

Ranger Battalion and commanded an Infantry Rifle Company.

During a night training exercise at Fort Lewis, Mike was nearly killed in a C-130 crash. The fuselage of the plane split open as the plane skidded 200 yards and embedded in the desert floor. Mike recalls, "I felt my hand break, in three places, and smelled dirt and was knocked unconscious." He was buried under the dirt with only his arm showing. Two fellow rangers dug him out and helped him crawl from the wreckage as the plane exploded into flames.

After the Army, Mike studied Slavic languages at the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Leningrad in Russia. Mike then pursued advanced study of Soviet affairs and public policy at Columbia University after being selected as a Mellon Fellow in the Humanities and winning a National Science Foundation Graduate Scholarship.

Mike graduated from Columbia University in 1989 and joined the U.S. State Department as a Presidential Management Intern. He handled a portfolio usually reserved for more senior officials at the Soviet Desk, making policy recommendations and writing talking points for the Secretary of State regarding German reunification, chemical weapons, NATO, and other issues. While at the State Department, Mike became a Foreign Service Officer.

As a diplomat in Warsaw, Poland, Mike tracked Poland's evolving relations with Russia and the countries of Eastern Europe. He analyzed the strength of the post-Communist Party, correctly predicting its return to political power in 1993. A tour in Moscow followed. As special assistant to the U.S. Ambassador to Russia, Mike helped coordinate the Embassy's response to critical events during a time when Russia's relationship to the U.S. in a post-Cold War world was as yet undefined. He received the State Department's Meritorious Service Medal in 1994.

The Cold War largely won, Mike and his family decided to return home. He honored his commitment to continue to serve the public interest and entered the field of education. Mike has assumed leadership roles to raise academic standards in his school district and the State of Colorado. Mike also serves as an educational consultant and motivational speaker for school districts and other public organizations around the State. He is recognized as an accomplished practitioner of curriculum alignment, organizational effectiveness, and systems thinking.

Over the past 5 years Mike and the Harrison School District Two School Board have been on a quest to turn around the chronically underperforming Harrison School District Two. More than 70 percent of the 11,300 students are living below the poverty line and many are at risk of dropping out.

Their systemic reforms of the school district include: Developing and implementing a rigorous pay-for-performance evaluation system; Changing the recruitment paradigm by identifying teacher candidates early and investing in their training and preparation in return for a commitment to teach in the school district; Piloting a Year 2020 curriculum in a middle school and high school in which students learn critical thinking, information literacy, economics and globalization, math and science reasoning, Chinese, and the arts; Developing principals and instructional leaders who are

held accountable for improving the quality of instruction and raising student achievement; and Creating a culture of instructional feedback in which classroom instruction is observed and effective feedback is given regularly and consistently.

The district cites these other achievements during Mike's time as superintendent: District removed from state academic probation; Significantly improved test scores; Decreased the minority achievement gap; Improved teacher effectiveness, including removing ineffective, tenured teachers from the district; and Created the only public year-round school in the area.

Despite enormous resistance from the teacher's association in the district, Mike and the school board have not backed down from putting children first. I admire his focus and fortitude in fighting for the school children of Colorado Springs. I commend him for his success and urge professional educators across the country to study his record of success as they look for ways to better educate our young people.

Mike is married to Karen Miles, and they have three children: Nicholas, Madeleine, and Anthony.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for allowing me this opportunity to pay tribute to Mike Miles for his success in improving the lives of our children.

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IN HONOR OF THE WORK OF  
THORAYA AHMED OBAID, EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR OF THE UNFPA

**HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 21, 2010*

Mrs. MALONEY. I rise today to celebrate the extraordinary leadership and work of Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director of the UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund.

Thoraya Ahmed Obaid will retire as Executive Director of the UNFPA, United Nations Population Fund, at the end of this year. For over a decade, Thoraya has been an exceptional and dynamic leader of this important U.N. agency and key partner to the United States.

Thoraya has had a remarkable life and career where she was often the "first" trail-blazing a path for others. Born in Saudi Arabia, her father made sure that she received the same educational opportunities as her brothers—sending her at age 7 to a Christian boarding school in Cairo, Egypt. She excelled in her studies and became the "first" Saudi girl to receive a government scholarship to attend Mills College in California, where she graduated with distinction.

Thoraya became the "first" Saudi Arabian let alone Saudi woman to head a U.N. agency. At UNFPA, Thoraya has effectively implemented and advocated for UNFPA's global mandate to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV and AIDS, every girl, woman and young person is treated with dignity and respect, and that policies for poverty eradication are based on sound data.

Thoraya has played a pivotal role in promoting understanding of the close linkages between the implementation of the agenda of the International Conference on Population and

Development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the importance of respect for the human rights of women and greater investments in education and health for the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. Moreover, she has a deep and abiding commitment to supporting and advocating gender equality and the empowerment of women, and giving voice to countless women, men and youth around the world to participate in enhancing their reproductive health and well-being.

Under Thoraya's leadership, UNFPA has been a model within the U.N. system on working in collaboration with civil society partners around the world to ensure that culture and rights are central to all development efforts. For example, under Thoraya's watch, UNFPA's Campaign to End Fistula is now working in over 47 countries with doctors, midwives, advocates, community leaders and policymakers to make obstetric fistula as rare in the developing world as it is in the United States.

Thoraya has accomplished much for the world's women and their families with grace, humility, compassion and professionalism. In retirement, she will be returning to the region of her birth to continue to be a vocal and passionate advocate for the most vulnerable and marginalized.

This remarkable and much admired leader will be greatly missed in the United Nations but I am confident we will continue to hear her strong and clear voice for women's well being for many years to come.

I personally thank Thoraya for her vast and tremendous contributions to the world's women.

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KITTY PRING

**HON. ED PERLMUTTER**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 21, 2010*

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Kitty Pring for her service to our community.

Kitty balances her involvement in the community, her profession and her passions with skill and perfection. Professionally, she is a mediator and facilitator and is a Principal of ReSolutions Resources, which is an alternative dispute resolution practice. Kitty has been the recipient of many awards including Small Claims Mediator of the Year, Victim Offender Mediator of the Year and the Jefferson County Mediation Service Award.

Her dedication to the environment is evident through her work locally and globally. She co-authored the University of Denver Study Book, "Greening Justice: Creating and Improving Environmental Courts and Tribunals" which is a step by step guide provided at no cost.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Kitty Pring for being honored by the West Chamber serving Jefferson County. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all her future accomplishments.

REFLECTIONS ON REPRESENTING  
THE 27TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF TEXAS**HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 21, 2010*

Mr. ORTIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my deepest and most sincere appreciation to my colleagues of this Congress, and the constituents of South Texas, which has been part of my life while representing the 27th Congressional District of Texas for close to 28 years. I have had the distinct honor to serve as an elected official for the past 46 years, beginning at the ripe age of 27 as a County Constable, County Commissioner, County Sheriff, and finally as a Member of Congress.

I leave many great memories of my time in the Halls of Congress and in the U.S. House of Representatives. Those vivid memories of my arrival that cold winter day in Washington, shortly after the victorious election of 1982, will live on forever. I remember driving around the Capitol and through Washington, DC; the opportunity was great; the moment was there; I had been granted the chance to represent hundreds of thousands of constituents from Deep South Texas.

Today, as I retire from the distinguished House of Representatives, I reflect on the past with satisfaction as I look forward to the future with enthusiasm for the next chapter of what life has to offer. I will be spending well-deserved time with my beautiful children—Solomon Jr. and Yvette—as well as my grandson, Oscar, and the rest of my family. I look forward to a much less hectic life. I must admit, I will miss my colleagues—both Democrats and Republicans—and will miss representing some of the most loving, caring, amazing and interesting people of Texas—the constituents of the 27th Congressional District of Texas.

To my friends, supporters and those who have been with me since I was first elected to office in 1964 at the age of 27, from the very bottom of my heart, I thank you for standing by me and with me through it all. Words cannot tell how much I appreciate the love and support you have shown me and my family over the years. Thank you for the good memories and endless accomplishments; thank you for your vote of confidence and for believing in me; thank you for your love and words of encouragement as I worked to be the voice for all the people of South Texas, including minorities, the middle class, poor, vulnerable, and less fortunate.

As I deliver these last few words in the House of Representatives, I am at ease and peace with myself, my family, my colleagues in Congress, my constituents, life and most importantly, I am at ease with God. I truly believe that through our work and significant contributions during my years of service in Congress, we leave South Texas better than before. A more vibrant, economic-friendly and socially developed South Texas. Through the work of local, county, state and federal officials we were able to accomplish great deeds.

Thousands of memories from experiences in my service remain part of the tapestry of my

life and always will. I remember the votes on war . . . on economic justice. The battles for bases and 21st Century transportation in South Texas . . . fights and alliances with White House occupants . . . all I remember and savor—whether my side prevailed or not.

This is a great place—despite the shortcomings . . . despite the pettiness of our members from time to time, and despite the dangerous political climate created by those who turned cable news shows into political juggernauts. Democracy is by no means perfect . . . but it still beats all the alternatives.

I leave the national stage, certain of having done the right thing for those I represented. In the thousands of votes I cast in Congress for the 27th Congressional District of Texas, time and time again, I voted to make South Texas and this nation a better and stronger place.

I end my public service with an appropriate verse from Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken."

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

It certainly has made all the difference.  
I yield back my time, for the last time.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF LOUIS FINKEL TO THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE  
AND TECHNOLOGY**HON. BART GORDON**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 21, 2010*

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of a valued staff member of the Committee on Science and Technology, my Chief of Staff, Louis Finkel. While Louis still has decisions to make about his future, I've already made my choice. He may remain with the Committee or with the House, but after next week, I no longer will and I wanted to take this opportunity to thank him for his service.

Louis worked for me in my personal office from 1996 to 2001 in several positions, including Legislative Director. He also worked in the office of former Representative Peter Deutsch (D-FL) and in the private sector, representing the interests of educational institutions, nonprofits, and technology and energy companies.

Louis was one of the first hires I made when we took over the majority. I have always said I wanted this to be the Committee of "good ideas and consensus;" and Louis was key to implementing that pledge, with his balance of Hill and private sector experience. He was responsible for steering our committee agenda and organizing our efforts to reach out to folks interested in the business of the committee. He performed that exceedingly well, and when my long-time Chief of Staff retired, there was no one but Louis I could think of to fill the role. He was able to provide a seamless transition and we didn't miss a beat. It helped that he came into the Chief of Staff role with a deep knowledge of the Committee's work, as well as the respect of Members, staff, and the outside community.

The Chief of Staff is a challenging job: you need to not only be able to see the big picture, but also the details. Louis has the ability to row but also to steer. He has mastered the policy, politics and management aspects of the job.

Louis has said that there may be people that are smarter than his is, but there are few that are willing to work harder than he is. That drive and preparation has paid off, and I have been the beneficiary.

When he's not overachieving at work, he may be doing it in the kitchen, where he loves to impress family and friends with his command of the culinary arts.

Louis, I thank you for all your counsel and tireless efforts, and I thank Stacey, Max, and Caleb for their support. I will certainly miss working with you day to day.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. LOIS CAPPS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 21, 2010*

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I was not able to be present for the following rollcall vote on December 17, 2010, and would like the record to reflect that I would have voted as follows: rollcall No. 656: "yes."

REDUCTION OF LEAD IN DRINKING  
WATER ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. JOE BACA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 17, 2010*

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House for one minute.

I rise in strong support of S. 3874, the Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act. This bill amends the Safe Drinking Water Act to uniformly reduce the allowable lead content in solder, flux, pipe and fixtures.

It is important to strengthen and clarify national standards for lead in drinking water. Our families and children should feel comfortable knowing that the water they drink is safe. In my district, California's 43rd, we are faced with many water issues and the most severe is perchlorate found in our ground water. Our drinking water was compromised.

No one should have water compromised by perchlorate or lead. This bill is a positive step forward in eliminating the serious health threats and economic burdens caused by lead exposure.

In California, we have a new lead free standard that requires manufacturers to phase out potential exposure from materials in drinking water plumbing by this year. With S. 3874, families in other states will have greater protection from lead exposure.

I urge my colleagues to show their commitment to the safety of America's families and support S. 3874, the Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act.