

1995, he became part of the team that successfully merged all of the House's e-mail systems into one enterprise service. He then became the lead in implementing the Enterprise Fax system for the House which allowed Member offices to receive and send their faxes via e-mail. Phil has helped make the House e-mail and Enterprise Fax systems the reliable services the House relies on today. Continuing on the leading edge of technology, Phil's most recent duties were instrumental in the House's successful evolution to server virtualization.

Phil's knowledge, experience, dedication, mentoring and consistent outstanding performance in his daily tasks have set a fine example in providing superior customer service and earned him the respect and admiration of his co-workers.

On behalf of the entire House community, we extend congratulations to Philip Melvin for his many years of dedication, outstanding contributions and service to the United States House of Representatives.

We wish him many wonderful years in fulfilling his retirement dreams.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, November 3rd, I missed rollcall votes 821 and 822, for unavoidable reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

Rollcall vote No. 821: "yea" (Ordering the previous question on H. Res. 453, the rule providing for consideration of both H.R. 2940—Access to Capital for Job Creators Act and H.R. 2930—Entrepreneur Access to Capital Act)

Rollcall vote No. 822: "yea" (Dicks Motion to instruct conferees)

RECOGNIZING MT. PLEASANT MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor to extend a heartfelt congratulations to the congregation, administration, and supporters of Mt. Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church of Leesburg, Georgia as this fine institution celebrates 150 years of providing spiritual guidance and dedicated community service to the residents of Lee County, Georgia and individuals throughout the Albany, Georgia metropolitan area. This tenured religious institution will commemorate its 150th anniversary on Sunday, November 6, 2011 at a service ceremony at 143 Mt. Pleasant Road in Leesburg.

This upcoming anniversary ceremony will enable church members, local dignitaries, community leaders and other individuals throughout Georgia to pay tribute to a house of worship that has positively influenced many lives and served as a sanctuary for those in need of spiritual counseling.

Mt. Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church traces its historical roots back to our nation's dark days of slavery. The Church was founded in 1861 by a band of baptized believers in Christ on property deeded to them by slave owners.

Some of the church's early pastors, including Reverend Dough Johnson, Ben London, Gain Byrd, Tom Johnson and Reverend Gene Murray, worked endlessly to establish Mt. Pleasant as a stable institution that tended to the spiritual needs of its congregation and provided assistance to other churches in need of resources. Early in its existence, Mt. Pleasant graciously allowed members of Old Piney Grove Church to share its facilities and bury their members in Mt. Pleasant's cemetery until construction of Old Piney Grove's building was completed.

Throughout the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, Mt. Pleasant's edifice has gone through numerous transformations and renovations. In 1890, the first frame building was constructed on the eastern edge of the church's current location on Mt. Pleasant Road in Leesburg, Georgia. This building was built on a wood frame with four windows on each side and two doors at the front.

In the late 1930s, under the leadership of Reverend Wallace Davis, Mt. Pleasant's church building was renovated. After the 1930s renovation, the church building also served as a school house.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Reverend P.S. Sparks oversaw the construction of a new church building that included pews and pulpit furniture. In the early 1980s, under the direction of Reverend W.D. Slaughter, a new dining hall was added to Mt. Pleasant's campus.

Over the years, Mt. Pleasant has remained a steadfast community leader and supporter of several humanitarian initiatives that have assisted those individuals most in need. Mt. Pleasant's Mission Outreach Ministry donates food and clothing to low-income communities throughout the Albany, Georgia metropolitan area. The church is also associated with charity efforts sponsored by the Christian outreach group, Samaritan's Purse.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Mt. Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church in Leesburg, Georgia for all the many things this institution has done and will continue to do to positively impact the lives of those in Southwest Georgia.

HONORING TEXANS FOR LIFE COALITION PRESIDENT KYLEEN WRIGHT

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to honor Texans for Life Coalition President Kyleen Wright for her decades of work to protect life. Kyleen has been a leader and a fixture in the Texas pro-life movement for years, and her dedication to the unborn was critical to the recent passage of the sonogram law in the Texas Legislature. This law expands informed consent to include a visual presentation via sonogram.

Since 1975, Kyleen has been a tireless pro-life advocate. Beginning in her freshman year

of high school, Kyleen has spent the last 36 years influencing and instituting policies conducive to strong families. Her work has culminated in significant policy changes in Texas, including the sonogram law and an abstinence education program in 1995. It is also thanks in part to Kyleen's work that the incidence of teen abortions has dropped by half since 1995.

The pro-life cause in Texas has many leaders, but few are as effective in the state capital as Kyleen. Whether it's working with the legislature or talking on the airwaves, Kyleen is leading Texas and America to a brighter and better future. I ask all of my colleagues to join me in recognizing Kyleen Wright for a career of hard work to protect the unborn and their families.

RECOGNIZING NORMAN VUTZ, SCHUYLKILL TOWNSHIP'S 2011 OUTSTANDING CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Norman Vutz on the occasion of being honored as Schuylkill Township's 2011 Outstanding Citizen of the Year.

A longtime Township resident, Norman moved to Schuylkill Township in 1978 and served 28 years as a member of its Board of Supervisors. One of Norman's greatest accomplishments was helping to facilitate the Township's transition from utilizing an independent contractor for roads to establishing its own Roads Department. With an excellent and dedicated Roadmaster, the Township is saving money, is better managed, and is providing more efficient service to its residents.

One of his favorite aspects of serving on the Board of Supervisors is working with the talented and dedicated Township staff and helping area citizens. These are the folks that have provided Norman such great satisfaction during his long years of public service.

Mr. Speaker, in light of his exemplary years of service to Schuylkill Township, I ask that my colleagues join me today in recognizing Norman Vutz on the occasion of his being honored as 2011 Outstanding Citizen of the Year.

INTRODUCTION OF THE STEM EDUCATION INNOVATION ACT

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to articulate a vision for American education and a platform for developing a strong competitive workforce. Today I am introducing the STEM Education Innovation Act, which does exactly this by raising the profile of state and federal science, technology, engineering, and mathematics initiatives.

By promoting and highlighting science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education, we will enable America to regain its

competitive edge in the global economy. This is essential so that the youth of America can once again be competitive with their international peers and attain satisfying, well-paying jobs. It is essential so that American "Job Creators" will be able to find future employees with the right skill sets to meet their needs right here at home.

My legislation will establish an Office of STEM Education at the Department of Education, through which we will be making a national and international statement that the STEM fields are a national priority. This office can speak with articulation on why we must compete at the highest level on international benchmark tests such as the PISA, NAEP and TIMMS tests.

By providing federal support for State Consortia on STEM Education, my bill helps States exercise their power to create, maintain, and grow their STEM platform. The bill acknowledges existing public-private collaborations and will grow such efforts in the STEM community. These state consortia are already springing up at the grassroots level. Through a federal matching grant, we will be reaffirming our Nation's priorities while allowing States to dictate and control their educational agenda by identifying best practices and implementing state standards.

Finally, my legislation will boost American ingenuity and innovation by promoting the development of transformational technology for the classroom through the Education Innovation Project. Through a small federal dollar investment, small startup companies and the private market will deliver a huge return on educational technological innovation.

Mr. Speaker, it is the aspiration of ALL Americans—rich and poor, rural and urban, public school and private school, Republican and Democrat—to realize the American dream for their children. The STEM Education Innovation Act builds up the platform of local educational communities all throughout the United States to collaborate and consolidate a solid educational platform holding up the pillars of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). By supporting STEM efforts in American public schools, we are investing in the future of American youth. We are also investing in American ingenuity, innovation, and infrastructure: ensuring an educated population to carry us forward into the future.

**CELEBRATING THE DEDICATION
OF THE WEST HILLS COLLEGE
LEMOORE GOLDEN EAGLE
ARENA**

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize West Hills College Lemoore on the occasion of the Dedication Ceremony of the Golden Eagle Arena, its new, state-of-the-art facility which will provide a venue for the expanding educational and athletic programs. The new 52,000 square-foot arena will provide a home to the Golden Eagles basketball and volleyball teams, while also facilitating class space for enhanced physical education.

Golden Eagle Arena represents the third phase of growth for West Hills College

Lemoore. The college has grown substantially since opening its doors in 2002. With the construction of the new arena approved by the Lemoore City Council in 2006, tireless work has been put in to developing a center that can host a variety of athletic and academic events. The state-of-the-art lighting, sound and technological equipment found within this facility provide an ideal venue for a variety of performances. The versatile flooring ensures that the hardwood basketball court will remain in pristine condition and promote longevity for this grand investment. This 2,700 seat stadium will enrich student life and enhance the Golden Eagle spirit. Even though nascent, the Golden Eagle Arena has already been home to various high profile, national, public servant guest speakers.

West Hills College Lemoore has done nothing short of a job well done. After more than eighteen months of construction, the Golden Eagle Arena is complete. The perseverance of the Lemoore campus faculty, administration, students and community support has prevailed with this crown jewel in these tough economic times. In particular, I would like to commend the dedication of President Don Warkentin, Chancellor Frank Gornick, and the Board of Trustees: Mark McKean, Bill Henry, Nina Oxborrow, Steve Cantu, Edna Ivans, Jeff Levinson and Jack Minnite. Without the unwavering commitment of these individuals, projects and facilities like the Golden Eagle Arena would not be possible.

Mr. Speaker, I have been a proud supporter of the West Hills Community College District since my days in the California State Legislature. It is beautiful to see how this rural, community college meets its goal to serve its students with a diverse set of programs and curricula, while providing entertainment and enrichment venues such as the Golden Eagle Arena. I ask my colleagues to join me in commending West Hills College Lemoore and the community of Lemoore who have worked tirelessly to make the Golden Eagle Arena possible.

HONORING ALICE CARDONA

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an American trailblazer, a proud Puerto Rican and New Yorker whose advocacy for women's rights and minorities distinguished her as a true leader. Alice Cardona hailed from New York's Spanish Harlem or, El Barrio, where she was the first of nine children. From an early age, Alice began contributing to her community by volunteering with the Legion de Maria and providing psychological support to African American and Latino people in need. From this early experience, Alice had instilled in her a strong sense of the social, economic, and educational injustices facing people of color and the importance of remedying them.

Shortly thereafter, Alice worked for United Bronx Parents, where she helped foster parental involvement in the local school system. In 1964, she became involved in the first Head Start program in New York.

By the 1970s, she was working at ASPIRA and counseling young people. Alice's time

there inspired her to return to college and complete her degree, empowering her to further assist New York's minority communities. Upon graduation, she continued with ASPIRA and found more ways to become engaged in her community. She played a valuable role with the National Conference of Puerto Rican women and also co-founded HACER/Hispanic Women's Center, an important resource for assisting Latinas to achieve their educational goals.

As a member of Governor Mario Cuomo's Administration, Alice was the assistant director for the New York State Division for Women, where she further advocated for bilingual education and worked to combat HIV/AIDS, breast cancer, and domestic violence.

IN the 1990s, I had the pleasure of working side-by-side with Alice during my tenure as Director of the Department of Puerto Rican Community Affairs in the United States. Together, we led Atrevete, the most successful Hispanic voter drive in American history. I will always look back on her dedication, passion, and tireless work ethic as an inspiration.

Even in retirement, Alice dedicated herself to others by staying active with groups like the Puerto Rican Association for Community Affairs, the National Women's Political Caucus, and the National Association for Bilingual Education. Indeed, throughout her lifetime, she helped found more than 12 organizations dedicated to strengthening and empowering minority communities.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, Alice Cardona passed away. She is fondly remembered by many of us as a friend and role model. For all Latinas, her life is a source of pride and for New Yorkers, an inspiration to continue striving for greater social justice and opportunity in our City, state, and country. I ask that all my colleagues join me in paying tribute to Alice Cardona, an activist, passionate defender of women's rights, champion of bilingual education, and advocate for working people everywhere.

**THE VISA IMPROVEMENTS TO
STIMULATE INTERNATIONAL
TOURISM TO THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA (VISIT
USA) ACT**

HON. MAZIE K. HIRONO

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2011

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of myself and Congressman DAVID DREIER to discuss a bill that we introduced yesterday, the Visa Improvements to Stimulate International Tourism to the United States of America, VISIT USA, Act.

This is the companion bill to S. 1746, which was introduced on a bipartisan basis in the United States Senate by Senator SCHUMER of New York and Senator LEE of Utah.

The VISIT USA Act is a common-sense proposal that is about one thing—creating jobs and boosting our economy.

According to the U.S. International Trade Administration, the travel and tourism industry accounts for more than 25 percent of all U.S. services exports—our nation's largest service export, in fact. In 2010, international travel to the U.S. accounted for \$134 billion in receipts