

Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times before, progress doesn't just happen by accident. From the beginning of the creation of the Industrial Fund 50 years ago, it has taken hard work, vision, dedication, and leadership by those who have transformed the area's economy from an aging coal mining town to a diversified economy with a bright future.

These leaders, whose accomplishments will be recognized at the dinner celebration, set the goals of elevating the economy by encouraging and supporting business growth, increasing capital investment in the region, and enhancing the area's quality of life by serving as a catalyst for key community projects. My colleagues, while we need to continue to strive toward these ambitious goals, I would like to pay tribute to the business leaders who make up this Chamber and this community for their success in moving us closer to these goals over the past 50 years.

Mr. Speaker, this organization has a proud and storied history highlighted by individuals who rose to the occasion and helped transform this region. Charles Weissman, William O. Sword, Frank Burnside, Herbert Morris, Edward Schechter, and many more leaders helped build our economy on a proud tradition of doing what it takes to make northeastern Pennsylvania the best it can be by working in partnership with elected officials and volunteers from the business community.

The Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber is relentlessly working in partnership with local, State and Federal officials to rebuild our region's economic base from the ground up. Whether it is working to reclaim mine-scarred land, building and managing five business parks in the region like the new Innovation Center, promoting key community projects like the Arena, the levee raising and riverfront redevelopment projects, or working on the Downtown revitalization efforts, The Chamber serves as a vocal leader on issues and initiatives—from transportation to education, and from diversity to the knowledge economy—that help to advance the Greater Wilkes-Barre community.

Most recently, the Chamber deserves commendations for reaching out to neighboring organizations to improve on efforts to bring a more regional approach to economic development, which I strongly support.

It has been a pleasure to work with Chamber leaders on many of these important projects during my tenure in office, and I look forward to many more years of productive partnership for the benefit of northeastern Pennsylvania.

Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere honor to recognize the business and community leaders of the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce as they celebrate 50 years of progress on Thursday evening.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 30, 2003

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from this Chamber on October 28, 2003. I would like the RECORD to show that had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 569. I also would have

voted "nay" on rollcall vote 570. Further, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 571, 572, and 573.

HONORING JOSEPH CARL NORQUIST

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 30, 2003

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of a fallen soldier and American patriot, 26-year-old Army Specialist Joseph Carl Norquist, for his unstinting service to the community and devotion to the country. On October 9, 2003, Spc. Norquist, a 26-year-old Oakland man, was in a convoy in Baqubah, Iraq when he was killed in a barrage of grenades and bullets.

Norquist was serving with the 588th Engineering Battalion, based in Fort Hood, Texas. In Iraq, the battalion is assigned to the 4th Infantry Division, also of Fort Hood. The 588th is conducting two separate missions in Baqubah; they are searching for weapons and rebuilding schools.

"Joe believed in the job he was doing in Iraq," his parents said in a statement. "He thought it was worth it for the children, who would have better opportunities for a better life. We deeply mourn the loss of our son."

Norquist, a native of Martinez, attended high school in Benicia, where he played on the football team. He received an associate degree from Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill and joined the Army in 2001. He served for a year in Korea before being assigned to his unit in Texas, where he was trained in evaluating obstacles and operating conditions for tank maneuvers.

Joseph was a big, broad-shouldered man who liked to watch wrestling on TV. According to his friends, Joseph liked to spend his spare time in the base gym, working out with weights. In the evenings, he would try out wrestling moves on his Army buddies. He was contemplating enrolling in a pro wrestling school in Austin once his Army days were done. He was recognized for his attention to detail and thoroughness, and will posthumously receive the Bronze Star and Purple Heart medals.

Finally, as we remember Spc. Norquist today, I take great pride in joining Joseph's parents, Carl and Sue, his friends and fellow soldiers to recognize and salute the accomplishments and contributions of Joseph Carl Norquist.

RECOGNIZING WORLD POPULATION AWARENESS WEEK

HON. DAVID E. PRICE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 30, 2003

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the week of October 20–25th has been designated as World Population Awareness Week with the theme of "Water: Our Most Precious Natural Resource." Over the next 20 years, the world's population of 6.3 billion is projected to increase to nearly 9 billion before

leveling off. Since the entire population depends on 1 percent of the earth's water, many fear a future where water scarcity will undermine health and security and lead to political and social unrest. Acting on the global consensus that water scarcity must be a top development priority, the Population Institute has decided to dedicate the nineteenth World Population Awareness Week to the issue of water.

More than 80 nations, 165 organizations, 127 mayors, and 22 governors have proclaimed World Population Awareness Week. Governor Michael Easley of North Carolina is among those doing so, and I am pleased to call that proclamation to my colleagues' attention.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

HON. LOUISE MCINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 30, 2003

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, Breast Cancer Awareness Month is an opportunity to celebrate the great strides breast cancer education, treatment, and survival that American women enjoy today. It must also serve as a reminder not to take our health for granted—to schedule a mammogram, perform a breast self-exam, and call a friend to urge her to do the same.

In the United States, every 2½ minutes another woman is diagnosed with breast cancer and every 13 minutes another woman dies from this dreadful disease. Almost one-third of these deaths could have been prevented if the disease had been discovered in the early stages. The lives lost are those of wives, mothers, daughters, and friends.

Thankfully, a breast cancer diagnosis is no longer a sure death sentence. When discovered and treated in the early stages, the five-year survival rate is 97 percent. Today, there are more than two million breast cancer survivors in the United States. These women live to celebrate birthdays, holidays, every day with their families and friends.

Early detection opens the door to beating breast cancer, and mammograms are the key to that door. Mammograms can find 40 percent of cancers not detectable during a breast self-exam or a doctor's exam. It is the most effective method of early detection, yet only 63 percent of American women between the ages of 40 and 64 had a mammogram in the past year. Furthermore, we must search diligently for more effective detection technology to improve upon the mammogram.

Sadly, many women cannot pay for essential screenings. I was proud to be an original cosponsor of the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection program. Due to this program and other initiatives, a lack of insurance is no longer a barrier to breast cancer survival.

Let's make the most of October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month; let's seize this opportunity to take control of our health and our lives. Every one of us is at risk for breast cancer, regardless of age, health, or family history, simply by being women. Let's say goodbye to needless cancer deaths and hello to breast self-exams, clinical breast exams, and mammograms. Let's say hello to the thousands of women who are here today and will

be here tomorrow thanks to early breast cancer detection and treatment.

FALLEN PATRIOTS TAX RELIEF
ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 29, 2003

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to a bill scheduled to be heard today regarding the military death benefit paid to survivors of military personnel killed in the line of duty. Under current law, the military death benefit provides a surviving spouse \$6,000, of which \$3,000 is subject to federal tax.

At the tragic time of a death of a service member, it is an unimaginable loss to the family and represents the greatest sacrifice to our nation. To avoid adding insult to injury, we must make the Military Death Benefit fully tax-exempt. Families of our patriots should not be penalized on a benefit meant to express the nation's gratitude. The death benefit has historically been exempt from this taxation, yet an oversight in the tax code—after the benefit was raised to \$6,000 in 1991—left half of the payment subject to taxation.

The death benefit was designed to assist surviving family with financial needs following the death of the service member. Unfortunately, the current benefit is not sufficient. We should increase this benefit to \$12,000 to cover additional expenses. This bill would make this benefit retroactive for military personnel who have died in battle since September 11, 2001.

As of this morning, 232 American servicemen and women have died in battle in Iraq after the end to major combat operations in Iraq was announced. This represents 232 cases where a grieving family has had to sustain itself financially with limited funds while suffering the loss of a loved one who will not return home. Let us not let partisan politics get in the way of doing what is right for our fallen soldiers.

WELCOMING PRESIDENT CHEN
SHUI-BIAN OF TAIWAN TO
UNITED STATES

SPEECH OF

HON. DAVID WU

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 29, 2003

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 302, and urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

For the past half-century, Taiwan and its people have been one of the United States' most reliable friends and allies in Asia, and around the world. Our two nations have cultivated many mutual interests, including trade, cultural, security in the Western Pacific Ocean, and democratic development.

On October 31st, President Chen Shui-bian will be visiting the United States. On behalf of the American people, I would like to extend my warmest welcome to the President, and

hope that our two nations will continue to deepen various aspects of our relationship.

As we host President Chen, I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution, and urge Congress and the Administration to support Taiwan's efforts to secure meaningful participation in international organizations and forums.

IN HONOR OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF PEARL BUCK CENTER, EUGENE, OREGON

HON. PETER A. DeFAZIO

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 30, 2003

Mr. DeFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct privilege and honor to congratulate the Pearl Buck Center in Eugene, Oregon on 50 years of supporting families with special needs in Lane County.

When the Pearl Buck Center opened in 1953, it was one of the only educational programs in Oregon providing educational services to children with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities. The Pearl Buck Center has continued this tradition of leadership in the community, the state, and the nation, providing vocational training, employment, education, and case management services to people with developmental disabilities.

Annually, the Pearl Buck Center provides services to over 400 individuals with developmental disabilities and their children. Since it was founded, the Pearl Buck Center has helped thousands of adults and children meet the challenges of their disabilities and find opportunities to succeed in school and on the job; to succeed as parents and as self-sufficient individuals; and to contribute to the community and society.

I would like to acknowledge the vision and dedication that characterizes this organization. I hope that all Americans will reflect on the commitment of the staff and volunteers of the Pearl Buck Center and on the struggles and successes of the individuals they serve.

October 2003 has been designated as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. In this special month, I extend my deepest appreciation and thanks to the Pearl Buck Center for their efforts, past and present, to help individuals with disabilities more fully realize their abilities, potential, and independence. We are all richer for your half-century of service.

RECOGNIZING THE 2D ANNUAL YOUTH CONFERENCE OF THE ASIAN LIVER CENTER AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 30, 2003

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of the 2d annual Youth Conference on Asian and Pacific Islanders' Health being organized by the Asian Liver Center at Stanford University on November 7 through November 9, 2003.

During this 3-day conference, more than 100 high school students and their families from throughout California will discuss a variety of health issues of particular concern to the API community. These issues include youth identity, teen smoking and cultural competency in medicine. A major issue to be addressed is the high vulnerability that Asian and Pacific Islanders have to hepatitis B and its related effect of liver cancer.

The Asian and Pacific Islanders community comprise over 11% of my home state of California. Unfortunately, many Americans of Asian and Pacific Island background have no awareness of their heightened risk of acquiring hepatitis B. While the rate of hepatitis B infection for all Americans is less than .5%, for API Americans the rate is 7%—14 times higher.

The symptoms of this illness are often not apparent to the individual until the irreversible effects of liver cancer become evident. This silent killer is often spread from unsuspecting mothers to newborn infants at childbirth. It is also spread through child-to-child infection as result of contact with skin sores, small breaks in the skin or such activities as sharing a toothbrush. Luckily, the spread of this awful disease can be prevented through a simple series of vaccinations. But, people need to be educated about the need for such vaccinations.

A major goal of the Youth Conference is to create a cadre of emissaries to go out into the API community to increase awareness of this vulnerability to hepatitis B and liver cancer and to educate the populace on means of prevention and treatment. Many in the API community are not aware that there is a vaccine that offers full protection from hepatitis B. Many are not vaccinated because they simply are not aware of the problem. The unnecessary deaths from this disease must be stopped now.

The Asian Liver Center has it right—increased knowledge is the key to prevention. I commend the students and their families for taking time out of their busy lives to become more knowledgeable about these important health issues and to help spread their knowledge throughout their communities. I also commend the staff of the Asian Liver Center at Stanford University for organizing this conference and for their mission of addressing the high incidence of hepatitis B in the API population through outreach, education and research. This program is clearly one that should be emulated by many other organizations around the country.

REGARDING INDIAN RIVER
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 30, 2003

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay commendation to Indian River Community College, which serves the east coast of Central Florida and many of my constituents. The school has developed an innovative program to combat a local, state and national problem—the critical teacher shortage. Indian River Community College pioneered the "Bridge to Teaching" program to recruit and train college graduates to embark on careers in teaching.