

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.

Gordon Tsai is a junior at Clements High School in Fort Bend County, Texas. His essay topic is: In your opinion, why is it important to be involved in the political process?

The United States is a relatively young and unique country. It was only about two hundred years ago we entered the throes of revolution and asserted our independence. As a country, we tend to forget the principles that were fought for and won on that fateful day. This American Revolution was fought for freedom, especially the freedom to vote and/or run for public office.

The value of independence and freedom has almost been lost upon our current people. Ironically, we have a large population of people who don't necessarily even pay attention to or understand politics and current affairs. They live in their small bubble of influence within work, friends, and maybe a community church. This kind of American citizen is definitely not the right one. It is our duty as citizens to vote and uphold the practice of choosing our leaders that was fought for back then two hundred years ago. This country's citizens have almost come to take freedom for granted. In modern day, the average man is protected on many levels by various forms of legislation that ensures their basic human rights. Some would even argue that the United States grants too much freedom as in the controversial case of the gun law. We have become an ungrateful country. Even recently, we can see in the Arab Spring that the value of freedom and independence are worth dying. In the countries of Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and currently Syria, people are and have been willing to die for the slight possibility of a free independent process for choosing their leaders. And around the world, other elections are plagued by bribery and corruption with country leaders serving multiple terms that exceed the limit set upon by their constitution. When observed realistically, the American election process and atmosphere is almost a dream. So why won't the citizens of the United States fulfill their responsibilities as a nation and assert the privilege that is voting? It is clear that around the world many people are willing to die for this chance to play their tiny part in the direction and leadership of their country.

It is apparent that many people in the United States don't ever vote. Even my mom waives this right that I would jump at a chance to have. This decision, however small it is individually, on the next leader of the United States is not one to be taken lightly. We are playing our small part in deciding the direction and future of the most influential country in the world. In this light, voting should be unprecedented honor, not an annoyance which the average citizen should fulfill.

HONORING DR. GEORGE ALVIN
"G.A." JOHNSON FOR HIS PUBLIC
SERVICE AND ADVOCACY TO THE
STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2012

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable civil rights advocate and public servant, Dr. George Alvin "G.A." Johnson. Dr. Johnson earned his Doctorate of Divinity in 1979 from the Trinity Church Association in Shreveport, Louisiana.

He was born in Massies Mill, Virginia to the parents of Samuel and Virginia Johnson on

January 29, 1944. In 1963, after moving from Massies Mill to Washington, D.C. he stood on the grounds of the Lincoln Memorial to hear Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. deliver his "I Have a Dream" speech. As a young nineteen year old with an impressionable mind, Dr. King's speech became a defining moment in Dr. Johnson's life.

In 1970, seven years after Dr. King's infamous "I Have a Dream" speech, Johnson moved to Rolling Fork, Mississippi to take an active part in the civil rights movement. His first active role was in a position that was both admired and feared as becoming President of the Voter's League in Rolling Fork, Mississippi. As President, Dr. Johnson began to experience the indoctrination practices of the "traditions of the south."

After leaving his position as the President of the Voter's League in Rolling Fork, he took a position as manager of "Freedom Village." "Freedom Village" was one of the many strike cities that began emerging throughout Mississippi, as African Americans walked off plantations in protest of Jim Crow laws and unfair sharecropping practices. Dr. Johnson was also manager of one of the first self-help housing projects in the Mississippi Delta.

In 1971 Dr. Johnson moved to Greenville, Mississippi and became active in Delta Ministries sponsored by the Council of Churches of New York, New York. In 1976, he extended his ministry to television airing on WABG Channel 6 in Greenwood for 27 years. In 1988, Dr. Johnson founded GAIN, INC. (Goals, Aims, Intention Network) which stemmed from his prison ministry at the Mississippi State Penitentiary, known as Parchman Farm located in Sunflower County, Mississippi. He now resides in Charleson, Mississippi where he continues to be an advocate for children, the poor, the disadvantaged, and the displaced.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Dr. George Alvin Johnson for his dedication and service as a civil rights advocate and pioneer during the 1960s civil rights movement in the great state of Mississippi.

CONGRATULATING THE NEW
HAVEN LIONS CLUB ON THE
CELEBRATION OF THEIR 90TH
ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2012

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to extend my very best wishes to the members of the New Haven Lions Club as they gather to celebrate the 90th Anniversary of this extraordinary community organization. Over the course of its history, the New Haven Lions Club has enabled its members to contribute to our community in a positive and meaningful way. Indeed, in the last century, members of the New Haven Lions Club have helped to shape the very character of our community.

Founded in February of 1922, the New Haven Lions Club was only the second such club started in New England. From the very beginning, member's work in the community concentrated on assistance to local blind per-

sons and underprivileged children. In its earliest years, Lions would repair radios for the blind and transport them to and from local meetings as well as donate dinners and presents to needy families during the holidays. Over time, the Lions club has expanded both its membership and its activities on behalf of those in need.

Today, the New Haven Lions Club can be very proud of the two very special Service Projects it supports on an on-going basis. The first is Camp Cedarcrest, a forty-two acre facility located in Orange, Connecticut that began its operations in 1928. The New Haven Lions have partnered with four other service organizations—the Kiwanis, Proboscis, Quota and Rotary Clubs—who own the grounds and buildings, set policy, and provide capital improvements. In partnership with the New Haven Department of Parks and Recreation which provides a resident Ranger as well as organizes and supervises day camping and other activities, Camp Cedarcrest is available for recreation to thousands of young people and adults each summer season. In addition to the substantial financial support provided by the Club, over the years, New Haven Lions have contributed hundreds of hours of voluntary labor to ensure the upkeep of the grounds. The second service project to which the New Haven Lions have dedicated themselves is the One-To-One Program. This project, which is organized as a hands-on personal involvement of one Lion and one blind person, was first established in 1975 and has been a great success ever since.

In addition to these two service projects, the Lions also give back to the community by supporting Leo Clubs in local schools, volunteering their time and energies to other local service organizations like the Salvation Army and the Special Olympics, and providing scholarships to young people beginning their collegiate studies. In fact, as of their annual report last year, the New Haven Lions Club had spent in excess of \$750,000 to assist the less fortunate—all of which was raised by members.

The New Haven Lions have had an extraordinary impact on our community and we cannot thank them enough for all of their good work. As they celebrate their 90th anniversary, I am proud to stand to congratulate them on this remarkable milestone and to extend my deepest thanks and appreciation to members past and present for their outstanding efforts on behalf of our community. I have no doubt that they will continue to do so for many more years to come.

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 33RD
ANNIVERSARY OF THE TAIWAN
RELATIONS ACT

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2012

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 33rd anniversary of the enactment of the Taiwan Relations Act.

Since the end of World War II, the United States and Taiwan have fostered a close relationship that has been of enormous strategic and economic benefit to both countries. When the United States shifted diplomatic relations