I encourage the Bush Administration to do everything it possibly can to improve the economic livelihood of Gaza's population so that they do not become the tragic victims of Israel's national security policies. In particular, the Bush Administration should consider:

Expanding the list of food items permissible for import into Gaza. Presently only twelve basic food items are allowed entry into Gaza and this does not include salt or cattle;

Allowing entry of seed, seedlings, fertilizers, and chemicals necessary for farmers to continue growing basic goods for humanitarian needs and consumption;

Permitting the entry of raw materials intended for use by private sector Gaza-based factories. More than 800 factories have been shut down in Gaza since the blockade, exacerbating its unemployment conditions;

Extending, on an urgent basis, the reach of recently launched West Bank initiatives of the small loans and mortgage funding in order to provide micro-lending to small businesses and to stimulate peaceful economic activities;

Encouraging, and allowing entry of, European and other foreign technical staff to enter Gaza and engage in assisting the private sector as well as non-governmental organizations in Gaza; and

Permitting entry of construction materials into Gaza necessary for the completion of \$300 million dollars worth of projects which have been suspended due to material shortages. These projects fall under the umbrella of international organizations including the United Nations Relief Works Agency, the United Nations Development Program, and the World Bank. The necessary materials can be earmarked for specific projects and their implementation can be supervised by these international organizations thereby avoiding improper usage.

I urge the U.S. Administration to help end the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and ensure

the health, safety, and security for Palestinians and Israelis.

### MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

SPEECH OF

**HON. JOE BACA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 13, 2008*

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 1134, supporting the goals and ideals of Mental Health Month.

Mental Health Month helps to educate our communities that mental health is a fundamental and humane priority for America's well-being.

The quiet suffering of the afflicted, the familial pain shared by their loved ones, and the societal stigma associated with mental illness all make mental health very important to all Americans.

We must realize the toll mental illness has taken on the young. One in five children has a mental disorder. Furthermore, suicide is the third leading cause of death among teenagers, and every one in four Latina teens report seriously contemplating suicide, a rate higher than any other demographic.

Mental illness continues to be a silent illness for our veterans and soldiers returning from serving overseas. More than one in five of our troops suffer from major depression or post traumatic stress disorder. No longer should these conditions be swept under the rug, these are difficult situations that a lot of military families are facing every day.

Today senior citizens compose 12 percent of the population, but account for 16 percent of all suicides, higher than for any other age group. Our seniors are the foundation of this country and their mental health needs are underserved.

These are alarming and concerning statistics. Yet, many of us still don't know the extent of the mental health problems America is suffering from. Untreated mental illness costs the American economy over \$150 billion annually.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this resolution and educate our communities that mental health is a fundamental and humane priority for America.

### STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE FILL SUSPENSION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

**HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 13, 2008*

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6022, at a time when oil prices are reaching record highs, suspending the Federal Government's oil purchases is a win for consumers and for the Federal budget.

Regular gas now costs over \$3.73 a gallon, compared to only \$1.47 in 2001 before the President began implementing his disastrous policies. Families and businesses on eastern Long Island and across the country are calling on Congress to take action to lower these

soaring gas prices and reduce our Nation's unsustainable addiction to oil.

In response, I am pleased to cosponsor this bill, which takes a good, first step. Economists and government agencies agree that suspending the filling of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve would directly impact gas prices this summer by making more oil available. In contrast, it would take at least a decade for consumers to benefit from Republican plans to hand over America's wilderness areas to big oil.

Moreover, it is not fiscally prudent for the Federal Government to continue to pay such high premiums to stockpile oil when we currently have sufficient reserves.

In the 108th and 109th Congresses, as Bush administration policies drove the price of gas to record highs, I introduced similar legislation to halt the filling of the Petroleum Reserve.

Today the need for such action is even greater, Mr. Speaker. Therefore I call on my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 6022.

### MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

SPEECH OF

**HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 13, 2008*

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of H. Res. 1134, a bill which supports the goals and ideals of Mental Health Month. I support this legislation because I believe that Congress should seek to raise awareness about mental health conditions and the importance of mental wellness for all.

The plight of families suffering from mental illness is immense and can often be linked to an absence of adequate social services available coupled with the unwarranted stigma surrounding mental health issues. Due to the unwarranted social stigma associated with mental illness and a systemic failure to provide health care coverage, over two-thirds of the people who suffer from mental illness go untreated according to the Department of Health and Human Services.

According to the National Institute on Mental Health, 20 percent of our children and 26.2 percent of American adults suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year. As the leading cause of disability in the U.S., many people suffer from more than one mental disorder at a given time. According to the Centers for Disease Control, one in two Americans has a diagnosable mental disorder each year.

Within minority communities, there is an increased need for mental health services. For example, according to the Centers for Disease Control, African Americans are more likely to experience a mental disorder and less likely to seek treatment than Caucasian Americans. When African Americans do seek treatment, they are more likely to use the emergency room for mental health care, and they are also more likely than whites to receive inpatient care.

In 2004, the House Government Reform Committee estimated \$100 million of taxpayers' money was spent on detention of

youth awaiting community mental health services. I am alarmed by this number and therefore support H. Res. 1134 because it recognizes the dual need for preventative mental and physical healthcare.

Last year, I introduced H. Con. Res. 86 to express the sense of Congress that an appropriate month should be recognized as Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month. Bebe Moore Campbell was a premier journalist who, before her untimely death, authored a children's book titled, *Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry*, winner of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill Outstanding Literature Award. Through this story of how a little girl copes with being reared by her mentally ill mother, Moore Campbell was able to raise public awareness on mental health issues and heighten the consciousness of this topic within minority communities.

We must strive to accomplish the goals and ideals associated with Mental Health Month in order to alleviate the obstacles and burdens many people and families who are affected by mental illness face on a daily basis. Again, I would like to affirm my support of H. Res. 1134.

#### ON THE FORECLOSURE PREVENTION ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

**HON. JOHN D. DINGELL**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 8, 2008*

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, this legislation represents a fair, common sense solution that will allow homeowners to stay in their homes, and help stabilize the housing market. I would like to extend my gratitude to Chairman FRANK for his hard work on this legislation, which will be of critical importance in Michigan, where there are thousands of homeowners in danger of foreclosure. I am especially pleased that this bill includes legislation which I cosponsored that would provide up to \$300 billion in new loan guarantees to help refinance at-risk borrowers into viable mortgages. In addition, this legislation includes important provisions that expand homeownership opportunities for veterans, seniors, and first-time homebuyers.

This legislation will help both homeowners and lenders, but this is no bailout. Lenders who participate will have to take a loss, but their losses under this program will be far less than if these properties go into foreclosure. Borrowers who realize a profit when they sell their home must return some of that profit to the government. The United States provided similar leadership during the New Deal using a program run by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC). Much like the HOLC, this program stands to save millions of homes from foreclosure at a minimum cost to the taxpayers.

I would especially like to thank Chairman FRANK for his assistance in securing passage of a provision important to the residents of Parkview Apartments in Ypsilanti, Michigan. I have been working for 4 years now to try to facilitate the transfer of this property to Ypsilanti Housing Authority. Chairman FRANK and the staff of the Financial Services Committee

have been instrumental in these efforts, which are designed to clarify Congressional intent regarding certain properties that entered the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) property disposition process prior to the enactment of the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) but where the initial proposed disposition was delayed.

While I believe that Parkview is already subject to the grandfathering provision of the DRA, this provision clarifies that such properties should be considered "pre-DRA" properties, and that HUD should proceed with its prior disposition contracts as to those properties. This provision is one of many that was included in legislation that passed the House last year, and is now being included in this bill as part of a comprehensive housing package. This legislation is of the utmost importance to the Congress, and it is my hope and expectation that it will soon be enacted into law.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. ALBIO SIRE**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 14, 2008*

Mr. SIRE. Madam Speaker, I would like to state for the record my position on the following vote I missed on Tuesday, May 13, 2008. If present, I would have voted "yes" during rollcall No. 306 on H. Res. 1181, Expressing condolences and sympathy to the people of Burma for the grave loss of life and vast destruction caused by Cyclone Nargis.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. RUBÉN HINOJOSA**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 14, 2008*

Mr. HINOJOSA. Madam Speaker, I regret that I was unavoidably detained in my Congressional District in Texas on Tuesday, May 13, 2008. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall votes 306, 307, and 308.

#### ISRAEL'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. JOE SESTAK**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 14, 2008*

Mr. SESTAK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and honor Israel on the 60th anniversary of its founding—May 14, 1948. Over the past 60 years, the United States and Israel have developed a close friendship based on our common democratic values and security interests. I strongly believe that it is in our Nation's best interest to further strengthen our relations with Israel and create a peaceful Middle East.

There are over 3,500 Holocaust survivors living in the Greater Philadelphia region, and many are in my district. These men and women serve as a constant reminder to me to the history and birth of this nation. I have been to Israel numerous times in the Navy, and I re-

cently met with Israeli Ambassador to the United States, Salai Mender, and Commander-in-Chief for the Israeli Navy, Eli Marom, to discuss how our countries' relationship can be developed further.

Our conversation touched on our nations' economic relationship: the United States is Israel's top trading partners and American companies have significant investments in Israel's economy. I believe Congress has vested interest in continuing this economic relationship.

Furthermore, we discussed the state of Israeli's military as well as foreign affairs, from Iraq and the Global War on Terrorism to the close relationship between Israel and the United States and their militaries. I firmly believe our economies would mutually benefit including the potential of a joint venture between the United States and Israel, such as the development of Littoral Combat Ships.

Joint ventures would result in great mutual benefit by providing not only greater interoperability between American and Israeli militaries—while also driving down costs for procurement by working together—but would also greatly enhance the already strong relationship between these two countries.

More than our common bond of trade and security, however, our people share the common belief of Theodore Herzl, who once said "if you will it, it is no dream." A safe and secure Israel is necessary not only for the people of Israel, but for the future of the democratic world. I stand here to affirm my commitment to enhancing the relationship between our nations and to congratulate Israel on its 60th anniversary.

#### JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

**HON. ROBERT WEXLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 14, 2008*

Mr. WEXLER. Madam Speaker, it is an honor to join my colleagues in observing the third annual Jewish American Heritage Month, JAHM, which takes place over the entire month of May.

As you know, Jewish American Heritage Month allows us to annually recognize the historic contributions of the Jewish community to our Nation. The Jewish community has a rich history in the growth of America as we know it today, dating back nearly four centuries to the founding of our country, and it is essential that Congress along with local and State officials work together to promote greater awareness about the contributions of this multifaceted group of people to the fabric of America.

While American Jews make up only a small percentage of our Nation's population, their contributions have been significant in a number of arenas including technology, literature, entertainment, politics, and medicine, as well as many other parts of our society and culture. In celebration of these contributions, communities across the Nation—including many in South Florida, which I am privileged to represent—have scheduled creative programming and discussion to honor these great Jewish Americans who have helped build this Nation.

The programming, which will take places across the country, will also provide an important platform for the discussion of Judaism