

home. From new medical treatments to developing new energy solutions, NASA technology has made our world better. In addition, NASA's research centers, such as JPL, enhance communities, including my own district, by providing high-paying, highly-skilled jobs. Lastly, these projects provide inspiration to the next generation of engineers and scientists who will develop our future industries.

Mr. Speaker, I commend JPL and its employees whose tireless work has made Spirit's mission such a tremendous success. I wish JPL the best of luck as it embarks on future projects and continues to expand our knowledge of Mars.

RECOGNIZING THE VCU BASKETBALL TEAM'S ADVANCEMENT TO THE NCAA BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT'S FINAL FOUR

HON. ERIC CANTOR

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 14, 2011

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a historic accomplishment for the Richmond region. On March 27, 2011, the Virginia Commonwealth University's basketball team defeated the University of Kansas 71-61 and for the first time in history advanced to the NCAA Basketball Tournament's Final Four.

Led by Coach Shaka Smart, the Rams had a terrific season and finished sixth in the final ESPN/USA Today Coaches poll, which is the highest finish in school and CAA history. The Rams ended the season by tying their record of 28 wins.

The Rams set a number of new records for VCU and the CAA including total points scored with 2,864 and total three-pointers with 339, a mark which ranked second in the nation. The fourteen home games of the 2010-11 season set a new average attendance record with 6,645 fans per game. The average attendance for all forty games was 8,742, which is also a school record.

The team has brought the City of Richmond and the entire Commonwealth of Virginia much pride. Their strong teamwork and spirit were evident, and they brought an excitement to our community that has rarely been seen before. VCU pride was displayed in store fronts, restaurants, local businesses and in people's homes. We were all proud to share the magic of VCU's Cinderella season with the country.

I offer sincere congratulations to VCU President Michael Rao for his vision and outstanding leadership, Coach Smart for his contagious enthusiasm and tenacity, the Ram basketball team for their exceptional play and inspiring team spirit, and all of the students and fans that supported the team throughout the season.

I commend the Rams on their successful season and ask you to join me in celebrating their historic run.

DIA DE PORTUGAL RECOGNITION

HON. DENNIS A. CARDOZA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 14, 2011

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today along with my colleagues Mr. Costa of California, Mr. McGovern of Massachusetts, and Mr. Cicilline of Rhode Island to recognize Dia de Portugal, and reiterate the strong bond between the United States and Portugal. Celebrated around the world on June 10th, Dia de Portugal recognizes the magnificent heritage of the Portuguese people and their descendants.

Contributing to the strong ties between the United States and Portugal are the sizable Portuguese communities in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, California, and Hawaii. The latest census estimates that 1.3 million individuals living in the United States are of Portuguese ancestry. There are also about 20,000 Americans living in Portugal.

A large percentage of Portuguese-Americans are descendants of immigrants who came from the Azores in the late 1950's after the islands experienced several volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, leaving many without homes. Thousands of victims were in need of aid, and the United States, in a gesture of international goodwill, allocated visas to the people of the Azores to find work and rebuild their lives in America. Since the Azores are known for their rich soil and temperate climate, many of the Portuguese refugees settled in regions of the United States that supported agriculture and dairy, such as the San Joaquin Valley in Central California. Many other Portuguese from the Azores settled in parts of the nation with burgeoning fishing industries, particularly in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York where they continued to diversify and contribute to the nation's economy and common heritage.

Modern day Portugal has been an integral member of the European Union (EU) and is a strong proponent of European integration. While Portugal held the presidency of the EU Council for the third time during the latter half of 2007, Portugal oversaw the signing of a new EU reform treaty, staged EU summits with Russia, India, and China, and held a second EU-Africa summit. Furthermore, Portugal is a founding member of NATO and continues to be an active member of the alliance.

Lastly, the defense relationship between the United States and Portugal is excellent, centered on the 1995 Agreement on Cooperation and Defense (ACD). For 50 years, Lajes Air Base in the Azores has played an important role in supporting U.S. military aircraft. Past missions have engaged in counter-terrorism and humanitarian efforts, including operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Portugal often emphasizes its support for strong European ties with the United States, particularly on defense and security issues. Portugal sees its role as host of NATO's "Joint Command Lisbon," located near Lisbon, as an important sign of alliance interest in transatlantic security issues.

Mr. Speaker, we celebrate all the accomplishments of the Portuguese and Portuguese Americans on this occasion, and wish everyone celebrating worldwide a joyous Dia de Portugal.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 14, 2011

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I missed a round of votes in order to attend the remembrance services of a friend who passed away in Buffalo over the weekend. Because the votes I missed dealt with important questions of labor policy, foreign policy and funding for our veterans, I would like to enter into the record how I would have voted had I been present.

On Rollcall 413, the LaTourette Amendment, I would have voted "aye."

On Rollcall 414, the Amash Amendment, I would have voted "no."

On Rollcall 415, the Sherman Amendment, I would have voted "no."

On Rollcall 416, retaining Title II (Department of Veterans Affairs), I would have voted "aye."

PASSING OF THE HONORABLE JUAN FRANCISCO LUIS, THIRD ELECTED GOVERNOR OF THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 14, 2011

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I rise today to commemorate the life of the Honorable Juan Francisco Luis, the third elected Governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands who passed away on June 4, 2011, at the age of 70. In office from 1979 through 1986, Governor Luis was the longest serving elected chief executive of our island territory.

Governor Luis served at a time of growth and change in the Virgin Islands. He was a popular governor known as a leader who was responsive to the needs of ordinary citizens, who was always willing to listen to their individual concerns. According to Profiles of Outstanding Virgin Islanders, he will be remembered for significant infrastructure development in the islands, in particular, the establishment of modern health care facilities on all three islands, the initial expansion and financing of the airports on St. Thomas and St. Croix, the construction of a new container port on St. Croix, acquisition of land on St. Croix for homeownership and agriculture and several capital construction projects.

Mr. Speaker, Governor Luis first ran for public office in 1972, when he was elected to the Tenth Legislature of the U.S. Virgin Islands and served as chairman of the Legislative Housing and Planning Committee, Vice Chairman of the Recreation Committee and member of the Committees on Finance, Public Safety, Health and Welfare, Labor and Veterans Affairs.

He was chosen by the late Governor Cyril King to be his running mate in the 1974 gubernatorial election. The two won, and when Governor King died unexpectedly in 1978, Luis became Governor of the Virgin Islands. Originally a member of the Independent Citizens Movement, and later as an independent, Luis was elected in his own right in 1978 and again in 1982.

Born on the neighboring island of Vieques, Puerto Rico, he moved with his family to St. Croix when he was two months old. He was the valedictorian of the then Christiansted High School in 1958 and went on to attend Inter-American University in Puerto Rico. He served in the U.S. Army and was honorably discharged in 1968 as a sergeant. He later taught at the then Christiansted Grammar School and worked for the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

I have two special recollections of personal interactions with him as Governor. He made time to meet with me when there was a controversy surrounding the naming of the park in Frederiksted. Several of us had decided to ask him to consider vetoing the bill as passed by the Legislature and he did. I don't exactly remember the details of his negotiations with the HESS refinery. But at the time it seemed to me that he was not getting the support he needed and so in an attempt to rise above party politics, I secured the signatures to call a special meeting to urge the Territorial Committee of the Democratic Party to support him during the negotiations. My efforts were not successful, but I know he appreciated the attempt.

I believe that history will be exceedingly kind to the memory of Governor Luis as we can see his contributions in the health care system, in education, in the economy and in other aspects that affect the daily lives of Virgin Islanders. His efforts were sincere and those of us in office today build on the foundations that were set during his tenure. With the passage of time people have the chance to assess the contributions of those who live their lives in service to the public. It can be said of Governor Juan Luis that he had a clear vision and that he worked diligently to accomplish his intended goals and that we the people, were better off for it.

Mr. Speaker, my family, staff and I extend our sincere condolences to his wife, Mrs. Luz Luis and his children Juan, Jr. and Carlota Amalia. May Governor Juan Francisco Luis rest in peace.

HONORING DYERSBURG
SUPERINTENDENT LLOYD RAMER

HON. STEPHEN LEE FINCHER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 14, 2011

Mr. FINCHER. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today to honor and thank Mr. Lloyd Ramer for an outstanding 42-year career of serving in public education as Superintendent of the Dyersburg City Schools. Mr. Ramer will retire from service as Superintendent on June 7, 2011. We celebrate his accomplishments and wish him well in his future endeavors.

As an exceptional leader and education advocate, Mr. Ramer began with the Dyersburg School System in 1969. He has functioned in numerous roles ranging from a contemporary studies teacher, acting director, basketball coach, curriculum coordinator, and assistant superintendent. In 1994, Mr. Ramer accepted the responsibility of Superintendent, demonstrating what a colleague calls his "driving commitment to excellence and his continued quest for quality educational opportunities for our students." His commitment has been prov-

en by spending all 42 years of his career working for the Dyersburg City Schools. His years of working with the city schools prove his tremendous commitment to public education.

On behalf of the House of Representatives, I want to thank Mr. Ramer for encouraging thousands of young Americans to achieve their fullest potential.

Please join me in honoring Mr. Lloyd Ramer upon his retirement from public education.

HONORING MS. PATRICIA WOJCIK

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 14, 2011

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, today I pause to remember the great life and work of Patricia Wojcik the longtime director of the Department of Senior Services in Cheektowaga, New York.

For nearly two and a half decades Pat dedicated her life to making the lives of seniors in Western New York healthier, happier and more fulfilled.

Upon first assuming her leadership role in town government in 1980, Pat made it her mission to give local seniors a place to gather, learn, have fun and build friendships.

Two short years later the Cheektowaga Senior Center opened its doors and over the years since, thousands of seniors were greeted at those doors by Pat's smiling face and kind words.

The many ways Pat touched the lives of others is far too great to mention here but her commitment is demonstrated in the respect she had for the commitment of those she served. Each year one of her trademark events was a ceremony which included a splendid celebration for Cheektowaga couples celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary.

Her devotion to her work didn't go unrecognized. She received citizen of the year awards from the Am Pol Eagle and Zonta Club, was recognized by the St. Joseph Hospital Foundation and in 2005 I was honored to nominate her to represent our area for the White House Conference on the Aging.

That same year, 25 years after she first started, Pat turned over her duties at Cheektowaga's Senior Center and began a well-deserved retirement.

On June 10, 2011 I will join long-time Cheektowaga leader Assemblyman Dennis Gabryszak, Pat's friends, family and co-workers to plant a tree in Pat Wojcik's honor in front of the building where she spent so many years.

Her memory will live on with this tree as well as in the hearts of all of us who knew and loved her.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND
VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RE-
LATED AGENCIES APPROPRIA-
TIONS ACT, 2012

SPEECH OF

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 2, 2011

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under

consideration the bill (H.R. 2055) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes:

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of the LaTourette amendment and of the thousands of American workers, contractors and small businesses that benefit from the use of Project Labor Agreements.

Created by the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, Project Labor Agreements, or PLAs, allow construction workers to enter into a collective bargaining agreement that establishes the terms and conditions of employment for all workers on a construction project.

Project Labor Agreements are cost effective and pro-business. They are used in every State on private- and public-sector construction projects. Fortune 500 companies such as Wal-Mart, Toyota, and Boeing praise and use PLAs because they provide contractors with a reliable and uninterrupted supply of trained workers at predictable costs for wages and benefits.

PLAs provide uniform working conditions and rules on construction sites, thereby making the work site safer while businesses benefit by paying less in worker compensation and avoid project delays due to the lessened risk of job site accidents.

PLAs encourage the employment of local residents, ensuring that these workers' paychecks will be spent in the local community. PLAs can also be used as a way to enhance the work opportunities of military veterans and underrepresented communities.

PLAs have been used for the construction of some of our Nation's most iconic building projects, including the Coulee Dam in Washington State, the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, and the Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

PLAs represent the best of what can happen when labor and business come together.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support American workers and businesses and vote in favor of the LaTourette amendment.

MARTIN VAN BUREN NATIONAL
HISTORIC SITE

HON. CHRISTOPHER P. GIBSON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 14, 2011

Mr. GIBSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the people of New York's 20th District to express our sincere appreciation for the Open Space Institute's continued preservation and protection of the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site in my hometown of Kinderhook, NY.

The Martin Van Buren National Historic Site was established by Congress in 1974 in order to commemorate the life and work of President Martin Van Buren through the preservation and interpretation of Lindenwald, his home and farm. When the site was established, Kinderhook was a rural farming community, like many towns in the Mid-Hudson River Valley. Over the years, new homes and the loss of agricultural land began to threaten the area surrounding the park. These changes compromised the historic integrity of the property.