

Congress to pass this legislation to allow Virginia to move towards a path of energy independence.

RECOGNIZING SEA SCOUT SHIP  
7916

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 25, 2010*

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sea Scout Ship 7916, "Blue Heron," of Occoquan, VA.

Sea Scout Ship 7916 is a young but very active unit in the Boy Scouts of America National Capital Area Council (NCAC). The Ship hosts regular sailing ventures, service projects, training courses, fundraisers and social activities.

Ship 7916 has excelled in obtaining a significant number of awards in a short period, including the NCAC's "Wardroom Award" for achievement only four months after being formed. I would like to extend my personal congratulations to the Sea Scouts who have received awards in the past calendar year.

NCAC Commodore's Award—Shay Seaborne, Skipper—For devotion and enthusiasm given to Sea Scouting and assistance in the furtherance of the Sea Scout program as the initiator and driving force of the Save der PeLiKan Campaign, which aims to raise \$20,000 needed to repair the regional training vessel; NCAC Boatswain of the Year Award—Rebecca Siegal, Boatswain—For outstanding participation in Sea Scouting activities, for conducting training, for enthusiasm, loyalty, team spirit, and leadership given, for a positive attitude, ability to live up to responsibilities, and promoting Sea Scouting in the community; Venturing Advisor Award of Merit—Shay Seaborne, Skipper—For tenure, training, and providing a quality program; NCAC Outstanding Contribution—Karl and Stella Kent—For their generous financial contribution to the Save der PeLiKan fund. NCAC Outstanding Contribution—Skipper's Mate Dr. Rosemary Enright and Don Coulter—For their generous financial contribution to the Save der PeLiKan fund. Catherine A. Mullikan Sea Scout Volunteer of the Year—Rebecca Siegal, Boatswain—For significant service to the community, both inside and outside of Sea Scouting. Sea Scout of the Year Award—Rebecca Siegal, Boatswain—For excellence in advancement, citizenship, leadership and seamanship skills.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Sea Scout Ship 7916 and congratulating its highly decorated membership. They are responsible community partners and uphold the well-respected traditions and principles of scouting.

CONGRATULATING GEORGIA'S  
MOCK TRIAL TEAMS

**HON. DAVID SCOTT**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 25, 2010*

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor two exceptional high

school teams from my district. The Jonesboro High School and Morrow High School Mock Trial teams have had an unprecedented record of success. Collectively, both teams have surpassed expectations and are on their way to another record breaking year for the State of Georgia.

Jonesboro High School will compete for its seventeenth State Bar of Georgia Championship. No other school in the State of Georgia's history has ever reached this level of consummation. In addition to this record breaking endeavor, Jonesboro High School has already accomplished two national championships. This is a testament that hard work and discipline truly yield enormous results.

Morrow High School has also achieved ground breaking success. Morrow High School was the runner up in the State of Georgia region eight competition. The irony of this team's success is that Morrow High lost several team members just days before the competition. Nevertheless, this team expeditiously put together a new team which led to two of the three replacements winning state awards. While this team's cohesive bond was tested, their determination prevailed, which led them to another notable year. In addition to this year's success, it has been nine years since any other school in Clayton County has become the region champion.

With the help of the faculty advisors and community mentors, these two teams have displayed the passion and integrity that we, as members of Congress, continuously encourage. These teams represent the very essence of America as it has displayed its dedication, passion, and integrity throughout the competition in the courtroom and throughout the community.

HONORING MICHAELA MEYERHOFF  
FOR WINNING THE LESSONS OF  
THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE  
WRITING CONTEST

**HON. JOE COURTNEY**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 25, 2010*

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Michaela Meyerhoff as a winner of the first annual "Lessons of the African-American Experience" Creative Writing Contest. Michaela is currently in the sixth grade at Preston Plains Middle School, which is located in Preston, Connecticut.

In celebration of Black History Month, I sponsored a creative writing contest for all third through eighth grade students within the Second District. As we know, Black History Month is a time to reflect on the struggles and triumphs of our Nation's past. The lessons learned during this month continue to serve as the stepping stones of our Nation's future. Michaela's poem "What Black History Month Means to Me!" eloquently embraces this belief.

Michaela's poem shows a remarkable enthusiasm for learning that is inspiring to all. She identified the values that she learned during Black History Month and creatively discussed how those values affect her life and the lives of others. For this, her poem was among the four winners selected.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CENSUS  
OVERSIGHT EFFICIENCY AND  
MANAGEMENT REFORM ACT OF  
2010

**HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 25, 2010*

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing legislation, with my colleagues, Mr. DENT, Mr. TOWNS, and Mr. PASCARELL, and with a companion bill being introduced in the Senate by Senators CARPER and COBURN, that would ensure that the Census Bureau has the independence and transparency it needs to carry out its essential, constitutionally-mandated function. This bill would ensure the Bureau is focused on the ten-year process of preparing for the Census despite the four-year cycles of Presidential administrations.

This bill would mandate the Director at Census report directly to the Secretary so there is clear responsibility for supervision of the Census and to submit his or her own opinion in testimony to Congress even if it differs from the administration. It would make the Director of the Census Bureau a Presidential term appointment of five years, with the ten-year decennial cycle split into two, five-year phases—planning and operational, creating continuity across administrations. And it would require that the Director, when submitting the Bureau's budget request to the Secretary, also share that request with Congress increasing transparency and oversight.

The time to start worrying about the 2020 Census is now. Currently, the 2010 Census seems to be on a path to success, but if we are going to stop the repeated operational crises that have plagued each of the last four censuses, we need to change how we administer the census. I am confident the bill we are introducing today will move us toward that goal. And I want to thank my colleagues for joining me in starting the process for 2020 now.

LINKAGE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

**HON. SHELLEY BERKLEY**

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 25, 2010*

Ms. BERKLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to call my colleagues' attention to a recent blog post on the Jerusalem Post website, written by Abraham Foxman, the National Director of the Anti-Defamation League, ADL. Mr. Foxman challenges the idea that there is "linkage" between the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and other conflicts in the Middle East. It is both unrealistic and dangerous to believe that solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will somehow solve our problems in Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon and everywhere else in the Middle East. Distinct conflicts require distinct solutions and lumping them all together serves no one's interests, least of all our own. I highly recommend this excellent article.

[From the Jerusalem Post, Mar. 21, 2010]

A POINT OF VIEW: LINKAGE AND THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT  
(By Abraham Foxman)

No matter how many times it is proven to have no validity, the theme of linking the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict to broader issues in the region rears its head over and over again. Zbigniew Brzezinski did it in the 1970s, trying to blame Soviet influence in the region on the absence of a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Prior to the first Gulf War, there were those who opposed the war on the grounds that we needed first to address the Palestinian issue before we could credibly confront Saddam Hussein. And early on in the Obama administration, reports were circulating suggesting that American interests throughout the Middle East were dependent on progress on the Palestinian-Israeli front.

Henry Kissinger, in his magisterial two-volume memoir, dealt with this matter head on. He demonstrated during the Cold War that America's ability to further its broader regional interests was connected not to a need to resolve the Palestinian issue, but to showing America's moderate allies in the region—Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the Gulf States—that it paid to be allied with America. The best way to prove that? When Israel was under attack by regional extremists supported by the Soviets, it was vital for the US to make sure that Israel triumphed. By doing so, the moderates would absorb the truth that the future lay with the US and its allies. Standing up against radicals and with one's allies, rather than blaming one's friends for problems in the region, continues to be the best formula for serving US interests in the Middle East.

Now we are hearing the linkage theme once again. After the brouhaha between the administration and the Israeli government surfaced, a story emerged indicating that a military team under General David Petraeus's CENTCOM command reported to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Michael Mullen in January that Israel was jeopardizing US standing in the region. And then Petraeus himself, speaking before the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 16, reinforced this message. He stated that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict "fosters anti-American sentiment, due to a perception of US favoritism for Israel." He went on to say that "Arab anger over the Palestinian question limits the strength and depth of US partnerships with governments and peoples in the AOR (Area of Responsibility) and weakens the legitimacy of moderate regimes in the Arab world."

Once again, an illusion is at work here, one that will, if pursued, invariably result in no real progress being made in the region. We all want peace between Israel and the Arabs. And putting more effort toward such a goal is a good thing. What is not real, and is dangerous, is putting most of America's eggs in the region in this basket.

The Arab-Israeli conflict has never responded to such a heavy emphasis. Progress is made when Arab leaders decide it's time for peace. Maybe Assad of Syria is considering this, and it should be explored. But that's very different from placing this conflict at the center of everything. Disappointment, as always, will follow since the gap between what the Arabs want and Israel wants is substantial. Moreover, Arab willingness to accept Israel's legitimacy as a "Jewish State" is belied by everything that comes from Arab leaders and Arab media.

What inevitably happens if such unrealistic weight in the region is given to the Israeli-Arab conflict is that Israel comes to be seen as the problem. If only Israel would stop settlements, if only Israel would talk with Hamas, if only Israel would make concessions on refugees, if only it would share Jerusalem, everything in the region would be fine. Iraq would be fine. Afghanistan would be fine. Pakistan would be fine. Iran would be fine. Lebanon would be fine.

Of course, this is nonsense. These problems would remain even if Israel did not exist. The result of such an approach would be no progress on America's interests and great stress in US-Israel relations.

The Kissinger approach of strengthening moderates may be tainted in some minds because it may be associated with Bush's policy—but it doesn't have to be. One doesn't have to be a Bush supporter to understand that the greatest need in the region today is for victories by the moderates over the radicals. In Israel's case, radical challenges exist from Hamas in the south, Hizbullah and Syria in the north, and Iran. All are complicated challenges. US support for a strong and wise Israeli policy in response to these challenges will provide the best opportunity to strengthen American interests. Holding off Hamas, weakening Hizbullah, or preventing Iran from gaining nuclear weapons will provide the biggest boost to moderates throughout the Middle East. If the Obama administration can help bring about one or more of these accomplishments, it will go a long way to restoring American influence in the region and, by the way, make Israeli-Arab peace far more likely.

This linkage trend, if continued, is dangerous and counterproductive. It could undermine the historic bipartisan support for Israel in America, a support based on moral and strategic grounds, that has been—and still is—good for both countries. It will reduce whatever incentive the Palestinians have to reach a compromise peace with Israel; if America is backing away from Israel, the Palestinians would reason, then hopes of Israel's disappearance will be strengthened. It will raise questions about American loyalty and credibility among the Arabs who, despite their rhetoric criticizing US support for Israel, would be far more distressed about the US abandoning an ally.

It diverts attention away from the larger challenges in the region—Iran's nuclear program, and the challenge of Islamic extremism and terrorism. Finally, it has the smell about it of blaming the Jews for everything. The notion that al-Qaida's hatred of America or Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons or the ongoing threat of extremist terrorist groups in the region is based on Israel's announcement of building apartments is absurd on its face and smacks of scapegoating.

It's time for the administration to step back not only from the harsh rhetoric but also from the illusionary thinking about Israel hurting American interests. America and Israel can have their differences, but the US has no better ally than Israel. The administration needs to recognize this and find ways to reassure those who are raising concerns.

#### OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

#### HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 2010

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Madam Speaker, today our National debt is \$12,662,466,657,519.82.

On January 6, 2009, the start of the 111th Congress, the national debt was \$10,638,425,746,293.80.

This means the national debt has increased by \$2,024,040,911,226.02 so far this Congress.

This debt and its interest payments we are passing to our children and all future Americans.

HONORING MARIA COSTA SMITH

#### HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 2010

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Maria Costa Smith, successful horticulturalist, businesswoman and agricultural engineer in South Dade, Florida.

Maria currently serves as the color division president of Costa Farms. She is part of the third generation of the Costa family to run the farm. Started in 1961 by her grandfather, Jose Costa, and father, Tony Costa, Costa farms is one of South Dade's largest small businesses, now employing 2,200 and owning over 2,600 acres of land. In addition to its thriving foliage and plant divisions, Costa Farms operates merchandising and transportation companies in south Florida, North Carolina, the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica. Maria runs the farm with her husband, Chief Executive Officer Jose Smith, and her brother, Jose, who is vice president of the foliage division.

Recently, the Dade County Farm Bureau Women's Committee recognized Maria Costa Smith as the 2010 Woman of Distinction in Agriculture. She was recognized for her valuable contributions to the South Dade agriculture and agribusiness. Today I honor her for those reasons and many more, including her commitment to seeing through the dream of her grandfather, helping others in the community and ensuring that South Florida's local economy continues to flourish.

As we celebrate Women's History Month, I ask you to join me in congratulating and thanking Maria Costa Smith for her outstanding dedication, work ethic and desire to see her community prosper.

#### PRESIDENT MORE POPULAR IN THE NEWS THAN AMERICANS

#### HON. LAMAR SMITH

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 2010

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, President Obama is far more popular in the news than he is among American people.

Sixty percent of national media mentions of the President were positive over the past week while 40 percent were negative, according to Rasmussen Reports' new "Media Meter."

In contrast, just 48 percent of Americans approve of the job the President is doing.

By a 10-point margin, more Americans "strongly disapprove" of the President's job than "strongly approve." And just one-quarter say the country is "on the right track."

Wouldn't it be nice if the national media reflected the views of the American people?

The national media should give Americans the facts, not tell them what to think.