

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

Grapes" campaign and boycott led by Cesar Chavez and UFW was an omnipresent part of my youth and of many of my colleagues serving here today.

We knew what it meant to not buy grapes and not eat them, to feel proud of being part of something bigger than ourselves, even if it meant going without something we loved, or answering curious questions from friends or classmates. And for me, when victory came, it was sweet—literally and figuratively—and my small sacrifice seemed like the most powerful thing in the world.

On the 85th anniversary of Cesar Chavez's birth, we are reminded that his personal story is one of transformation and legacy. He transformed his early experiences from *Sal Si Puedes* into "*Si Se Puede*", "Yes, we can."

Those words still ring true today, and serve as a mantra of hope for millions of Americans who seek fairness and equal treatment. Just ask the President of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, today we reflect on Cesar Chavez's lifetime of advocacy in the pursuit of social justice. Let us hope our legacy will be as enduring as that of our beloved leader and brother Cesar Chavez.

A TRIBUTE TO DENISE HOULEMARD JONES, 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. Every 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 Denise Houlemard Jones of Pasadena, California. A brilliant businesswoman with many years of experience, Denise is a Management Consultant at DMJ Consulting Services, a business she started, where she provides advisory services to companies, colleges, agencies and individuals. She received a B.A. in Sociology and Economics from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a MBA from the University of Southern California.

It is noteworthy to mention Denise's unparalleled volunteer service to the community, which includes an impressive list of accomplishments. She has been a member of the Los Angeles Chapter National Black MBA Association, National Association of Female Executives, Pasadena Talks, Points of View Committee, Women At Work Young African American Women's Conference, Black Women's Forum, City of Pasadena Intergroup Relations Advisory Committee, and the City's Recreation Commission, among others. Ms. Jones has also been involved with the Community Health Alliance of Pasadena, CHAP, serving as a founding member, acting as President several times, and currently serving on the Marketing Committee. Presently, Denise is a member of the National Council of Negro Women, Saint Andrew Catholic Church, YWCA Pasadena—Foothill Valley, American Association of University Women, City of Pasadena Northwest Commission, and the Pasadena Delta Foundation, Inc., where she is a founding member.

Along with being a successful career woman, Ms. Jones has devoted countless hours of her time volunteering for the Alkebulan Cultural Center, American Institute for Cancer Research, Foothill Unity Center Food Pantry, and the Latino History Parade and Jamaica. She is also an annual fiesta volunteer at Saint Andrew Catholic Church.

Some of the honors Ms. Jones has received include the National Merit Award, the William L. Blair Award for Service and Leadership, the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Leadership Award, the YWCA Women of Excellence Award, and the Women In Action's "Wind Beneath Wings" Award.

I ask all Members to join me in honoring a remarkable woman of California's 29th Congressional District, Denise Houlemard Jones, for her outstanding service to the community.

THE HOMEOWNERS TAX FAIRNESS ACT

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 28, 2012

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Homeowners Tax Fairness Act. In February of this year, the 49 state attorneys general announced that they had completed negotiations with the country's five largest mortgage servicers to settle claims arising from mortgage fraud and wrongful foreclosures. The settlement, which amounts to over \$25 billion is the largest settlement this country has seen since the 1998 Master Tobacco Settlement.

This historic settlement will allow hundreds of thousands of distressed homeowners to stay in their homes through enhanced loan modifications and principal reduction, and it will also provide payments to victims of unfair foreclosure practices. Unfortunately, under current law, those settlement payments would subject the homeowners and servicemembers who receive them to additional tax burdens. For instance, homeowners receiving relief in the form of mortgage debt forgiveness and direct cash payments for wrongful foreclosure could be subject to federal income tax. Moreover, additional tax would be owed on the payments made to servicemembers who were wrongfully foreclosed on while deployed overseas.

To prevent that injustice, the Homeowners Tax Fairness Act would extend the exclusion for debt forgiveness on a primary residence throughout the term of the settlement agreement, and exclude the relief payments from income for homeowners and servicemembers. This bill also considers the particularly egregious actions taken by the five largest banks in violation of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. Over the past three years, the five largest servicers violated the law and wrongfully foreclosed or overcharged mortgage interest on servicemembers, many of whom were deployed overseas in combat zones. Accordingly, the Homeowners Tax Fairness Act not only excludes this relief from income to servicemembers, but denies these banks the ability to deduct these payments from their federal income taxes.

The estimated 1.7 million homeowners eligible to benefit from this settlement deserve to

receive the full benefit of this relief—relief that was negotiated in good faith by the states, the banks, and the federal government. Collecting federal income tax on relief for struggling homeowners is not only bad policy, but is simply the wrong thing to do.

As we move forward from one of the worst recessions in American history, we must be vigilant and provide as much help to the American people as possible. This bill will do just that, and will ensure that our homeowners and servicemembers get every bit of relief they deserve.

HONORING ANN KAPLAN'S SERVICE AS A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS BOARD OF GOVERNORS

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 28, 2012

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute an admirable public servant and a dear friend.

Ann Kaplan, a celebrated constituent from the great state of New York, has served selflessly and diligently as a member of the American Red Cross Board of Governors since 2003 and next week will complete her third and final term on the Board.

The American Red Cross depends upon experienced leadership that understands the significant operational challenges it faces in delivering a full range of services each and every day. From supporting the armed forces around the world to safely supplying nearly half the Nation's blood supply to directly helping the American public and businesses prepare for and respond to over 70,000 disaster annually, the American Red Cross Board of Governors plays an integral role in developing effective strategy for the organization.

During Ann Kaplan's service on the Board of Governors, the American Red Cross has gone through an unprecedented internal transformation including comprehensive governance reform resulting in bold changes that are a model of corporate governance, and internal restructuring in order to eliminate a significant operating deficit, streamline operations, and improve service delivery.

Ms. Kaplan has made significant contributions to the organization through her service on the Board including leading the Board-directed mandate to address the organization's operational and financial issues and to restructure the oversight of investments. Her service on the Board includes the following leadership positions: Vice Chair, Finance Committee (2005–2006); Chair, Finance Committee (2006–2008); Vice Chair, Compensation and Management Development Committee (2009–2012); Chair, Investment Committee (2010–2012); and Vice Chairman of the Board (2007–2012).

While Red Cross Board members normally serve two terms, Ms. Kaplan served a third term at the unanimous request of the Board during a critical period because of her passionate and able leadership and financial expertise.

Ms. Kaplan has been a generous supporter of the American Red Cross and has served the organization in various other capacities including Co-Chair of the Chairman's Council,