

time to congratulate the individuals who will take their oath of citizenship on July 4, 2012. In true patriotic fashion, on the day of our great nation's celebration of independence, a naturalization ceremony will take place, welcoming new citizens of the United States of America. This memorable occasion, coordinated by the Hammond Public Library and presided over by Magistrate Judge Andrew Rodovich, will be held at The Pavilion at Wolf Lake in Hammond, Indiana.

America is a country founded by immigrants. From its beginning, settlers have come from countries around the globe to the United States in search of better lives for their families. The upcoming oath ceremony will be a shining example of what is so great about the United States of America—that people from all over the world can come together and unite as members of a free, democratic nation. These individuals realize that nowhere else in the world offers a better opportunity for success than here in America.

On July 4, 2012, the following people, representing many nations throughout the world, will take their oath of citizenship in Hammond, Indiana: Edina Anita Szabo, Jonathan Carmona Garcia, Alaa Alzayed, Oliva Chavez, Guolan Lu, Jaime Oseguera Cardenas, Dejan Kitevski, Jelica Dobrijevic, Karla Elizabeth Arreguin Farias, Ahmad Abdelrahim Almaaya, Huda Dali, Ljubica Vignjevic, Kefaa Nahed Omar Shuaibi, Rea Agulto Clarito, Senka Pamucar, Tanja Vignjevic, Liljana Josevski, Omiyosoye Adebawale Ololade, Mopelola Eniola Ololade, Blessing Obong Dennis, An Boo Min, Amanjot Kaur, Jingli Crain, Caroline Elizabeth Nyamweru Kama, Halrun Luppess, Senija Crnkic, Siraneth Sem, Lenna Sabina Wade, Sanel Puzic, Jose Alberto Galicia Talabera, Tobias Florian Boes, Faneromeni Talia, James Murei Mumbura Karanja, Stella Gathoni Waithaka, Bacilia Avila, Mireya Jaquelin Aguilar, Gifty Debo Barlue, Esther Joo Young Chun, Patricia Contreras, Salvador Cruz, Nathaniel Tuason David, Luis Alberto Garcia, Njeri Mary Karumbo, Juliana Santos Kladis, Lenka Mitic, Innocent Ngenga, Elizabeth Procyk, Jose Gustavo Suarez, Nour Alghnimi Ulayyey, and Jovita Zurita.

Though each individual has sought to become a citizen of the United States for his or her own reasons, be it for education, occupation, or to offer their loved ones better lives, each is inspired by the fact that the United States of America is, as Abraham Lincoln described it, a country “. . . of the people, by the people, and for the people.” They realize that the United States is truly a free nation. By seeking American citizenship, they have made the decision to live in a place where, as guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights, they can practice religion as they choose, speak their minds without fear of punishment, and assemble in peaceful protest should they choose to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in congratulating these individuals, who will become citizens of the United States of America on July 4, 2012, the day of our nation's independence. They, too, will be American citizens, and they, too, will be guaranteed the inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We, as a free and democratic nation, congratulate and welcome them.

IN HONOR OF CLEVELAND CITY COUNCILWOMAN DONA BRADY

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2012

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Cleveland City Councilwoman Dona Brady, who has admirably served the residents of Ward 17 since 1997.

Born and raised in Cleveland, Councilwoman Brady has been a leader in the Greater Cleveland community for years. She attended Cleveland State University Levin College of Urban Affairs where she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree, Cum Laude, in Urban Studies with a major in neighborhood revitalization. She is also a graduate of CSU's Leadership Academy.

Before she was elected to Cleveland City Council, Brady worked for the Office of Cuyahoga County Prosecutor William D. Mason, Judge Raymond L. Pianka and for the Cleveland Board of Zoning Appeals.

Throughout the past 15 years, Councilwoman Brady has worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life in Ward 17 of Cleveland, which includes the West Boulevard and Clifton historic districts. She has worked toward promoting economic development, improving public safety, maintaining the ward's housing stock and developing additional recreational opportunities for families. Brady serves as the Chair of the Public Service Committee, Vice-Chair of Public Safety, and as a member of the Council's Finance and Community and Economic Development Committees.

Councilwoman Brady is also involved in Cleveland's Albanian-American community and has been named Cleveland's Ambassador to Albania. She has been a constant in revitalizing the Albanian Cultural Garden in Rockefeller Park and instrumental in building an international trade relationship with Fier, Albania.

Throughout the years and her career, Councilwomen Brady has been honored by numerous organizations. She is the recipient of the 2005 Outstanding Elected Official's Award from CSU Leadership Academy's David C. Sweet Alumni Society. Additionally, she has been inducted into the Golden Key National Honor Society, and recognized by Jobs with Justice, the International Services Center and American Nationalities Movement.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honoring Councilwoman Dona Brady for her years of service and commitment to the Greater Cleveland area.

TRANSPORTATION WORKER IDENTIFICATION PROCESS REFORM ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 26, 2012

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3173, which directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to reform the process for the enrollment, activation, issuance of renewal of a Transportation Work-

er Identification Credential, TWIC, to require, in total, not more than one in-person visit to a designated enrollment center.

The TWIC program was established to ensure all individuals who require admittance into secure areas of regulated maritime facilities and vessels are properly vetted and do not pose a threat to maritime and supply chain security. Current TWIC requirements require that applicants go to an enrollment center twice to complete the application and confirm the biometric information embedded into the card.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is an onerous burden for workers in the maritime industry, such as merchant vessel operators and truck drivers, who must obtain the credential for employment. Individuals in need of a TWIC card often work long hours with little down time. Many cannot afford to take extended periods of time off to go to an enrollment center, in some cases located hundreds of miles away, on two different occasions.

I believe that the Secretary of Homeland Security should reform the TWIC process before the end of 2012, when the TWICs first issued in 2007 will need to be renewed allowing applicants to complete the process with only one in-person visit. I urge Members of Congress to support H.R. 3173, to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to reform the process for the enrollment, activation, issuance, and renewal of the TWIC program.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2012

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to participate in the following votes. If I had been present, I would have voted as follows: June 26, 2012—rollcall vote 416, On agreeing to the Connolly Amendment—I would have voted “nay”, rollcall vote 417, On agreeing to the McClintock Amendment—I would have voted “aye”, rollcall vote 418, On agreeing to the Garrett Amendment—I would have voted “aye”, rollcall vote 419, On agreeing to the Capps Amendment—I would have voted “nay”, rollcall vote 420, On agreeing to the Gosar Amendment—I would have voted “aye”, rollcall vote 421, On agreeing to the Broun Amendment—I would have voted “aye”, rollcall vote 422, On agreeing to the Broun Amendment—I would have voted “aye”, rollcall vote 423, On agreeing to the Broun Amendment—I would have voted “aye”.

RECOGNIZING THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA DURING ITS 2012 ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

HON. SHELLEY BERKLEY

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2012

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, today I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) during its 2012 annual conference in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The National Council of La Raza became a national organization in 1972. NCLR has grown and evolved over the course of its history to become the most authoritative voice on Hispanic issues today. Latinos are strengthened through participation in NCLR and in the political process through its various civic engagement projects. NCLR also works to strengthen emerging community-based organizations in areas where there is a growing Latino population.

Now in its 44th year, NCLR is busy building communities as an industry leader in homeownership counseling, operating programs in 40 sites throughout the country. Its Charter School Development Initiative has helped create more than 40 new schools and strengthen more than 45 others, and its Institute for Hispanic Health develops and implements health education and prevention programs and conducts health advocacy activities in partnership with its network of affiliates.

NCLR's education component is dedicated to increasing educational opportunities, improving achievement, supporting college-readiness, and promoting equity in outcomes for Latinos. The efforts of the education team build the capacity and strengthen the quality of the community-based education sector and inform the broader public education system.

NCLR's economic and workforce advocacy seeks to ensure the Latino community's ability to contribute to and share in the nation's economic opportunities by promoting policies that boost Hispanic employment in good jobs, provide safe and fair workplaces, bridge Latino workers' education and skills gaps, and offer a secure retirement.

With the Raza Development Fund, NCLR's community development lending arm is one of the nation's largest and most successful community development banks. It has approved more than 117 loans totaling \$54.6 million, leveraging more than \$267 million in financing to community-based housing projects, schools, health clinics, and day care centers.

More recently, in efforts to provide NCLR's affiliates with more direct access to elected officials in Washington, DC, earlier this year NCLR held its first annual NCLR National Advocacy Day. The event convened affiliate members from 22 states who were briefed on the most important issues facing Latinos at the national level, including education, economic mobility, health, and immigration, and who met with Members of Congress to educate them about the needs of the community.

As the Representative for Nevada's First Congressional District, it gives me immense pride to recognize the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) and the role they play in educating and training our community members, developing community leaders and fighting for equal rights and fair representation throughout the United States. I am especially pleased to welcome NCLR's members and the tens of thousands of attendees for its 2012 annual conference to Las Vegas, Nevada. I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the great work of NCLR and wish them a most successful 2012 conference.

INTRODUCTION OF THE TAXPAYER BILL OF RIGHTS ACT OF 2012

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2012

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I have introduced the Taxpayer Bill of Rights every Congress since 2008, and today I am proud to introduce the Taxpayer Bill of Rights Act of 2012, legislation that contains important provisions to improve services for and protect the rights of American taxpayers, particularly those with modest incomes. Senator Bingaman of New Mexico, a dedicated advocate for taxpayer rights, is introducing companion legislation in the Senate. Many of these provisions are based on proposals from the National Taxpayer Advocate, Nina Olson, who has long been a champion of improving taxpayer services and tax administration at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

As former Nixon Treasury Secretary William Simon said, "The nation should have a tax system that looks like someone designed it on purpose." As we look for ways to restructure the tax code to make it fairer and more transparent for all taxpayers, it is critical that ideas to help improve IRS service and accessibility are included in this conversation. Every year, millions of taxpayers file their returns with the IRS and inevitably issues of tax administration come to the forefront. These issues range from taxpayers not knowing their legal rights when interacting with the IRS, to taxpayers enlisting unscrupulous or poorly-trained preparers to help them complete one of their most important financial transactions of the year. This legislation aims to help prevent taxpayers from finding themselves in these avoidable situations, and to build on and improve taxpayer services provided through the IRS.

The centerpiece of this Act is the requirement that Treasury publish a Taxpayer Bill of Rights. The Taxpayer Bill of Rights will be a simple and straightforward statement that enumerates all taxpayers' rights and obligations, as well as reference their location in the tax code. As the National Taxpayer Advocate explained in her 2011 Report to Congress: "In a time when the IRS will feel pressure to bring in additional tax revenue, it is crucial to provide taxpayers with strong protection for their rights." Currently, these rights and obligations are scattered throughout the tax code and Internal Revenue Manual, making them neither accessible nor written in plain language that most taxpayers can understand.

This Act also helps improve the quality and accessibility of tax preparation services and advice available to taxpayers in several different ways. First, it builds on the IRS's initiative to regulate unenrolled tax preparers through examination and continuing education requirements, for which I have been a long time advocate. Implementation of the IRS tax return preparer framework is well underway, and this legislation will simply codify the existing authority of the IRS to regulate tax return preparers. The Act also helps ensure moderate income taxpayers have access to qualified tax assistance by supporting a grant program for free income tax assistance services, and by allowing IRS referrals to Low-Income Taxpayer Clinics, which provide representation to modest income taxpayers in their disputes

with the IRS. The Act also provides for oversight over facilitators of high cost tax refund anticipation loans and other tax refund delivery products, and significantly increases penalties on preparers of fraudulent tax returns.

Finally, this bill includes several provisions that would improve IRS taxpayer services. One important provision provides greater protections for taxpayers when they are faced with a Notice of a Federal Tax Lien filing (NFTL). Filing of an NFTL can result in significant, long-term hardship to a taxpayer, and may adversely affect the taxpayer's credit, thus impairing his or her ability to conduct financial transactions or secure employment. The Taxpayer Bill of Rights Act requires the IRS to make individualized determinations before the filing of an NFTL, and also requires consideration of hardship factors and a taxpayer's history of compliance before these determinations are made.

Many of the problems identified in this bill have gone unaddressed for too long, causing confusion and undue hardship for taxpayers across the country. I encourage all of my colleagues to support these common sense provisions to promote taxpayer rights and services for all Americans.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2012

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$15,778,950,543,472.67. We've added \$5,152,073,494,559.59 to our debt in just over 3 years. This is debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

On this day in 1919, the Treaty of Versailles was signed in Paris, ending World War I. Without a balanced budget, the United States will no longer be able to bring peace to warring nations.

125TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNITED WAY

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2012

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 125th Anniversary of United Way.

Founded in 1887, United Way has become a celebrated organization committed to improving communities throughout the United States and around the world. Through locally targeted initiatives, United Way strives to advance the common good, helping communities reach their full potential in the spirit of volunteerism and service. United Way mobilizes thousands of individuals and organizations worldwide to improve education, help people achieve financial stability and promote healthy lifestyles in their communities, building the foundation for a stronger, healthier society.