

be established, and they should now be removed. Those of us who believe strongly in Israel's right to a continued existence as a secure, democratic, independent state have a particular responsibility to point out that those who create and defend these settlements may undermine the chances of achieving such a result.

There are strong public policy reasons for objecting to these unauthorized, illegal settlements, as we learned when the Obama administration was so successful in blocking a U.N. vote to recognize Palestinian statehood. The defeat of that effort, led by the Obama administration's aggressive diplomacy, was a far better result for Israel in the U.N. than we have seen in many years. And it is clear that it was because President Obama has expressed his disagreement with the existence of many of these settlements that he had the credibility to achieve that diplomatic victory.

But the Supreme Court of Israel is not motivated by these political considerations. Rather it is committed to the rule of law—a strong distinction between Israel and most of its neighbors. Given the pressures that are brought to bear against the Judiciary in the name of security, a phenomenon we have seen in our own country at various times, the decision by the Israeli Supreme Court to order the dismantlement of an illegal settlement deserves praise and it is important that the Netanyahu administration carry out this court order. It would be a gift to critics of Israel if there were to be any faltering in the Israeli Government's standing behind this decision of its Supreme Court.

Mr. Speaker, the New York Times, in an editorial on March 28, noted this, and because the example of a Supreme Court, in a nation that is engaged in a serious effort to protect itself against external enemies, is standing up for the rule of law in the face of pressures to the contrary is so important, I ask that the editorial from the New York Times, entitled "Israel's Top Court vs. Outposts" be printed here.

[From the New York Times, Mar. 25, 2012]

ISRAEL'S TOP COURT ORDERS SETTLERS TO LEAVE OUTPOST  
(By Ethan Bronner)

JERUSALEM.—Israel's Supreme Court on Sunday ordered a West Bank settlers' outpost built on private Palestinian land to be dismantled by Aug. 1, rejecting a government compromise with the settlers that would have allowed them to stay put for another three years.

The decision was much anticipated, because the panel of three judges who decided the case included the court's conservative new chief justice, Asher Grunis, and because the case involved the politically explosive issue of moving settlers in the face of potentially violent resistance.

Whether the government will remove the 50 families living in the outpost before the deadline will also be closely monitored.

In their ruling, the judges chided the government for having failed to evacuate the outpost in accordance with an earlier high court decision.

"This is a necessary component of the rule of law to which all are subject as part of Israel's values as a Jewish and democratic state," the decision said.

The case concerns Migron, a settler outpost near the West Bank city of Ramallah. Migron is one of the largest of dozens of small enclaves that have a different status under Israeli law than the 120 full-blown settlements in the West Bank.

Although the larger settlements, home to about 330,000 Israeli Jews, are considered in violation of international law by a vast majority of foreign governments, Israel views them as legitimate; not so for the smaller outposts, which Israel views as illegal because they went up without its authorization. Despite that status, most of the outposts have been provided with basic infrastructure by the government.

Nearly a decade ago, Israel promised the United States that it would dismantle a number of the outposts in preparation for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Palestinians want to build a state on land that is now partly occupied by the settlers. But almost no outposts have actually come down, and Israeli-Palestinian negotiations are frozen.

Meanwhile, Migron stands out among the outposts because its land is not simply part of a theoretical future state of Palestine but also because it has been shown to belong to private Palestinian owners. The state did not dispute that finding, although the settlers say that no proof of ownership was provided.

Palestinians represented by an Israeli lawyer took the case to the Supreme Court, along with Peace Now, a left-wing Israeli group that opposes the settlements. The case dragged on for years, but last summer the court said the outpost had to be dismantled by the end of March 2012, a deadline the new ruling extends to Aug. 1.

The government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, which is a strong defender of the settlers and wanted to avoid a confrontation, suggested a compromise—let the residents of Migron remain until a new authorized community could be built nearby where they could relocate upon its completion in 2015.

The plaintiffs returned to the court last week and told the court that to accept such a deal would be to flout the rule of law.

One of the three justices who heard last week's arguments, Salim Joubran, indicated the court's leanings at the time: "You say the outpost will move in three years, but I know this type of behavior. Three years will inevitably turn into eight."

Right-wing legislators said Sunday that they would introduce legislation to legalize Migron and other outposts. Dani Dayan, a leader of Israel's settler movement, said that the court's ruling would empower the violent extremists in his community who have long argued that there was no point in seeking compromise.

Tzaly Reshef, a founder of Peace Now and a lawyer, said the decision would not change the fact that "supporters of the settlements remain in power." But he called it "very meaningful in terms of the constitutional system in Israel."

Mr. Reshef said that had the case been decided the other way, "it would have been almost the end of the existence of the courts as the protectors of the rule of law in this country, as well as the ultimate victory of the settlers."

He continued, "The government, threatened with violence if it tries to remove settlers, tried to convince the court that it should pull back from its decision, which is based on the basic right of ownership of private property."

The next test, Mr. Reshef said, would be whether the government is "able to change facts on the ground."

Mr. Netanyahu said the government would honor the court's decision and uphold the rule of law.

A TRIBUTE TO JOANNA VARGAS,  
29TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
WOMAN OF THE YEAR—2012

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 28, 2012

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Women's History Month. Each year during the month of March, we pay special tribute to the accomplishments made by our nation's most distinguished women.

Today, I pay tribute to Joanna Vargas of Alhambra, California, an accomplished woman who has brought multi-generations together and joy to the lives of many, through her extraordinary vision for the arts. Born and raised in Alhambra, Joanna is a graduate of Alhambra High School and opened her first dance studio at the age of 26.

Joanna's passion for the arts has been evident throughout her career. She is the creator of an astounding number of projects and has an exhaustive list of accomplishments. Joanna has launched various dance companies for adults and teens, created Alhambra's Monthly Mosaic Art Walk, Jayvee Dance Center, the Annual Maxt Out Dance Competition, "Streetease Fitness and Dance" classes and instructional DVDs, and the Alhambra Hot Spot, which is home to an annual art event that celebrates music, dance, art and fashion. She is also the Chief Executive Officer of Dance for Peace Charity, a non-profit she established two years ago.

In addition to her projects, it is noteworthy to mention Ms. Vargas's unparalleled service to the community. Joanna is a Board Member of the Alhambra Chamber of Commerce, a member of the San Gabriel Chamber of Commerce, charter member of the Rotary International New Generation Club, and President of the City of Alhambra Downtown Business Association.

Joanna is a charitable woman who gives back to her community through her invaluable service. She has awarded scholarships to deserving underserved teens and children, and to people who have the desire to further their dance training.

I ask all Members to join me in honoring a remarkable woman of California's 29th Congressional District, Joanna Vargas, for her exceptional service to the community.

HONORING LIEUTENANT COLONEL  
JOHN L. COOMBS

HON. STEVE CHABOT

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 28, 2012

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor and acknowledge Lieutenant Colonel John L. Coombs who has served this great Nation in the U.S. Army since 1989, most recently as the Acting Director of Operational Contracting Support and Policy with the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Procurement.

John L. Coombs enlisted as a Private and began his Army career as a Light Infantryman with the 7th Infantry Division in Fort Ord, California. He was soon recommended for and

graduated from the Officer Candidate School where, in 1992, he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Chemical Corps. As a Chemical Officer, he served as a Battalion and Brigade Chemical Officer in artillery, cavalry, and aviation battalions and brigades for the 1st Armored Division in Germany and the 1st Cavalry Division in Texas. In 1995, he deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina as the nuclear, biological and chemical reconnaissance platoon leader. There he developed tactics, techniques, and procedures to detect environmental hazards at industrial sites occupied by U.S. forces, leveraging the capabilities of the mobile mass spectrometers installed in the nuclear, biological and chemical reconnaissance vehicles.

In 2001, Captain Coombs was accessed into the Acquisition Corps, attended the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California and in 2002 graduated with a Master of Science in Business with an emphasis on federal contracting. From 2002 to 2005, as the Contracting Division Chief in the Wiesbaden Contracting Center for the U.S. Army Contracting Command, Europe, Captain Coombs supervised more than 30 contracting officers who awarded and administered more than \$400 million in annual contract awards. He deployed to Kosovo for six months as the Chief of a Joint Contracting Center, where he led a joint military staff, U.S. civilians and Kosovar nationals to procure \$5 million in annual contract awards. While in Kosovo, his work helped to improve multi-national relations when he negotiated a complex settlement for damages to a hotel occupied by NATO forces. The following two years, Major Coombs served as the Deputy Chief of Office in the Italy Regional Contracting Office for U.S. Army Contracting Command, Europe. He oversaw high visibility procurements including letter contracts to lease properties supporting the 2006 Winter Olympics security operations in Torino. He was named the Army Europe Contracting Officer of the year in 2005. An Army fellowship at the RAND Arroyo Center in Santa Monica, California brought this Hamilton, Ohio native back to the U.S. There he developed RAND's recommended acquisition strategy for Future Combat Systems to balance cost control for the Army and risk to the contractor. Since 2008, Lieutenant Colonel Coombs has been assigned to Army Headquarters at the Pentagon. He has served as the Executive Officer, Deputy Director and several senior positions in the office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Procurement. His expert knowledge of operational contracting policy for military operations, natural disasters and humanitarian relief has been invaluable.

Mr. Speaker, for more than two decades, Lieutenant Colonel John L. Coombs has faithfully served our Nation as a dedicated steward for American taxpayers. As he enters this next phase of his life with his beloved wife Kellie and their four children; Lyndsay, Adam, Emily and Jesse; I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Lieutenant Colonel John Coombs upon his retirement and thank him for his service in the U.S. Army.

## CONGRATULATING THE LOUISVILLE BALLET ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY

### HON. JOHN A. YARMUTH

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 28, 2012*

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, today I have the distinct privilege of recognizing and celebrating the Louisville Ballet on its 60th anniversary. As Kentucky's official ballet company, the Louisville Ballet has long been a source of pride and distinction for the people of our community and the Commonwealth.

Since its formation in 1952, the Louisville Ballet has transformed from a small, understaffed-yet-dedicated company, to one of the Southeast's premier artistic institutions—employing a world-class company of dancers and an equally talented staff of professionals that make each performance come to life.

Today, the company has a repertoire of more than 150 works, has been the recipient of numerous accolades, and maintains the distinction of being the only regional company to perform with the great Mikhail Baryshnikov. It also contributes to the artistic and cultural core of Louisville, which is one of only 11 U.S. cities with all five major arts institutions.

Under the leadership and vision of Artistic Director Bruce Simpson, the past 10 years have been among the Ballet's strongest, with the company commissioning 13 world premieres. Each performance offers the precision and grace witnessed among ballet's elite.

On behalf of the 3rd Congressional District, I wish the Louisville Ballet Company future success and look forward to another 60 years of excellence and awe-inspiring performances.

## CELEBRATING THE 191ST ANNIVERSARY OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE

### HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 28, 2012*

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in commemorating the 191st anniversary of Greek independence. It is an honor to recognize a nation whose rich and vibrant history not only laid the foundation for democracy, but whose immigrants and descendants have enriched the cultural landscape of our Nation.

The warm friendship that America shares with Greece is rooted in the indelible mark of democracy and self-determination that Hellenic culture has left on our country. We note that the ancient Greeks developed the concept of democracy, in which the supreme power to govern was vested in the people. Our Founding Fathers of the United States, many of whom read Greek political philosophy in the original Greek, drew heavily on the political experience and philosophy of ancient Greece in forming our representative democracy.

And just as our founding fathers were guided by these principles in their fight for independence from the British Crown, so too were the founders of modern-day Greece, who declared their independence from the Ottoman Empire on March 25th, 191 years ago.

Since the birth of both Nations, we have shared the desire to uphold the values of freedom, equality, and justice championed by the Ancient Greeks. We have joined together to promote peace and stability in the world. Indeed, Greece is our ally and our partner, having supported the United States in every major international conflict throughout the 20th century. Though rooted in ancient ideals, our strong allegiance continues today through a shared belief that freedom and democracy are the building blocks of peace.

At home, we recognize the contributions of Greeks in the areas in culture, literature and architecture.

I trust that the bonds between our two Nations will remain strong for years to come.

I ask my colleagues to join me in extending warm congratulations and best wishes to the people of Greece as they celebrate the 191st anniversary of their independence.

## HONORING CESAR ESTRADA CHAVEZ

### HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 28, 2012*

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the legacy of an American icon, Cesar Estrada Chavez, leader of the United Farm Workers, born on March 31, 1927. This Saturday, we celebrate the 85th anniversary of his birth.

Cesar Chavez was born in Yuma, Arizona, to a life filled with early hardships, poverty and racial and social injustice. These experiences were his first lessons in what our nation should not be for millions of Americans.

As a result of his family's losses during the Great Depression, Cesar Chavez's family, like so many others, migrated to California to work in the farm fields picking crops in hopes of economic stability. They eventually settled in San Jose where they lived in a barrio called Sal Si Puedes, "Get Out If You Can."

Cesar Chavez often recalled the early injustices he experienced in school, and later as a farmworker. He vividly remembered throughout his life the prohibition of Spanish in school and being punished for speaking it. . . or even the signs in his community that said "Whites Only."

His experience was universal for many in that era, whether they were Latino, African-American, Asian American or others facing discrimination. My own father encountered signs that read "No dogs and Mexicans Allowed" during this time.

It was on account of this type of blatant discrimination and racism that Cesar Chavez devoted his life to fighting for social and economic justice in our nation. Events around our nation remind us that the need for such a champion is still present today.

In 1962, alongside Dolores Huerta, Cesar Chavez founded the National Farm Workers Association, later to become the United Farm Workers, an organization that came to be known as the driving force of the organized labor movement for farmworkers in the U.S.

This movement, or "La Causa" as it was known in millions of homes including mine, taught us that solidarity, even in the face of brutal adversity can lead to victory. The "No