

abuse, and the social and emotional isolation that often accompanies it, can leave lasting emotional scars.

And too many schools have a culture that fosters and sustains a hostile environment for these youth. Surveys indicate that the average high school student hears 25 anti-gay slurs daily; 97 percent of high school students regularly hear homophobic remarks. Even more alarming are the results of GLSEN's most recent National School Climate Survey, which found that 84 percent of LGBT students had suffered some form of abuse and 82.9 percent of these reported that adults never or rarely intervened when present. It is unsurprising that such a pervasive atmosphere of harassment takes its toll. LGBT students are far more likely to skip classes, drop out of school and, most disturbingly, attempt suicide.

According to numerous studies, LGBT teens are 2 to 3 times more likely to attempt suicide. Such statistics are a sobering reminder that we must redouble our efforts to provide our children with safe and secure learning environments. No student should be harassed or attacked simply because they are perceived as different, or because they have had the courage to openly acknowledge their sexual orientation.

Through their actions, the student organizers and participants of the Day of Silence set an example for their peers and their elders alike. Their silence has spoken volumes about the need for us to recognize the corrosive climate of fear and intimidation that any kind of bullying creates. Our schools should be havens for learning and personal growth, not arenas for conflict and harassment. For their courage, their compassion, and their tenacity, I honor all those who took this vow of silence today.

TRIBUTE TO DR. SHIRLEY JACKSON, PRESIDENT OF RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

**HON. JOHN W. OLVER**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 13, 2005*

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the educational leadership of Dr. Shirley Jackson. As university president, Dr. Jackson has helped shape Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, RPI, into one of the premier technological universities in the world.

A key aspect of Dr. Jackson's effort was the establishment of the "Rensselaer Plan," a collaborative roadmap joining together faculty, staff, students and alumni in an effort to make RPI an academic mecca within the Northeast region. During her tenure, she has increased the level of educational services the university can provide students in part by securing a \$360 million unrestricted gift to RPI, one of the largest single gifts ever given to an American university, and by doubling annual fundraising in the last 3 years.

The influx of new financial resources during Dr. Jackson's tenure has spurred the new construction of state-of-the-art research facilities, including the Center for Biotechnology and Interdisciplinary Studies and the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center. These construction projects have cor-

responded with increases in National Institute of Health, NIH, research funding from \$400,000 in 1999 to \$30 million in 2004. These increases have allowed the university to hire over 100 new faculty members and expand research activities. Students benefit from these first class facilities and improved student-to-faculty ratio while having the opportunity to be involved in cutting edge research.

Again, I commend Dr. Shirley Jackson for her remarkable accomplishments in keeping RPI, my alma mater, a top-tier technological university.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF PEARSALL CITY COUNCILMAN CONRAD CARRASCO, JR.

**HON. HENRY CUELLAR**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 13, 2005*

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the distinguished public service of Pearsall City Councilman Conrad D. Carrasco, Jr.

Conrad Carrasco has long been an established part of Frio County's legal community. He entered public service in 1980, and served as Justice of the Peace for Precinct No. 3 through 1990. The Justice of the Peace is the judicial officer who works most closely with average citizens, and Mr. Carrasco's duties included the issuance of warrants and the settlement of small claims disputes between citizens. In this role, as in his other roles, Conrad Carrasco served the people of Frio County with distinction.

He was elected to the City Council of Pearsall in May, 2000. Mr. Carrasco has worked while on the council to safeguard Frio County's natural beauty and to ensure that the city is run in an accountable and effective manner. He serves in Place No. 3 on the Council, for a term that extends through May 2006.

Finally, he has distinguished himself as a businessman. He has been employed with KBJ's Loan Company since 1995, and continues to be a valuable part of his community's financial sector.

Conrad Carrasco has accumulated an impressive record of success in business and service to the people of Frio County. He is an important resource for his community, and I am proud to have had this opportunity to thank him.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NATIONAL INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL ACT

**HON. VERNON J. EHLERS**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 13, 2005*

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to codify the Executive Order that established the Invasive Species Council and gave the Council responsibility for coordinating all invasive species activities across the federal government (Executive Order #13112, issued in February 1999). Invasive species, such as the snakehead fish and zebra mussel, cause an enormous eco-

nomical, ecological and human health toll on the United States every year. There are over 20 different federal agencies involved in prevention, eradication, control, monitoring, research and outreach efforts to deal with the threat of invasive species, and this Executive effort seeks to make these efforts more coordinated, effective and cost-efficient. Better management of invasive species efforts across federal agencies is critical to an effective response to this threat, and the Executive Order was the right first step. However, it is only the first step. Congress now needs to pass this legislation to give the Council more authority to effectively meet this threat.

Since its inception, the Council has made progress in achieving its mandate. In particular, in January 2001 the Council issued the National Management Plan to provide a general blueprint of goals and actions for federal agencies to better deal with invasive species. While this broad plan lacks detail in some areas, it helps focus the various federal efforts on common goals and coordinated actions. In addition, the Council established a federal advisory committee consisting of 32 members from a broad array of stakeholders. The advisory committee has met several times in order to provide guidance on the development of the National Management Plan and on federal agency actions regarding invasive species in general.

While the Council has had some success, its authority to coordinate the actions of federal agencies has been limited. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has recognized this problem, reporting that agencies did not incorporate the components of the National Management Plan into their annual performance plans. In addition, the GAO recommended that the Council study whether or not a lack of legislative authority has hampered its mission. Key agencies of the Council have already recognized this lack of authority as problematic and have supported codification of the Council in testimony before a November 2002 joint hearing of the House Resources and House Science Committees on aquatic invasive species.

The legislation I am introducing today essentially keeps the existing structure of the Council intact, while at the same time it addresses issues raised by the GAO by giving the Council a clear statutory mandate.

First, the legislation maintains the Executive Order's statement of administration policy that federal agencies should not undertake actions that may lead to the introduction or further spread of invasive species without careful consideration of the costs that the proposed action may cause. The legislation requires that the Council on Environmental Quality, in conjunction with the Council, issue guidelines for federal agencies to help them consider the consequences of any proposed action. The intent of this provision is to create a common set of guidelines by which all federal agencies can measure their actions, not to give individuals a private right of action against government agencies that take actions regarding invasive species.

Second, the legislation makes some modifications to the existing institutional structure of the Council. The membership of the Council will remain the same; however the legislation updates the membership, as described by the Executive Order, to reflect additional agencies that have been added since 1999. It also