

acknowledge her receipt of the Walks of Life Award from the Irish American Archive Society. Sister Kathleen has dedicated her life to the homeless and to students of the Greater Cleveland area.

Sister Kathleen attended high school in Cleveland's West Park neighborhood at St. Joseph Academy. She later earned a bachelor's degree in education from St. John College and a master's degree from Cleveland State University.

In 1952, Sister Kathleen entered the nunnery at St. Clement in Lakewood. Early on, she devoted most of her time as a grade school teacher at Annunciation, St. Angela Merici, St. Aloysius, St. Mary and St. Colman schools. In 1977, the West Side Catholic Center was established to assist the elderly and homeless; Sister Kathleen was named the director. Twenty years later, in 1997, Sister Kathleen established Seeds of Literacy, an organization dedicated to helping high school drop-outs earn their diplomas.

Because of her relentless work to support those in need, in 2000, the West Side Catholic Center honored Sister Kathleen with the Dorothy Day Humanitarian Award.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in congratulating Sister Kathleen Kilbane as she is honored by the Irish American Archive Society.

**CONGRATULATING THE WAIALUA HIGH SCHOOL ROBOTICS TEAM, THE "HAWAIIAN KIDS," ON WINNING THE 2011 FIRST CHAIRMAN'S AWARD**

**HON. MAZIE K. HIRONO**

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 2012*

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Waialua High School Robotics Team, the "Hawaiian Kids," on winning the prestigious Chairman's Award at the 2011 FIRST Robotics World Championships and to recognize its impressive contributions to the founding and expansion of robotics in Hawaii. The FIRST Chairman's Award recognizes a program's contributions to robotics, service to other robotics programs, and overall excellence. Waialua High School was one of 48 teams nationwide competing for the prize.

The judges of the 2011 FIRST Championship described the winning team as "helping transform the region from an area of agricultural industry decline to one where the accomplishments of these students are celebrated as an indicator of promise for the future." All of the team members of the "Hawaiian Kids" graduate from high school, compared to the region's average of a less than 30 percent graduation rate, and all of the school's valedictorians in the past four years have been members of the robotics team. The team has shown great promise as science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) leaders and innovators with 90 percent of the members pursuing careers in STEM fields.

Founded in 1999 by Glenn Lee, a Career and Technical Education teacher and electrical engineer, the Waialua High School Robotics Program has become a model for engaging students in STEM and college-readiness courses. The "Hawaiian Kids" were the first

FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) team in Hawaii and initiated the development of other teams statewide. Its accomplishments have been shared with local government representatives, their community, and schools throughout our State. Today, close to one-third of Hawaii's high schools have an FRC team, the highest percentage of involvement in the Nation.

While the "Hawaiian Kids" have experienced great success over the past few years, they continue to embrace their program's motto: "It's not all about winning, it's about teamwork, commitment and responsibility." Congratulations to the members of the Waialua High School Robotics Team for all their accomplishments, their dedication sharing robotics and STEM education with their peers, and continuing to raise Hawaii's academic standards.

Mahalo nui loa (thank you very much).

**RECOGNIZING THE CARSON WOMEN'S CLUB AND EDWARD TILLMON, A TUSKEGEE FIGHTER PILOT**

**HON. LAURA RICHARDSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 2012*

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the Carson Women's Club, based in my congressional district, for the wonderful work it has accomplished over the years and their unwavering commitment to our local community.

The Carson Women's Club was founded in 1968 as a non-profit, non-political organization with a mission to serve as the official hostess of the City of Carson by supporting and promoting scholarships, and by engaging in community service activities focused on making Carson stronger.

The Carson Women's Club plays an active part in local charity work. For example, each year on the 4th of July, Club members bring food to the on-duty firefighters at all stations in Carson. The Club also sends Thanksgiving baskets to 15 adopted Carson elementary schools and organizes a Christmas toy drive for the children at the El Nido Center.

Mr. Speaker, the Carson Women's Club is a shining example of civic commitment, mutual trust, respect, and equal treatment without regard to race, sex, or ethnicity. The Club promotes mutual cooperation between individuals of different backgrounds through its diverse membership and informative community engagement events.

This past weekend, I had the opportunity to attend a Carson Women's Club event in my district honoring members of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. The Tuskegee Airmen were the first black military airmen in the United States. This heroic group of 13,000 young African American men overcame institutionalized racism to become one of the most distinguished fighter units in World War II.

At the meeting, we were fortunate enough to be graced with the presence of Mr. Edward Tillmon, a surviving Tuskegee Airman who reminded us of the remarkable accomplishments of the Tuskegee Airmen—both in and out of combat.

Through his experience growing up in a segregated America, Mr. Tillmon learned that hard work and perseverance are the key to overcoming obstacles that seem impenetrable. Mr. Tillmon expressed his appreciation for the challenges and opportunities that accompanied his time at war, and his firm beliefs that the successes of the Tuskegee Airmen would not have been possible if it were not for the strong sense of camaraderie between the members. They were truly a band of brothers.

Edward Tillmon continues to serve his nation by preserving the Tuskegee Airmen legacy through his association with the Los Angeles based "Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Foundation", which was established in 1979 to provide annual scholarships to exceptional young students in their quest for academic excellence.

Mr. Speaker, Edward Tillmon served his nation with pride, even at a time when African Americans were treated like second-class citizens. The legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen is one of courage and heroism in the face of adversity and their story has provided many with the inspiration necessary to achieve their goals.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize the contributions of the Carson Women's Club and Edward Tillmon and to thank them for their service to our community and our nation.

**INTRODUCTION OF WORKING FAMILIES FLEXIBILITY ACT**

**HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 2012*

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, as a result of demographic shifts over the last 50 years, the modern workforce has a different, more diverse set of needs. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 70 percent of children are raised in families that are headed by either a working single parent or two working parents. The number of married households with children where both parents were in the labor force rose to 66 percent in 2010, while the number of single parent families has almost tripled over the last fifty years, from 5 percent in 1960, to 14 percent in 2010. Furthermore, more households are caring for older relatives as medical advances mean people are living longer, with studies showing that almost 60 percent of those who provide unpaid care to an adult or to a child with special needs are employed.

Flexible work arrangements are the key to meeting these diverse workforce needs. Such voluntary arrangements between employees and employers include changing the time, amount, and/or place that work is conducted in order to allow workers to more easily meet the needs of both work and family life. To give employees the right to request flexible work options in terms of hours, schedules, and work location, today I am introducing the Working Families Flexibility Act. This legislation also provides employers with flexibility by encouraging them to review these requests, propose changes, and even deny them if they are not in the best interest of the business.

Having flexible workplace policies has been shown to boost employee satisfaction and morale as well as improve business bottom line.

These policies help businesses retain key talent, reduce absenteeism, and enhance employee productivity. President Obama's Council on Economic Advisors found that as more firms adopt flexibility practices the benefits to society, in the form of reduced traffic, improved employment outcomes, and more efficient allocation of workers to employers, may be greater than the gains to individual firms and workers. In addition, a 2011 U.S. Government Accountability Office report found that a flexible work environment can increase and enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Flexibility is clearly a win-win for employees and employers. I offer special thanks to Senator BOB CASEY for introducing Senate companion legislation, and to my colleagues Representatives JOHN LEWIS, GEORGE MILLER, and JOSÉ SERRANO for their cosponsorship.

HONORING MR. ROELOF VAN ARK

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 2012*

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Mr. Roelof van Ark, who will soon end his term as the chief executive of the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CAHSRA). There is no textbook on how to build high-speed rail in America; it has never been done before. For the past two years Mr. van Ark has written the first chapters of that book by dedicating himself wholly to building the nation's first true high-speed rail system in California. He deserves our recognition and true appreciation for all the work he has done for California and our nation.

For three decades, Mr. van Ark has worked on high-speed rail and other transportation systems throughout the world. Before becoming only the second chief executive since the Authority was formed in 1996, he led ALSTOM Transportation, Inc., for five years. Mr. van Ark previously worked in Germany and South Africa for Siemens Transportation Systems, a global leader in high-speed rail systems. During his more than 20 year tenure with Siemens, he successfully constructed complex infrastructure projects such as the "Skytrain" in Bangkok, several subways throughout China, and high-speed rail lines in Germany. He ended his time with Siemens while working in Sacramento as President and Chief Executive Officer of the company.

His lifetime of experience enabled him to bring such tremendous expertise and leadership to the implementation of California's high-speed rail project.

I applaud Roelof van Ark for his years of tireless work on behalf of the California High-Speed Rail Authority and the state of California. Mr. van Ark has truly laid the groundwork for the nation's first high-speed rail system, and I hope he will join me in riding the first train that departs from San Francisco en route to Los Angeles via the San Joaquin Valley. All Californians will be better off due to the service and sacrifice of this great leader.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great appreciation that I ask my colleagues to stand with me in thanking Roelof for his work in advancing modern modes of transportation within the United States and around the world. Please

join me today in recognizing the commitment, dedication and success of Mr. Roelof van Ark and wish him well as he embarks on new endeavors.

IN RECOGNITION OF JANICE G. MURPHY

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 2012*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Janice G. Murphy and to acknowledge her receipt of the Walks of Life Award from the Irish American Archive Society. A Cleveland native, Mrs. Murphy has dedicated her life to improving the health of others.

Mrs. Murphy began her career in the health care industry while serving as a nun with the Sisters of Notre Dame. She left the convent upon discovery of her true calling in life and began classes at Fairview Hospital's School of Nursing. She later earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from Bowling Green State University and a master's degree from the University of Akron.

Mrs. Murphy worked as a nurse at Fairview Hospital in oncology and later coronary care. She was named chief nursing officer and in 2007, became the hospital's chief operating officer. While leading Fairview Hospital, Mrs. Murphy was also the president of Lakewood Hospital, a role in which she served for nearly three years. Today she remains the president of Fairview Hospital.

In addition to running two of Cleveland's premier hospitals, Mrs. Murphy serves on the boards of the Ursuline Community Advisory Board, North Coast Health Ministry, St. Joseph Academy and Hospice of Western Reserve. She has also been awarded the Cleveland Clinic Western Region Leadership Award and Baldwin Wallace Healthcare Award.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in congratulating Janice G. Murphy as she is honored by the Irish American Archive Society.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF U.S.-AZERBAIJAN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

**HON. GENE GREEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 2012*

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my Colleagues to join me in recognizing the 20th year of diplomatic relations with our friend and key ally, Azerbaijan.

On February 19, 1992, the United States and Azerbaijan initiated formal diplomatic relations and on March 6 of that year Azerbaijan opened their embassy in the United States. The United States opened our embassy in Baku, Azerbaijan on March 16.

After the fall of the former Soviet Union and the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, we have seen a growing need for strong allies in the region. Azerbaijan, a predominantly secular Muslim country bordered by Russia to the north and Iran to the south,

is a natural partner to promote peace, stability, and economic prosperity in this important part of the world.

Azerbaijan was among the first to join us in the War Against Terror, sending troops to Afghanistan that served alongside our servicemen and women, and later in Iraq. Today, Azerbaijan offers a crucial route to transport supplies to our troops in Afghanistan.

Azerbaijan is also a key contributor in promoting energy security internationally. The opening of the BTC pipeline in 2005 allowed Caspian oil to reach the world market via Georgia and Turkey, bypassing Russia.

With the recent arrival of Ambassador Elin Suleymanov to Washington, DC, I look forward to working with the Embassy to further strengthen this important relationship.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

**HON. MIKE COFFMAN**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 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 \$15,442,120,983,663.88. We've added \$4,815,243,934,720.08 to our debt in 3 years. This is debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. MIKE CLEARY

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 2012*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Mr. Mike Cleary and to acknowledge his receipt of the Walks of Life Award from the Irish American Archive Society.

Mr. Cleary was raised in East Cleveland by his parents, both of whom were immigrants from Ireland. He graduated from St. Ignatius High School before attending John Carroll University. Mike also served for the U.S. Navy for two years aboard the USS *Lake Champlain*, an aircraft carrier.

Prior to his retirement in 2011, Mr. Cleary worked in the collegiate and professional sports arena for 46 years. Early on in his career, he worked as a general manager for the Cleveland Pipers and Kansas City Steers. He later entered intercollegiate athletics and worked as the director of championship events for the National Collegiate Athletic Association. In 1965, he was hired as the executive director for the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics.

Mr. Cleary was also the fund administrator for the John McLendon Minority Scholarship Foundation and served on the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority and U.S. Olympic Committee. He is highly regarded in the athletic world and has been recognized by the National Football Federation, College Hall of Fame, and in 2009, he was inducted into the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics.