

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO AMEND THE ROBERT T. STAFFORD DISASTER RELIEF AND EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE ACT TO REAUTHORIZE THE PRE-DISASTER HAZARD MITIGATION PROGRAM

### HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 10, 2013*

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to introduce a bill to amend to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to reauthorize the pre-disaster hazard mitigation program.

First authorized in 2000, the pre-disaster hazard mitigation program has a proven history of saving taxpayer money by investing in cost effective projects that are designed to reduce injuries, loss of life, and damage and destruction of property in the event of a disaster. As the old adage goes: an ounce of prevention is worth its weight in gold.

This is true for the pre-disaster hazard mitigation program. In 2005, the Multi Hazard Mitigation Council of the National Institute of Building Sciences found that for every \$1 spent on mitigation, \$4 was saved in potential disaster costs. Other corollary benefits and indirect savings at the local level and within the business sector were also identified. Moreover, the Congressional Budget Office confirmed the cost savings of the program. Using a different analysis, the CBO found in 2007 that for every \$1 spent on mitigation, \$3 was saved in potential disaster costs.

But it is not just empirical studies that have confirmed the benefits of this program. There are numerous examples of flood control projects, voluntary acquisitions of real property located in flood zones, and the construction of safe rooms that have saved lives and prevented future damage. Areas that have experienced flood damage in the past, and have flooded again, experienced reduced or no damage thanks to effective mitigation. For instance, in Iowa, pre-disaster mitigation funds were used to purchase riverfront homes from homeowners that had suffered flood damage and then converted to green space. When the area subsequently flooded again, there was no new damage, thanks to the pre-disaster mitigation efforts.

With today's ongoing fiscal challenges, increasingly severe storms, and escalating effects of climate change, it makes sense for our country to prepare for these disasters now in order to prevent or reduce damage. Smart planning to mitigate the adverse impact of disasters not only saves lives, but saves money—especially over the long run.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy when there were initial damage estimates in the billions of dollars, many Members from both sides of the aisle streamed to the floor to express sympathy to the victims, as well as decry the extent of the damage and large costs. This program represents an opportunity to curb similar costs in the future while also saving lives and protecting property.

It is time to reauthorize the Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Program at a sufficient level to make an impact. I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

### HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

### HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 10, 2013*

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF JOSE ALVAREZ

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize Jose Alvarez, Commissioner for the City of Kissimmee, for his outstanding career and service to the community.

Mr. Alvarez was born in Cuba, and moved to the United States in 1971. He was raised in Miami, where he worked for the Bridge and Road Engineering Department of the Florida Department of Transportation, before relocating to Central Florida.

Mr. Alvarez has tirelessly served the Hispanic community in Kissimmee, Florida while also achieving success in the local real estate market. He has held many positions both in the public and private sector including the Board of Directors for League of United Latin American Citizens, the Board of Directors for National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals, and the Board of Directors for Osceola Association of Realtors. He has demonstrated a thorough understanding of both the business and real estate market.

In 2012 Mr. Alvarez was elected to be Commissioner for the City of Kissimmee. He has developed a flourishing career and earned the respect of his constituents for his dedicated service to the community. Mr. Alvarez is happily married to his wife Darlene, with whom he has five daughters and two grandsons.

I am happy to recognize Mr. Alvarez, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for his proven commitment to his community and leadership in Osceola County.

RECOGNIZING THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF JONATHAN EVANS

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize Jonathan Evans for his commitment to public service.

Jonathan possesses a Bachelor's degree in Social Work, and a Master's Degree in Public Administration, both from the University of Central Florida. He is currently working on another Master's Degree in Business Administration from Saint Leo University.

Jonathan has worked as a public servant for several Central Florida communities including the City of St. Cloud, the Town of Celebration, the City of Largo, and Haines City. Jonathan was hired as the Haines City Assistant City Manager on July 16, 2012, and was appointed as Acting City Manager on May 16, 2013. Prior to his work in Haines City, Jonathan worked for the City of Largo for nearly 6 years as the Assistant to the City Manager.

Jonathan is a full member of the Florida City and County Management Association, FCCMA, and has served on numerous boards for the organization. He is also a member of the International City/County Management Association, ICMA, and is taking the required steps to become an ICMA Credentialed Manager.

Jonathan has a strong grasp on municipal government, and a great work ethic that has not gone unnoticed. He has received numerous awards including the United Gold Award, the Children's Empowerment Award, and was

named the Employee of the Month by the City of St. Cloud.

I am happy to honor Jonathan Evans, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for his outstanding leadership and public service.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF ELLEN OCHOA

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize the inspiring career of Ellen Ochoa, astronaut, engineer, and Director of NASA's Johnson Space Center.

Ellen Ochoa received a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics from San Diego State University in 1980. She then went on to attend Stanford University, where she received a Master of Science degree and Doctorate in Electrical Engineering.

She was selected by NASA in January 1990 and became the first Hispanic female astronaut in July 1991. Her technical assignments in the Astronaut Office at the Johnson Space Center included crew representative for flight software, computer hardware and robotics, Assistant for Space Station to the Chief of the Astronaut Office, lead spacecraft communicator (CAPCOM) in Mission Control, and Acting Deputy Chief of the Astronaut Office. As a veteran of four space flights, Ellen has logged nearly 1000 hours in space.

Ellen is a pioneer of spacecraft technology. She is a co-inventor for three patents for an optical inspection system, an optical object recognition method, and a method for noise removal in images. At the NASA Ames Research Center, she led a research group working primarily on optical systems for automated space exploration. She has received numerous awards for her accomplishments including NASA's Exceptional Service Medal, Outstanding Leadership Medal, and four Space Flight Medals.

Since 2007, Ellen has served as Deputy Director of the Johnson Space Center, helping to manage and direct the Astronaut Office and Aircraft Operations. On January 1, 2013, Ochoa made history again by becoming the first Hispanic and second female director of NASA's Johnson Space Center.

I am happy to honor Ellen Ochoa, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for her exceptional career, numerous accomplishments, and contributions to the Hispanic community.

HONORING THE CAREER OF JOSE FELICIANO

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month to recognize Mr. Jose Feliciano, a Puerto Rican musician whose international success is a true testament to his amazing talent.

Mr. Feliciano was born in Lares, Puerto Rico. At the age of five he immigrated with his parents and siblings to New York City. Due to congenital glaucoma, he was left permanently blind at birth. However, his disability has not hindered his passion for playing music. Mr. Feliciano's love for music began at the age of three, when he first accompanied his uncle on a tin cracker can. By the age of six, he had taught himself to play the concertina simply by listening to records and practicing. When Mr. Feliciano received his first guitar, he spent hours practicing each day and started taking classical lessons with a guitar instructor.

In 1963, Mr. Feliciano signed a contract with RCA Records. Over the course of his career he has had numerous chart-topping singles in multiple countries. His famous single, 'Feliz Navidad,' tops the charts every year during the holidays. The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers named 'Feliz

Navidad' one of the top 25 most frequently played and recorded Christmas songs worldwide. Mr. Feliciano has received numerous awards over the course of his career including nine Grammys, a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame, and the Hispanic Heritage Foundation's Lifetime Achievement Award. The City of New York also honored him by renaming Public School 155 in East Harlem, "The Jose Feliciano Performing Art School."

Mr. Feliciano is not only a talented musician, but also a humanitarian. He serves as the International Immigrants Foundation's Honorary Ambassador and Official Delegate before the United Nations. He also serves as a board member for New Hampshire's Association for the Blind. The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, an ancient and prestigious Papal Order of the Catholic Church, knighted Mr. Feliciano at St. Patrick's Cathedral. He also received a Doctorate Degree in Humane Letters from Sacred Heart University for his musical and humanitarian contributions to the world.

I am happy to honor Mr. Jose Feliciano, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for his many contributions to music and humanity.

#### RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF DENISE DIAZ

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize a hard-working community organizer, civil rights activist, and working mother of two.

Originally from Puerto Rico, Denise Diaz's parents raised her and her brother on the northwest side of Chicago. Her parents worked hard in the airline catering industry to provide a better life for their children. As union members, they instilled Denise with a strong sense of collective action and a passion for justice.

Denise Diaz received her BA in Political Science from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her activism began in organizing on the South Side of Chicago. She later became a tenant rights organizer in immigrant communities outside of Washington, D.C.

In 2007, Denise moved to Central Florida to raise her two children and continue community organizing on workers' rights issues. Denise can often be seen picketing in front of major employers, meeting with workers, and leading community events with the support of her husband Mark and her two children, Zoe and Zion.

For over five years, Denise has served as the Executive Director of Central Florida Jobs with Justice. She is also a National Jobs with Justice board member and a board member of the Florida Institute for Reform and Empowerment (FIRE).

Denise's work with the Central Florida Jobs with Justice, a coalition of unions, community based groups, faith based and student groups that work together on economic justice campaigns, has empowered and improved the lives of working families in Orlando.

I am happy to honor Denise Diaz, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for her incredible accomplishments on behalf of the working families in Central Florida.

#### RECOGNIZING JOSE F. MENDEZ FOR 40 YEARS OF EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize the inspiring career of Jose F. Mendez. He has committed the last 40 years to expanding educational opportunities both in Puerto Rico and the United States.

Mr. Mendez has served as President of Ana G. Mendez University System (AGMUS) since 1974. In 1978, Mr. Mendez advocated for the creation of a Televised Study Center to make university education accessible to students who could not attend a traditional style university. Through his efforts, a televised education program was created and has since been utilized by thousands of students and the prison population of Puerto Rico. In 1985, under Mr. Mendez' stewardship, AGMUS founded Channel 40 (today, Sistema TV), Puerto Rico's first privately operated television station affiliated to PBS.

Mr. Mendez formed partnerships between universities in the United States and Puerto Rico to spark an interest in science and technology among minority groups. Under his leadership, AGMUS has grown to become the second largest private university in Puerto Rico. AGMUS also has three campuses in Florida, including one in my district, and one in Maryland.

Mr. Mendez has held various positions in educational leadership and received numerous awards. One of his crowning achievements was the creation of AGMUS's Permanent Fund for scholarships which provides education to talented students from low income areas.

Mr. Jose Mendez has focused his efforts on education because he believes that our ability to learn and to contribute to human progress is our greatest gift. I am happy to honor Jose F. Mendez, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for his unwavering commitment to expanding educational opportunities for all.

#### RECOGNIZING THE CAREER AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF BETSY FRANCESCHINI

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, to recognize the career of Betsy Franceschini. Mrs. Franceschini is a leader in both the Central Florida and national Hispanic community.

Mrs. Franceschini has a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and a Master's Degree in Guidance and Counseling from the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico. She has received multiple awards and recognitions, including Magellan Media Corporation's Businesswoman of the Year Award in 2001, the Dove of Peace International Award in 2006 for her outstanding community leadership, the Hispanic Business Initiative Fund—Success Story Award, and the Entrepreneurial Excellence Award in 2008. Mrs. Franceschini was also recognized in 2012 as one of the Top 25 Most Influential Hispanics in Central Florida by Vision Magazine and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metro Orlando.

Mrs. Franceschini has been extremely active in the community since moving to Florida in 1985, focusing on issues affecting minorities. In 2003, Mrs. Franceschini was appointed by Mayor Buddy Dyer to serve in the City of Orlando's Strategic Team and Transportation Committee. She also served on the Board of the Hispanic Initiative Business Fund from 1999 to 2006 and headed the Hispanic Task Force for the Census 2000 in Orange and Seminole Counties. Just before that, she served as President of the Asociación Borinqueña (Puerto Rican Association of Central Florida), from 1997 to 1999.

In February 2011, Mrs. Franceschini was one of 15 Latino leaders selected by the White House to meet with President Obama to discuss issues important to the Hispanic commu-

nity. In addition, she successfully organized and executed the first ever White House Hispanic Summit in Central Florida. In March 2011, she was appointed as the first Hispanic Outreach Director for the Florida Democratic Party and successfully accomplished the goal of increasing Hispanic voter participation in Central Florida.

Mrs. Franceschini recently worked as the Deputy District Director and Hispanic Outreach Coordinator for my office in Orlando. On July 1, 2013, the Governor of Puerto Rico, Alejandro Garcia Padilla, appointed her as the Florida Regional Director for the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration. Over twenty-eight years of dedication and commitment has earned her a high level of respect, support, and admiration as a national Hispanic leader in public service.

I am happy to honor Betsy Franceschini, during Hispanic Heritage Month, for her outstanding accomplishments and service to the Hispanic community.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF THE GREAT LAKES REGION CHAPTER OF B'NAI B'RITH FOR 170 YEARS OF ADVOCACY FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE

#### HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 10, 2013

Mr. PETERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, as B'nai B'rith International celebrates 170 years of advocacy and leadership in support of the security of Jewish people around the world, including the Jewish State of Israel, and to recognize its local chapter for the Great Lakes region.

When it was founded in 1843, the members B'nai B'rith set out to create a support network for newly arriving Jewish immigrants in the United States. Among its first actions, B'nai B'rith created an insurance policy to provide members' widows with resources to cover the cost of funeral services and a weekly stipend for the remainder of their lives. It also provided a stipend to each member's children and assured male children that they would be taught a trade. From these initial programs, which were an immediate response to the living conditions of Jewish immigrants in New York, B'nai B'rith rapidly grew, with many fraternal lodges and chapters in the United States and around the world.

As it grew, B'nai B'rith quickly became involved in international affairs which became necessary to respond to rising anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe. As part of its response, the United States opened its first Consulate General in Romania, expanding the reach of American diplomacy. From this initial foray into foreign policy, B'nai B'rith has developed into a global voice for the safety and security of the Jewish people and their homeland.

In addition, to its international initiatives, B'nai B'rith has cultivated and maintained a number of programs to address the changing needs of the Jewish American population. As the Jewish population in the United States has aged, B'nai B'rith has responded to the needs of seniors, opening its first senior residence in 1971 which has grown into an international network of forty residences worldwide. The