

authority to use their discretion, and issue waivers to children that pose no security threat to our country.

This is commonsense legislation that allows us to cultivate relations with our Mexican neighbors, while keeping those who would do us harm out of our country. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this critical legislation, by cosponsoring the VISA Act.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
REMEMBRANCE

HON. RANDY HULTGREN

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 18, 2011*

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, three years ago this week, the community of Northern Illinois University was scarred by an act of senseless violence. The NIU family—including the students, faculty, administration, and alumni—has been a model of perseverance and compassion in the wake of this tragedy and I join the people of DeKalb and my whole district in honoring their resilience and courage.

The five victims of the February 14, 2008 shooting demonstrate how terrible it is when lives and the promise of bright futures are cut short.

Ryanne Mace was an excellent student who liked to knit blankets and baby clothing. Her family said “She was ten thousand times better than the best parts of each of us.”

Gayle Dubowski sang in her high school choir, acted in musicals and loved to draw. “She went out of her way. She was a really sweet and genuine person,” said a friend. “She was so happy, open and serving,” said another friend, “I know that she shone so brightly for God on that campus.”

Catalina Garcia was the youngest daughter of immigrants. They believed education was the path to the American dream and Cati, as she was called, hoped to become a teacher.

Dan Parmenter was a gentle giant. He joined the staff of the Northern Star newspaper and worked hard, received recognition, and was experiencing the satisfaction that comes from doing what you love and doing it well.

Julianna Gehant was an Army Reservist and an aspiring teacher. She loved serving her country and had been deployed to Bosnia before coming to NIU. She wanted to continue to serve in the classroom where she could help young people and be closer to her family.

Every death is a loss, but the deaths of these young people are especially tragic; their lives would have touched and impressed so many others. This week, I join the community of North Illinois University in honoring their memory and I will continue, along with the people of the 14th district, to pray for the families and friends of those who died and support the NIU community as they continue to move forward.

THE FIREFIGHTING INVESTMENT,  
RENEWAL, AND EMPLOYMENT  
(FIRE) ACT

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 18, 2011*

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I have recently reintroduced the Firefighting Investment, Renewal and Employment (FIRE) Act (H.R. 716). This bill would authorize the Assistance to Firefighters Fire Station Construction Grants for each of the next 5 years, at \$210 million per year.

Our firefighters put their lives on the line each and every day without hesitation. And yet in many of our communities, we have outdated and deteriorating fire stations or simply do not have enough fire and emergency facilities as was found in a study of San Diego County. That is why I am reintroducing the FIRE Act. I urge my colleagues join me in standing up for our firefighters by co-sponsoring this critical legislation.

REPUBLICANS FOLLOW THROUGH  
ON THE PLEDGE TO AMERICA

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 18, 2011*

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the Republican House Leadership for following through on the Pledge to America. While the Democratic legislators in Wisconsin are fleeing from their responsibility, Republicans in Washington are working virtually around the clock into the weekend to create jobs by reducing excessive spending.

In these first few weeks of the 112th Congress, Leadership has navigated the House through a flurry of activity. House Republicans have made good on several campaign promises such as: reducing government spending by cutting Congressional office budgets, stopping unnecessary printing, and repealing Obamacare which the NFIB reports will kill 1.6 million jobs. As Molly K. Hooper wrote in The Hill on Friday, “Democrats like the openness in the GOP House.” Leadership has done an extraordinary job in accomplishing much in such a short amount of time to live up to promises and reduce government borrowing to promote private sector job creation.

In conclusion, God Bless our Troops and we will never forget September the 11th in the Global War on Terrorism.

HELP OUR BORDER COMMUNITIES

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 18, 2011*

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about a very important bill that I just introduced, the Save Our Border Communities Act (H.R. 717). The bill would reimburse police, firefighters and other first responders for services associated with U.S. Ports of Entry.

Local law enforcement and first responders are bearing the brunt of protecting our borders. The Federal Government has not reimbursed border towns for border-related incidents and its drain on local police, firefighters and first responders is increasingly unbearable.

In Imperial County, California, the already strained local police department has announced that due to the high volume of border-related requests, it will no longer respond to most calls from the U.S.-Mexico Port of Entry. The local police department stated they cannot afford to process and transport the numerous individuals with out-of-county misdemeanor warrants to the local jail. Now, instead of being brought to justice, these individuals are set free.

It is about time the Federal Government pays its fair share! I urge my colleagues to join me in ensuring all our border communities are fully reimbursed for protecting our nation's borders by supporting the Save Our Border Communities Act.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JUDY BIGGERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 18, 2011*

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 69, I was absent. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea”.

JUSTICE FOR A VIETNAM VET

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 18, 2011*

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I recently introduced a private bill (H.R. 730) on behalf of a Vietnam War veteran, Fernando Javier Cervantes.

Mr. Cervantes legally entered the United States when he was only 7 years old and has not lived anywhere else since. He has been a legal resident for over 48 years and is married with two children. In 1972, Mr. Cervantes voluntarily enlisted into the United States Army and honorably served during the Vietnam War, earning a National Defense Service Medal. At the time of enlisting and throughout his service, Fernando was told that he would become a U.S. citizen by serving in the Armed Forces. In July 2008 he was surprised to hear that this was not the case and immediately applied for citizenship. Unfortunately, Fernando's application was denied due to a minor drug possession charge that he received during his difficult readjustment period after returning from Vietnam.

Today, Mr. Cervantes is drug-free and is committed to recovery. If deported to Mexico, Mr. Cervantes would not have any familial or community support to recover from his addiction. His entire family resides in the United States as either legal permanent residents or United States citizens. Mr. Cervantes demonstrated permanent allegiance to the United States by voluntarily enlisting into the United States Army and putting his life on the line to make sure we have our freedom. We must

allow him the freedom to live in the country he served.

JUSTICE FOR ALUSIA AND LEDIA

**HON. BOB FILNER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 18, 2011*

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I recently introduced a private bill (H.R. 731) on behalf of two extraordinary young women, Alusia and Ledia Zace.

Alusia and Ledia were brought here from Albania by their parents in 1996 when they were 8 and 9 years old. Their fathers' legal bid for political asylum was denied in 2004 due to the incompetence of their lawyer and was deported in 2007. This injustice forced the girls and their mother to care for themselves. With no legal representation, the girls face deportation.

The sisters have excelled academically in the U.S. and are attending university in San Diego. They can neither read nor write their native language and would most certainly be condemned to a life without opportunity should they be forced to return to Albania. The U.S. is their home and they should be given an opportunity to finish college and contribute to the only community they know.

IMPROVE ACCESS TO MEDICARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

**HON. BOB FILNER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 18, 2011*

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I recently introduced the Huntington's Disease Parity Act of 2011 (H.R. 718), which would direct the Social Security Administration (SSA) to revise outdated, medically inaccurate criteria for determining Social Security Disability and waive the Medicare two-year waiting period for people disabled by Huntington's Disease (HD).

HD is a devastating, hereditary degenerative brain disorder that causes total physical and mental deterioration. Eventually, every person affected by HD becomes completely dependent on others for care. Today, 30,000 Americans are known to have HD and an additional 200,000 have a fifty percent chance of inheriting the disease from an affected parent. The debilitating symptoms make it challenging, if not impossible, for the person with HD to remain employed, resulting in a loss of income and employer-sponsored health insurance benefits.

REVISE OUTDATED CRITERIA TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO DISABILITY BENEFITS

Due to the SSA's dependence on outdated medical guidelines, individuals experience long delays and multiple denials of critical Social Security benefits, forcing patients to wait years for benefits while HD's destructive cognitive, behavioral and physical symptoms rob the person of their ability to work and live independently. The HD Parity Act directs the Commissioner of SSA, in collaboration with the National Institutes of Health and HD experts, to update the agency's guidelines.

ELIMINATE MEDICARE WAITING PERIOD RATHER THAN ACCEPTING IMPASSE

Access to critical health care is often denied in the early stages of disease due to an individual's inability to work, thereby causing the loss of their employer-based insurance. During the required Medicare two year waiting period, individuals with HD see their physical and mental health deteriorate rapidly necessitating more costly care later.

Passing the Huntington's Disease Parity Act of 2011 will direct the SSA to revise the medically inaccurate criteria used to determine Social Security Disability and eliminate the Medicare two-year waiting period. These two critical reforms will directly impact the welfare and lives of individuals and their families impacted by this rare and devastating disease.