

Weather Reporter" in the 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006 competitions, and the Mobile Press Club has named him the "Best Weather Anchor" several times.

In recognition of his remarkable accomplishments, The Press Club of Mobile awarded John Edd its 2005 John Harris Achievement Award, an award presented to a member of the news media "who has made a consistently excellent contribution over a period of time." The Mobile County Commission recently declared 2009 as "The Year of John Edd."

A prolific songwriter, John Edd is one of the founding members of the Mobile Songwriters. He is a member of the Nashville Songwriters Association International and a member of the board of the Frank Brown Songwriters Festival. John Edd also wrote the fight song for the University of South Alabama.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing a dedicated community leader and friend to many throughout Alabama. On behalf of all those who have benefited from his good heart and generous spirit, permit me to extend thanks for his many efforts in making Mobile and south Alabama a better place. John Edd Thompson is an outstanding example of the quality of individuals who have devoted their lives to the field of broadcast journalism.

On behalf of a grateful community, I wish him the best of luck in all his future endeavors.

IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF SAN MATEO COUNTY

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 05, 2009

Ms. SPEIER, Madam Speaker, today I rise to applaud the Peninsula Partnership Leadership Council and the San Mateo County Youth Commission for their inspired work in creating the Bill of Rights for Children and Youth of San Mateo County. I especially want to thank Youth Commissioner James B. Pollack for his articulate and passionate presentation of the Bill of Rights when the groups visited with me last month.

This ground-breaking document was born from the shared belief that all young people—regardless of race, gender, disability, economic status or other identifying characteristic—should be allowed to grow and blossom to their fullest potential, experiencing the joy, wonder and happiness that so many of us remember from our own childhoods.

The Bill of Rights reads:

"We resolve to invest in all children and youth so that:

They have a healthy mind, body and spirit that enable them to maximize their potential;

They develop a healthy attachment to a parent, guardian or caregiver and an ongoing relationship with a caring and supportive adult;

Their essential needs are met—nutritious food, shelter, clothing, healthcare and accessible transportation;

They have a safe and healthy environment, including homes, schools, neighborhoods and communities;

They have access to a 21st century education that promotes success in life, in future careers and a love of life-long learning;

They have training in life skills that will prepare them to live independently, be self-sufficient and contribute to their community;

They have employment opportunities with protections from unfair labor practices;

They have freedom from mistreatment, abuse and neglect;

They have a voice in matters that affect them;

They have a sense of hope for their future."

Madam Speaker, in our democratic system of government, we are taught to believe that all voices are heard equally. But most 12-year-olds don't have a lobbyist and few tables in the halls of power make room for families. That is why the work of the Peninsula Partnership Leadership Council and the San Mateo County Youth Commission and the principles laid out in the Bill of Rights for Children and Youth are so vitally important.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF MR. CLIFF DODSON, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS IN BUNCOMBE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

HON. HEATH SHULER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2009

Mr. SHULER, Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Cliff Dodson on his impending retirement.

For the past nine years, Mr. Dodson has served our community as the Superintendent of Buncombe County Schools. As Superintendent, Mr. Dodson has demonstrated his dedication to quality education and has ardently worked to improve educational opportunities for all children. Through his dedication and commitment to education, Mr. Dodson has helped shape the future of Western North Carolina.

He began his service to education thirty-eight years ago as a science and physical education teacher. He has continued to work tirelessly on behalf of children in various roles as an educator, as an Assistant Principal, as a Principal, and for the past twenty-three years as a public school Superintendent.

Mr. Dodson proven himself an accomplished public servant by successfully overseeing the educational direction of over 25,000 students and effectively administering a budget of almost a quarter of a million dollars. Due to his outstanding efforts he has been recognized by the North Carolina Association of Educators as Superintendent of the Year.

I deeply appreciate that under his direction during these difficult economic times, Buncombe County has ensured that 12,000 students can receive free or reduced-price hot cafeteria meals. He has certainly set an admirable example for future public servants who follow in his path.

Mr. Dodson has also served on the Board of Directors for numerous education-based organizations including the United Way, Children First, and the North Carolina School Administrators Association. In addition to his service in the field of education, as an honored veteran, Mr. Dodson earned the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry for his service as a United States Marine.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Mr. Cliff Dodson today and I want to thank him for

his invaluable contributions to the Western North Carolina educational community and to wish him well in his retirement.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2009

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor our Nation's teachers during National Teacher Appreciation Week, which is being held this year May 3rd–9th.

This is a time to express our thanks and admiration for the more than 3 million teachers in the United States. I encourage everyone to express their appreciation for those teachers who have touched their lives or the lives of their children.

Teachers are heroes in our communities, shaping the next generation of great minds. No great leader, scientist, or artist would be where they are today without the influence of caring and dedicated teachers.

Thurgood Marshall once said, "None of us got where we are solely by pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps. We got here because somebody—a parent, a teacher, an Ivy League crony or a few nuns—bent down and helped us pick up our boots."

There is perhaps no other occupation that influences the fabric of our society more than teachers, and we are fortunate to have this week dedicated to recognizing their contributions.

I am particularly proud of our teachers from my home State of Texas—serving as motivators and mentors for our future leaders. I remain dedicated to working in Congress to ensure that Texas teachers and all teachers have the resources necessary to successfully prepare our Nation's youth for a successful future.

INTRODUCTION OF "THE ENERGY INDEPENDENCE NOW ACT OF 2009"

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2009

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill titled, "The Energy Independence Now Act of 2009."

Few things affect American consumers like high energy prices. During the summer of 2008 with the price of oil hovering near \$150 a barrel, Americans faced record prices at the gas pump—in many cases well over \$4.00 per gallon. These high prices contributed to a downturn in economic growth, an increase in inflation and forced many American families to make difficult financial choices. According to the latest figures from the Energy Information Administration, gasoline prices are down to around \$2 per gallon and the price of oil is close to \$50 per barrel. Though the price of gasoline has decreased significantly, many are still concerned that it will rise again and quite possibly because of the disproportionate amount of oil that we import from regimes that are unfriendly to us.

The old adage goes that those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Apart from creating the Strategic Petroleum Reserves after the oil embargoes of the 1970s, the United States did painfully little to make sure that oil could never again be used as a weapon against us. If anything, we put ourselves further under the thumb of foreign oil. In 1972, we imported approximately 28 percent of the oil we consume from foreign countries; today the United States imports 62 percent of its oil from other nations. While half of that amount comes from our friends in Mexico and Canada, the other half of our imported oil travels from unstable, undemocratic or unfriendly regimes. That means that every time I fill up my gas tank—whether the price is \$2 a gallon or \$4 a gallon—at least half of my money goes into the economies of Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Nigeria, and Angola. And while the tactics of oil manipulation may change—price spikes versus an outright embargo—the results are eerily the same.

That is why I am introducing this bill, to continue to move our country forward on the path toward breaking America's dependence on foreign sources of oil while at the same time investing in a renewable energy future. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle are looking to pass a costly cap-and-trade program that will only serve to increase the price of energy for the American consumer and devastate energy companies in my home State of Indiana. Now is not the time to burden families with higher energy costs, when many of them are already struggling to find and keep jobs, pay for college and provide for their families.

I believe that in the long-run we need to get off oil and that requires more investment in alternative energy and energy conservation technologies. My bill addressed this through provisions that would increase alternative energy sources and diversify the energy grid with currently available alternative energy technologies. As a nation, we waste far too much energy with inefficient engines and machines. That is why my bill would provide tax incentives for companies to produce fuel efficient vehicles. In fact, it provides a \$500 tax credit for individuals who purchase hybrid cars made by American-based companies.

However, while we are discovering new, clean and cost-effective ways to increase the American energy supply, we must recognize that oil will remain a part of our energy mix for some time. The good news about this is that we have plenty of it. The Department of the Interior, DOI, conducted a comprehensive inventory of oil and natural gas resources located off our coastlines within the last several years, and according to the Department's figures there is an estimated 8.5 billion barrels of known oil reserves and 29.3 trillion cubic feet, tcf, of known natural gas reserves along our coastlines; with 82 percent of the oil and 95 percent of the gas located in the Gulf of Mexico, GOM. However, even more importantly, the Department of the Interior estimates that there are untapped resources of about 86 billion barrels, 51 percent in the Gulf of Mexico, and 420 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, 55 percent in the Gulf of Mexico, out there. My bill would open up these areas to access these resources. Domestic production of these resources would provide much-needed real energy jobs without any cost to the taxpayer.

In addition, my bill opens up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, ANWR, which holds the

single largest deposit of oil in the entire United States. Its 10.4 billion barrels of oil is more than double the proven reserves of the entire State of Texas and almost half of the total proven reserves in the U.S., 22 billion barrels. Had President Clinton not vetoed ANWR energy production in 1995, the United States could be getting nearly 1.5 million barrels of oil per day from the arctic right now.

In addition, the U.S. has been called the Saudi Arabia of oil shale. It has been estimated that oil shale deposits in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming hold the equivalent of as little as 1.8 trillion barrels of oil and potentially as much as 8 trillion barrels of oil. In comparison, Saudi Arabia reportedly holds proved reserves of 267 billion barrels. Unfortunately, oil-shale is rough equivalent to diesel fuel and a number of Clean Air Act regulations—such as low-sulfur diesel—and federal motor fuel taxes—which favor gasoline over diesel fuels—have created a strong financial disincentive regarding the production and use of oil-shale fuels. Many of these deposits are on public land making it more bureaucratically complicated to exploit this resource. My bill would provide a financial incentive for companies to invest in and produce more oil from oil shale.

Getting more domestic oil on the market is only half the solution. We haven't built a new refinery in this country in more than 25 years because the approval process for new refinery construction is estimated to require up to 800 different permits. While existing refineries have undergone significant expansion over the years, even as others have been shuttered, our aging refinery infrastructure leaves little margin for error. If we begin to produce more domestic crude oil we would need to turn it into home heating oil, gasoline, or diesel through the refining process. The ability to refine oil must keep pace with the demand for gasoline and diesel. My bill would create an expedited process for the construction of new refining capacity by streamlining the permitting process and opening up closed military bases for construction.

Clearly, developing new oil fields and refineries will take some time. In the interim my bill also helped promote the production of non-food sources for biofuels. It also opens up Federal land for the production of biofuel crops in order to provide relief from high food prices that have resulted from ethanol production.

Madam Speaker, I believe in conservation, I believe in energy efficiency, and I believe in diversifying our energy supply by using wind, solar, coal-to-liquid technologies, ethanol and other renewable energy sources. But the fact of the matter is that oil and natural gas are still going to be a part of our energy mix for a long time to come and we must be able to access our own resources rather than becoming more dependent on unstable parts of the world.

I would like to urge my colleagues to join me in co-sponsoring this important legislation to help America get on the road towards energy independence and to create real jobs at no cost to the taxpayer.

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CINCO DE MAYO

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 4, 2009

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Cinco de Mayo, a day that represents freedom, liberty and determination for the people of Mexico and Mexican Americans.

H. Res. 230, a resolution introduced by my friend Congressman JOE BACA, recognizes the historical significance of the Mexican holiday of Cinco de Mayo, a day on which we celebrate the Mexican army's unlikely victory over French forces at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. While the Mexicans were outnumbered, they defeated a well-equipped French Army that had been undefeated for almost 50 years. The holiday of Cinco de Mayo is mainly a regional celebration in Mexico, while for Mexican Americans it represents heritage and pride.

Hispanics are the fastest growing minority community in our Nation. In 2007, the Hispanic population in the United States reached over 45 million, 13.2 million of whom live in California, and it continues to rise. Hispanics now own a record number of small businesses, creating millions of jobs across our country.

This Cinco de Mayo, let us thank the members of our Latino community for their important contributions to American culture and society. Please join me in celebrating Cinco de Mayo and appreciating the values, traditions, and contributions of Mexican Americans.

IN COMMEMORATION OF CINCO DE MAYO

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 5, 2009

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I would like to commemorate Cinco de Mayo, or the Fifth of May, in honor of the historic day that Mexico defeated France at the Battle of Puebla in 1862. Cinco de Mayo is a national holiday that symbolizes courage, honor, liberty, unity and the struggle for freedom for millions of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans.

Cinco de Mayo has a deep history that all Americans should recognize and remember. Shortly after Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1810, internal political takeovers and wars destroyed the Mexican economy causing Mexico to borrow money from France and other creditors. Mexico was unable to pay back the debt they owed to France; thus, the French invaded Mexico in an attempt to force repayment. The Mexican troops were outnumbered by the French—the French army had 6,500 soldiers while the Mexican army only had 4,500 soldiers. The odds were stacked against the Mexican soldiers: they were outnumbered, untrained and ill-equipped, fighting against an army deemed as one of the best trained and equipped in the world. The French soldiers were confident that their attacks against Mexico would leave the struggling nation on its knees, bowing to a European crown once again. Much to their dismay,