

IN HONOR OF DR. MITCHELL J.
BIENIA

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of Dr. Mitchell J. Bienia, as he is honored as the recipient of the 2009 Cleveland Society of Poles "Good Joe" Polish Heritage Award. Dr. Bienia's dedicated service to the Cleveland community as well as to the Polish American community continues to be evident throughout his life.

In his 30-year tenure with the Cleveland School District, he worked as teacher, guidance counselor, department head and administrator. For ten years, Dr. Bienia worked as a part-time guidance counselor at Cuyahoga Community College. Among numerous professional accolades, Dr. Bienia was the recipient of the 1970 Martha Holden Jennings Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award, the 1990 Phi Delta Kappa Award, and the 1995 Counselor of the Year Award. Dr. Bienia's integrity and dedication to making a difference in his professional life is mirrored in his personal life as well. A lifelong volunteer, he has served as a member and leader with numerous social service organizations, including his current post as a Board Member with Cleveland Metropolitan General Hospital.

In addition to his community service, Dr. Bienia has worked tirelessly to promote and preserve his Polish heritage. He has been an active member and leader with several local and national Polish organizations and currently serves as the National Director for the Chicago-based Polish Roman Catholic Union of America. Dr. Bienia and his wife Krystyna are the proud parents of two grown daughters—Krystyna and Michelle, to whom they have passed down the value of family, faith and service to others.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition of Dr. Mitchell J. Bienia, whose service to family, friends, community and dedication to sharing Poland's cultural gifts all serve to illuminate the diversity that defines the Cleveland community and is the foundation of our country. Dr. Bienia's faith, his love of family and commitment to community is a testament to the true meaning of citizenship and reflects the American dream.

COMMENDING MARTIN AND BETH
ARON OF SPRINGFIELD, NEW
JERSEY

HON. LEONARD LANCE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. LANCE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to Martin and Beth Aron of Springfield, New Jersey. For nearly two decades, Martin and Beth Aron have worked tirelessly to make a difference in their community by helping others.

In fact, there are dozens of New Jersey civic, social welfare, educational, artistic and religious organizations that have benefited from the Arons' hard work, dedication and selfless sacrifices to help those in need.

On March 31, 2009 Congregation Israel in Springfield, New Jersey will honor Martin and Beth at the synagogue's 34th Annual Tribute Dinner for their remarkable and enduring contribution to Congregation Israel and to communities throughout New Jersey.

Over the years, the Arons have been involved in the Zamir Chorale and Zamire Chorale Foundation, both of which promote Jewish choral music as a vehicle to inspire Jewish life, culture and continuity. The Zamir Chorale performed at the White House this past year. The Arons have also been involved in the formation and development of Joseph Kushner Hebrew Academy of Livingston, New Jersey, improving the education opportunities of children with unique learning challenges, as well as in the charitable, community outreach and children's programming activities at Congregation Israel.

It gives me great pleasure to share the remarkable efforts of Martin and Beth Aron with my colleagues in the United States Congress and with the American people. I am also honored to join Congregation Israel in recognizing their outstanding service to their community.

HONORING THE LIFE OF FRANK L.
SWANNER

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is with great respect and honor that I rise today to recognize the life and legacy of Northwest Florida's beloved Frank Swanner.

Frank Swanner was a man who lived his life deeply rooted in his strong faith in God and love for his family and community. Born in Tanner, Alabama on January 28, 1921, he began his working career as a farmer, member of the Limestone County School Board, and an active member of the local Baptist Church and Baptist Association, as well as, working at Chemstrand/Monsanto.

When Chemstrand/Monsanto transferred the Swanner family from Decatur to the Pensacola Plant in 1959, Mr. Swanner and his family moved to Milton, Florida, where he continued his active service in the church and community as Deacon and music leader in Ferris Hill Baptist Church, treasurer of the Santa Rosa Baptist Association, a member of the Santa Rosa County Civil Service Board, the Local Democratic Committee, and the Kiwanis Club.

In addition to his love for God and family, Frank had a tremendous love for our country. During World War II, Frank Swanner joined the United States Army, which brought him to Omaha Beach and the shores of Normandy on June 6, 1944. With honor and sacrifice, he and millions of men and women answered the call of duty. They have become known as the "Greatest Generation," and we are eternally grateful for their service.

To some, Frank Swanner will be remembered as a community leader and fellow worshipper, and to others, an avid softball player and bowler. To some he will be remembered as a friend in the Wendy's Lunch Bunch, and to others, a comrade in the United States Army and World War II Veteran. He will long be remembered by his family and friends as a

loving and compassionate person full of energy and charisma. Frank Swanner touched a number of lives, and all who knew him are forever blessed for the love and inspiration that has left a lasting impression in our hearts.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to honor one of America's great heroes, Frank Swanner, for his honorable leadership and service to North-west Florida and to this great Nation.

TAXPAYER FUNDED BONUSES AT
AIG

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to add my voice in opposition to plans by American International Group Inc. (AIG) to reward their executives with "job performance" bonuses worth over \$165 million at a time when the American people, including my constituents in Minnesota, are making huge sacrifices to make ends meet.

Yesterday, I joined my colleagues in co-signing a letter to Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner to express my objection to AIG's payment of these ill-timed executive bonuses.

I want to go further and call on the Administration to repeal AIG's latest federal stabilization infusion of \$30 billion until they retrieve the \$165 million in bonuses, provide assurances that bonuses will no longer be disbursed without Congressional oversight and agree to turn over regular disclosure forms to account for how taxpayer funds are being used.

We must demand the highest level of transparency and accountability, especially since American taxpayers have provided over \$170 billion in funding to AIG and control approximately 80 percent of the company.

The purpose of the funds is to stabilize and prevent the devastating collapse of the financial markets, not to reward executives whose performance deserves an "F" grade for their failure to protect investors and consumers.

For traders—whose recklessness and greed greatly contributed to the financial crisis—to think they can profit at the expense of the taxpayers is unconscionable.

This latest irresponsible act by AIG has further compromised the public trust.

I am pleased that President Obama has responded so quickly by pursuing every legal avenue to block these bonuses. Like the President, who yesterday expressed that he is "choked up with anger," I am angry and so are the millions of families bearing the brunt of the economic meltdown.

These monies must be recovered immediately and AIG must provide documentation as to which executives were to receive the bonuses so we can determine if these awards violate recently enacted federal restrictions.

In January, I voted for House passage of H.R. 384, the TARP Reform and Accountability Act, to strengthen accountability and oversight of the Troubled Asset Relief Program and require tough, sensible restrictions on executive pay.

And recently, Congress passed the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, which President Obama signed into law, to curb

multi-million dollar packages and limit bonuses.

We must work closely with the Obama Administration to rigorously enforce these requirements and close potential loopholes so that taxpayers are protected.

HONORING CONSTANCE WALKER-FOWLER

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, Constance Walker-Fowler is a native of Detroit who moved to Yonkers in 1997 and has been deeply involved in the community and civic organizations since her arrival.

She is Chair of the Yonkers Commission on Human Rights, where she helped to develop the language for the resolution Against Domestic Violence. She is a Life Member of the National Council of Negro Women and for the past four years president of its Hudson Valley Section.

She is also a member of the Hudson River Community Association; Sister-to-Sister Inc.; the Westchester Black Women's Political Caucus; a Trustee of the Schomburg Corporation; and serves on the Advisory Board of Groundworks Hudson Valley. She is also Democratic District Leader and Secretary of the Third Ward election district.

Further, she is Secretary of the International Governing Board of Voices of African Mothers, an organization dedicated to alleviating hunger in Africa.

Even further, she is dedicated to her family, often visiting her son Andre in England and helping her Aunt Mamie and her sister Norice and her family.

In short, Constance Walker-Fowler is dedicated to helping her communities from every aspect while still maintaining close and devoted ties to her family.

I congratulate her on her receiving the Humanitarian Award of the Yonkers YWCA and wish her every success.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "FIXING THE FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ACT"

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, today, along with Representative HONDA (D-CA), I am reintroducing the "Fixing the Federal Voting Assistance Program Act" which would do two things: (1) make the Director of the Federal Voting Assistance Office a presidential appointee confirmable by the Senate, and (2) create an advisory board to strengthen oversight of the office to ensure better access to the ballot by overseas military and civilian voters.

The Federal Voter Assistance Program (FVAP) is the government's primary office for helping ensure access to the ballot for thousands of overseas voters, both civilian and military, in recent elections. This legislation is

designed to bring greater attention to the voting office in the Department of Defense and enhanced oversight to ensure that it does its job of providing greater access to voting for our soldiers, sailors and airmen, their families, as well as civilians living overseas.

The "Fixing the Federal Voting Assistance Program Act" is a necessary step in ensuring that overseas voters are counted in elections. I believe that Americans serving in the military abroad or civilians residing overseas still do not have adequate help from the government in facilitating their right of access to the ballot. Representative HONDA and I believe we need to start working on improving access to the next election now while the problems are still fresh in our minds so that we are not facing them again in 2010.

IN RECOGNITION OF SAM BURNS

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Ms. MATSUI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Sam Burns, a dear friend and tireless community leader who recently passed away. Sam served as the head of the Sacramento Convention Center and Visitors Bureau and was an admired advocate for drawing tourism into Sacramento. As his family and friends gather to honor and remember his wonderful life, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in saluting one of Sacramento's most well-respected figures.

Sam was a prominent leader in the Sacramento Region, and his death leaves a tremendous void in the community. When Sam was hired by city leaders in 1972, the Memorial Auditorium was the largest local venue for conventions. Under Sam's leadership, a new Sacramento Community Center opened in 1974, finally putting Sacramento on the map as a convention host. With an \$80 million expansion in 1995, the Community Center was renamed Sacramento Convention Center Complex and is now home to dozens of major events, conventions, and community gatherings each year.

Sam was a strong supporter of all that Sacramento has to offer, from the prestigious Crocker Art Museum to Old Sacramento and the city's riverfront. The high quality of his work and his dedication to Sacramento led to the expansion of his duties in 1993, when he was named to lead the Community and Visitor Services Department. Sam became responsible for drawing large crowds to Sacramento as he promoted the Sacramento Jazz Festival and other city events.

Sam's passion and commitment resonated in his work and will not soon be forgotten by the Sacramento community. His positive impact is seen across our city in the expansion of downtown hotels and the numerous conventions held each year. Sam was a wonderful public servant and ambassador to Sacramento, but he was an even better husband and father. He leaves behind his lovely wife Betsy and three children, Brandi, Michael and Brett.

Madam Speaker, as Sam Burns' family and friends gather to honor his wonderful legacy and many contributions, I am honored to pay tribute to him. Those of us who were privi-

leged enough to call him our friend will deeply miss him. I ask all my colleagues to pause and join me in paying respect to an extraordinary man, Sam Burns.

TRIBUTE TO KANSAS CITY, KANSAS, YWCA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CATHY BREIDENTHAL

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Cathy Breidenthal, the longtime executive director of the YWCA of Kansas City, Kansas, who retired from that position on February 28, 2009, after nearly 23 years of dedicated service to that important community institution. Cathy's reinvigoration of the Kansas City YWCA, which included a capital campaign, coupled with a significant expansion in services and programs, will be celebrated at a "Heart of Gold" fundraiser for the institution on March 27th. The Kansas City Star recently carried an article detailing Cathy Breidenthal's service to our local YWCA community; I include it here for review by our colleagues, who I am sure join with me in recognizing the important contributions made by Cathy Breidenthal during her years of service to the YWCA of Kansas City, Kansas. We wish her well upon her well-earned retirement!

[From the Kansas City Star, Dec. 31, 2008]

YWCA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO RETIRE

(By Joy Gipple)

Cathy Breidenthal, executive director for 22 years of the YWCA of Kansas City, Kan., recently announced her retirement.

"When longtime EDs (executive directors) retire, it's kind of an initial shock," said YWCA board member Theresa Reyes Cummings. "She's really been a pillar."

"Eliminating racism, empowering women" is the branding statement for the YWCA's mission.

"The growth in those two areas is something that I feel really good about," Breidenthal said.

Breidenthal has been credited with a regeneration of the YWCA during her tenure. A major effort was the capital campaign that resulted in sweeping improvements to the facility at 1017 N. Sixth St. and a subsequent expansion in services and programs.

"That process started in 2001, which was our 100th year," Breidenthal said. "In 2002, a lot of construction development was occurring right on our block—the BPU office building and hotel, etc.—so we had some decisions to make as to whether we were going to stay and be a positive part of this (downtown revitalization) development."

The YWCA board decided the agency should stay in the original building. The project included an art gallery, theater and meeting space, as well as a health and fitness facility.

In 2003 the YWCA started its first entrepreneurial initiative: the Corner Café.

"I was looking at the opportunity and some of the amenities that are so important to urban development," Breidenthal said. "We knew there was no upscale coffee shop or café at that time, and we felt that if we were going to phase this in, we needed to do something that really showed progress and our willingness to take that leap of faith."

Underwriting support helped to get it started, and five years later the café continues to provide daily lunch, "happy hour"