

Mr. Higgins enriched the lives of everyone fortunate enough to have known him. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the House of Representatives, we extend our deepest appreciation to Mr. Higgins' family and friends. Please join me in honoring Mr. Andrew Jackson Higgins, an exceptional individual who dedicated his life to the service of our country.

COMMENDING THE ALAMEDA CORRIDOR TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 2004

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority (ACTA). Earlier today, ACTA representatives formally presented the U.S. Department of Transportation with the final payments for a loan, including interest, which totals nearly \$573 million. This final payment was made 28 years ahead of schedule.

Opened on time and within budget, the Alameda Corridor is a 20-mile rail expressway connecting dock terminals in the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach to transcontinental rail yards located in downtown Los Angeles. The project proceeds primarily along and adjacent to Alameda Street—with grade separations to safeguard local communities and pedestrian and vehicle traffic—through or bordering the cities of Vernon, Huntington Park, South Gate, Lynwood, Compton, Carson, Los Angeles, and the County of Los Angeles.

Much of the Corridor's success was made possible by an innovative federal loan, which deferred debt service repayments in the early years of the project and allowed for financing at reasonable interest rates through the bond market. In fact, this novel financing approach was the basis for the Transportation Infrastructure Financing and Innovation Act of 1998 (TIFIA), a national program to select projects for credit assistance.

The Alameda Corridor is a project of national significance as it facilitates the movement of commerce from around the world to the entire nation. The Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach together handle more than 40 percent of the nation's imports by value. More than 2 million jobs nationwide are associated with trade through these ports. These workers, and this country, benefit from the Federal government's role in assuming the early project risk that made the Alameda Corridor possible.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, let me again congratulate the ACTA team for their management of the project and the early loan repayment completed today. The Alameda Corridor is a model project and has set a new standard for excellence. I look forward to working on future "goods movement" projects such as this that will benefit our region and the Nation.

IN RECOGNITION THE MOTHERS' CLUB OF PINE CREST SCHOOL

HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 6, 2004

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Mothers' Club of Pine Crest School in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. For 60 years, the Mothers' Club has been the lifeblood of Pine Crest School. The organization is comprised of over 450 mothers of current elementary-age students.

The Mothers' Club works diligently behind the scenes to ensure an optimal educational experience for Pine Crest's students. They promote community by organizing orientation programs which help acclimate new students and their parents to Pine Crest School. Every Pine Crest School event benefits from the support, involvement and assistance of the Mothers' Club. The Mothers' Club coordinates family barbecues, holiday gatherings and a festival of the arts.

The Mothers' Club always lovingly and willingly contributes to Pine Crest School, in any capacity necessary. This includes coordinating and chaperoning an annual field trip to Washington, D.C. These dedicated mothers volunteer in the classrooms and tutor students, assist in the library and implement a book share program, and serve lunch to students.

Mr. Speaker, the efforts of the Mothers' Club benefit not only Pine Crest School but also the greater South Florida community. These women coordinate various philanthropic endeavors to benefit local charities. Their hard work is noticed and appreciated throughout South Florida. In honor of their hard work for the last 60 years, I wish to recognize and commend the wonderful women of Pine Crest School's Mothers' Club for their dedicated service to children and elementary education.

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF INCREASING AWARENESS OF AUTISM

SPEECH OF

HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 2004

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 605 to recognize the importance of generating awareness about autism, increasing research efforts into this terrible disorder, and improving support for those who suffer from autism and those who help care for the autistic. My 13 year old nephew Jack has autism, so I am part of an extended family working to raise a child with this disability. My family's ongoing experience has impressed upon me how critical it is for us, as a society, to give those with autism and their families the support they need to fight this devastating disease, and to commit the resources necessary to determine the cause of autism and to develop a cure for the millions of afflicted individuals.

Autism is not rare. Autism affects approximately 1 in every 166 children in the United States, making it one of the most common childhood medical disorders. In many cases,

those with autism will never marry, they will never live independently, and more than half of them will never learn to speak. Families affected by autism are forced to bear an extraordinary burden. Parents, siblings and friends have to learn to try to communicate with and care for a child who may be incapable of either verbal or nonverbal communication or who may exhibit erratic behavior. The fact that autism is so common is proof that autism research is deserving of our nation's wholehearted support.

Funding for autism research at the National Institutes of Health has been increased from approximately \$93 million in Fiscal Year 2003 to \$96 million in Fiscal Year 2004, but we know that is not enough. Scientists continue to disagree on the cause or causes for the dramatic increase in the number of autism cases diagnosed in the United States. Only with increased research will we be able to understand autism, find better treatments and effective prevention methods, and hopefully, someday soon, develop a cure for this terrible disease.

I am pleased to be here today as a cosponsor of H. Res. 605. I applaud Representative TIERNEY for authoring this Resolution and working to bring attention and resources to an all too common, but devastating disorder. At its peak, there were 20,000 cases of polio each year. Today, less than 10 Americans contract polio annually. By working together and by never giving up, I know we can make autism just as rare. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF INCREASING AWARENESS OF AUTISM

SPEECH OF

HON. LEE TERRY

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 2004

Mr. TERRY. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 605 to support National Autism Awareness Month; commend the parents and caregivers of autistic children; support aggressive research into autism; and recognize the importance of early intervention.

If you were to see nine-year-old Jacob Nolan Hirschfeld on the baseball diamond today you might be impressed with his skills in playing our national pastime. Since his middle name was inspired by the great pitcher Nolan Ryan, you might also think that his success on the field was destined. But Jacob's ability to play baseball, and to do everyday things such as attending school and playing with friends, were never guaranteed.

Jacob Hirschfeld has been diagnosed with autism.

Jake struggles with most of the issues common among the autistic. At four years of age he could only speak in one syllable words. He was scared of loud noises and bright lights. He had many of the compulsions that are common with these children, and was fearful of most people outside of his immediate family. Jacob's father, Mark Hirschfeld, has said "our family was literally a prisoner to autism."

Jake's diagnosis was devastating to his parents. But even more difficult was the fact that physicians, educators and other professionals had little understanding of this complex disorder and what could be done to help children like Jacob. Stereotypes abounded.