

The lack of natural disaster preparedness efforts and temporary housing options for disaster-stricken citizens only exacerbated an unbearable situation. Deficient recovery responses have led to elongated recovery rates in my district and across this Nation.

Two main problems—increasing the availability of temporary housing in times of national emergencies and improving training and preparedness for national emergencies—must be resolved to ensure that the humanitarian catastrophe that occurred in the gulf coast and continues to happen today will never occur again.

We have an obligation to better prepare and more adequately respond to the needs of communities hit by natural disasters. We have a responsibility to ensure that basic needs of disaster victims are met immediately following the devastation.

My legislation establishes six National Emergency Centers throughout the United States. The Centers will be used, first and foremost, to provide temporary housing, medical and humanitarian assistance, including education, for individuals and families displaced due to an emergency. The Centers will also serve as a centralized location for the training and coordination of first responders in the instance of an emergency. In addition, the Centers will improve the coordination of preparedness, response, and recovery efforts between governments, private companies, not-for-profit entities, and faith-based organizations.

The National Emergency Centers will be located on military bases, with a preference wherever possible for those installations closed during the most recent Base Realignment and Closures, BRAC, round. I am proposing these sites because the necessary infrastructure to house, feed, educate, and care for evacuees over an extended period of time is already in place, thus limiting the cost and time needed to construct these facilities.

Madam Speaker, our Nation was not prepared for the disastrous hurricanes that struck Florida and the gulf coast in 2004 and in 2005. The establishment of National Emergency Centers will go a long way to ensuring that our response to national emergencies are not as disastrous as the disasters that created the emergencies in the first place.

I ask my colleagues to support this legislation and urge the House Leadership to bring this bill to the floor for its swift consideration.

IN HONOR OF GERTRUDE PINTZ

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 22, 2009

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Mrs. Gertrude Pintz, upon the recent celebration of her 100th birthday.

Gertrude Pintz was born on December 29th, 1908 in Austria-Hungary. She has been blessed over her lifetime with strength, joy, her family and friends. She is known for seeing only the good in others and beauty in life. Mrs. Pintz lives every day with a grateful heart, warm smile and positive outlook.

Mrs. Pintz married the love of her life, Sebastian, and together they raised three sons—Sebastian, Adam and the late Henry. She re-

mains close with her sons, seven grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. As the matriarch of her family, Mrs. Pintz hosted the family's annual Thanksgiving dinner at her Cleveland home, continuing this tradition until the age of 88. In her early seventies, following the passing of her beloved husband, Mrs. Pintz embarked on pursuing her artistic talents. She enrolled in a four-year art school, where she studied oil painting. To this day, her artwork adorns the homes of numerous family members and friends.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor of Mrs. Gertrude Pintz upon the joyous occasion of her 100th birthday. Her love of family, love of life and youthful soul all serve as an inspirational example for all of us to follow. I wish Mrs. Pintz an abundance of peace, health and happiness today, and throughout the years to come.

CORPORAL JOSEPH HERNANDEZ

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 22, 2009

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, it is with great respect and deep sadness that I wish to commend United States Army Corporal Joseph M. Hernandez for his bravery and his willingness to fight for his country. Corporal Hernandez, who was assigned to 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment out of Hohenfels, Germany, was killed in the Zabul Province of Afghanistan when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle on Friday, January 9, 2009. His sacrifice will be forever remembered by those he fought to protect.

A native of Hammond, Indiana, Joseph graduated from Mount Carmel High School in Chicago, Illinois, in 2003. Known for his patriotism and his commitment to serving others, it was no surprise to anyone close to him that he decided to join the Army.

Joseph's family remembers him as a warm-hearted individual who loved boxing, building model airplanes, fishing, and working on cars. Quite the talented young man, he also loved to sing, as well as play the piano and the guitar, and he played soccer in high school. A person of a strong faith, Joseph was active in his church as an altar server and cantor, and at one point, even considered entering the priesthood.

Corporal Hernandez leaves behind a loving family that misses him very much. He is survived by his devoted wife, Alison (nee Gordon) Hernandez, and their two sons, Jacob and Noah, whom Joseph truly treasured. Joseph also leaves to cherish his memory his adoring parents, Elva Hernandez and Jesse (Vicki) Hernandez, and his brothers, Jason and Jessie (Chrissy) Hernandez, as well as his loving grandparents, Josephine and Salvador Pompa. He also leaves behind many other friends and family members, as well as a saddened but proud community and a grateful nation.

Madam Speaker, at this time, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring a fallen hero, United States Army Corporal Joseph M. Hernandez. Corporal Hernandez sacrificed his life in service to his country, and his passing comes as a setback to a community already shaken by the realities

of war. Corporal Hernandez will forever remain a hero in the eyes of his family, his community, and his country. Thus, let us never forget the sacrifice he made to preserve the ideals of freedom and democracy.

A TRIBUTE TO RIMBAN GEORGE T. MATSUBAYASHI ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE BUDDHIST CHURCHES OF AMERICA AFTER NEARLY 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 22, 2009

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Rimban George T. Matsubayashi. After almost 50 years of serving as a minister for the Buddhist Churches of America, including more than nine years as head priest of the Los Angeles Honpa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple in Downtown Los Angeles in the 34th District, Reverend Matsubayashi will retire on January 31, 2009.

Rev. Matsubayashi, who is also fondly known as Rev. George or Matsubayashi-sensei, graduated Summa Cum Laude from Ryukoku University in Kyoto, Japan in 1960. Later that year, he began his ministerial service in the Jodo Shinshu tradition of Buddhism in the United States at the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii at the Honolulu Betsuin Buddhist Temple. While in Hawaii, Rev. George studied at the English Language Institute at the University of Hawaii. In 1963, he enrolled in the doctoral studies program at the University of Wisconsin. In 1964, he transferred to the PhD program in the Department of Oriental Languages at the University of California, Los Angeles.

In 1965, Matsubayashi-sensei was appointed to the Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple in Los Angeles. When the temple became independent in 1976, Rev. George served as its first resident minister. He remained there until 1999. During his 34 years at Venice Hongwanji, Rev. George was active in a wide variety of community organizations. He served on the board of United Way's Western Region. He was a member of the Clergy Council for the Pacific Division of the Los Angeles Police Department. He also gave his time as a Reserve Chaplain for LAPD's Central and Pacific divisions.

In 1999, Rev. George was appointed as the Rimban, or head priest, of the Los Angeles Honpa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, which is also referred to as "Nishi" to the local Japanese American community. During his tenure, Rev. George oversaw the 100th Anniversary of the temple in 2005. The event featured the addition of the new Wisteria Chapel and the Muryo Koku-do (nokotsudo-columbarium) built to commemorate the temple's pioneering members and to continue the proud legacy of the Issei—first generation Japanese Americans—for future generations.

Since joining the Los Angeles Honpa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, Rev. George's community involvement extended well beyond the church's walls. He serves on the Little Tokyo Coordinating Council, the Los Angeles Buddhist Federation and as a volunteer chaplain at several hospitals on the west side of Los Angeles.

In addition to his spiritual and community work, Rev. George is also a devoted husband, father and grandfather. Rev. George and his wife, Kiyoko "Kay" Matsubayashi, have four children: Craig and his wife, Raquel; Dean and his wife, Kim; Tina and her husband, Howard; and Erik and his wife, Cindy. They are also the proud grandparents of Jared, Lindsay, Chase and Emma.

Madam Speaker, on the occasion of Rev. George's retirement, I ask my congressional colleagues to please join his dutiful congregation, his family and me in thanking him for his many years of service to the Buddhist Churches of America and our community. While we wish him well in this new phase of his life, Rev. George will always be Sensei, or teacher, in the hearts and minds of the generations of families whom he has touched during his many years of ministerial service.

HONORING MR. JOE PANIAGUA

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 22, 2009

Ms. GRANGER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the loyal service rendered to the City of Fort Worth, Texas by Mr. Joe Paniagua from 1986 until his retirement in December 2008.

As a former member of the city council and Mayor of Fort Worth, I had the opportunity of working directly with "Joe P.," as he is known by all at City Hall.

Although a native of Corpus Christi, Joe P. joined the City of Fort Worth's employment rolls in 1986 as a Municipal Courts customer service representative. He held a series of positions before being promoted to be the city's chief state and federal legislative program coordinator and grants manager. In that capacity, he faithfully and tirelessly represented the city through six Texas Legislative Sessions, from 1991 through 2001.

Joe P. spent countless hours driving that long and lonely stretch of I-35 back and forth each week between Fort Worth and Austin in loyal service to our city. I have heard stories of his sleeping on friends' couches in Austin in the early days in order to save the city money.

His hard work paid off on many issues that benefitted our community including the successful passage of legislation creating a revenue-sharing program between Fort Worth and Dallas, which supports DFW Airport, one of the busiest airports in the world. Joe P. also worked to streamline Texas crime district laws and to secure legislation allowing municipalities to include "best value" as consideration for purchases.

Joe P. was promoted to Assistant City Manager in September 2001 and retired as First Assistant City Manager on December 31, 2008.

Not only has Joe P. been a loyal public servant to our city, but he and his wife Elsa and their two children, Jose Francisco and Elissa, are well known and beloved citizens of our community.

In closing, I can say without reservation that the City of Fort Worth, Texas and our community at large have benefitted from the service of Joe Paniagua. I invite my colleagues to join me in honoring Joe Paniagua and his family upon the occasion of his retirement.

IN RECOGNITION OF RODEL RODIS

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 22, 2009

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, Rodel Rodis, attorney, author and educator, has been a dedicated member of the Board of Trustees of San Francisco Community College District for eighteen years from 1991–2008. Since his appointment in 1991, Rodel was elected and re-elected by San Francisco voters in 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004. During his tenure, he was chosen by his peers to serve as President and Vice President of the Board three times.

In addition to his service on the Board, Rodel has volunteered his limited additional time but abundant energy to serve as Chairman of the Association of Community College Trustees, National President of the Association of Asian/Pacific Islander Community College Trustees, founder and Northern California Chair of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations and President of the Filipino Bar Association of Northern California.

A natural leader, Rodel previously served two terms as President of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission where he was instrumental in the decision to transfer fifteen acres of SFPUC property in the South Balboa Reservoir to City College where it will be put to great use for the benefit of the general public, hosting, among other projects, a Joint Use Facility and Performing Arts Center.

Rodel Rodis' achievements are many. While a Trustee, he worked with the Board to advance equality of opportunity through the Latina/Latino Services Network; African American Scholastic Program; Asian Pacific American Student Success; Women's Resource Center and Multicultural Infusion Project. He was also instrumental in passing local bond measures for renovating campus facilities and expanding the use of technology throughout the system.

As we both know, Madam Speaker, San Francisco is a community of diverse neighborhoods. Mr. Rodis recognizes this and has been a strong advocate for the new Mission Campus, the Chinatown/North Beach Campus and the Wellness Center.

Throughout Rodel's career, he has been far more than just an elected representative. His passion for education and his commitment to fairness, equality and the expansion of opportunities for all San Franciscans has made Rodel something of a community touchstone—a person whose wisdom, good humor and professionalism remind us all of what it means to be a citizen.

Madam Speaker, the good work of the San Francisco Community College District makes all of us proud. I am confident that it will continue to provide excellent educational opportunities and career training even without Rodel Rodis' leadership, but his shoes will no doubt be hard to fill and his nearly two decades of public service will long be appreciated.

TRIBUTE TO HRANT DINK

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 22, 2009

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Hrant Dink, a beloved journalist, activist, and a man of conscience. Two years ago, on January 19, 2007, Mr. Dink was assassinated in front of his office building in Istanbul.

As a Turkish Armenian, he worked tirelessly to unite the Armenians and the Turks. Serving as the editor-in-chief of Agos, Turkey's only bilingual Armenian and Turkish newspaper, Hrant Dink was a leader. When it came to the Armenian Genocide, he rejected the Turkish government's subversion of history. Instead of accepting state denial of the Armenian Genocide, he advocated for truth and battled Turkey's strangling grip on freedom of speech.

For these convictions, Hrant Dink was tried for insulting Turkishness under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code. For these convictions, Hrant Dink was brutally assassinated.

Two years later, Turkey's citizens who speak honestly about the Armenian Genocide still face potential prosecution and imprisonment for publicly denigrating the Turkish Nation or Turkish Republic. This ultra-nationalism hijacks history at the expense of freedom of speech, stifling discussions by the Turkish people.

Two years later, the investigation into Hrant Dink's murder is in disarray, corruption in the judicial and police system runs deep, and Turkey's moral authority is weakened. The many involved in Hrant Dink's killing, from members of the gendarmerie to extremist nationalists, have been charged or imprisoned for their actions, but it has become apparent that Istanbul and Trabzon's security departments had information that Hrant Dink would be killed, but failed in their duty to protect him. Turkey should act swiftly to bring justice to the memory of Hrant Dink.

This hate and denial produces an environment of fear. This environment produces extreme nationalist organizations that manipulate young men to kill in the name of the Turkish Republic. The law enforcement community was tainted by officers who portrayed Hrant Dink's assassin as a proud Turkish citizen, placing a Turkish flag in his hand and flashing photographs to celebrate a murder.

Now, more than ever, Turkey must shun this behavior and embrace the lessons that Hrant Dink taught—the need for reconciliation between the different realities in Turkey.

There are those on the extreme fringe who stone Armenian Churches and in the midst of soccer matches chant in jubilation the name of Hrant Dink's killer. These individuals may be extreme, but the Turkish government fosters their existence through laws like Article 301.

But there also exists the people in Turkey who see past government intimidation and chant "We are all Armenian, we are all Hrant's," as they gather in thousands upon thousands to celebrate his life.

On the wake of the 60th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on Genocide, thousands of Turkish intellectuals signed on to a letter apologizing to the Armenian people for the genocide. This promising show of empathy amongst the Turkish people is welcome.