

But the new constitution has dramatically altered the status of women in Kenya. Among the over 40 new reforms is a non-discrimination clause outlawing bias on the basis of sex, pregnancy or marital status. Additionally, women can own and inherit land, and matrimonial property is protected during and after the termination of marriage. Unconstitutional customary laws carried on by tradition are now void.

Women's right have been elevated in the new Kenyan Constitution. But as anyone who lives in a democracy knows, constitutional mechanisms must be matched by meaningful enforcement and constant vigilance to actually achieve their goals.

Kenya is facing many trials at the moment. The drought in the Horn of Africa is threatening the lives of over 13 million people. Food insecurity is affecting 3.75 million people in Kenya, and 4.3 million men, women, and children are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance.

These numbers do not include the influx of refugees from Somalia and neighboring lands. At its peak, Kenya and Ethiopia saw nearly 1,000 people a day arrive at refugee camps to escape the famine in Somalia. Sexual violence against women in these already overcrowded refugee camps is on the rise.

There are no easy solutions to this crisis, and we in the United States must step up and do our part to help our fellow people in need. Nonetheless, in face of these adversities, it is heartening to see Kenya's men and women move forward together, as equals and as partners. By empowering Kenyan women and rejecting gender-based discrimination, the new Kenyan constitution has paved the way for a brighter future for the Kenyan people.

ACKNOWLEDGING CAROLINE  
DEGNAN FOR HER COMMUNITY  
SERVICE

### HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 14, 2011*

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great admiration that I recognize Caroline Degnan for outstanding service to her community.

Throughout her years at the South Buffalo Food Pantry, Mrs. Degnan personified caring and compassion as she selflessly placed the needs of others before her own.

Mrs. Degnan spent more than twenty years as a volunteer for the South Buffalo Food Pantry as well as overseeing the Lovejoy Food Pantry for several years. In March of 2006, she was nominated by the local branch of Catholic Charities for the organization's national Volunteer of the Year Award.

Despite great personal loss and physical setbacks due to multiple illnesses, Caroline's continues to persevere with spirit and faith. In recognition of that perseverance and to give thanks for her countless hours of providing food and friendship to those in need, her family and friends gathered together to honor this special woman on October 15th at St. Agatha's McGuire Hall in South Buffalo, New York.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and pride that I acknowledge the example set by Caroline Degnan and join with a grateful com-

munity to extend our deepest appreciation for her exceptional service and generous heart that fuels the betterment of the lives she has touched.

HONORING DR. MARILYN HEINE  
FOR BEING NAMED THE 162D  
PRESIDENT OF THE PENNSYLVANIA  
MEDICAL SOCIETY

### HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 14, 2011*

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Marilyn Heine, of Dresher, PA who has been named the 162d President of the Pennsylvania Medical Society. Dr. Heine has been a member of the Pennsylvania Medical Society for 22 years, and will now lead this organization as it aims to shape health care delivery to assure that the evolving system provides quality and value to patients and the community.

An active member of the medical community in Pennsylvania, Dr. Heine has served as a delegate to the PA Medical Society's House of Delegates and has played an important role in the Pennsylvania Medical Society's Foundation.

Dr. Heine has also served as president of the Medical Society in my home of Bucks County and was recognized YWCA of Bucks County as a Woman Who Makes a Difference. She has dedicated her professional career to the advancement of medicine in her community, and the Pennsylvania Medical Society is fortunate to have her as its incoming president.

Dr. Marilyn Heine has made it her life's work not only to serve her patients in her practice, but also to improve the healthcare industry here in Pennsylvania. Her dedication serves as an example for her fellow healthcare professionals and I congratulate her on her new position.

RECOGNIZING HISPANIC HERITAGE  
MONTH

### HON. JERRY MCNERNEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 14, 2011*

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Hispanic Heritage Month.

The United States of America's history, culture and vast array of achievements have been shaped by peoples from across the world. Hispanic Heritage Month is an important opportunity to recognize the contributions of our nation's Latino community. California has been uniquely shaped by the contributions of its Hispanic heritage, from the founding of the Missions with their unique art and architecture to the rich cultural diversity of our cuisine, music and art.

One of many important achievements of Hispanic Americans is that of civil rights that affect us all. Civil rights activist, labor leader, and farm worker César Chávez fought for fair treatment, equality, and dignity without the use of violence. César's leadership, faith, and per-

sistence paved the way for many Latinos and non-Latinos who carry on his legacy.

Today, Latino men and women are an integral part of the fabric that keeps our communities and our families strong. Latinos are tireless teachers in schools and brave soldiers who fight to defend our freedom. In the face of adversity, Latinos have risen to the highest levels of success in business, the arts, public service, athletics, and the armed forces.

As we celebrate the contributions of Hispanic Americans, let us all work together to meet the challenges facing our communities so that we can build upon the American Dream for future generations. It is for these reasons I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Hispanic Heritage Month.

IN RECOGNITION OF COLDWELL  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL RECEIVING  
THE 2011 NATIONAL BLUE  
RIBBON AWARD

### HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 14, 2011*

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the achievements of Coldwell Elementary School. Coldwell was recently honored with the 2011 National Blue Ribbon award from the United States Department of Education for excellence in education.

The National Blue Ribbon School award honors both public and private elementary, middle and high schools where students achieve at high levels and also schools where the achievement gap is narrowing. Since 1982, more than 6,500 of America's schools have received this coveted award.

I want to personally congratulate the teachers, administrators, and staff of Coldwell Elementary for their commitment and dedication to our young students in El Paso. This year only 304 schools nationwide received the award, and they will be honored at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. The Blue Ribbon validates the efforts of these schools in creating a positive and effective learning environment. These schools and their communities have achieved a degree of excellence of which they can justifiably be proud.

Coldwell Elementary School is a fine example of what can be accomplished when parents, teachers and administrators collaborate to prepare our students for a prosperous future. By emphasizing the importance of subjects like math, science and language arts, Coldwell is enabling a new generation of community leaders.

In times of economic uncertainty, we cannot lose sight of the paramount importance of our children's education, and I am honored to represent Coldwell Elementary School.

CELEBRATING THE ACHIEVEMENT  
OF PRESIDENT ELLEN SIRLEAF  
JOHNSON

### HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 14, 2011*

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the President of

Liberia, Ellen Sirleaf Johnson, for recently being awarded the Noble Peace Prize for 2011. She was given the award in conjunction with peace activist Leymah Gbowee and pro-democracy campaigner Tawakkol Karman. The trio was recognized for their nonviolent role in promoting peace, democracy, and gender equality.

In typical fashion, President Sirleaf gave credit to the Liberian people, "For we are now going into our ninth year of peace and every Liberian has contributed to it. We particularly give this credit to Liberian women, who have consistently led the struggle for peace, even under conditions of neglect."

South Carolina has a special relationship with Liberia many founders of the Republic of Liberia having a South Carolina heritage. I know firsthand the mutual affection of the people of our two countries in that I was present for the re-opening of the AME University in Monrovia where my constituent African Methodist Episcopal Bishop David Daniels of West Columbia, presided with Pastor Ronnie Brailsford of Bethel AIVIE, Columbia, SC. Appropriately Bishop Daniels is the Bishop of the Diocese of South Carolina and Liberia.

Her leadership has proven instrumental in restoring democracy and lasting peace in Liberia which had been devastated by Civil War. President George W. Bush was effective in demanding abdication by the murderous dictator Charles Taylor.

TO HONOR ERIC STRANSKY FOR  
HIS SERVICE TO THE SOCIAL SECURITY  
ADMINISTRATION AND  
HIS MILITARY SERVICE

### HON. STEVEN C. LATOURETTE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 14, 2011

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Eric Stransky, who recently retired after 35 years with the Social Security Administration, with 28 of those years in management.

Stransky has been a tenacious advocate for my constituents in need of help from the Painesville, OH, Social Security office, and has been a trusted and reliable source who has worked closely with my caseworkers to get problems resolved. He is a model employee and his departure will leave Social Security with very big shoes to fill.

A graduate of John Carroll University, Stransky has been lauded for his work at the SSA, and received a Regional Commissioner Citation for leading a workgroup that resolved over 5,000 overpayments in six weeks. He's been a Supervisor at many SSA locations in Ohio—Marietta, Athens, Painesville, Cleveland East and University Circle Area. In 1998, Stransky served as the Area System Coordinator ensuring a smooth transition for all employees in Northern Ohio to individual desktop system access.

Stransky managed the local Euclid office for two years, Warrensville Heights for three years, and spent eight years working just a few blocks from my district office in Painesville while juggling a two-year stint in the U.S. Army as a Senior Joint Doctrine Developer at the Joint and Allied Doctrine Division, Army Capabilities Integration Center in Ft. Monroe, VA.

Retired Lt. Col. Eric Stransky served in the US Army Reserve for more than 29 years. He attended the following Military Schools: Armor Officer Basic; Junior Officer Preventive Maintenance Course; Armor Officer Professional Development Course; OPSEC Course; Special Warfare Center and School, PSYOP Officer Course; Armor Officer Advance Course; United States Army Command & General Staff College; United Kingdom PSYOP Officer Course; Physical Security Course; Individual Terrorism Awareness; Logistics Managers Course; Joint PSYOP Course; Joint Planning Orientation Course; Joint PSYOP Staff Planning Course; Faculty Development Phase 1 Course and Commanders Safety Course. In June 1995, then a Major, he was Chief of Psychological Operations at a United Nations Mission in Haiti.

Stransky commissioned in the Army Reserve as a Second Lt. in July 1978 and continued to move up through the ranks, ultimately promoted to Lt. Col. in April 2000. He retired in August 2006, but remains actively involved with the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Catholic War Veterans.

Stransky has received the following Military honors: Legion of Merit; Army Meritorious Service Medal (3); Army Commendation Medal (2); Joint Service Achievement Medal; Army Achievement Medal; Army Reserve Achievement Medal (7); National Defense Service Medal w/star; Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; Armed Forces Service Medal; Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal; Armed Forces Reserve Medal (with silver hour glass and M(2) device); Reserve Component ODT Ribbon (6) and United Nations Mission in Haiti Medal.

Stransky has a great wit and a tremendous work ethic, and clearly can juggle many tasks at once with little effort. His military service has provided him with tremendous discipline and his attention to detail and process has catapulted the various Social Security offices he's managed into well-oiled, highly efficient, responsive and successful offices where both the employees and constituents are well served. He's a motivator who gets results.

With his remarkable career and his decades of service to our country, you might suspect that Eric Stransky is an Eagle Scout as well. And alas, he is.

It's been an honor and a privilege for me and my staff to work with a man whose goal in life is to help others, and it's a tough task to show him an appropriate level of gratitude. I'm sorry to see him go because he was one of a kind. He's served our nation and those in need with heart and purpose, and I wish him and his loving family all the best. Please enjoy your well-deserved retirement.

INTRODUCTION OF RAILROAD REHABILITATION & IMPROVEMENT FINANCING (RRIF) LEGISLATION

### HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 14, 2011

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to introduce legislation that makes significant improvements to the Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing Program (RRIF). The RRIF program can help

railroads, shippers, and states meet their rail infrastructure investment needs. But we are not taking full advantage of the program.

I meet with railroads and others that tell me—time and again—how difficult the application process is to navigate; how time consuming it is; how expensive and cumbersome it is, how they can't use studies from other DOT agencies; and, in the end, many of them tell me: It's just not worth it! Well we need to do better.

The draft Surface Transportation Authorization Act of 2009 made significant changes to the RRIF program, which I proposed. The bill authorized the Secretary to: (1) reduce the interest to be paid on direct loans provided to railroads, State and local governments, and eligible entities for the sole purpose of installing positive train control (PTC) systems; (2) allow applicants to use private insurance, including bond insurance, in lieu of a credit risk premium; and (3) allow applicants to pay the credit risk premium over the life of the loan. The draft bill also authorized appropriations to assist the Secretary in reducing the interest rates for loans used for installing PTC.

IN RECOGNITION OF TRAVIS CREDIT UNION ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY

### HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 14, 2011

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, Representatives GEORGE MILLER and I rise today in honor of Travis Credit Union, who has served Solano County and its surrounding communities for 60 years. Originally opening as the Travis Air Force Base Federal Credit Union in the autumn of 1951, Travis Credit Union has grown to be the 13th largest credit union in California, and with \$1.8 billion in assets, among the top 100 in the country.

To the charter members of Travis Air Force Base Federal Credit Union, the cost of living in 1951 was likely a major reason they decided to create their own financial alternative to banks that made it easier for them to borrow and save money. When the credit union first opened, it was in a makeshift base office and served only military and civilian personnel at the base.

In December of 1951, Travis Air Force Base Federal Credit Union had 68 members and \$2,015 in deposits. In 1954, the credit union made its first house trailer loan and then moved into the Passenger Terminal Building in April of 1955. At the end of 1961 TAFB FCU had 5,0432 members and \$1.39 million in deposits. Membership was expanded to include military and U.S.-sponsored civilian personnel stationed overseas in 1964 and in 1965 the Executive Committee was created establishing a president, vice president, treasurer and secretary.

The Travis Air Force Base Federal Credit Union changed its name to Travis Federal Credit Union in 1974 and in 1977 construction of the first off-base branch in Fairfield was completed. Today, the credit union has 22 branches located throughout the region in the cities of Fairfield, Vacaville, Dixon, Suisun City, Benicia, Vallejo, Davis, Woodland, Napa, Concord, Antioch, Clayton, Merced and