Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Village of Orchard Park Mayor Patricia Dickman, a genuine public servant and faithful community advocate, may her life in retirement be met with the many triumphs achieved in her years as Mayor.

FOR THE RELIEF OF THE PARENTS OF THERESA MARIE SCHIAVO

SPEECH OF

HON. JULIA CARSON
OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, March 20, 2005

Ms. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, the Schiavo family tragedy has touched the hearts of Americans across the country. This is a family that has for fifteen years intimately battled with what for most of us are distant fears. Now millions of us, in conversations at the office with our friends and colleagues and at the dinner table with our families, are trying to decide what we would do in their situation, what we would want for ourselves, and for our loved ones. It is a conversation we need to have as a nation. But it is a question that will remain unanswered unless that time comes when our families are faced with tragedy as the Schiavo family has been.

Today we can argue what we hope we would do in their situation, what we think we would want for ourselves, and what we think is right. But we do not know what it means to be a member of the Schiavo family. We in Congress can only pretend.

Can any of us even imagine the agony that this family has weathered over the past fifteen years? Can any of us here in Washington pretend to have the authority to decide which members of this family in Florida are “good” and which are “bad”? I have listened to some of my colleagues condemn Michael Schiavo, a man they have never met and do not know, as wicked. Some of my colleagues have suggested that this man they have never met, this man who has suffered immeasurably through this agonizing family tragedy, is motivated by selfishness and cruelty. Some have suggested that he has no respect for life. Let us see these accusations for what they are: a sick and shameful attempt to destroy a man’s character and to tear apart a family, all in the name of political gain.

My colleagues, this will be a day looked back upon with shame. It will be the day that 100 Senators and 435 Members of Congress and one President, none of whom are members of this family, none of whom have stood alongside Terri Schiavo over the hardships of the past 15 years, none of whom know her wishes, none of whom would have lifted a finger were it not for a sick sense of political opportunism. It will be the day these 536 strangers decided that the family wasn’t good enough, that it was time for 536 strangers to decide, without any evidence or personal connection, what was good for a family they have never met.

This is a choice we would never wish upon anyone, but which families must make between themselves and God alone. May Congress never again pretend to be part of such a covenant.

TRIBUTE TO LANDSOWNE CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF BALTIMORE COUNTY

HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN
OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 5, 2005

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to the Lansdowne Christian Church of Baltimore County marking its 100th year of celebrating Memorial Day Services. The Church, which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977 by the U.S. Department of Interior, is the only Church in the United States built to honor the men of the Grand Army of the Republic and the sacrifices they made to preserve the Union.

On May 14, 1905, the first annual Memorial Service for the Grand Army was held at the Lansdowne Christian Church. Memorial Day was established in the wake of the Civil War to remember and pay homage to all those who had died in service to our nation. The service on the last Sunday in May continues today. This year’s service will be held on May 29, 2005, continuing a tradition for which Church members and the community should be very proud.

Today, we are engaged in armed conflict in Iraq and in Afghanistan. Many of our soldiers have made the ultimate sacrifice, and it is important that we honor their commitment to freedom and democracy.

I hope my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives will join me in saluting the Lansdowne Christian Church for making duty, service and dedication to our nation a central focus of church life.

RECOGNIZING KEN SLAVENS OF SAINT HELENA, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON
OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 5, 2005

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my dear friend, Ken Slavens, of Saint Helena, California, for his 21 years of public service. His outstanding leadership and commitment have helped to make my hometown the incredible community that it is today.

Born and raised in Saint Helena, Ken’s appreciation, love, and devotion to protecting and preserving this small, unique community are obvious from his many years of dedicated service. With an innate knowledge of his community and unyielding compassion, Ken was elected to the office of City Council in 1994. His energy, drive, and undeniable hard work are only a few of the many reasons that he was appointed as Vice Mayor in 1997. Shortly thereafter in 1999, Ken was elected Mayor of Saint Helena.

Mr. Speaker, during his tenure on the City Council and as Mayor, Ken has been a strong advocate for Saint Helena on numerous boards throughout Napa County and California. These include the Long Range Water...
Manston England Air Base. Mr. McDowell was taken by the medics to the hospital, treated and released with a cane. The B–17 was so damaged that it never returned to action.

Last year, Mr. McDowell and his family approached me about getting his long overdue Purple Heart. Unfortunately, before I was able to present the Purple Heart to him, Mr. McDowell passed away.

Mr. Speaker, while it is unfortunate that Mr. McDowell is not alive to receive his Purple Heart, I know that his family will cherish the medal and his memory for the rest of their lives. Mr. McDowell’s story is emblematic of many who served in World War II and surely places him as a member of the “greatest generation.”

HONORING UNDERSHERIFF CURTIS L. WATSON

HON. BARBARA LEE OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 5, 2005

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, Mr. STARK and I rise today to honor the extraordinary contributions of Undersheriff Curtis L. Watson to the Alameda County Sheriff’s Department over the past 34 years. Curtis joined the department in 1970 and steadily climbed its ranks to become the undersheriff in 1993, providing excellent service throughout his tenure.

In 1970, Curtis had just completed a tour in the United States Air Force. On the advice of his brother, he applied for the Alameda County Sheriff’s Department, where he was hired as a sheriff’s deputy and assigned to work at Santa Rita Jail.

Curtis had worked his way up to the position of lieutenant at Santa Rita when he first made the acquaintance of Charles Plummer, the Alameda County Sheriff, in 1987. Curtis’s competence and confidence made a positive impression on the sheriff, who would remember him when their paths crossed again a few years later.

After advancing to captain and becoming the commanding officer of the North County Jail in Galveston, Curtis took the commander’s examination in April 1992, finishing with the highest score of any candidate and again catching the attention of Sheriff Plummer. By that time, Curtis had made such an impression that when the undersheriff position came open in 1993, Sheriff Plummer tapped him to fill it.

With his promotion to undersheriff, Curtis became not only the highest-ranking African American in the Alameda County Sheriff Department’s 152-year history but also the highest-ranking black sheriff’s official in the state of California.

Curtis served as undersheriff from 1993 until his retirement on March 24, 2005. Only one other undersheriff in the entire history of the Alameda County Sheriff’s Department served longer than Curtis’s 12 years in the position.

On the occasion of Curtis Watson’s retirement, we would like to honor his contributions to law and order in Alameda County over the past 34 years. He has served with distinction and dedication, breaking down barriers and forging new paths. We salute him for his commitment and dedication.

We have a responsibility to protect the most vulnerable among us. Though we sometimes are led astray, every man, woman and child is precious in God’s eyes. Terri’s family must be given the opportunity to give her the treatment and care she deserves.

It is vital that Congress pass this legislation; not just to protect Terri’s life, but also to avoid setting the disturbing precedent of ending human life against the wishes of someone’s family and those willing to give her care. What kind of statement would we have to make if we are not able to support the assistance of medical technology or the care of others? As many have stated, when it comes to life and death decisions we must always err on the side of life.

I regret I was not available to vote for S. 868. Had my vote been needed for passage, I would have returned immediately.