

spreed. "I don't like the company. They don't treat their employees right. They don't even treat the customer right.

"But," she added, "the price is reasonable."

Holly Hamilton pushed her shopping cart through the parking lot looking not unlike an ad for Wal-Mart. In her cart was almost everything the 27-year-old nurse would need for an upcoming camping trip: a fishing pole, beach towels, food and bottled water, all gathered at a single store for hard-to-beat prices.

Like many customers outside the Pittsburgh store Wednesday, Hamilton did not know about Tuesday's ruling, but when told, she expressed some concern and said she might consider shopping elsewhere if a court determined the company discriminated against women.

During an afternoon break, Dukes, dressed in a black and tan outfit with a billowing red scarf, turned an upside down shopping cart into an impromptu chair.

"Wish you the best of luck, sweetie," a male customer called to Dukes in the store parking lot.

Dukes was hired at Wal-Mart a decade ago, with grand plans for a quick move up the ladder into management. Instead, she says, she was passed over for promotions repeatedly, as men with less experience landed the job.

But she makes \$12.53 an hour—an increase of more than 25% in the three years since the lawsuit was filed, thanks to generous raises. A volunteer minister, Dukes likes most of her co-workers and bosses, who "respect my right to pursue this matter." She likes most of the customers, most parts of the job. She works at Wal-Mart and shops at Wal-Mart, and loves the prices.

"All we're asking for is our day in court, and to let the evidence speak for itself."

The ruling, in which Jenkins said the "evidence raises an inference that Wal-Mart engages in discriminatory practices in compensation and promotion that affect all plaintiffs in a common manner," however, is by no means the company's first considerable trial. And even as the number of Wal-Mart critics appears to be growing, so does the number of its defenders—and so does the company's reach.

One of the company's previous blows came in April, when Inglewood voters soundly defeated a sweeping initiative that would have allowed the company to build a Supercenter the size of 17 football fields without going through the traditional layers of city bureaucracy.

The company spent more than \$1 million in its failed effort to pass the initiative, buying television commercials and handing out doughnuts, all for an election that drew just 12,000 voters. Opponents spent a fraction of that amount and won the contest, about 7,000 casting ballots against the proposal and 4,500 in favor.

The contest's David vs. Goliath overtones ripped across the country. On paper, however, the defeat cost the company but a single Supercenter.

And the company, which opened its first Supercenter in the state this spring in La Quinta, southeast of Palm Springs, has plans for 40 more across California, including stores in Stockton and Hemet expected to open this year.

The Supercenters are the company's most controversial because of their size, averaging 200,000 square feet, and the fact that they stock groceries.

Wal-Mart pays its employees, male and female, less than many other similar retail outlets as well as grocery stores. The so-called Wal-Mart effect—the company's ability to undercut competitors with its lower

wages and prices—helped trigger the longest grocery store strike in Southern California last year as some grocers sought wage and benefit concessions they said were needed to compete with the Supercenters.

Although the company lost its Inglewood battle, and as many California cities, including Los Angeles, have passed ordinances that effectively ban such massive "box stores," the company has found open arms in many other parts of the state. Some describe the Inglewood opposition, the lawsuit and other attacks on the company as knee-jerk bashing of a successful corporation.

In Gilroy, where the City Council voted 5 to 2 in March to approve a Supercenter, Wal-Mart proponents wrote off the news of the lawsuit ruling as legal hullabaloo.

"Certification of a class-action suit is easy to do," said Bill Lindsteadt, executive director of the Gilroy Economic Development Corp., which embraces the new center. "It's frivolous. It's another ploy by the unions to force Wal-Mart to become union."

While heated fights over proposed Supercenters are playing out across the state, some observers say the company is facing increasing difficulties as it moves from rural and suburban markets into urban areas—and that Tuesday's ruling may increase opposition.

As Wal-Mart moves "from the suburban fringe and really starts to look more in urban areas . . . they're encountering a different level of concern and opposition than they were when they were building out amid the strip malls," said Amaha Kassa, co-director of the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy. "These kinds of issues of pay equity and disparate treatment are very much going to be issues of concern for urban voters."

RECOGNIZING SANDCASTLE DAYS IN IMPERIAL BEACH, CALIFORNIA

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 25, 2004

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a country of patriots. A nation entering a hot summer, full of turmoil and uncertainty.

The coming three months will be marked by many significant world events; the transfer of sovereignty in Iraq, the Olympic games in Greece, an escalating November election at home.

The world will spin a little faster this summer and to compensate we must all pull together as a nation.

It is time for us to reconnect, to remind ourselves what it is that makes us uniquely American.

We are all neighbors, and that which divides us will never outshine that which unites us.

We are all neighbors, and for that reason I share with the community what is happening in my yard this summer.

In one month time the 28,000 residents of Imperial Beach, California will be holding their city's 48th birthday commemoration.

Proudly anchored as the country's most southwesterly city, this diverse seaside town is preparing to celebrate the same way it has for the past quarter-century. Come early July, the city of Imperial Beach will be holding its 24th annual U.S. Open Sandcastle Competition.

For three days, creativity and civic pride will be honored. In addition to the sand-sculpting

contest, festivities will include a community ball, street parade, and nighttime fireworks display over the Pacific.

The weekend long celebration will draw over 250,000 spectators. People will swarm the sand to see creations that will not last the next tide. In the spirit of ingenuity, modern marvels of dirt will be erected and destroyed in an afternoon's time.

For three days the sun will shine and the children will smile. The world will slow in this corner of the country and we will celebrate the anniversary of a city, the essence of a nation.

We are a "can do" people, but that does not mean we should have to do it alone.

My district is only 1 of 435, and so I ask my fellow Representatives in the House, what is your District doing this summer? Let us share in this most public of forums, that which unites us as a country.

We are each other's neighbors and we should not let an opportunity to come together pass us by. The world will seem a smaller and safer place if we know what is happening in our own backyards.

So as summer quickly comes to our countryside, let us give voice to our originality, and champion all that makes our society truly extraordinary.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEDICATION OF THE TARAS SHEVCHENKO MONUMENT

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 25, 2004

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, on June 26, 2004, the Ukrainian American community will be celebrating the 40th jubilee commemoration of the unveiling of the monument to Taras Shevchenko, known as the bard of Ukraine for his exquisite lyric poetry and numerous novels, as well as his many works of art.

Taras Shevchenko was born in the Kyiv region in 1814 to a childhood of servitude and a life of hardship. He first worked as a houseboy until his owner realized his artistic talent, after which he was apprenticed to a painter. His freedom was purchased in 1838 by another painter who appreciated Mr. Shevchenko's work.

An ardent champion of freedom and Ukrainian independence, Taras Shevchenko saw George Washington as a symbol and liberator of the American people from the colonial rule of a foreign power. Mr. Shevchenko's works played a key role in the awakening and drive for national liberation of the Ukrainian people. In his poems, he attacked tyrants, oppressors and all enemies of human freedom and decency.

Mr. Shevchenko's love of freedom and criticism of the czars resulted in his arrest in 1847. He was first sentenced to forced military duty, and later imprisonment, where he remained in Russian custody until his release in 1857, two years after the death of Czar Nicholas. He was arrested again in 1859 and remained under police surveillance until his death in 1861.

Years of harsh punishment did nothing to curtail his fight against the imperialist and colonial occupation of his native land. Mr. Shevchenko secretly produced numerous

works of poetry and art throughout his term of imprisonment which inspired the Ukrainian people.

Mr. Speaker, it is fitting that a statue honoring a man who fully embraced the ideals of personal freedom and human dignity, cornerstones of our country, should stand in the United States. I congratulate the Ukrainian American community on celebrating the 40th anniversary of the dedication of the Taras Shevchenko monument.

PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE INTERROGATION STANDARDS ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2004

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 25, 2004

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the "Promoting Responsible Interrogation Standards Enforcement Act of 2004" or "PRISE Act," legislation that reaffirms the United States' longstanding commitment to refrain from engaging in torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. I am joined by Representatives LOFGREN, MEEHAN, WATERS and SANCHEZ.

This nation's foreign and military policies have been substantially undermined as a result of the Iraqi prisoner and detainee abuse scandals. The PRISE Act is designed to prevent similar abuses from occurring. In doing so, the legislation takes several important steps.

First, it codifies the United States' legal and international treaty obligations with respect to the prohibition on the use of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Second, the bill directs the Secretary of Defense to issue guidelines to ensure compliance with this obligation. Third, in the unfortunate event that a member of the Armed Forces or Department of Defense contractor violates this prohibition, the bill requires the Defense Secretary to submit to Congress, in a manner that protects national security, a report highlighting the details of such violations. Finally, it closes a loophole created by the PATRIOT Act that may allow torture at U.S. military facilities overseas.

As we continue to define our values as a country, we must make it abundantly clear that we will not compromise our principles. The use of torture is not only wrong, but it is an ineffective interrogation tactic because it produces unreliable information. People who are being tortured will often lie to their interrogator in order to stop the pain.

I am hopeful that Congress can move quickly to enact this worthwhile and timely legislation.

CORRECTING ENROLLMENT OF S. 2238, THE BUNNING-BEREUTER-BLUMENAUER FLOOD INSURANCE REFORM ACT OF 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL G. OXLEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 21, 2004

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 2238, the Bunning-Bereuter-

Blumenauer Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2004. This important piece of legislation not only reauthorizes the National Flood Insurance Program through September 30, 2008, but also makes much-needed reforms that will help the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) stem wasteful use of taxpayer funds on properties that flood over and over again.

By now most Members are well aware of the long road we have traveled in developing this legislation. After years' worth of discussions with floodplain managers, taxpayer groups, environmental groups, insurance professionals and the housing industry, the House Financial Services Committee passed H.R. 253 by a unanimous, bipartisan vote on July 23, 2003. The bill was subsequently passed in the House by an overwhelming margin on November 20, 2003. The National Flood Insurance Program is now set to expire on June 30, 2004; it is critical that we act on this bill today.

Thanks to the hard work of my colleagues, there should be no doubt that this legislation will receive a favorable vote once again. The Senate bill is, in most respects, identical to the one we passed here in the House. That bill, H.R. 253, authorized funds to address severe repetitive loss properties for both the existing Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program and authorized a new pilot program to address these properties. Under the House bill, this trial pilot program addressed the properties in a simple, straightforward manner: the owner of a severe repetitive loss property would be charged a rate closer to the actuarial, risk-based rates for their national flood insurance policy if certain conditions were met. Safeguards were built into the system to ensure that homeowners would be protected. Through our bill, the number of repetitive flood loss properties would be decreased because FEMA would have the money and the means to take care of them.

S. 2238 adds a title creating certain policyholder protections designed to ensure swift action for the payment of claims in the event of a flood. In addition, the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will be tasked with promulgating regulations outlining an appeals process for policyholders with respect to claims, proofs of loss, and loss estimates related to flood insurance policies. And at the request of FEMA, the Senate has made minor changes regarding implementation of the flood mitigation programs originally set forth in the House bill.

On a personal note, perhaps the most appropriate change made by the Senate was in naming this legislation for Congressman DOUG BEREUTER, my good friend who is retiring from the House this year. This legislation is a testament to his hard work and to the dedication he has shown throughout his career to further the interests of not only his constituents but also the Nation as a whole and to the ideal of good government. Congressman BEREUTER worked tirelessly to craft this bill with Senators BUNNING and SARBANES as well as Ranking Member FRANK and Representatives BLUMENAUER and BAKER. Mr. BAKER was also particularly helpful in crafting this legislation and in providing a voice for his constituents in Louisiana and other states particularly hard-hit by repetitive flood losses.

It is important to note once again that the National Flood Insurance Program has been

long overdue for change. The Bunning-Bereuter-Blumenauer Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2004 addresses the problem of repetitive loss properties (buildings that flood regularly because of their location) and the threat such properties pose to the ability of the NFIP to meet obligations to policyholders without drawing on taxpayer funds. Repetitive loss properties are a problem in nearly every one of the fifty States and cost the NFIP approximately \$200 million each year, which is an unacceptable expense. One percent of all properties in the NFIP account for approximately 25 percent to 30 percent of all the NFIP losses. Repetitive loss properties have for too long exhausted the NFIP's funds and subverted the original intent of the program.

Despite the problems caused by repetitive flood loss properties, the NFIP is a program that provides important protections for homeowners who live on the Nation's floodplains. Though most of these homes have never flooded, the NFIP is a vital safeguard with a proven record of success. These much-needed reforms will enhance the program's effectiveness by requiring people living in flood prone areas to reduce their risk of flooding in a way that is not punitive and which saves the program and taxpayers money. This legislation should enjoy widespread bipartisan support in the Congress and will be welcomed by the people who work every day to control floods all across the country.

TRIBUTE TO DR. C. VINCENT BAKEMAN

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 25, 2004

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the life and legacy Dr. C. Vincent Bakeman, a co-founder of the Human Resources Development Institute, Inc. (HRDI), who devoted himself to improving our alcohol and chemical dependency treatment systems.

We are all aware of the national problem that is especially acute in inner-city areas across this great Nation. The shortage of healthcare professionals has left many underserved communities without access to healthcare, placing low- and middle-income families at even greater risk of suffering from medical conditions and disorders that could be averted.

True to its mission, HRDI has charted innovative healthcare solutions that continue to stabilize and strengthen families, neighborhoods and entire communities from Chicago to Las Vegas to Indianola, Mississippi, and points in between.

Additionally, through his efforts to empower those without healthcare, he formed partnerships with area institutions of higher learning to assist residents in acquiring the necessary skills and training central to competing in this new age of information and technology.

Many of our colleagues here in Congress have espoused the notion of expanding healthcare coverage. Dr. Bakeman lived it.

It is through community efforts as demonstrated by Dr. Bakeman and HRDI that we may be able to achieve a reality of accessible and affordable healthcare for all.