

“Welcome Home a Hero Program” at Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) International Airport. I especially want to thank the kind folks at DFW, the North Texas Commission, and the USO for their efforts to recognize and show their appreciation to the brave men and women who serve our country.

“Welcome Home a Hero” is a volunteer program to encourage and support our deployed military and greet troops at DFW International Airport as they return home for two weeks of R&R. Anywhere from 150 to 275 troops come through DFW each day, with one flight arriving daily and one flight departing daily. Volunteers gather each day to welcome these troops off their flight, thanking and encouraging them for their service to our great nation.

This wonderful program started in the summer of 2004 when the U.S. military selected DFW to begin receiving the daily 20-hour flights from Kuwait. Once the flights began, grassroots groups, schools, churches, scouts and veterans organizations began to greet the troops on a daily basis. DFW fire trucks welcome every military charter on the runway with a “shower of affection” to begin the celebration.

In fact, “Welcome Home a Hero” has greeted more than 1 million troops during the course of the program by dedicated volunteers who greet troops daily. I had the privilege of attending the one millionth warrior ceremony at DFW and let’s just say that there wasn’t a dry eye in the place.

If you want to experience the best America has to offer—respect for freedom, gratitude for service and sacrifice and a deep, deep love of country—just head on down to Terminal D or Terminal B depending on the day. You’ll witness the show of support from volunteers from across North Texas and the unbridled joy and emotional high of a family embracing a returning warrior. Cheerful and faithful patriots of all ages and stages wearing their finest red, white and blue attire show up so that they can let complete strangers who dedicate their lives to our armed forces know that we love them, we care about them, we pray for them and we appreciate them.

You’ll see humble veterans from wars gone by who know that freedom is not free. You’ll meet Vietnam veteran Bert Brady who makes a point of ensuring that this generation of soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines returns with honor and a warm welcome—unlike the men who came home from Vietnam. You’ll feel a sweet embrace from the “huggin’ and kissin’ grandmas” who make it a habit of planting a big one on digi-cammie clad warriors. Each volunteer offers a sweet smile, a love of country and respect for service that truly welcomes home our troops with the way they deserve to be treated.

As a combat veteran who witnessed the ultimate low for returning warriors from Vietnam, I made a promise to myself that when, not if, I escaped my captivity in Vietnam, I would do anything and everything in my power to treat our men and women of the United States Armed Forces with the respect and honor that they deserve. “Welcome Home a Warrior” is a shining example of that golden homecoming and showcases how much North Texans—and Americans—support our troops.

If people across America find themselves traveling through DFW, I encourage them to call the R&R update line 972-574-0392 to learn of the next arrival ceremony and to see

if they may participate in a truly heartwarming and uplifting welcome home celebration for our armed forces. They also may go to www.dfwairport.com/heroes.

On this day, I respectfully request that the United States House of Representatives reaffirms our unwavering commitment to actively promote and support the “Welcome Home a Hero Program” and its invaluable importance to the morale and welfare of those men and women who serve our country.

Make no mistake—America remains the land of the free because of the brave. God bless America.

RECOGNIZING BROOKS BYERS OF
FLOWER MOUND

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 21, 2011

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in recognition of our youth who show an outstanding capacity for service. In particular, I would like to commend the achievements of Brooks Byers of Flower Mound, Texas. Mr. Byers is the newest winner of The Congressional Award Gold Medal, Congress’s only and very prestigious award for youth.

Earning the Gold Medal requires great commitment and devotion to service; each award-winner must spend two or more years completing more than 400 hours of community service. Mr. Byers’s service projects included organizing youth tennis camps and gift-wrapping fundraisers to raise more than \$3,000 for Susan G. Komen for the Cure, tutoring at-risk children each week and raising money for their after-school program through a book drive, and organizing homecoming celebrations for soldiers each weekend as part of the Welcome Home a Hero Program.

Mr. Byers’s accomplishments do not end here. The Congressional Award Gold Medal also requires participants to complete 200 hours of personal development and physical fitness activities, which Brooks fulfilled through a junior golf league and his high school’s tennis team. For the Expedition part of the Gold Medal program, Brooks planned a trip to enrich his understanding of ancient European history in Scotland and France.

The Congressional Award Gold Medal recognizes youth who show great initiative and an inspiring ability to reach complex, self-imposed goals. This experience, what Mr. Byers himself calls “transformative”, shows an incredible commitment to excellence and the principles of our country’s future leaders. It is an honor for me to have the opportunity to recognize and represent Mr. Brooks Byers.

A TRIBUTE TO JOSÉ R. SÁNCHEZ

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 21, 2011

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize José R. Sánchez.

José R. Sánchez, is President and Chief Executive Officer of Norwegian American Hospital, Chicago’s only Latino hospital. José has

a 30-plus year career as a health care executive and possesses a wealth of knowledge of the health care industry.

As President and CEO of Norwegian American, José is dedicated to enhancing the quality of services provided to more than 112,000 patients annually. Among his first priorities was to lead the management executive team to critically assess and refine the quality of all systems, structures and services that are currently in place. José is committed to pursuing collaborative and innovative solutions to combat the health care challenges of the communities the hospital serves: Humboldt Park, West Town, Wicker Park, Logan Square and Austin.

Before joining Norwegian American Hospital, José was the Senior Vice President of the Generations +Northern Manhattan Health Network, one of the largest health care networks in the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation. During his tenure, he oversaw three acute care hospitals of which two were level one trauma centers, and 34 community-based health centers in East Harlem, Central Harlem and the South Bronx in New York City.

José is the architect of the Urban Health Conference, an annual national forum in existence since 2001 that brings together more than 300 health care providers to focus on the disparities in health care for minority populations and strategies to eliminate them. He serves as Chairman of the East Harlem Business Capital Corporation Board of Directors, which provides microlending and business development services for community businesses. In addition, he is a member of the Board of Boricua College in New York. The college was designed to serve the educational needs of Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics. In October 2009, José was named among the “Most Influential Latinos” in the United States by Hispanic Business Magazine, a New York Times Co. syndicated publication.

José has been a licensed social worker since 1979. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from the City College of New York and a Master of Social Work from Adelphi University. In 2002, he was conferred an honorary doctorate degree from the New York College of Podiatric Medicine. This honor recognized his measurable accomplishments and steadfast commitment to improving the health status of the poorest and most disadvantaged populations in New York City.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Mr. José R. Sánchez for his extraordinary accomplishments and his spirit that reflect the best our nation has to offer.

HONORING CAROLE M. WATSON

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 21, 2011

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary career of Carole M. Watson as she retires from over 30 years of nonprofit management, including the last ten years as Chief Community Investment Officer with the United Way of the Bay Area, UWBA. I join our community in celebrating the many ways in which her life’s work has contributed to the success and well-being of countless people throughout the Bay Area and beyond.

In addition to holding a Master of Social Work from Wayne State University and a bachelor's degree in Education & Social Work from Western Michigan University, Ms. Watson completed the United Way of America/Annie E. Casey Foundation's Family Strengthening for Success Fellowship at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government in 2002. Ms. Watson's experience in academia also includes serving as a university faculty member for undergraduate and graduate students of Social Work while residing in Tennessee.

During three decades of leadership experience in the nonprofit sector, Ms. Watson served two Urban League affiliates located in Nashville, Tennessee and the San Francisco Bay Area. In her Urban League roles, she managed job development, led training programs and coordinated job fairs serving thousands of job seekers. Over the years, she has helped over 7,000 job seekers in securing employment opportunities with roughly 100 employers.

In her most recent role as UWBA's Chief Community Investment Officer, Ms. Watson managed grants, programs, volunteers, marketing strategies, donor cultivation, collaborative fundraising, fund distribution and community building across seven Bay Area counties.

As a member of UWBA's senior management team for the last 10 years, Ms. Watson has been known as a fearless and effective leader and mentor. She managed a \$6 million portfolio with a Community Investment Team and Community Project staff, comprising over 20 members. And in 2002, she was voted the esteemed UWBA Percy C. Moore Employee of the Year by her colleagues.

The recipient of numerous honors and accolades, Ms. Watson received the National Philanthropy Day Foundation Professional Award co-sponsored by the Northern California Grant Makers and Association of Fund Raising Executives in 2006. She was also recognized as the 2006 San Francisco Boy Scouts of America's Whitney M. Young Community Leader.

Ms. Watson's dedication to improving the lives of children, youth and families through economic development is evident from her countless community affiliations and activities. Whether serving as a liaison to the United Way World Wide Income Advisory Group, creating the Earn It! Keep It! Save It! Campaign, EKS, to provide free tax preparation for eligible EITC tax filers, or serving as Board President of the Oakland Emiliano Zapata Street Academy, Ms. Watson has donated her time to lead bold initiatives for the benefit of her community. She has truly created pathways out of poverty.

On behalf of the residents of California's 9th Congressional District, Ms. Carole M. Watson, I salute you for three decades of outstanding service in assisting families to achieve financial stability and secure future success. I congratulate and thank you for your unparalleled service to our community. You have touched many lives in profound ways throughout your career, and we wish you and your family continued prosperity and happiness as you transition to this exciting new chapter of life.

A TRIBUTE TO FELICIA LEMONS

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 21, 2011

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Felicia Lemons.

Felicia Lemons is a Human Rights Specialist for the New York City Commission on Human rights. She spent her formative years growing up in Linden Plaza, Brooklyn, New York. Her family then moved to Cambria Heights, Queens where she expanded upon the value of family and love of community. Both her parents, Hank and Sadie Lemons emphasized the importance of education, social justice and helping one's neighbor.

During a bible study meeting at the House of the Lord Church in Brooklyn, the Rev. Dr. Herbert Daughtry approached Felicia with an opportunity to work in his outreach ministry. He recruited her to advocate for formerly incarcerated women, as well as minister the gospel of Jesus Christ to the community at large. While under the mentorship of Pastor Daughtry, she trained in all matters of social justice, gender discrimination and serviced the "least of these" in the neighborhood.

Also while in training, Felicia attended Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus. Felicia was on the Dean's List for seven consecutive semesters and is a member of the Alpha Chi Honor Society. Graduating Magna Cum Laude, she earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree.

From Long Island University under the advice of Pastor Daughtry and Rev. Dr. Syl Shannon, National Convention Chaplain for Alpha Phi Alpha, Felicia pursued a Masters in Divinity Degree from Duke University. While working on her Masters, she served marginalized communities as a volunteer for Center for community Help in Durham, North Carolina.

Felicia returned to New York to work for Commissioner Patricia Gatling at the NYC Commission on Human Rights. Serving as a Human Rights Specialist, she directs her talent and passion to educated and advocate for people transitioning back into the community from prison. In doing so, she works closely with organizations such as Alpha School Project in Brooklyn, Women's Prison Association, Young Women's Leadership program of August Martin High School, New York State Division of Parole, as well as Community Liaison for the Commission on Human Rights. From this work, she has coauthored "Turning the Game Around," a comprehensive resource guide to Employment discrimination under the Human Rights Law for returning citizens of incarceration who desire to have a successful transition in New York City. Felicia continues to persist in her work. She believes to leave one person behind of a million under her watch, is to lose the battle at large.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Mrs. Lemons for her extraordinary accomplishments and her spirit which reflect the best our nation has to offer.

REINTRODUCTION OF THE HURRICANE RESEARCH INITIATIVE ACT OF 2011

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 21, 2011

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, June first marked the official start of the 2011 hurricane season. As we prepare for this upcoming season, I am proud to reintroduce the Hurricane Research Initiative Act of 2011.

I cannot help but recall the devastation left in the wake of hurricanes that have hit my

home State of Florida, such as Andrew, Ivan, Jeanne, and Katrina. These storms were some of the worst any of us had ever seen. We can all remember the haunting images of our coastal communities from Florida to Louisiana left in utter destruction. It is easy to picture the faces of those who were most affected, and to remember the stories told by survivors. Even today, the impact of these disasters are still being felt in many communities along the Gulf Coast region.

The damage from these storms affects us all. Hurricane damage has cost our Nation an average of \$35.8 billion in economic losses per year since 2001. Between 2002 and 2007, we experienced over \$180 billion in losses due to hurricanes.

As a nation, we have been caught off-guard by these storms. In the past, we were not ready for the destructive forces that came our way. We could not anticipate the extent to which these storms would change our coastal towns and cities. In short, we were unprepared.

Looking back, it is easy to see why. In recent years, we have allowed hurricane research to lapse. It is a failure that must be addressed. Every year, we pay the price in environmental damage, fiscal devastation, and human lives.

More research must be done on these storm systems. Therefore, I am proud to reintroduce the Hurricane Research Initiative Act of 2011, which authorizes critical hurricane research funding to help our scientists study and better understand how hurricanes form and intensify, research that will help us prepare for many hurricane seasons to come.

The legislation also provides for enhancing early warning systems, infrastructure durability standards, and severe weather tracking and prediction capabilities. A National Infrastructure Database will be established under this legislation in order to develop standards and create public policy to better understand hurricanes and tropical storms.

This version of the bill also restores funding to perform a necessary update to our Nation's Joint Polar Satellite System, funds that were cut in the Republican budget for Fiscal Year 2011. The Continuing Resolution eliminated the means to perform this necessary update. Satellites are designed with a limited lifespan. When the end of that lifespan is reached, our ability to track severe weather systems such as hurricanes and blizzards also ends. By restoring funding for the JPSS, this bill ensures the continuation of our ability to forecast and track severe weather systems before they happen.

Mr. Speaker, we have an opportunity to close the gap in hurricane research funding. Correcting this lack of scientific research is imperative and will help us to preserve our environment, protect our property, and save lives. I urge my colleagues to support this critically important legislation.