EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE EXEMPLARY WORK OF LENA F. BLALOCK

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Judge Lena F. Blalock of Pleasanton, Texas for her dedication and commitment to community service.

Judge Lena Blalock has made the people of her district proud, by tirelessly dedicating her time to the Municipal Court for 25 years. Judge Blalock, originally from Silverton, Texas, has been the presiding Judge of the Pleasanton Municipal Court since 1985 and works day after day for the betterment of the Pleasanton community.

By working as a nurse during World War II, working for the police department as a dispatcher, and setting up a business in Pleasanton specializing in TV and radio equipment, Judge Blalock has lived an outstanding life of service to the Country and the community.

Judge Blalock has also been a member of the Church of Christ since 1946, and enjoys traveling, photography and crocheting. In her spare time, she also enjoys visiting senior citizens camps in the fall and spring.

Judge Blalock has demonstrated great dedication to community service and I am honored to recognize her accomplishments here today.

INTRODUCTION OF THE AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES RESEARCH ACT

HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2005

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce today a bill that is a critical component in our efforts to combat aquatic invasive species—the Aquatic Invasive Species Research Act. This legislation is similar to legislation that was reported out of the House Science Committee in the 108th Congress. It creates a comprehensive research program that supports federal, state and local efforts to prevent invasive species from ever entering our waterways, as well as detection, control and eradication efforts once they are here. It complements a bill introduced today by Mr. GILCHREST in the House and Senators COLLINS and LEVIN in the Senate to reauthorize the National Invasive Species Act. This legislation is a critical component in our battle against these harmful and extremely damaging pests.

In undertaking this effort, I have found that many people wonder—"What is an invasive species? Why it is so crucial to keep them out of United States?" It is important that we understand these questions so that we can appreciate the scope of the threat that invasive species pose to our economy and environment.

The introduction of non-native species is not new to the United States. People have brought non-native plants and animals into the United States, both intentionally and unintentionally, for a variety of reasons, since the New World was discovered. Some examples include the introduction of nutria (which is a rodent similar to a muskrat) by trappers to bolster the domestic fur industry, and the introduction of the purple loosestrife plant to add rich color to gardens. Both nutria and purple loosestrife are now serious threats to wetlands. Non-native species may also be introduced unintentionally, such as through species hitching rides in ships, crates, planes, or soil coming into the United States. For example, zebra mussels, first discovered in Lake St. Clair near Detroit in the late 1980s, came into the Great Lakes through ballast water from ships.

Not all species brought into the country are harmful to local economies, people and/or the environment. In fact, most non-native species do not survive because the environment does not meet their biological needs. In many cases, however, the new species will find favorable conditions (such as a lack of natural enemies or an environment that fosters propagation) that allow it to survive and thrive in a new ecosystem.

Only a small fraction of these non-native species become an "invasive species"—defined as a species that is both non-native to the ecosystem and whose introduction causes or may cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. However, this small fraction can cause enormous damage, both to our economy and our environment.

The economic damage includes the cost of control, damage to property values, health costs and other factors. Just one species can cost government and private citizens billions of dollars. For example, zebra mussels have cost the various entities in the Great Lakes basin an estimated $3 billion during the past 10 years for cleaning water intake pipes, purchasing filtration equipment, and so forth. Sea lamprey control measures in the Great Lakes cost approximately $10 million to $15 million annually; and, on top of these expenses, there is the cost of lost fisheries due to this invader. In fact, invasive species now are second only to habitat loss as threats to endangered species.

Given the enormous economic and environmental impacts these invaders cause, two clear goals emerge: First, we need to focus more resources and energy into dealing with this problem at all levels of government; second, our best strategy for dealing with invasive species is to focus these resources to prevent them from ever entering the United States. Spending millions of dollars to prevent species introductions will save billions of dollars in control, eradication and restoration efforts once the species become established. In fact, one theme is central to both Mr. GILCHREST's bill and this legislation. It is an old adage, but one worth following—"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

To successfully carry out this strategy, we need careful, concerted management of this problem, supported by research at every step. For example, we know that we must do more to regulate the pathways by which these invaders enter the United States (ships, aquaculture, etc.), which is an important component of Mr. GILCHREST's legislation. However, research must inform us as to which of these pathways pose the greatest threat and which techniques used to manage each pathway are effective. This legislation would help develop this understanding through the ecological and pathway surveys conducted under the bill. In fact, research underlies every management decision aimed at detecting, preventing, controlling and eradicating invasive species; educating citizens and stakeholders; and ensuring that resources are optimally deployed to increase the effectiveness of government programs. These items are also reflected in the legislation, which I will now describe in more detail.

The bill is divided into six main parts. The first three parts outline an ecological and pathway research program, combining surveys and experimentation, to be established by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center and the United States Geological Survey. This program is focused on understanding what invasive species are present in our waterways, which pathways they use to enter our waterways, how they establish themselves once they are here and whether or not invasions are getting better or worse based on decisions to regulate pathways. In carrying out this program, the three principal agencies will develop standardized protocols for carrying out the ecological and pathway surveys that are called for under the legislation. In addition, they will coordinate their efforts to establish longterm surveys sites so we have strong baseline information. This program also includes an important grant program so that academic researchers and state agencies can carry out the surveys at diverse sites distributed geographically around the country. This will give federal, state and local managers a more holistic view of the rates and patterns of invasions of aquatic invasive species into the United States. Lastly, the principal agencies will coordinate their efforts and pull all of this information together and analyze it to help determine whether or not decisions to manage these pathways are effective. This will inform policymakers as to which pathways pose the greatest threat and whether or not they need to change the way these pathways are managed.

The fourth part of the bill contains two programs to develop, demonstrate and verify technologies to prevent, control and eradicate invasive species. The first is an Environmental Protection Agency grant program focused on developing, demonstrating and verifying environmentally sound technologies to control and eradicate aquatic invasive species. This research program will give federal, state and local managers more tools to combat invasive

species that are also environmentally sound. The second is expansion both in terms of scope and funding of a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Fish and Wildlife Service program geared toward demonstrating technologies that prevent invasive species from being introduced by ships. This is the federal government's only program that is focused solely on helping develop viable technologies to treat ballast water. It has been woefully underfunded in the past and deserves more attention.

The fifth part of the bill focuses on setting up research to directly support the Coast Guard's efforts to set standards for the treatment of ships with respect to preventing them from introducing invasive species. Ships are a major pathway by which invasive species are unintentionally introduced; the ballast water discharged by ships is of particular concern. One of the key issues that has hampered efforts to deal with the threats that ships pose is the lack of standards for how ballast water must be treated when it is discharged. The Coast Guard has had a very difficult time developing these standards since the underlying law that support their efforts (the National Invasive Species Act) did not contain a research component to support their work. This legislation provides that missing piece.

Finally, the sixth and final part supports our ability to identify invaders once they arrive. Over the past couple of decades, the number of scientists working in systematics and taxonomy, expertise that is fundamental to identifying species, has decreased steadily. In order to address this problem, the legislation sets up a National Science Foundation program to give grants for academic research in systematics and taxonomy with the goal of maintaining U.S. expertise in these disciplines.

Taken together, both my bill and Mr. GILCHREST's bill represent an important step forward in our efforts to prevent invasive species from ever crossing our borders and combat them once they are arrive. New invaders are arriving in the United States each day, bringing with them even more burden on taxpayers and the environment. We simply cannot afford to wait any longer to deal with this problem, and so I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

HONORING RABBI MICHAEL ROBINSON OF SONOMA COUNTY

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2005

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Rabbi Michael Robinson of Sonoma County who has dedicated his life to the cause of social justice at home and around the world. From the American civil rights movement to the Nicaraguan Contra war to the Israel-Palestinian conflict Rabbi Robinson has been on the front lines promoting peace and the improvement of humanity. On April 14 he is being presented with the Jack Green Civil Liberties Award by the ACLU of Sonoma County for his lifetime of achievements in this arena. Nobody deserves this honor more than Michael Robinson.

Born in North Carolina, Robinson received his B.A. from the University of Cincinnati and attended North Carolina State College before enlisting in the Navy during World War II. He served in the Pacific and became a pacifist immediately after this experience.

In 1952, after completing a course of study at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Robinson became the first North Carolina native to be ordained as a rabbi. He later earned his doctoral degree from the New York Theological Seminary and served in temples in Seattle and Pomona as well as 29 years as an activist leader at Temple Israel in Westchester, New York. During the civil rights movement, the synagogue raised money to help rebuild the black churches that had been burned in the South and finance the van used by the Freedom Riders to tour the South. Rabbi Robinson marched with Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma, and expressed his convictions with these words: "When I was 10 years old I began sitting on the back seat of the bus with 'colored people.' I never returned to the front seat."

After moving to Sonoma County with his wife Ruth, Rabbi Robinson served Shomrei Torah and is credited with growing the congregation from 30 families to now the largest Jewish congregation in Santa Rosa. Retired since 1996, Rabbi Robinson holds the title of Rabbi Emeritus at both Temple Israel and Shomrei Torah.

In addition to promoting affirmative action, same sex marriage, affordable housing, and other equality issues, Robinson has worked against nuclear war, apartheid, and all forms of injustice. He is known locally for his involvement in the Sonoma County Task Force on Homelessness, Children's Village, the Living Wage Coalition, Habitat for Humanity, the Sonoma County Peace and Justice Center, and the Sonoma Land Trust.

A founding member of Angry White Guys for Affirmative Action in 1996, Rabbi Robinson's words still resonate: "I hope that my anger will not dissipate until justice is done and every man, woman and child has equal access to all the privileges of a democratic society and receives equal respect."

Mr. Speaker, I share that passion and also Rabbi Robinson's hope that we as a Nation can become better people and create a just society. Michael Robinson is a model for all of us—from the ACLU of Sonoma County to those in distant lands who strive for basic rights. His words as well as his deeds are an inspiration that none who have come into contact with him will ever forget.

THANKING MR. WAYNE MYERS FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE HOUSE

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2005

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, on the occasion of his retirement in March 2005, we rise to thank Mr. Wayne Myers for 31 years of outstanding service to the United States government, with the majority of it here in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Wayne began his government career in 1967 as a soldier in the U.S. Army where he was trained as a combat radio repairman and served a tour of duty in South Vietnam. Upon being honorably discharged in 1970, he continued his education in the electronics field. After 4 years, Wayne became a technician at the National Air and Space Museum and later transferred to the National Gallery of Art. In 1979 he joined the engineering staff of the House Recording Studio as it began the historic television coverage of House floor proceedings. For the past 25 years Wayne Myers has led by his quiet dependable example. He has been a selfless team player. His faith has given him the inner peace to work through the most tenuous times without complaint while still maintaining a great sense of humor.

On behalf of the entire House community, we extend congratulations to Wayne for his many years of dedication and outstanding contributions to the U.S. House of Representatives. We wish him many wonderful years in fulfilling his retirement dreams.

IN HONOR OF GAY, LESBIAN, STRAIGHT ALLIANCES AND THE NATIONAL DAY OF SILENCE

HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 13, 2005

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join hundreds of thousands of young people across the Nation to "break the silence" surrounding the scourge of anti-gay bullying and harassment in our schools. In more than 4,000 schools in all 50 states and Puerto Rico, students have taken a day-long vow of silence to peacefully and poignantly draw attention to the abuse routinely faced by their lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) classmates. Over 450,000 students are expected to participate in this year's National Day of Silence.

This ever-growing, student-led effort, cosponsored by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) and the United States Student Association, is a clarion call to parents, teachers, and school administrators to help end the all too common practice of dismissing or discounting student-on-student harassment. It is increasingly clear that young people of conscience will not sit idly by as their LGBT friends or classmates are preyed upon by bullies and bigots. They will stand up and speak out against such bigotry and intolerance, even if the adults in their lives will not.

We have all heard the saying, "sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me," which has been used for generations by countless children to fend off verbal attacks from their peers. Unfortunately, the notion that such verbal bullying or harassment is a "normal" and unavoidable part of growing up remains a widely accepted attitude amongst school administrators and teachers in this country. Too often, adults tend to dismiss or even romanticize schoolyard bullying as some sort of coming of age ritual or an inevitable "right of passage." Today, I join with the growing chorus of voices, including informed educators, children's rights advocates and students, who reject such anachronistic, survival-of-the-fittest thinking.

The uncomfortable truth is that "names" and labels can indeed hurt. For sensitive or vulnerable young people—particularly LGBT youth who are already struggling with their sexuality in a cultural and social context that often is overwhelmingly hostile to it—such verbal