

progress. With so many opportunities now available to our young women and men today, it would be a shame if they were not prepared and ready to take advantage of them. We must make sure that our education system is the absolute best it can be, providing students with the basic skills and academics to succeed in college and in the global marketplace.

IN HONOR OF THE GRAND  
OPENING OF PICKERING PLACE

**HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 17, 1997*

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, on June 18, 1997, the city of Fremont and the Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition will celebrate the grand opening of Pickering Place, a 43 unit affordable housing development, in the city of Fremont in California's 13th Congressional District. I commend both the Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition and the city of Fremont for coming together to complete this project.

Affordable housing is an urgent need in California and the Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition has been a leader in the development of affordable housing. They have developed over 3,300 units in the Greater Bay Area and are currently working on eight more projects. This new project, Pickering Place, will provide 43 affordable townhouse apartments for low-income families in our community.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Fremont City Council and the city of Fremont staff who worked together with the Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition to develop the vision and the plan for Pickering Place. This development would not have been possible without the funding and support from a variety of sources in the community, including a loan from the Fremont Redevelopment Agency.

Mr. Speaker, Pickering Place is an example of an extraordinary partnership. I applaud all of those who were involved in bringing this project to our community.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION  
OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 54,  
PROHIBITING THE PHYSICAL  
DESECRATION OF THE FLAG OF  
THE UNITED STATES

SPEECH OF

**HON. VINCE SNOWBARGER**

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 12, 1997*

Mr. SNOWBARGER. Mr. Speaker, today the House is debating an amendment to the Constitution which will give the people's elected Representatives the authority to protect our Nation's most important and enduring symbol. This emblem is a powerful distillation of our commitment to individual freedom and constitutional democracy. The fact this image is sewn onto the shirt sleeves of Boy Scouts and emblazoned on the heat resistant tiles that protect our Nation's space shuttle fleet, is further testimony to this symbol's relationship to the American character.

This American flag is more than a banner to lead armies. It is the rallying point for our na-

tional conversation about freedom. Many have died defending this Nation, not because some great royal family or despot commanded it, but so that each American would continue to enjoy the blessings of liberty. There is a reason why veterans' organizations like the American Legion support this measure. These men and women know, perhaps more than others, what it means to defend America. Their sacrifice is memorialized in the flag itself. The red stripes, which are so recognizable, are representative of the blood spilled by America's sons to defend our treasured liberty. These Kansans of the American Legion want us to stop hoodlums and thugs from desecrating the flag to attack their legacy.

This flag represents America's historic and principled past and these struggles to extend freedom to all Americans. However, it is more than just a symbol of past triumphs. This flag is important to all freedom loving people around the world who long to construct for themselves a similar constitutional order. When Chinese dissidents wanted to communicate the desire for American-style liberty, they chose our flag to convey that message. They didn't want to be Americans; they wanted the freedom that our flag represents.

It is curious to me, Mr. Speaker, that opposition to flag protection persists. Our country has long recognized the icons and trademarks of American business through the patent and copyrighted acts. These corporate symbols are a valuable form of property that companies spend millions of dollars each year to augment and enhance. We have given America's business community the right to protect and defend their own emblems. Why should the most sacred and important symbol of America be treated differently?

At the very least, we should be allowed to criminalize violent destruction of our flag. This act approximates a personal attack on veterans and patriotic Americans. Remember, as other members—like the distinguished chairman of the Judiciary Committee—have pointed out, we have carved out this type of narrow restriction on expression before. Consider our hate crime laws that prohibit individuals from engaging in certain types of abhorrent speech to which constitutional protection does not apply. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, acts of contempt like burning a cross or displaying racial epithets do not amount to "speech," in the common meaning of the word. To the contrary, these activities fall into a class of behavior meant only to frighten, intimidate, and discourage the very political discourse contemplated by the Framers of the Constitution.

To put all of these issues together, Mr. Speaker, when individuals see an American flag passing in a Labor Day parade or in the fist of an enthusiastic child cheering a returning hero, they feel proud. When Americans see or hear about the desecration of their flag, they feel a tremendous pain. This is not a question about free speech or the right of dissent. Burning a flag is not speech. Nor is it dissent. Dissent is saying how you disagree. It implies a dialog.

This amendment is about preventing an attack on American citizens, collectively and individually. That is why our Kansas Legislature, and the legislatures of 40 other States, have petitioned this Congress to act. We owe it to these Americans, and Americans yet to be born, to extend protection to this transcendent national symbol.

TRIBUTE TO CHICAGO

**HON. CORRINE BROWN**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 17, 1997*

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, June 18, 1997, the Congressional Black Caucus [CBC] will gather in the Rayburn House Office Building to celebrate the unprecedented success of the smash hit premiere national touring musical "Chicago's" in our Nation's Capital. The CBC will honor "Chicago" brilliantly innovative and charismatic cast, and will pay special tribute to the stars: Jasmine Guy, Obba Babatunde, and Carol Woods.

A congressional reception was held April 8, 1997, hosted by the Illinois delegation and featuring the "Singing Senators," Senators TRENT LOTT, JOHN ASHCROFT, LARRY CRAIG, and JIM JEFFORDS to welcome the cast to Washington, DC. Also in attendance were the Honorables BILL BARRETT, HOWARD COBLE, JOHN CONYERS, ASA HUTCHINSON, HENRY HYDE, WILLIAM JENKINS, DENNIS KUCINICH, NITA LOWEY, MICHAEL McNULTY, CONSTANCE MORELLA, SILVESTRE REYES, TIM ROEMER, CARLOS ROMERO-BARCELÓ, JOHN SHIMKUS, LOUISE SLAUGHTER, and Secretary William Daley. "Chicago" cast members, Obba Babatunde and "The Girls," performed for the distinguished audience.

"Chicago" has broken box office records at the National Theatre and in New York City with its Broadway cast. "Chicago" is also the season's biggest musical hit.

The Broadway cast received six Tony Awards including Best Musical Revival, Best Director—Walter Bobbie, Best Choreography—Ann Reinking, and Best Lighting Design—Ken Billington. This wave of recognition continues with nominations from the prestigious New York Drama Desk for Outstanding Musical Revival, Outstanding Direction, Outstanding Choreography, Outstanding Actress in a Musical, Outstanding Actor in a Musical, Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Musical, Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Musical, and Outstanding Lighting Design. The New York Drama Critics Circle, the Nation's second oldest theatre award, after the Pulitzer Prize, voted a special award to the cast and creative team of "Chicago" for outstanding contribution to Broadway. "Chicago" continues to win raves and awards with five Outer Critics Circle Awards, including Best Musical Revival, Best Director, and Best Choreography.

The Musical is based on the 1926 play of the same name by Maurine Dallas Watkins. The play inspired the 1942 movie, "Roxie Hart," starring Ginger Rogers. The John Kander-Fred Ebb-Bob Fosse musical premiered in 1975 and the new revival, under the direction of Walter Bobbie and choreography—in the style of Bob Fosse—by Ann Reinking, opened on Broadway on November 14, 1996. "Chicago" has been hailed as "A triumph" by Time magazine. The New York Times raves "Chicago" is a musical for the ages with the sexiest, most sophisticated dancing seen on Broadway for years. It flies us right into musical heaven.

The Congressional Black Caucus will honor these talented and ambitious African-Americans for their inspiring success as artists and human beings. For it is individuals such as

these who raise our aspirations, motivate our youth, and provide us with powerful national role models of integrity and spirit. We thank you for your commitment and honor your achievements.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE SHEPARD  
ACCELERATED SCHOOL

**HON. RICHARD A. GEPHARDT**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 17, 1997*

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute Shepard Accelerated School in my district for being named a national Blue Ribbon School recipient.

The Blue Ribbon Schools Program identifies and gives national recognition to a diverse group of public and private schools that are unusually effective in meeting local, State, and national goals and in educating all of their students. The program seeks to promote school improvement nationwide through the collaborative self-evaluation required of local school communities that participate. In addition, recognized schools serve as models for other schools and communities seeking to provide high quality education for all their students.

Shepard Accelerated School was one of only 264 schools across the United States recognized as a Blue Ribbon School. Now, you might think that sounds like a lot of schools. But think about this—there are about 76,000 public and private elementary and middle schools in America. That means that one out of every 288 elementary and middle schools in the entire United States has been named a Blue Ribbon School for 1997. And I'm pleased that Shepard Accelerated School right here in St. Louis, MO, is one of those schools.

To qualify for this award, I know Shepard went through rigorous reviews by some of the Nation's leading educators. The school impressed everybody and they deserve the highest praise for that. The innovative programs and supportive community Shepard has established truly demonstrate the importance of a positive learning environment.

Shepard Accelerated School has a shared purpose among faculty, students, and parents to improve the education of the 600 children who attend. I am proud of Shepard for being named a national Blue Ribbon School recipient. Ms. Savannah Young, all the teachers, and especially the students should be saluted for their dedication to high standards and excellence in teaching and learning.

Congratulations Shepard Accelerated School.

TRIBUTE TO MARGARET S.  
BENEDIKT

**HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 17, 1997*

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to convey the sad message of the death of a great American, Margaret S. Benedikt.

Widowed in the 1950's with a dependent child, Peggy Benedikt submersed herself learning all there was to investment and con-

struction. Her daughter remembers awaking late at night to find her mother reading and was amazed at her mother's extraordinary ability to retain what she read. Peggy moved to south Florida in the 1960's and established what would become a very successful construction and development company. Knowledgeable in all areas of the construction business, she felt equally at home donning a hard hat on the building site or dressed for presentations in the sales office.

As her successes grew, Peggy Benedikt was generous with both her time and her money in supporting a wide variety of organizations in her adopted hometown, Fort Lauderdale, FL. She touched many in the community through her efforts with such diverse groups as Kids in Distress, the Opera Guild, the Humane Society, the American Cancer Association, and the Freedoms Foundation.

Margaret S. Benedikt loved Republican politics but she stands as a symbol for Democrats and Republicans alike. Through her actions, she taught all of us that we should stand tight for what we believe in. If there are politics in heaven, Peggy is already in the thick of it.

Margaret S. Benedikt was a great lady and a good friend. Peggy, we love you. We'll miss you.

TRIBUTE TO SPECIAL GRADUATES  
OF NEW YORK'S 12TH CONGRES-  
SIONAL DISTRICT

**HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 17, 1997*

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, with great pride I would like to congratulate some special graduates of the 12th Congressional District of New York. I am certain that this day marks the culmination of much hard work and many valiant efforts for these students; work and effort which have led and will lead them to continued success. They have overcome the obstacles of overcrowded and dilapidated classrooms, antiquated and insufficient instructional materials, the all too frequent distractions of random violence and pervasive drug activity, and, for some, having to adapt to a new language and new customs. But these students have persevered despite the odds. Their success is a tribute not only to their own strength, but also to the supportive parents and teachers who have encouraged them to achieve.

These students have learned that education is priceless. They know that education will provide them with the tools and opportunities to be successful in any endeavor they pursue. In many respects, this is the most important lesson they will carry with them for the rest of their lives.

In closing, I would like to say that youth in America must be encouraged to stay on course and complete their educations so they can pave the way for a better future. Let us not forget that their future is the future of this Nation. These successful graduates of the 12th Congressional District take the charge to lead our Nation very seriously as their commitment to their education has demonstrated. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in congratulating the following graduates who have triumphed despite adversity and who have achieved outstanding academic standing.

Congratulations to the 1997 graduates of the 12th Congressional District:

Sherley Medina, John Denton and Geimy Colon—El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice High School.

Evelyn Reynoso and Carlos Segura—Eastern District High School.

Naisha Arthur and Ragon Atkhas—Bushwick High School.

Dawn Stokes and Alberto Sanchez—East New York High School.

Jetaime Toliver and Shykia Bell—Maxwell High School.

Dory Garcia and Kaleena Torres—Intermediate School 291.

Christina Rodriguez and Bartosz Bernatowicz—Charles O. Dewey Middle School.

Nina Soto—Middle School 88.

Delaila Catalino and Edwin Carrion—Public School 86.

LAVAR FOSTER AND SHALIEK  
RIVERA: COMMUNITY HEROES

**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 17, 1997*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend two incredibly brave youth, Lavar Foster and Shaliek Rivera, for their heroic efforts.

On May 5, 1997, these P.S. 346 sixth graders rescued a senior citizen from an attacker. Not only did they save her life, but their detailed descriptions ultimately led to the criminal's capture. What makes their accomplishments so remarkable is that they did not let their young age or small size prevent them from extending a helping hand to a fellow citizen. For their fearless efforts, they were also named "New Yorkers of the Week" by New York 1 News.

Lavar and Shaliek are shining beacons of hope for the future of our community. Citizens such as these are few and far between. They are truly role models for Brooklyn and the entire Nation.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting Lavar Foster and Shaliek Rivera for their outstanding contributions to the Brooklyn community.

TRIBUTE TO STEPHEN AND IRIS  
GAINES

**HON. BRAD SHERMAN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, June 17, 1997*

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Stephen and Iris Gaines for their contributions to the Chabad of the Conejo Adult Education Program. In the spirit of Jewish unity, the Chabad of the Conejo recognizes the Gaines family for their time and dedication.

Stephen and Irish were inspired by their children to not only join an adult education program but promote adult education throughout our community. After sending Brandon and Ryan to Chabad, the Gaines' realized that Chabad would also be useful in their own lives.