Mr. Speaker, we must speak out and act against this abominable disregard for human rights, human dignity, and human freedom just 90 miles from our shore. My Colleagues, we know how intense the repression, no matter how horrifically brutal the consequences of a dignified struggle for liberty, the totalitarian gulags are full of men and women of all backgrounds and ages who represent the best of the Cuban nation.

Mr. Speaker, we must speak out and act against this abominable disregard for human rights, human dignity, and human freedom just 90 miles from our shore. My Colleagues, we know how intense the repression, no matter how horrifically brutal the consequences of a dignified struggle for liberty, the totalitarian gulags are full of men and women of all backgrounds and ages who represent the best of the Cuban nation.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to express my gratitude to National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice for her leadership in this battle. She exemplifies the highest aspirations of this great country.

Mr. Speaker, Ben is an excellent example of hard work, dedication, and service to our country. He trained thousands of military linguists, served as a prisoner of war interrogator and French linguist, and sacrificed his life in service to our nation.

We honor the memory of Lance Corporal Nicholas David Larson and the dedication and bravery with which he served our nation and the people of Iraq.

IN HONOR OF MR. BENJAMIN DE LA SELVA

HON. SAM FARR
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, April 5, 2005

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Benjamin “Ben” De La Selva. Ben was born in Somoto, Nicaragua, in 1939. He immigrated to the United States in 1961, subsequently serving in the U.S. Army for six and a half years. In the mid-1960s he studied French and Polish at the Defense Language Institute, DLI, and then served a year in Vietnam from 1966-67 with the 173rd Airborne as Prisoner of War interrogator and French linguist. Ben was in Dakto, Central Highlands, at the onset of one of the Vietnam War’s bloodiest battles. After leaving the military and getting a college education through the GI Bill, Ben was hired at DLI, where he occupied numerous positions from 1972 to 2005.

During his rise from teacher to dean at DLI, Ben trained thousands of military linguists, guided several generations of language teachers and mentors, and mentored supervisors and managers who now occupy leadership positions. Moreover, he supervised every DLI language program and participated in the development of much needed Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Arabic curricula. During the last 20 consecutive years, Ben served as dean of every DLI resident school, a credit to his solid leadership qualities. As a dean, he participated in several pioneering initiatives including Team Teaching, the Faculty Personnel System, and the introduction of up-to-date teaching methods. Likewise, Ben was at the forefront of DLI’s giant leap to modern-day technology. Ben retired on January 3rd, 2005, but is still associated with the U.S. government in his capacity as President of the DLI Alumni Association, a non-profit organization he founded in November 2001.

Mr. Speaker, Ben is an excellent example of the immigrant young man who arrives in the USA with a high school diploma, serves in the military, gets an education through the GI Bill, pursues and flourishes in a governmental career, and 40 years later retires as an impeccable and distinguished officer. Ben truly believes he has achieved the American dream. He exemplifies the highest aspirations of this nation. I am proud to honor him today.

He began his service after graduating from Wheaton North High School in 2003. He was assigned to Company L, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA. Corporal Larson followed in the footsteps of his father, who served in the Navy during World War II. Teachers and administrators at Wheaton North High School described Nicholas as quiet and focused and an intense student. And always knowing he wanted to be a Marine.

Lance Corporal Larson was a young man of only 19 when he made the ultimate sacrifice in service to his country. Our deepest sympathies to his beloved family: David and Anne Larson, and his sister Katie Larson. The entire community joins in mourning Nicholas’s loss.

We honor the memory of Lance Corporal Nicholas David Larson and the dedication and bravery with which he served our nation and the people of Iraq.

IN HONOR OF MR. BERNARD “BEN” DE LA SELVA

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OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, April 5, 2005

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