

Light" and to celebrate the growing tide of commitment to service and volunteering that is a hallmark of this great nation. Tomorrow, President George H. W. Bush and President Barack Obama are together to mark this important milestone in the history of the service movement.

Twenty years ago, President Bush spoke of a thousand points of light, individuals and organizations "spread like stars throughout the nation, doing good." From this idea rose the Points of Light Foundation which has both recognized and organized exemplary acts of giving for the past two decades.

In 2007, it merged with Hands On Network, which started in my district, in the city of Atlanta, and the combined organization is now the Points of Light Institute, the largest volunteer network in the country. Their mission is to mobilize, not just a thousand, but millions to answer the call to solve our most pressing problems—volunteers working together to help those with HIV in San Francisco, building wheelchair ramps in Greenville, and creating award-winning tutoring programs in Atlanta.

In today's hard times, people are hurting. Americans are having to choose between paying their mortgages and putting food on the table. In these tough times it is more important than ever that we, as American citizens, give back to those in need. National Service becomes ever more important when people are hurting. I am proud of my fellow citizens who have heeded the calls to service, and have dedicated their time to helping others. In 2008, 61.8 million Americans volunteered, dedicating more than 8 billion hours of service worth an estimated \$162 billion.

The Points of Light Institute and its 250 Hands On Action Centers reach 80 percent of our nation's communities have been at the forefront of this remarkable growth. I am so pleased to be able to recognize this organization's first 20 years of harnessing the energy and enthusiasm of our people to be a part of a better world and their ongoing contributions as a part of President Obama's United We Serve initiative.

INTRODUCING THE EVERY CHILD DESERVES A FAMILY ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation that will open up thousands of good homes to foster children. On any given day, there are approximately 500,000 children in the child welfare system. Over 125,000 of these abused and neglected children are waiting to be adopted. There is an acute shortage, however, of adoptive and foster parents. The result is that many children, particularly minority and special needs children, languish in foster care without permanent homes. The severe developmental, emotional, and educational costs to children raised in foster care are well documented. The 25,000 youth who never find a permanent family and "age out" of the system each year are more likely than nearly any other group to become homeless, incarcerated, or suffer with mental illness or substance abuse.

Despite the shortage of adoptive and foster parents and the terrible consequences of long

stays in the child welfare system, some states have enacted discriminatory bans prohibiting children from being placed with qualified parents due to the parent's marital status or sexual orientation. Currently, over 65,000 adopted children and 14,000 foster children are living with a gay or lesbian parent. Studies suggest that upward of 2 million gay and lesbian individuals are interested in adopting or fostering a child. Yet, statewide discriminatory bans and the practices of individual adoption agencies have resulted in fewer children being placed in safe and permanent homes.

Congress invests over \$8 billion in the child welfare system each year and we should not accept policies that use Federal funds to enact barriers to adoption and close the door to thousands of potential homes. Multiple studies have found that adopted and foster children raised by gay and lesbian parents fare just as well as their peers being raised by heterosexual parents.

When considering a potential placement for a child, the only criteria should be what is in the child's best interest and whether the prospective parents can provide a safe and nurturing home. Bigotry should play no part in this decision. That is why I am introducing the "Every Child Deserves a Family Act." This legislation would simply prohibit any entity that receives Federal child welfare funds from denying or delaying adoption or foster care placements based solely on the prospective parent's marital status or sexual orientation. States and child welfare agencies that fail to end discriminatory practices would face financial penalties. This is the same approach that put an end to race discrimination in adoption and foster care placements.

Abused and neglected children in our child welfare system are some of the most vulnerable members of our society. We cannot allow divisive politics to further harm these children by shrinking the number of prospective adoptive and foster parents. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in saying yes to children and no to bigotry by cosponsoring the "Every Child Deserves a Family Act" and working with me to make it law.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL LATINO AIDS AWARENESS DAY OF 2009

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize National Latino AIDS Awareness Day of 2009 which takes place today on Thursday, October 15, 2009. I want to commend the various individuals and groups that have worked hard to make this day a reality including the Hispanic Federation, the Latino Commission on AIDS, the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors, and various other local, regional, and national partners.

National Latino AIDS Awareness Day is an incredibly important day that helps bring attention to the problems the Latino community faces in regards to the HIV/AIDS crisis. While the HIV/AIDS problem is an issue that affects every racial and ethnic group in the United States, it unfortunately has a disproportionate impact on the Latino community. In 2006,

there were roughly 80,000 Latinos living with AIDS, representing 18 percent of all those living with the disease, and although Latinos comprise 15.3 percent of the U.S. population, they account for 24.3 percent of new HIV infections. Additionally, stigma within the community, lack of access to health care, and misinformation about the virus make it difficult to combat. Truly, this must be changed, and embracing the goals and ideas of National Latino AIDS Awareness Day is a step towards making that happen.

I am reminded, too, that the Latino community is not alone in this struggle. Other ethnic groups and particularly the African-American community are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. We must all stand together, learn from each other, and work toward ending this virus that hurts so many people in our country and across the world.

Madam Speaker, I urge my fellow colleagues to join me today in recognizing National Latino AIDS Awareness Day for the betterment of our country and the health of the numerous ethnic groups that add so much to our national character.

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT AND THE REGIONAL PARKS FOUNDATION

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the joint anniversary celebration of East Bay Regional Park District's 75th Anniversary and the supporting Regional Parks Foundation's 40th Anniversary. This evening, Park District supporters and friends gather at Temescal Regional Park, overlooking open space created through the founding of the nation's first and largest Regional Park District.

In 1934, during the catastrophic depths of the Great Depression, members of a grass-roots land preservation movement placed a measure on the ballot that would preserve excess watershed land in the Oakland and Berkeley hills. The project introduced a concept unheard of at the time: creating a natural balance between recreational land use and wilderness preservation. Bay Area residents responded with unprecedented foresight and civic commitment when the measure passed by an astonishing 71 percent.

Today, the East Bay Regional Park District, EBRPD, operating in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, manages more than 98,000 acres of land comprising 65 parks and over 1,000 miles of biking, hiking and horse riding trails. The parks host approximately 14 million visitors per year.

The District, supported by the Regional Parks Foundation's fundraising efforts, provides recreational opportunities at freshwater swimming areas, fishing docks and piers, day camps, children's play areas and numerous camping and picnic sites.

Myriad visitor services include education centers, a disabled-access swimming pool and group meeting facilities. The District's Park Express Bus Program offers subsidized bus service to any District park for groups of senior, disabled or low-income residents and school classes with funded lunch programs.

Our regional parks' success is the result of eight decades of hard work by innumerable citizen activists, elected district directors, general managers, district employees, environmental organizations, public officials, volunteers, and taxpayers who have collaborated to ensure local access to a majestic regional park system. Many park sites also contain protected species of plants and animals, as well as Native American historical sites containing rock art, and burial or village locations. Above all, EBRPD's top priority remains aligned with our park founders' original mission: to preserve the natural beauty of the land and protect wildlife habitats.

The future of East Bay Regional Park District is marked by growth and stability thanks to last year's passage of Measure WW, the largest local park bond measure to pass on record.

Seventy-five years ago, Bay Area park advocates demonstrated a pioneering and progressive local spirit, which endures to this day. The rich history of our regional parks has undoubtedly helped lay the framework for the Bay Area's famed conservation movement. It is this continued passion for open spaces and preservation that inspires communities, on a national and global level, to protect and preserve both the environment—and our future.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, on October 14, 2009, I missed the following Rollcall Votes due to a longstanding commitment away from Washington:

1. Rollcall vote No. 775, H. Res. 768, Expressing support for the designation of the Month of October as "National Work and Family Month".

2. Rollcall vote No. 776, H.R. 1327, the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act.

3. Rollcall Vote 777, H. Res. 816, Mourning the loss of life caused by the earthquakes and tsunamis that occurred on September 29, 2009.

4. Rollcall Vote 778, H.R. 3371, Airline Safety and Pilot Training Improvement Act of 2009.

5. Rollcall Vote 779, H. Res. 786, Commemorating the canonization of Father Damien de Veuster, SS.CC. to sainthood.

If present, I would have voted "yea" on all matters.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ART VAN FURNITURE

HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Mr. PETERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Art Van Furniture, an iconic fixture in the retail world of Michigan that was founded by Art Van Elslander, a much admired and prominent figure in the metro-Detroit community.

The story of Art Van Elslander and the rise of Art Van Furniture to its dominant position in

the retail furniture world is the American Dream fully realized. As a son of Belgian immigrants and growing up on Detroit's east side, Archie "Art" Van Elslander's entrepreneurial spirit shone brightly even as a youngster when he hawked newspapers up and down Detroit's Gratiot Avenue. After high school, military service and working at a local furniture store, Mr. Van Elslander entered the world of entrepreneurs. Heeding his father's advice to "control your own destiny," Mr. Van Elslander mortgaged his home and borrowed against insurance policies to finance his first store.

Through times both flourishing and faltering in the subsequent years, the fortunes of Art Van Furniture ebbed and flowed with the economic cycles of the Michigan economy. Ultimately, it grew to more than 30 locations across Michigan and employing more than 2500. Over the years, Art Van Furniture has adapted to the changing environment, and quite literally so. Art Van has been named a "GreenTailor" by the Michigan Retailers Association after adopting a variety of Earth-friendly practices ranging from the installation of Energy Management Systems to recycling tons of waste. It has been continually named as one of West Michigan's Best and Brightest places to work.

Over the past 50 years, Art Van has grown to be Michigan's largest furniture retailer. And during those years, Art Van Elslander became renowned and admired as a pillar of the philanthropic community and a stalwart business leader committed to Michigan and its citizens. Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join my salute today to Art Van Elslander on 50 years of vision, perseverance and "giving back" to our community; and to Art Van Furniture and each of its thousands of employees over the years, on 50 years of business growth and success.

RECOGNIZING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GEORGE BUSH INTERCONTINENTAL AIRPORT IN HOUSTON, TEXAS

SPEECH OF

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 14, 2009

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 138, which honors the George Bush Intercontinental Airport for its 40 years of outstanding service to the residents of Houston, TX, and to travelers from around the world.

Since it first opened in 1969, Bush Intercontinental Airport has transported over 700,000,000 passengers to more than 170 U.S. and international destinations, making it one of the largest airports in the world. This, in turn, has generated tremendous economic benefits for the greater Houston area. Travelers to the region account for more than \$20 billion in annual sales. The airport also employs over 30,000 Houston-area residents and has created over 120,000 additional jobs in local industries. Many of these employees live in our district.

Bush Intercontinental Airport has likewise served as a hub for cargo shipments to the U.S. and Latin America. For four years in a

row, the airport has received Air Cargo World's "Air Cargo Excellence Award" for its facilities. It now handles more than 300,000 tons of freight annually, and this figure continues to grow. In November, the airport plans to open a new import facility for perishable freight, which will expand business in temperature and time-sensitive products.

Together with the Port of Houston, Bush Intercontinental Airport has helped to make Houston a truly international city and one of the leading ports of entry and export in the country. It serves as a model of success in international travel and shipping, and this level of accomplishment should be acknowledged.

I urge my colleagues to support House Concurrent Resolution 138 recognizing the 40th anniversary of George Bush Intercontinental Airport.

PASTOR CHARLES T. SEMBLY AND FIRST LADY PAMELA J. SEMBLY

HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 15, 2009

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Madam Speaker, I rise before you today to honor Reverend Charles T. Sembly and First Lady Pamela J. Sembly for their 25 years of faithful, dedicated service to Union Bethel A.M.E. Church.

Following in the footsteps of his father, the late Rev. Edgar L. James, Pastor Sembly earned his license to preach on March 17, 1971, and was ordained an African Methodist Episcopal Itinerant Deacon in 1978 and an Itinerant Elder in 1979. In 1982, Pastor Sembly was appointed Pastor of Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church in Knoxville, Maryland. During the mid-year Conference on October 24, 1984, Pastor Sembly was appointed to Union Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Pastor Sembly and Mrs. Sembly have provided noteworthy spiritual leadership in fulfilling their vision of growth and development at Union Bethel A.M.E. Church. During Pastor Sembly's tenure, the church established over 40 ministries and outreach programs to enhance the Randallstown community. Under his leadership, the church created a nonprofit Community Development Corporation to increase its social outreach and opportunities for service to the greater Northwest Baltimore County community. As local President of the Lillian M. Dorsey Senior Missionary, Mrs. Sembly established several on-going outreach programs, which include the Good Samaritan Ministry, the Senior Outreach Ministry and provided additional support to three area shelters.

Pastor Sembly is currently a Trustee and Member of the Finance Committee of the Second Episcopal District Washington Conference, and an Instructor of the Second Episcopal District Washington Conference Board of Examiners. Pastor Sembly conceptualized and developed the Six-Week Lenten Services with seven A.M.E. Churches and is a former Recording Secretary for the Second Episcopal District Washington Conference.

Mrs. Sembly is very active in the Women's Missionary Society of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. She currently serves as the President of the Lillian M. Dorsey Senior Missionary Society of Union Bethel A.M.E.