

HONORING CHELSEA TATLOW

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2012

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Rock Bridge High School Lady Bruins Swimming and Diving team member Chelsea Tatlow on her state victory in the 100-yard backstroke.

Ms. Tatlow played an integral part in the school's success at the state championship. Winning this event in her sophomore year is indeed a considerable feat, and I am sure that we will continue to see her name in swimming headlines. Ms. Tatlow and her coaches should be commended for all their hard work throughout the regular season and in the state championship.

I ask that you join me in recognizing Rock Bridge High School Lady Bruins' Chelsea Tatlow for a job well done.

**IN SUPPORT OF NATIONAL
AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH**
HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2012

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Coalition for Autism Research and Education, I rise today to recognize April as National Autism Awareness Month. Autism is the fastest growing developmental disability in America, with 1 to 1.5 million Americans living with it each day. Every April since the 1970s we celebrate National Autism Awareness Month, which provides an opportunity to educate the public on autism and the issues affecting those people afflicted with the disorder.

This disorder is universal, affecting children from all ethnic, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. The latest statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention state that 1 in 88 children born in the United States will develop autism.

Mr. Speaker, this increase is a clear call that more needs to be done in terms of research and education. Congress must call for more resources to be given to early screening and diagnosis programs. This can lead to improved educational and social outcomes and increases the chances of employment and independent living for those suffering from autism.

My own State of California has seen a huge increase in autism diagnoses. In 1990, 6 out of every 10,000 children born in the State were diagnosed with the disease by the age of five. Only 11 years later that number had risen to 42.5 in every 10,000 children. Since then the numbers have only risen.

Children diagnosed with this disorder will struggle with significant social, behavioral and communication challenges. For example, an activity as simple as going to the movies is impossible for many families with autistic children. However, autism is treatable. There is no permanent cure for the disorder, but studies show that early detection and intervention can lead to significantly improved outcomes.

Mr. Speaker, the occurrence of autism is on the rise in our nation. This is why it is more important than ever that we continue to fund programs like the National Database for Autism Research, whose overall goal is accelerating scientific discovery in autism spectrum disorder through data and research sharing among ASD investigators.

That is why it was so important that Congress passed H.R. 2005, the Combating Autism Reauthorization Act of 2011. I am proud to have been an original co-sponsor of this legislation, which authorizes more than \$200 million in continued funding for the Centers for Disease Control's surveillance and epidemiological research programs for autism and other developmental disabilities and for the National Institutes of Health's respect to research program on autism spectrum disorders and possible environmental causes of autism. The bill also authorizes a robust autism education, early detection, and intervention program at the Health Resources and Services Administration, HRSA.

Mr. Speaker, nowhere is autism's impact felt more than in underserved communities, where diagnosis is delayed on average two years. Given that early identification and intervention are paramount to the developing brain of children with autism, this two-year delay is especially devastating, as it denies thousands of vulnerable children the benefits of early diagnosis and intervention. This can mean the difference between a child who may someday live independently, and a child destined for a life of institutionalized care.

The alarming delay in diagnosis becomes even more detrimental when compounded by issues of poverty, such as a lack of housing, employment, and transportation. This is the reality faced by families in underserved communities who are affected by autism and other developmental disabilities.

That is why I also want to recognize, commend, and encourage organizations like the Special Needs Network, Inc., which serve the greater Los Angeles community for the great work and service they provide to families and individuals affected by the autism in underserved communities.

This month, let us recommit ourselves to raising awareness about autism. We have a responsibility to continue to broaden our efforts to research this disorder, and increase awareness about the importance of early detection.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognition of National Autism Awareness Month, and ask all Americans to take time this month to find out what you can do to help the growing population of those afflicted with, or affected by, autism.

**BANKRUPTCY EQUITY FOR
HOMEOWNERS ACT**
HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2012

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, on February 16, 2012, I spoke on the House floor about the intrinsic unfairness of certain bankruptcy laws. In my statement, I inappropriately characterized the actions of the Mortgage Bankers Association. The following is my amended statement:

This week, we watched the settlement unfold between the Department of Justice, the State attorneys general, and the major banks. Twenty-six billion dollars sounds like a lot of money, but given that almost one in four homeowners owe more on their mortgages than the values of their homes—overall losing some \$700 billion in value. This is a step in the right direction that will help some people but is not really a major correction. There are still far too few real pressures to get the market right.

There is a simple answer that won't cost the taxpayers a dime and which will stabilize the housing depression within a year. It would help reestablish home values and encourage banks to work with their customers whose mortgages are "under water".

The recent decision of American Airlines to pursue bankruptcy is illustrative. This corporate giant could actually pay its bills. It had some \$4 billion in cash and was still taking in revenue, but it made a strategic judgment to use the bankruptcy laws to reposition itself to win market rate loan terms, to modify its union contracts and the pension obligations to its employees because, under the law, a bankruptcy judge can adjust these business relationships to reflect current market conditions—for a business, that is. Curiously, homeowners are treated differently.

A business speculator could buy 10 units in a condominium in south Florida when the housing bubble bursts and could get bankruptcy relief on all 10 units—but not Sally Six-Pack, who bought an identical unit to live in.

What is it about homeowners that make them less worthy of relief of the fresh start of bankruptcy than the speculator or American Airlines? The answer is right here on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Congress has decided to look out for business, not the homeowner. The daisy chain of profit we saw collapsing under the weight of colossal greed and bad judgment was protected at the expense of the homeowner, who was trapped, with limited options to renegotiate, with no leverage, who simply faced foreclosure, a short sale, or what is described as jingle mail: send the keys back and walk away.

It's interesting that homeowners have been urged that it's their moral duty, their obligation to pay, even as the Mortgage Bankers Association, itself, reneged on the mortgage on its headquarters and cut a side deal with its financial partners to get out of its underwater mortgage. Not long before this happened, John Courson, the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Mortgage Bankers Association, was quoted in the press as asking defaulting homeowners, "What about the message they will send to their family and their kids and their friends?" What message did the Mortgage Bankers Association send? The answer is clearly that they have one set of rules, while American families have another. This blatant hypocrisy enrages ordinary families and runs counter to democratic values of fairness and equal opportunity. Homeowners are expected to do the right thing, even if we're seeing a cavalcade of financial misdeeds, shortcuts, and, in some cases, outright fraud.

I've been unable to find any good reason that homeowners should be discriminated against in bankruptcy. If it's good enough for business, it should be good enough for the homeowners.

There are lots of reasons to change that policy. First, it's simple equity, the same treatment. In addition, making bankruptcy relief available to homeowners will make the system respond to reasonable requests for renegotiations, which would be cheaper, faster, and easier than the foreclosure process for everybody. The simple act will stem the flood of foreclosures and uncertainty, which will help stabilize home values currently in free fall, and it will make it harder for another speculative bubble to be created. Knowing that homeowners will be treated the same as business in bankruptcy will make people think twice about aggregating vast numbers of dicey mortgages, simply taking a profit, and passing the package on to others.

I am introducing the Bankruptcy Equity Act to provide bankruptcy judges the power to align the homeowner's mortgage to its current value and terms and put ordinary homeowners on the same playing field as speculators and businesses. It makes sure private and federally insured mortgages are eligible for modification, allowing FHA, VA, and the Department of Agriculture to pay out claims on insured mortgages modified in bankruptcy.

For an immediate solution to the foreclosure crisis, allowing families to stay in their homes, to be treated equitably, and prevent the next bubble from forming, I strongly urge my colleagues to examine the Bankruptcy Equity for Homeowners Act and join me in treating homeowners as fairly as we treat speculators and investors.

RECOGNIZING PHILIP AMERIS AND
CAROL COULTAS FOR THEIR
OUTSTANDING WORK ON BEHALF
OF THE WORKING MEN AND
WOMEN OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

HON. MARK S. CRITZ

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2012

Mr. CRITZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize two dedicated champions of the American worker for receiving an award for outstanding labor leadership. Each year, the Allegheny County Labor Council confers its Labor's Man of the Year and Labor's Woman of the Year Awards on one male and one female who have worked passionately and effectively to advance the cause of organized labor in western Pennsylvania. This year's Labor's Man of the Year is Philip Ameris, President and Business Manager of the Laborers' District Council of Western Pennsylvania. Labor's Woman of the Year for 2012 is Carol Coultas, a longtime servant of western Pennsylvania's labor movement, who most recently served as Executive Vice President of Communication Workers of America (CWA) Local 13500. The enthusiasm with which these two individuals have worked to advance the material wellbeing and workplace safety of hardworking Americans over the years is a tribute to their integrity and selflessness.

In 1994, Philip Ameris was appointed a Field Representative for Laborers International Union of North America Local 1058. Since then, he has risen through the ranks on account of his outstanding managerial and organizational skills. In his current post, he over-

sees the Labor District Council of Western Pennsylvania's efforts to provide fair working conditions and wages to the hardworking men and women who build and maintain western Pennsylvania's physical infrastructure.

Mr. Ameris also holds leadership positions on several prominent labor boards. He serves as Chairman of the Western Pennsylvania Laborers' Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee, Chairman of the Western Pennsylvania Laborers' Education and Training Trust Fund, Chairman of the Laborers' Combined Funds of Western Pennsylvania Pension and Welfare Funds and Chairman of the Western Pennsylvania Laborers' Political Action Fund.

An 8th degree black belt, Mr. Ameris is the founder of several martial arts instruction programs for young children. He has served as a martial arts instructor to the children within his own programs for the last 30 years.

Mr. Ameris has been married to his wife Jeanne for the last 30 years. He and Jeanne have two sons—Philip, Jr. and Jimmy—who are both proud members of the Laborers' International Union of America.

Carol Coultas is a 30-year veteran of the Communications Workers of America. In addition to having served as Executive Vice President of CWA Local 13500, she has been the President of the CWA Local 13051 Retired Members Council and Executive Vice President Emeritus of the CWA Local 13500. Ms. Coultas has also served as a board member of the Pennsylvania Alliance for Retired Americans, a trustee and delegate to the Allegheny County Labor Council and a member of Jobs for Justice.

Ms. Coultas began her career as a Long Distance Telephone Operator for the Bell Telephone Company in 1944. She first became a member of CWA when she went to work in Bell's Special Accounts Business Office. From that moment on, she has worked with the utmost passion to protect the rights and the livelihoods of working families and seniors.

In addition to being a dedicated advocate for active and retired American workers, Ms. Coultas is also a devoted wife to her husband Ronald—a Vietnam veteran and retired National Guardsman—loving mother to her daughter Bernadette and proud grandmother to her grandchildren David and Emily.

Mr. Speaker, all of us should strive to replicate the passion for serving others that Phil Ameris and Carol Coultas have exhibited throughout their distinguished careers as labor leaders. I want to congratulate them on receiving such a well-deserved honor.

HONORING MAYOR HAL BALDWIN

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2012

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the commitment of the late Mayor Hal Baldwin of Schertz, Texas. Mr. Baldwin, one of the longest continuously serving council members in the state of Texas served on the Schertz City Council for twenty-nine years and as the city's Mayor of another eighteen years. Mayor Baldwin's nearly forty years of service to the community will echo even in his passing.

Mr. Baldwin, the Wichita, Kansas native moved to Schertz, Texas in 1967 as he was finishing a 20-year enlisted career in the Air Force with the rank of Senior Master Sergeant. While on active duty, Baldwin served with the 51st Fighter Interceptor Wing, Naha Air Force Base, Okinawa, during the latter months of the Korean War. He also served at Headquarters, 7th Air Force, Tan Son Nhut Air Base during the Vietnam War. He finished his military career at Randolph Air Force Base, where he served as the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Command Graphics Branch, Presentations Division, Headquarters, Air Training Command.

By the early 1970s, Baldwin's first interaction with city government was with the Citizens Advisory Committee that advised City Council on matters. Later, he partook in a program called "Project Transition" which was an Air Force program that sought to let retiring members work half a day in a civilian job for a period of time until they retired and could work full time in that job. As a tax-assessor collector for the City of Schertz as his half day civilian job, he learned about city government and issues. After six years, he took a job as a business manager for the school district and served in this position until his retirement in 1998.

After serving his country and learning the ropes of city government, his political career began. He was appointed as a City Council member and in 1994 he ran for Mayor of Schertz, won and served in that position until 2012. His landmark services as Mayor include the formation of the Schertz-Seguin Local Government Corporation and more recently raising awareness of historical places in the area, such as a number of century old homes in the city. I had the honor of working collaboratively with Baldwin since 2006 on projects for the City of Schertz, including bringing a new Post office to the area.

The mayor and Mrs. Barbara Baldwin were married for 55 years, they have five children, eight grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren, all of whom reside in the Schertz area. Mayor Hal Baldwin's love for the Schertz community can be measured by one simple fact—he has spent half his life in public service to that community.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have had the opportunity to recognize the late Mayor Hal Baldwin. His hard work and valor have truly impacted many lives and our community.

HONORING GORDON TSAI

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2012

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.