

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 8, 2009

Mr. MARKEY of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I rise to commemorate World Environment Day, which is recognized every year on June 5th. World Environment Day was established by the United Nations in 1972 during the commencement of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. For the last 37 years, World Environment Day has been one of the ways that the United Nations has increased awareness in every country about our environment through its goals of giving a human face to environmental issues, empowering people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable development, promoting an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing attitudes towards environmental issues, and advocating partnership which will ensure all nations and peoples enjoy a safer and more prosperous future.

This year, the theme for World Environment Day appropriately focuses on taking action to combat global warming. This year's anniversary comes as people from nations all around the globe are calling for action to move towards a clean energy future that will not only drive economic growth but also protect our planet. As the world readies for the United Nations Climate Change Conference this December in Copenhagen, this anniversary also serves as an important reminder of the need for global action as the international community prepares to come together to discuss the path forward.

The scientific debate about whether humans are causing global warming is over. The reports issued in 2007 by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change underscored the clear need for all countries to take action to reduce global warming pollution. In Copenhagen, the United States and the international community must now turn to how to take action to address it.

Last month, the United States took a major step forward when the House Energy and Commerce Committee reported out the American Clean Energy and Security (ACES) Act. This comprehensive energy legislation will unleash a clean energy revolution here in America that will create hundreds of thousands of jobs, strengthen our national security by reducing our dependence on foreign oil and stop global warming. This legislation will build upon the progress we have already made with the passage of the 2007 energy bill and the clean energy provisions included in the recovery package. With the leadership of President Obama and Speaker PELOSI, the United States is finally poised to head to Copenhagen as a leader rather than a laggard in taking action to transition to a clean energy future and reduce heat-trapping emissions.

This U.N. event is an important reminder of our global needs and I want to bring it to the attention of all the Members.

GEORGE S. "BUCK" BLESSING

HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 8, 2009

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Madam Speaker, this communication is forwarded on behalf of the constituents of Congressional District Three and myself as we pay tribute to the life of George S. "Buck" Blessing. We are all saddened by the loss of his presence in this life but joyful that he has gone to be with his Heavenly Father.

On this occasion, we join with the immediate family and loved ones in saying farewell and praising God for his life. George S. "Buck" Blessing was dearly cherished and well respected by his loved ones, his colleagues, and the community. His service in the Army in World War II illustrates his dedication to America and its ideals. Please rest assured that your extended family from Congressional District Three joins your immediate family and community in recognizing George S. "Buck" Blessing's outstanding service to this nation. As you experience the stage of grief, please find comfort in God's words and wisdom. He is a constant power of strength in these times and will continue to lift you and your family.

Remember, we join Reverend Charles Belz and your friends and family in celebrating George S. "Buck" Blessing's tremendous life. We are all with you in this time of transition. There is an emptiness that only those who have lost a close relative can understand. May the sympathy of those who care make the sorrow of your heart less difficult to bear. If my staff or I may assist you or your family in any way, please do not hesitate to call on us.

In closing, I know that George S. "Buck" Blessing would be extremely proud of the tremendous work his grandson, Nick Martinelli, is doing in my office on behalf of the armed services and veterans. Nick Martinelli is carrying on his family's strong tradition of service to this nation, and I am very thankful for the contributions he makes every day.

HONORING LYNN MORTON-WEIL

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 8, 2009

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today along with my colleague, Representative LYNN WOOLSEY, to honor and recognize Lynn Morton-Weil, who is retiring after more than 21 years of service to the people of Sonoma County.

During her tenure as a county employee, Ms. Morton-Weil worked in six departments as well as serving as personal assistant to three county supervisors, Tim Smith, Mike Cale and currently, Valerie Brown. As such, she embodies much of the Board's institutional memory.

In addition to her official duties, she helped establish the Sonoma County Regional Park Foundation and served as its first Executive Director. She also administered the first Community Partnerships for Youth grant, which included developing the application process,

contract and monitoring criteria and served as Project Director of the Sonoma County Juvenile Prevention Commission.

Recognizing the importance of public service and involvement, she has dedicated countless hours to both candidates and causes.

She takes pride in living in a television-free household, so her retirement hours will be filled with her passions: gardening, hiking, cycling, music, theatre, dance and most especially, her friends, family and her eagerly anticipated English springer spaniel puppy.

Madam Speaker, Lynn Morton-Weil has served her community and her county well for much of her adult life. It is therefore appropriate that we honor her for her public service and wish her well on her retirement.

HONORING LYNN MORTON-WEIL

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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FEDERAL EMPLOYEES PAID
PARENTAL LEAVE ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 4, 2009

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 626) to provide that 4 of the 12 weeks of parental leave made available to a Federal employee shall be paid leave, and for other purposes:

Mrs LOWEY. Madam Chair, I rise today in strong support of the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act. This long overdue and deficit-neutral measure will make the federal government a more family-oriented workplace.

As a mother of three and a grandmother of eight, I understand the challenges families face. Balancing work with child care, especially after the arrival of a new baby, is a challenge Congress can and must do more to address. By providing federal employees with four weeks of paid parental leave after the birth or adoption of a child, H.R. 626 is an important first step in this worthwhile effort.

As the nation's largest single employer, the United States government should be leading the way in adopting family-friendly employment policies, not struggling to catch up. Not only do 75 percent of Fortune 100 companies already provide paid parental leave, but a Harvard University study of 165 nations revealed that the United States joins Lesotho, Liberia, Swaziland and Papua New Guinea as the only nations that do not guarantee paid parental leave to their federal employees. Like many of my colleagues, I am pleased that the House of Representatives will act tonight to rectify this embarrassing discrepancy.

According to the Office of Personnel Management, roughly three million federal employees or nearly 60 percent of the current federal workforce will be eligible to retire within the next ten years. The bill under consideration this evening represents a strategic investment in the future of our federal workforce, ensuring that the United States government is able to recruit and retain young, talented professionals.

Madam Speaker, with our nation embroiled in two armed conflicts and confronting the worst economic recession in decades, I believe that this measure is an essential step toward maintaining and enhancing the quality of the federal workforce in years to come. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act.

ENHANCING SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS EDUCATION ACT OF 2009, H.R. 2710

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 8, 2009

Mr. HONDA. Madam Speaker, last week I reintroduced the "Enhancing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education (E-STEM) Act of 2009," H.R. 2710. This legislation, improved from last Congress, provides comprehensive mechanisms to coordinate the Nation's science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education initiatives. Forty-nine members of the United States House of Representatives signed on as original cosponsors of this bipartisan legislation.

The intent of this bill is to increase the coordination, collaboration, and coherence to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education initiatives for the students of today and the citizens and workers of tomorrow.

As a former teacher, principal and school board member I am deeply committed to improving the education we provide our young people. Developing citizens that are critical thinkers and scientifically literate will help drive a vibrant society and create sound economic policy. Our economy depends on our country's education.

Today, more than ever, our economic resiliency depends on the competitiveness of our labor force. Unfortunately, the signs are not good. Over 25 years ago, "A Nation at Risk" identified America's need to improve STEM education to ensure that we remain competitive in an increasingly global economy. In this country we have many successful STEM education programs. The challenge is that these programs are not coordinated. Over a dozen agencies are engaged in STEM education and often not aware of the efforts of other agencies—they are working in isolation. Our Nation is not maximizing the impact of our STEM education initiatives.

The E-STEM Act will provide a framework for federal agencies, the states and all stakeholders, to work collaboratively. It will help them establish national STEM education goals, coordinate STEM education initiatives, and avoid unnecessary duplication among these efforts.

The bill has four major components:

(1) Elevating the STEM Education Subcommittee at the President's Office of Science Technology Policy (OSTP) to the standing committee level. This change would give STEM education a higher profile within OSTP and establish the mechanism for the coordination of federal STEM education initiatives.

(2) Establishing an Assistant Secretary for STEM Education at the U.S. Department of Education. This Office would bring together the Department's STEM education efforts and manage programs such as Math and Science Partnerships, Math Now, Math Skills for Secondary Students, Minority Science and Engineering Improvement, Teachers for a Competitive Tomorrow, and Upward Bound Math-Science as well as the non-financial aid components of the National Science and Mathematics Access Retain Talent (SMART grants), the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH grants), and the Academic Competitiveness grants.

(3) Creating the State Consortium on STEM Education. This voluntary group of states will be provided with support to align their STEM education efforts. Their mission is to coordinate policies to address weaknesses in STEM education. For example, the Consortium will work with stakeholders to identify strategies to improve the representation of women and minorities in STEM fields.

(4) And lastly, this bill establishes the National STEM Education Resource Repository (NSERR). This clearing house will be a portal to information about all federally funded STEM education programs, making the results of the more than \$3 billion the Federal Government spends annually on STEM education available to local educators. NSERR will make STEM education resources, research and promising practices and exemplary programs widely available to educators, search engines, and third party developers to create applications to enhance STEM teaching and learning.

We need to ensure that all our children are prepared for citizenship in a world that is in-

creasingly dependent on STEM literacy. The bleak outlook for our economy should be a wake-up call that we cannot continue to move forward without a blue print for our students and our future economic well-being. This is why I reintroduced the E-STEM Act.

I want to thank all my colleagues for joining together to address the critical needs of our Nation. I look forward to working together to move this legislation through this Congress.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE PEOPLE OF LEBANON ON ADVANCE OF DEMOCRACY

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 8, 2009

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I wish to congratulate National Assemblyman Saad Hariri and his March 14 coalition on their victory in yesterday's elections in Lebanon. In December, I participated on a delegation to Beirut meeting with Saad Hariri and his colleagues who were bravely campaigning to promote a free market democracy. At their campaign headquarters, I was, inspired by the large number of portraits of assassinated parliamentarians. Saad Hariri is upholding the tradition of dedication established by his martyred father. Following the American-led coalition liberation of Iraq, Syria withdrew from Lebanon giving new hopes for the spread of democracy across the Middle East.

I would like to submit the following portions of an article entitled "Hezbollah loses Lebanon vote" that ran in today's Washington Times reporting on the success of Mr. Hariri and his coalition:

"Lebanon's pro-Western coalition claimed victory Sunday night after an election that appeared to douse fears of a militant Islamist takeover in the tiny nation known for sectarian conflict and as a proxy for Iranian and Syrian interests . . .

"Hezbollah, labeled a terrorist group by the United States and European Union, appeared to suffer from a high voter turnout that exceeded 50 percent—the largest since the end of Lebanon's 1975-91 civil war.

"The outcome appeared to avoid a crisis with the United States and Europe, where some analysts had feared that the Hezbollah-led coalition would win and force the United States and European Union to reconsider foreign aid, especially for the Lebanese army. The army is a key institution in a country that transcends sectarian divisions.

"This is a big lay in the history of democratic Lebanon," Saad Hariri, leader of the pro-Western March 14 coalition, told cheering supporters.

"Congratulations to you, congratulations to freedom, congratulations to democracy," said Mr. Hariri, the son of slain former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri . . .

"Analysts said the next government would have to work with the opposition to prevent instability and fighting from a year ago, when Shi'ite Hezbollah-led forces briefly seized control of Sunni-dominated West Beirut.

"Hezbollah is a longtime ally of Iran and Syria. It opposed a 2005 agreement in which Syrian troops withdrew from Lebanon, ending a 29-year occupation."