

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Taylor Courter for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT HATE
CRIMES PREVENTION ACT OF 2009

HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud co-sponsor of H.R. 1913, the "Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009." According to FBI statistics, 118,000 hate crimes have been reported since 1991. During the same period of time, reported bias motivated crimes based on sexual orientation has more than tripled, yet the federal government currently has no jurisdiction to assist states and municipalities in dealing with even the most violent hate crimes against gay and lesbian Americans. The FBI's 2007 Uniform Crime Reports showed that reported violent crimes based on sexual orientation constituted approximately one out of six hate crimes committed in 2007, with 1,265 reported for the year.

The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 will provide assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies and amend federal law to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of violent, bias-motivated crimes. This important legislation is backed by a number of major law enforcement organizations, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National District Attorneys Association, and the National Sheriffs Association.

This bill will strengthen existing federal law by expanding its jurisdiction to provide protections for crimes directed at individuals because of their gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability. The bill only applies to bias-motivated violent crimes and does not impinge public speech or writing.

This bill includes an explicit First Amendment free speech protection. Pastors, Sunday school teachers, and religious leaders cannot be prosecuted for the content of their speech. Many religious groups have expressed support for the bill, including the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, the Interfaith Alliance, the Presbyterian Church, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, the United Methodist Church, and the Congress of National Black Churches.

I am proud to support the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 because it is grounded in fundamental American values: recognizing the dignity of every person, protecting religious freedom, and freedom of speech. This legislation protects people from violence based on who they are, and has explicit protections to ensure that the law does not punish what people think, feel, or believe, but rather actions that physically harm others. I urge passage of the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009.

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF
SERVICE BY THE BUFFALO AU-
DUBON SOCIETY

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise to commend and congratulate the Buffalo Audubon Society on the occasion of their centennial of exemplary service to the communities of Western New York and New York State.

Established in 1909, the Buffalo Audubon Society is the oldest Audubon chapter in New York State and one of the four oldest Audubon Chapters in the United States serving the counties of Erie, Wyoming, Niagara, Orleans, Genesee and portions of Chautauqua, Cattaraugus and Allegany.

This outstanding organization is a membership-based not-for-profit that provides an invaluable contribution to our community as it continues to promote the enjoyment and appreciation of the natural world through education and stewardship.

Its educational experience credentials remain exemplary as The Buffalo Audubon Society provides nature and environmental education to as many as 35,000 children and adults each year through classroom presentations, field trips, workshops, festivals, and excursions and has inspired a deeper appreciation of nature among hundreds of thousands of children and adults over the last century.

The Buffalo Audubon Society's stewardship is best exemplified by its ownership and maintenance of six nature preserves in Western New York, whose total acreage exceeds 1,000 acres, including Beaver Meadow Audubon Center, the most active nature education center in upstate New York.

The Buffalo Audubon Society is and will remain a leader in building partnerships and collaborations with other environmental nonprofits, state and local governments, and businesses throughout the region to affect positive changes in the natural environment of Western New York.

Tonight, the community will come together for a Centennial Gala at the Buffalo Zoo celebrating a century of nature education, environmental advocacy and accomplishments. I am pleased and proud to ask that my colleagues join with me in adding the congratulations of the United States House of Representatives and extending our deepest appreciation for 100 years of caring for the environment.

We also add best wishes to the Buffalo Audubon Society for every success in its next century of service as it continues its dedication to work as a strong and effective voice for the protection of natural wonders and environmental quality in Western New York.

CONGRATULATIONS TO JACK
LEONHARDT, MAYOR OF THE
CITY OF WINDCREST

HON. LAMAR SMITH

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, today I want to congratulate Mayor Jack

Leonhardt on the occasion of his retirement as Mayor of the City of Windcrest.

First elected Mayor of Windcrest on May 5, 2001, Mayor Leonhardt has been consecutively elected to four terms. He announced his retirement in May 2009. As Mayor, he served as Chairman of the Alamo Area Council of Governments, President of the Texas Municipal League Region 7, Treasurer of the Greater Bexar Council Council of Cities and was appointed by Mayor Phil Hardberger and Judge Nelson Wolff to the Transportation Task Force.

Mayor Leonhardt is a member of the Windcrest Lions Club, the Windcrest Optimist Club, the Northeast Partnership, the Greater Randolph Chamber of Commerce, and serves as an elder at John Calvin Presbyterian Church. He also served in the United States Air Force from 1966 until 1987 when he retired as Lieutenant Colonel.

He is married to Barbara and has two daughters, Jacqueline Denham and Joanne Brickson, as well as four grandchildren.

He has done an exceptional job as Mayor and we are all grateful for his service to his community.

ROBERT KNISELY

HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of Robert Knisely, a friend to all of Nebraska and a man whose philanthropy over the years—many times anonymous in nature—will be missed.

Born in Shubert, Nebraska, Bob served our country honorably during World War II, captaining B-17 and B-29 bombers in the U.S. Army Air Corps.

After the war, Bob founded Midwest Construction Company which became a nationally recognized heavy construction contractor for more than 56 years. He did not rest on his laurels, instead earning a reputation for a man who loved and lived his work. He returned this success to the State of Nebraska not only through private philanthropy, but also by working to make our State a better place.

Bob's strength was his ability to tap into the humor, empathy and charm which made him well-liked by everyone who knew him.

A driven man, a passionate Husker fan, and a loving husband, father and grandfather, Bob will be missed. My thoughts and prayers remain with his family.

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN
HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DAVID WU

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Mr. WU. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, a time when we reflect on the contributions that Asian Pacific Americans have made to our country.

I would specifically like to take this opportunity today to speak briefly about the Asian

Pacific American community and a topic close to my heart: organ donation. April was "Donate Life Month," and my colleague, Mr. COSTA, one of the co-chairs of the Congressional Organ and Tissue Caucus, spoke eloquently about the need for everyone, particularly those in ethnic minority communities, to become organ donors and to inform their families of this important decision.

Organ and tissue donation is a topic that requires specific, culturally sensitive information to be provided to the Asian Pacific American community in order to get past the fear and cultural stigma associated with donation.

According to the Department of Health and Human Service's Office of Minority Health, the need for transplants is unusually high among some ethnic minorities. Some diseases of the kidney, heart, lung, pancreas, and liver that can lead to organ failure are found more frequently in ethnic minority populations than in the general population. For example, Asian and Pacific Islanders, along with African Americans and Hispanics, are three times more likely than Caucasians to suffer from kidney disease. Some of these diseases are best treated through transplantation; others can only be treated through transplantation.

Successful transplantation is often enhanced by using organs from members of the same racial and ethnic group. Generally, people are genetically more similar to people of their own ethnicity or race than to people of other races. Therefore, matches are more likely and timelier when donors and potential recipients are members of the same ethnic background.

Minority patients may have to wait longer for matched kidneys and therefore maybe be sicker at the time of transplant or may die waiting. Currently there are 7,108 Asian Pacific Americans on organ donor waiting lists. While Asians represent 6.4 percent of the current wait list, only 3.1 percent of organs donated in 2008 came from Asians. With more donated organs from minorities, matches will be found more quickly and the waiting time will be reduced.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to recognize the contributions of Asian Pacific Americans around the country who are addressing this problem. I am deeply grateful for people like Cammy Lee, who started the Cammy Lee Leukemia Foundation to help find matches for bone marrow transplants, and Dr. Samuel So of the Stanford Asian Liver Center and the Jade Ribbon Campaign, whose work addresses the high incidence of hepatitis B and liver cancer in Asians and Asian Americans through education and treatment.

Together as a country we recognize Asian Pacific American Heritage month, and together we can help increase the rate of organ and tissue donation within the Asian Pacific American community, as well as other ethnic minority communities.

INTRODUCING THE FAIR FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS ACT

HON. MAZIE K. HIRONO

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Ms. HIRONO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to reintroduce the Fair Funding for Schools

Act, which reauthorizes and improves the Impact Aid program. Impact Aid benefits millions of American students attending elementary and secondary schools in every state in the country. Through this program, the federal government does the right thing by reimbursing local school districts for lost tax revenue due to federal lands within the borders of their districts and the number of military-connected students in the district.

The majority of public school funding in America comes from local property taxes. Unfortunately, this vital funding stream is drastically reduced in school districts where the federal government controls part of the land in the district. For instance, the many U.S. military bases located in Hawaii take up a vast amount of space and house large populations, but these bases do not generate local property taxes. In other states, large national parks and forests, federal prisons, and Indian lands all similarly decrease local property tax revenue. Left uncorrected, this loss of revenue would leave the children living in these areas with a second class education, funded by substantially fewer dollars than their peers living in areas with no federally impacted land.

In 1950, Congress recognized the need to address this inequity and created Impact Aid, a program by which we provide additional federal dollars to school districts feeling this financial strain.

Impact Aid is one of the most effective programs run by the Department of Education because it sends money directly to local school districts with very few strings attached. Just like the property tax revenue it replaces, Impact Aid dollars can be used to fund the most essential needs identified by the school district—textbooks, computers, utilities, and salaries, for instance. Many districts rely heavily on this money, and without it their students would be shortchanged. Therefore, we must reauthorize this program.

Even great programs need to be tweaked every so often, and this Fair Funding for Schools Act makes necessary changes in Impact Aid. The bill addresses the effects of military base realignment and troop redeployment by allowing Impact Aid payments to be calculated using current student counts instead of prior year data. This change will allow districts receiving an influx of new military families to receive their Impact Aid dollars in a timely manner.

The Impact Aid law also has become overly complicated during its 59-year history. This bill simplifies the law by eliminating some outdated provisions that added unnecessary complications. It also maintains the program's traditional focus on need, whereby payments to school districts are calculated based on the percentage of the budget lost due to federal actions and on the number of federally connected children in a district.

Madam Speaker, this is a vitally important bill for Hawaii and for many school districts across the country. The students most impacted are often from families serving in our military. Given the sacrifices we ask of military families, they deserve nothing less than the best education for their children. This bill will take us in that direction, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE LONGWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 50th anniversary of the founding of Longwood School District, which unites four central Long Island hamlets under a single purpose: providing a top quality education to the children of our community.

The first recorded area schoolhouse was established in Coram, New York, in 1811, nearly a century after permanent European settlement in the area known as "The Plains" due to its inland location. Division of the area into separate school districts soon followed, and schoolhouses for primary education proliferated. In 1959, local school boards moved to consolidate the schools in order to better serve area students, selecting the name of Longwood from a centrally-located estate.

For the past 50 years, Longwood School District has educated students from the communities in my district of Coram, Middle Island, Yaphank, East Yaphank, Shirley, Ridge, Lake Panamoka, Gordon Heights and portions of Medford, Miller Place and Shoreham. The district has grown to include four primary schools: Charles E. Walters, Coram, Ridge and West Middle Island, with students graduating to Longwood Middle School, Junior High School and High School.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the families served by the dedicated teachers, administrators, and staff of the school district, I congratulate Longwood on reaching this important milestone and offer best wishes for continued success in the classroom, on the playing fields, and in post-secondary pursuits.

CONGRATULATING CHICAGO COMMUNITY LOAN FUND, A 2009 RECIPIENT OF THE MACARTHUR AWARD FOR CREATIVE & EFFECTIVE INSTITUTIONS

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Chicago Community Loan Fund (CCLF) on receiving the 2009 MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

I would also like to commend the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, another exemplary Chicago institution, for its ongoing investments in knowledge, the arts, public policy, conservation, and justice. Their grants support diverse areas with critical needs. For example, other recipients of the MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions included groups working on natural resource conservation in the Caribbean, defense of human rights in the Don Region of Russia, and the promotion of equal justice and the rule of law in Nigeria.

CCLF is one of three U.S. organizations, and just eight worldwide, to receive the prestigious award, which recognizes implementing