

product was a video recording of the session, which in turn will be transcribed in order to produce a document, or written report for presentation back to Reps. BISHOP, JR. (D-GA), and RANGEL (D-NY) of the Veterans Braintrust, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Democratic leaders in the House, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and others recommending ways to address the unique needs of both Iraqi & Afghanistan returning soldiers, and their families, as well as African American, or black veterans and provide thoughtful proposals for legislation.

Later that evening I hosted the 20th anniversary gala reception and awards ceremony at the Washington Grand Hyatt Hotel. Among those publicly recognized and acknowledged on this special occasion were Judge Robert Russell, Jr. who was presented the Citizens Beneficiary Award by the Mike Handy Foundation and Fund, for his unique Buffalo Veterans Court Treatment Program in the state of New York along with the U.S. Army Freedom Team Salute recognizing Frederick Gray, President of the Black Iwo Jima Veterans Group; Brig. Gen. Robert Cocroft, President and CEO of the Center for Veterans Issues; and Joseph Stevenson, a World War II veteran.

Other 2008 Braintrust awardees included: Actor John Amos, Sgt. Nathaniel Bass, USA, Ret., Asa Gordon, Dr. Richard Danford, Jr., Ph.D., Dr. Edward Brown, Dr. Vincent Patton III, Maj. Gen. Rosetta Burke, NYANG, Ret., Thomas Jones, Sr., Christopher Moore, Dr. Charles Simmons, Howard Wright, Thomas Yarosz, Halley's Comet Foundation, Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Tubman African American Museum, Smithsonian's National Museum for African American History and Culture, Parting Ways Historical Site, Sankofa Restoration Project, Myrl Billings Memorial Veterans Center, and Doubleback Productions.

Finally singled out for special praise was the Association of the 2221 Negro Volunteers of World War II, who served in white Army infantry units during and after the Battle of Bulge. Afterward the private reception and awards ceremony was opened to the general public for a party with entertainment provided by Tori Robinson of Paris and Recording Artist Betty Wright.

My special thanks go to Roslyn Burrough, Anthony Hawkins, Mae Campbell, Forest Farley, Jr., Dr. Frank Smith, Jr., Brigadier General Robert Cocroft, Joe Wynn, Jack Evans, Dr. Vince Patton III, Belinda Foster, Dr. Martel Teasley, Dr. Michael Kane, Dr. Cheryl Royster Branker, Karen Freeman Wilson, Carmen Wilson II, Lucretia McClennay, Thomas Harris, Pastor Leon Bryant, Sr., Maceo May, Jason Young, Clarence Slaughter, Jean Davis, David Thompson, Maj. Myles Caggins, USA, Tonya Collins, Medgar Evers College and Congressional staff members Emile Milne, Kenya Handy, Holly Biglow, Kiwanis Harvey Styles, Roshan Hodge, Lee Footer, Alexandra Ward, Sonya Passi, Jonathan Halpern, Edwin Larkins, Tony Buckles and Malcolm Shorter.

May God continue to Bless America, and thank all veterans for their service.

48TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACE CORPS

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2009

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 48th Anniversary of the Peace Corps and in doing so, join many others around the nation in celebrating National Peace Corps Week. Their mission is to help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women while helping to promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served, as well as, a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

Since the establishment of the Peace Corps by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, more than 195,000 U.S. citizens have served their country in the cause of peace by living and working in 139 countries throughout the world. As of September 30, 2008, 7,876 Peace Corps Volunteers are making significant and lasting contributions to improve the lives of individuals and communities in 76 countries.

I am proud to say that three of those volunteers currently serving their country are from my district in West Virginia. Both Ashley M. Hess (Burkina Faso) and Garrett C. Prendergast (Mongolia) will finish up their two years' of service in August of 2010, while Stephanie D. Zorio will finish up her two years' of service in the Philippines in November of 2010.

Peace Corps volunteers have made significant and lasting contributions around the world in agriculture, business development, information technology, education, health and HIV/AIDS, youth and the environment.

The 195,000 citizens, who have volunteered to serve their country since 1961, came from all walks of life and represent the best of what the United States has to offer. The work they have done over the past 47 years has played an important role in developing nations and continues to provide opportunities for people of different backgrounds to come together to serve the cause of peace.

SUPPORTING THE MEDAL OF HONOR COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT OF 2009

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2009

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, I am proud to join my good friend Congressman CHRIS CARNEY as an original cosponsor of the Congressional Medal of Honor Commemorative Coin Act of 2009. This bipartisan legislation will assist the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation in raising the funds it needs to promote heroism and selflessness among our nation's youth—qualities which the Medal of Honor embodies.

First authorized by Congress in 1861, the Congressional Medal of Honor is our nation's highest award for valor in action against an enemy force. It is a symbol of how ordinary Americans can risk their lives and go above and beyond the call of duty in defense of our great nation.

Since its inception, fewer than 3,500 Medals of Honor have been awarded to members of the United States Armed Forces—approximately half during the Civil War. Today, there are only 111 living recipients. These select few exemplify the values of our great nation through their incredible acts of bravery and commitment to our country.

As the first U.S. Representative-reservist to be deployed to an imminent danger area since World War II, I know first hand the sacrifices and challenges our men and women in armed forces face. It was an honor to serve with uniformed Americans in Afghanistan and it is in their honor that I join Mr. CARNEY in introducing this legislation today.

EXEMPLARY STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2009

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Madam Speaker, There are wonderful examples of academic achievement and community service taking place in Southeast Queens high schools. Many students throughout the New York Congressional 6th District are performing at such a high level in their academic work and community activities that it deserves public recognition. I have been so inspired that I initiated the Exemplary Student Achievement (ESA) award program to honor these young citizens who are emerging as our community's future leaders.

Since the inception of the ESA program in September 2008, I have partnered with administrators and faculty in various Southeast Queens high schools to identify and honor worthy students. It has been my privilege to award the following students with Congressional Achievement Awards:

Andrew Sargeant of Business, Computer Applications & Entrepreneurship Magnet High School

Brian Herb of Queens High School for the Sciences at York College

Chandraika Niranjana of Math, Science Research & Technology Magnet High School

Cleavelyn Murray of Humanities & the Arts High School

Deborah Hector of Humanities & the Arts High School

Dookumarie Persaud of Jamaica High School

Kevin Thom of Humanities & the Arts High School

LeeAnn Anderson of Queens High School

Mariam Donzo of Hillcrest High School

Marquise Moore of Business, Computer Applications & Entrepreneurship Magnet High School

Miriam Gonzalez of Hillcrest High School

Oniyebi Hinton of Humanities & the Arts High School

Peter Brown of Math, Science Research & Technology Magnet High School

Philipnary Thuyamany of Jamaica High School

Reaz Khan of Jamaica High School

Robin Singh of Queens High School for the Sciences at York College

Shannon Gordon of Humanities and the Arts High School

Shelly Lekhraj of Business, Computer Applications & Entrepreneurship Magnet High School

Tracy Ganga of Jamaica High School

Tracy Mangal of Hillcrest High School

Zora Jiles of Jamaica High School

Through their strong commitment to academic excellence and community service, these high school students have established themselves as peer role models amongst their classmates. I am proud to have such stellar students emerging within the Southeast Queens community. I encourage them all to continue their academic studies and social development at a higher education institution. I look to them to continue representing the high standards that our district's families, schools, and community organizations promote. The people of Southeast Queens look to these youth to utilize their academic knowledge, practical skills, and social networks to strengthen our community's cultural, civic, business, and political institutions.

It takes a village to raise a child, so it is important that I also recognize the family members, guardians, teachers, administrators, counselors, coaches, and mentors who have provided these students with the guidance and resources making it possible for them to blossom into exemplary young leaders. I thank all of these individuals for their dedication and contributions to our youth and our community's future.

THE FEDERAL RESERVE TRANSPARENCY ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2009

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Federal Reserve Transparency Act. Throughout its nearly 100-year history, the Federal Reserve has presided over the near-complete destruction of the United States dollar. Since 1913 the dollar has lost over 95% of its purchasing power, aided and abetted by the Federal Reserve's loose monetary policy. How long will we as a Congress stand idly by while hard-working Americans see their savings eaten away by inflation? Only big-spending politicians and politically favored bankers benefit from inflation.

Serious discussion of proposals to oversee the Federal Reserve is long overdue. I have been a longtime proponent of more effective oversight and auditing of the Fed, but I was far from the first Congressman to advocate these types of proposals. Esteemed former members of the Banking Committee such as Chairmen Wright Patman and Henry B. Gonzales were outspoken critics of the Fed and its lack of transparency.

Since its inception, the Federal Reserve has always operated in the shadows, without sufficient scrutiny or oversight of its operations. While the conventional excuse is that this is intended to reduce the Fed's susceptibility to political pressures, the reality is that the Fed acts as a foil for the government. Whenever you question the Fed about the strength of the dollar, they will refer you to the Treasury, and

vice versa. The Federal Reserve has, on the one hand, many of the privileges of government agencies, while retaining benefits of private organizations, such as being insulated from Freedom of Information Act requests.

The Federal Reserve can enter into agreements with foreign central banks and foreign governments, and the GAO is prohibited from auditing or even seeing these agreements. Why should a government-established agency, whose police force has federal law enforcement powers, and whose notes have legal tender status in this country, be allowed to enter into agreements with foreign powers and foreign banking institutions with no oversight? Particularly when hundreds of billions of dollars of currency swaps have been announced and implemented, the Fed's negotiations with the European Central Bank, the Bank of International Settlements, and other institutions should face increased scrutiny, most especially because of their significant effect on foreign policy. If the State Department were able to do this, it would be characterized as a rogue agency and brought to heel, and if a private individual did this he might face prosecution under the Logan Act, yet the Fed avoids both fates.

More importantly, the Fed's funding facilities and its agreements with the Treasury should be reviewed. The Treasury's supplementary financing accounts that fund Fed facilities allow the Treasury to funnel money to Wall Street without GAO or Congressional oversight. Additional funding facilities, such as the Primary Dealer Credit Facility and the Term Securities Lending Facility, allow the Fed to keep financial asset prices artificially inflated and subsidize poorly performing financial firms.

The Federal Reserve Transparency Act would eliminate restrictions on GAO audits of the Federal Reserve and open Fed operations to enhanced scrutiny. We hear officials constantly lauding the benefits of transparency and especially bemoaning the opacity of the Fed, its monetary policy, and its funding facilities. By opening all Fed operations to a GAO audit and calling for such an audit to be completed by the end of 2010, the Federal Reserve Transparency Act would achieve much-needed transparency of the Federal Reserve. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HONORING JUDY PEARL-LEE

HON. LEE TERRY

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2009

Mr. TERRY. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize another of the many successful and talented African-Americans in my district. Today it is my great honor to recognize Judy Pearl-Lee.

Judy Pearl-Lee is President of Frontier Bag Company in Omaha, Nebraska. The company was started in 1946 by Judy's parents, Amos and Alberta. In the early years, the company provided products to the agricultural markets in Nebraska, Iowa and Missouri. Since then it has expanded into a variety of product lines, including duffel bags, briefcases and totes.

As minority business owners, the family faced many challenges including the floods

and fires of the 1950's as well as the civil rights riots in the 1960's. The family and the business weathered these setbacks and are now an established part of our Omaha business community.

Judy attended Spelman College in Atlanta and graduated from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln with a degree in Bachelor Science Textile Science.

In 1987 Judy took over the business and today the company can ship top-quality custom bags to anywhere in the country. Judy is also an active member of the Omaha Chamber of Commerce, Great Plains Minority Council, Kiwanis and Girls Inc. just to name a few.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to share Judy's life and business success with my colleagues and wish her continued success.

IN TRIBUTE TO PRESTON WILCOX, EDUCATOR AND ACTIVIST

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2009

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the life and achievements of Preston Wilcox and his commitment to community empowerment, education, and public service. In 2006, the passing of Preston Wilcox removed from the world a scholar whose academic stature was as profound as its practical application. Though he is no longer with us we will not forget the contributions he has made to Harlem and to society at large.

Preston Wilcox was born in Youngstown, Ohio in 1923. He moved to New York after World War II. He went on to graduate from the City College of New York in 1949 and in 1957 he earned his Master's degree in social work at Columbia University. Mr. Wilcox utilized his skills to benefit the Harlem community from 1958–1964 where he served as a program consultant to the East Harlem Summer Festival, a United Neighborhood Houses initiative which was designed to prevent juvenile delinquency. He continued in this vein for the Massive Economic Neighborhood Development, and anti-poverty program.

As a teacher, Mr. Wilcox taught courses in social work theory and community organization at Columbia University's School of Social Work, Clark Atlanta University, Medgar Evers College, along with other institutions of higher education. As a practitioner, Mr. Wilcox was a strong advocate for parent participation in curriculum development and in the hiring of school supervisors and teachers. He also participated as a social researcher in the Princeton University six week summer studies program for junior high school students for what has now become the Upward Bound Program.

After twenty years of involvement in the black educational movement he developed AFRAM Associates, a public service agency to provide technical assistance to community groups in the areas of education, economic development, and consumer rights. AFRAM operated a parent-implemented program in education funded by the Follow Through Program Division of Compensatory Education of the