

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING NANCY JOHNSON, A NATIVE OF DOWNERS GROVE, IL, ON WINNING THE FIRST GOLD MEDAL OF THE 2000 SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

HON. JUDY BIGGERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 22, 2000

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Nancy Johnson, a native of Downers Grove in the 13th Congressional District of Illinois, for making history this past weekend.

Nine years after being advised to retire due to nerve damage in her arms and legs, Nancy Johnson overcame the odds to win not just a gold medal, but the very first gold medal of the 2000 summer Olympic games in Sydney, Australia. Nancy struck gold in the women's 10 meter air rifle competition.

Like all Olympic events, the competition was tough and came down to the wire. In fact, it came down to the final 10 shots. Neither Nancy nor the 7 other final round competitors blinked, budged or crumbled under the pressure. But, when it was all over, Nancy had edged out Cho-Hyun Kang of Korea by two-tenths of a point.

But Nancy's story is even more impressive than her Olympic triumph. Her victory is the story of perseverance. Her medal-winning performance was the culmination of years of hard work, dedication, competitiveness and, most importantly, family.

Nancy first took up the sport of shooting as a teenager. She and her father, Ben Napski, often shot together at the Downers Grove junior rifle club. Ben and Diane, Nancy's mom, also lent their support while she competed in numerous competitions, including the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta where she finished 36th in her sport. Tragically, Diane passed away before she could see her daughter's magnificent accomplishment. But Ben, and Nancy's husband Ken, were there in Sydney to provide support, advice and gold-winning embraces.

Nancy Johnson's Olympic performance and shooting achievements also have helped to raise the level of awareness and appreciation for women's sports throughout the United States. Her love for a sport not typically associated with women serves as an inspiration for all of us, regardless of age or gender, to participate in activities we might not otherwise. Her performance also reminds us that participation in sport provides women, as well as men, with a means to gain the experiences, self-confidence and skills that are needed to succeed in all other endeavors.

Nancy's gold medal-winning performance epitomizes the goals and ideals of the Olympics. These goals, which have not changed since antiquity, include a commitment to a goal, grace under pressure, unity, perseverance, fair play and good will toward fellow competitors. Most of all, her performance teaches us that Olympic competition is about the quest for excellence.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, Nancy Johnson has honored her family, her native home town of Downers Grove, her native state of Illinois and her country through her dedication to excellence and high achievement. More important,

this young woman has left her mark in history. I ask that my colleagues join me in saluting her achievement and all that for which it stands.

CONGRATULATING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF TEAM8 COMMUNITIES COALITION

HON. LYNN N. RIVERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 22, 2000

Ms. RIVERS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great enthusiasm that I rise today to commend a very special group from my district. The TEAM8 Communities Coalition, a community partnership comprised of the eight cities of Adrian, Albion, Belleville, Milan, Romulus, Saline, Sumpter, and Van Buren has made great advances in combating juvenile crime. These outstanding communities came together three years ago to build a model strategic defense against the escalation of drug-use and youth violence in the State of Michigan. Within that three year span, the communities have delivered prevention education services and youth development activities to more than 56,000 school children, reducing juvenile crime over 50 percent and in-school incidents by 75 percent.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that TEAM8 will continue to make great strides in the fight to rid our communities of juvenile crime. Again, I commend TEAM8 and I wish all the participants continued success in the future.

HONORING THE CITY OF GALVESTON, THE PORT OF GALVESTON, AND CARNIVAL CRUISE LINES

HON. NICK LAMPSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 22, 2000

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, today I honor the City of Galveston, the Port of Galveston, and Carnival Cruise Lines on a very historic occasion. On September 27, 2000, the Texas Cruise Ship terminal at Pier 25 on Galveston Island will be rededicated. This \$10.6 million renovation and refurbishment of the historic 73-year-old terminal will equip the facility to serve as a home port for Carnival Cruise Line's 1,486-passenger vessel *Celebration*.

From the end of World War I until the late 1930s, luxury passenger ships owned by the Mallory Lines regularly sailed twice a week between Galveston and New York. A commitment was made in the mid-1980's by City of Galveston officials to develop a cruise terminal on Galveston Island and market the city to major cruise lines once again. The *Celebration* will result in 20 ship port-calls in 2000 and 79 in 2001. It is estimated that the local economic impact will amount to approximately \$40 million annually from ship and passenger spending.

Mister Speaker, this is an exciting time to be a Galvestonian. I would like to applaud everyone throughout the community who made this dream a reality. When the first ship sets sail on September 30, it will usher in a new era of

Gulf Coast cruise operations out of the Port of Galveston.

H.R. 5109, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL ACT OF 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 21, 2000

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to advise that unfortunately because of an important scheduling conflict, I was unable to cast my vote yesterday during consideration of H.R. 5109, The Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Personnel Act of 2000. At the time of the vote, I was presenting a keynote speech in observance of Hispanic Heritage Month, where I highlighted veterans issues as part of a discussion of the important contributions of Hispanics in public service.

Had I been able to be present during consideration of the bill, I would have voted in support of the bill. This is a bill that I co-sponsored, strongly supported and voted in favor of being reported out of the House Veterans Affairs Committee for consideration on the House floor.

This is an important bill that would improve the personnel and administration systems of the Veterans Health Administration, allow for necessary construction, and require reports on the effectiveness of the Veterans health care system along with the various aspects of Post Traumatic Stress syndrome on Veterans.

The bill is important as it provides revised authority for pay adjustments for nurses employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and requires that nurses are consulted in formulating policy relating to the provision of patient care.

Also, as part of the full spectrum of health care for Veterans, I am pleased that the bill provides for special pay for dentists, and raises their salaries depending on their training and length of tenure.

Additionally, the bill provides an exemption for pharmacists from a ceiling on special salary rates, and authorizes the inclusion of a physician assistant to consult on the utilization and employment of physician assistants in VA medical centers.

Moreover, it is critical that our VA medical facility infrastructure is safe and meets the needs of our veterans. Therefore, I welcome the authorization in this bill for the construction of major medical facility projects across the nation.

In order to better serve our veterans, this bill also requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that a protocol is used in any clinical evaluation of a patient to identify pertinent military experiences and exposures that may contribute to the health status of the patient and ensures that information relating to the military history of patients are included in their medical records.

Most importantly, I commend the authors of this bill for developing a pilot program to allow Medicare-eligible veterans to receive care at non-VA facilities if they do not have easy access to VA hospitals. Accessibility of care is essential to truly meet our nation's healthcare commitments to our veterans. This carefully