

community, where he served as a guide, a counselor, and a friend.

HONORING SOUTH PADRE ISLAND
CHIEF OF POLICE ROBERT
RODRIGUEZ ON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service and dedication of Police Chief Robert Rodriguez for his service and commitment to the Town of South Padre Island, where he worked for 25 years, and retired from the police force on September 1, 2009.

Chief Rodriguez has been instrumental in working during the years with the many law enforcement agencies in the Rio Grande Valley as each of the town's police officers, including him, strove to serve and protect South Texans and guests who visit South Padre Island year-round.

During the past few years, Chief Rodriguez, along with those that call South Texas home, has seen South Padre Island grow. We have seen new development come in, new businesses open, and hotels and condominiums constructed.

Through these significant changes, we know South Padre Island continues to evolve even after suffering from great loss in revenues and services brought about by Hurricane Dolly. South Padre Island continues to accommodate, protect, and serve its many residents and tourists.

Chief Rodriguez has been able to adjust his staff and manpower to the growing needs of South Padre Island. On any given day, you can spot Chief Rodriguez, while on or off duty, visiting with locals and residents. He works around the clock.

In 1984, he began his work for the Town of South Padre Island as a dispatcher, and later was promoted to the police force. From then on, Chief Rodriguez has climbed the ranks within the South Padre Island Police Department and on August 18, 2000, he was sworn in as police chief.

Chief Rodriguez has been instrumental in his work with South Padre Island, and although I am sad to see him leave, I know he is ready to enjoy his much needed retirement with his family, friends and loved ones.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to please join me in commemorating the service of Chief Robert Rodriguez, who served the Town of South Padre Island, the State of Texas, and the United States of America, in his capacity of law enforcement officer for 25 years.

HONORING COL. JIM MUDD

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a true leader, dedicated public servant, and a dear friend, Col. Jim Mudd, Collier County Manager.

Jim served his country honorably for 26 years in the U.S. Army, achieving the rank of Colonel and retiring as the Commander and District Engineer of the U.S. Army Engineer District in Rock Island, Illinois. He graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1974 and earned a Master's degree in operations research from the Naval Postgraduate School in 1982. He was formerly Assistant Director of Civil Works, Central Region, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Washington, D.C., and Chief of the Assessment Division, U.S. Central Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He is also a veteran of the Gulf War. He and his wife Annette have two children who are also serving in the armed services. His son Ryan is a Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy and his daughter Kati is a Captain and physician in the U.S. Army.

After completing his military service in 2000, he moved to Collier County where he became the Public Utilities manager followed by nine months as the Deputy County Manager and eventually earning the top leadership position as County Manager on July 15, 2002.

Throughout the years I have had the privilege of working with Jim to advance the needs of Collier County and the Southwest Florida Community. He has been committed to the people of Collier County for almost a decade even continuing his service after being diagnosed with brain cancer. Through this most difficult battle of his life Jim has shown grace and dignity. He has dedicated his life to his country and to the people of Southwest Florida and truly embodies the spirit of public service. Speaker, I ask that you join me in thanking County Manager Jim Mudd for his service to this country and the people of Southwest Florida. It is an honor to know such a great man, and a personal privilege to call him a friend.

THE RETIREMENT OF PAUL
COWEN AS CHIEF OF STAFF TO
STATE SENATOR EDDIE LUCIO,
JR.

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the dedication of Paul Cowen, who is retiring after 20 years as Chief of Staff to State Sen. Eddie Lucio, Jr.

Paul has worked day in and day out with our office on policy that has greatly impacted South Texas. His vision, perseverance and commitment to helping the less fortunate is remarkable.

In 1989, Paul got a call from then-candidate Eddie Lucio, Jr., the soon-to-be Senator asked Paul if he would run his campaign for the Texas 27th Senatorial District, Paul agreed. The rest is history.

Paul is one of 10 children of Louis and Virginia Cowen. He has been married to Tamara Cowen for 37 years and has three children: Tara Jean, Jonathan Paul, and Timothy Patrick. I take this time on the House Floor to wish Paul a happy retirement, and at the same time, thank him for the many lives he impacted and changed through his work in the Texas Legislature alongside Sen. Lucio.

Although Paul will no longer be Chief of Staff to Sen. Lucio, he will forever remain in the hearts and souls of those he impacted.

Today, I ask that my colleagues join me in commemorating the retirement of Paul Cowen as Chief of Staff to Sen. Eddie Lucio, Jr. I wish you the best of luck, amigo.

ACCEPTANCE OF STATUE OF
HELEN KELLER PRESENTED BY
THE PEOPLE OF ALABAMA

SPEECH OF

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 30, 2009

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Congressional Tribute commending the dedication of the statue of Helen Keller.

The life of Helen Keller is one that we continue to praise because of her tenacious spirit. Having her sight and hearing stolen by illness as an infant in rural Alabama did not stop her from accomplishing incredible feats. Ms. Keller is not only a champion for the blind and deaf in the United States, but also worldwide. Her miraculous breakthrough came at a simple well-pump, learning the spelling of the word "water" as it ran over her hand. From this moment, she went on to graduate from Radcliffe College, author several books and be awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

As a Representative, as a woman, and as a nurse, I can appreciate the societal and medical challenges Ms. Keller overcame to become the triumphant figure that she is. Young women have a great role model in Helen Keller. She has also inspired medical professionals and humanitarians across the globe to fight preventable blindness and malnutrition.

It is with great respect for this American hero that I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Congressional Tribute commending the dedication of the statue of Helen Keller.

TRIBUTE TO ART VAN FURNITURE

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

Mr. UPTON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Art Van Furniture. Throughout the month of October, Mr. Art Van Elslander and Art Van Furniture are celebrating 50 years as a family-owned and Michigan-based company.

In my district, the city of Kalamazoo is home to an Art Van Furniture store that has been dedicated to supplying guests with quality furniture and superior customer service. They have continued to provide jobs and revenue to the local economy during a time when Southwest Michigan has needed it most.

As Michigan's largest furniture retailer with 32 locations, Art Van Furniture has brought recognition and notoriety to our State by receiving numerous distinguished honors. One recent accolade was the 2009 Retailer of the Year Award from Furniture Today, a furniture industry publication. In acknowledgment of their green efforts, the Michigan Retailers Association named Art Van Furniture a 2007

GreenTailer. This inaugural honor is given to retailers who are protecting the environment by adopting energy conservation and Earth-friendly practices.

Providing continual and vital economic growth to local communities statewide by employing more than 2,500 Michiganders, Art Van Furniture has been continually named one of West Michigan's 101 Best and Brightest places to work. Furthermore, Art Van Furniture has an exceptional record of giving back to area charities and communities through a variety of generous financial contributions.

Again, it is my honor to rise today in honor of Art Van Furniture on the monumental occasion of its 50th anniversary. Congratulations and best wishes for another five decades.

TRIBUTE TO THE CONGREGATION
GEMILUTH CHASSODIM

HON. RODNEY ALEXANDER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Congregation Gemiluth Chassodim of Alexandria, LA, originally known as the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Rapides. Chartered on October 2, 1859, the congregation recently celebrated its 150th anniversary of distinguished service to the Jewish community, as well as to providing faithful dedication to the Alexandria area.

The congregation first held religious services in various private homes with lay leadership. The initial Jewish sanctuary was built in 1870, and the first rabbi, Marx Klein, came in 1873. On October 14, 1873, the young congregation became one of the original charter members of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, presently known as the Union for Reform Judaism, which today represents 900 affiliate congregations in the United States and abroad. The present sanctuary was constructed in 1952.

The congregation has been served by 23 rabbis and 33 board presidents. It grew to a peak of nearly 300 families during the mid-twentieth century.

Many members of the Temple have held various leadership roles in civic and charitable organizations throughout Central Louisiana. In addition, they have made significant contributions in the fields of medicine, law, government, social services, education and the cultural life of the region.

The Temple, the Rabbi and individual members continue to play an integral part in achieving better interfaith understanding, working to strengthen the quality of life for all citizens in the communities of the region.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join with me in commending the Congregation Gemiluth Chassodim.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PROTECTING RESORT CITIES FROM DISCRIMINATION ACT OF 2009

HON. HARRY E. MITCHELL

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, earlier today I, along with Representative DEAN HELL-

ER of Nevada introduced the Protecting Resort Cities from Discrimination Act of 2009.

If enacted, the bill would prohibit federal agencies from discriminating against cities like Scottsdale, Arizona, and Reno and Las Vegas, Nevada, simply because they are great places to visit.

Scottsdale, and resort destination cities like it, are reeling right now—not just from an economic downturn, but from stigma. Business travelers are reluctant to avail themselves of the great facilities and great value we have to offer, out of fear that they will be accused of inappropriately vacationing on the company dime.

In Arizona, some are calling it the “AIG effect.”

As a result, an already difficult situation has become dire.

Earlier this year, the Arizona Republic reported that, in Scottsdale alone, an estimated 80 events and business meetings had been canceled and local resorts had lost a combined \$23.9 million from groups fearing a public-relations backlash.

Scottsdale's hotel occupancy is down nearly 12 percent, and revenue per available room is down nearly 30 percent.

The ripple effect this has had on our economy is even worse. Restaurants, suppliers—you name it—they're all suffering.

And it doesn't help when the federal government tells the business community that they're afraid of giving up their business, too.

Cities like Scottsdale, Reno and Las Vegas should have every bit as much right to win federal meeting and conference business as anywhere else. If we can provide the right facilities at the right price, we shouldn't be punished because we also happen to be great places to visit.

If enacted, the Protecting Resort Cities from Discrimination Act would stop that from happening. The bipartisan bill would prohibit federal agencies from discriminating against cities that are perceived to be resort or vacation destinations when planning events, meetings or conferences.

I want to assure my colleagues that nothing in this bill will encourage federal agencies to undertake any additional or unnecessary travel. I firmly believe that federal agencies have an obligation to ensure that tax dollars are not wasted or misused.

All this bill would do is ensure that, when appropriate, cities like Scottsdale have a right to compete.

I want to thank Rep. HELLER for his partnership on this legislation and I urge my colleagues to support it.

H.R. 3590, SERVICEMEMBERS HOME OWNERSHIP TAX ACT OF 2009

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I extend my support to H.R. 3590, the Service Members Home Ownership Tax Act of 2009, and thank my friend from New York, Mr. RANGEL, for introducing this legislation.

When Congress passed the first-time homebuyer tax credit in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in January of this year, it

sought to reverse the downturn in the housing market by helping qualified homebuyers purchase their first home with a maximum \$8,000 tax credit. To ensure that the credit benefited ordinary Americans and not speculators, we required that borrowers who took advantage of the credit repay it if they sold their home within three years of the purchase date.

At the time, we thought this was good policy. However, it is clear now that an exception should have been made for our servicemen and women and their families, who are often required by federal orders to redeploy overseas within a three-year period. The chance for us to correct this oversight has now come.

The Service Members Home Ownership Tax Act amends the federal tax code to provide an exemption for members of the military, CIA, and Department of State that would not require them to repay the homebuyer tax credit if they are called for overseas duty and are forced to sell their homes within three years of purchasing it. It also extends for one year the deadline for utilizing the first-time homebuyer tax credit for service members who served outside the country for at least 90 days in 2009. This provision would help returning veterans take full advantage of the tax credit, which is set to expire on November 30, 2009.

In exchange for service in war zones abroad and the sacrifices that our servicemen and women make everyday, it is only fair that our military families be able to take full advantage of the programs we enact in Congress. The Service Members Home Ownership Tax Act of 2009 is deficit neutral and reaffirms our commitment to our men and women in uniform. I am proud to provide my support to H.R. 3590.

“BRINGING HER LIGHT”—IN HONOR OF HELEN KELLER AND THE UNVEILING OF HER STATUE AT THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL

HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

Mr. ADERHOLT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor an American heroine, Helen Keller, on the occasion of the unveiling of her statue at The United States Capitol on Wednesday, October 7th 2009, in the Great Rotunda. Born in Tuscumbia Alabama, Helen would rise up to be one of the greatest daughters of the South. Stricken at the age of 19 months as a baby, losing both her hearing and her sight. Against all odds, armed with but only her will, courage and persistence, would come out of the dark to teach the world. And become admired for her shining example of faith and courage. Providing hope to all and championing the betterment of others. I ask that this poem penned by Albert Caswell of the Capitol Guide Service be placed in the RECORD.

BRINGING HER LIGHT

Out of the darkness . . .
Into the light . . .
From out of the darkness . . .
Can so come the light . . .
From out of such silence . . .
Can so come one's soul . . .
A voice heard, so sounding . . . so very
bright, to behold!
All in the Keller, the color of one's soul . . .