

the state assessment systems. It also rewards schools that score in the top 10 percent on state assessments. The faculty and students at Earl Warren Middle School and Twin Oaks Elementary School have demonstrated strong leadership, clear vision and mission, excellent teaching and curriculum, policies and practices that keep their schools safe for learning, expanded involvement of families, and evidence that both schools help all students achieve high standards.

I am immensely proud of those involved whose outstanding and tireless work in the interest of better education has now been recognized through the National Blue Ribbon Schools program. This is particularly close to my heart, because, as a former teacher and coach, and as a father, one of my passions is improving education so that every American can have a fighting chance to achieve the American Dream.

And while these two schools in my district have now been recognized as National Blue Ribbon Schools, the real winners are all of the children, parents, teachers and citizens who have all been challenged through this recognition to successfully improve education in all of their local communities.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF TRUSTEE JUSTIN R.
RODRIGUEZ OF THE SAN ANTONIO
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 14, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the exemplary public service of Justin R. Rodriguez, District 7 Trustee of the San Antonio Independent School District.

Justin R. Rodriguez, a long time Texas resident, was born in San Antonio in 1974. In addition to his current career in education, he also has extensive legal experience in both his own law practice and through his former job as Assistant District Attorney.

Mr. Rodriguez understands the needs of our community. As Trustee, his goal is to prepare our children for both higher education and for the future workforce. Setting out to help end teenage pregnancy, and working hard to improve high school graduation rates, Justin Rodriguez believes in our kids.

He is the recipient of numerous awards, most notably the Bruce F. Beilfuss Memorial Award for outstanding service to the University of Wisconsin Law School. Justin R. Rodriguez has also served as the President of the Jefferson Neighborhood Association.

Justin Rodriguez currently lives in San Antonio with his wife Victoria and three children: Miranda, Aidan, and Olivia.

It is an honor to recognize the hard work of Justin R. Rodriguez of the San Antonio Independent School District. His dedication to the education of our children will help to insure the futures of our youngest citizens.

COMMEMORATING THE CITY OF
MADISON HEIGHTS, MICHIGAN

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 14, 2005

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the City of Madison Heights, Michigan, on the occasion of its 50th anniversary of its incorporation as a city.

On January 17, 1955, the residents of the east side of Royal Oak Township voted for the incorporation of the City of Madison Heights and elected nine commissioners to draft a charter for the new city. The Charter Commission drafted its first charter within six months of incorporation. The draft charter was presented to the citizens at a June 6th election and was defeated. A Revised Charter was again presented to the citizens on December 6, 1955, and it was approved, becoming the tenth city government in South Oakland County. At that time, the 7¼ square-mile City was the second largest in South Oakland County. Madison Heights ranked as fifth-highest populated City in South Oakland County. The first City Hall was located at 26305 John R Road, the former township offices. On April 5, 1963, a new municipal building was constructed which is on the present location at 300 West Thirteen Mile Road.

The City of Madison Heights was named a "High Tech Hot Spot" by *Detroit Magazine*. Nestled in the heart of Automation Alley, the newest technology cluster in the United States, Madison Heights offers lifestyle and economic benefits to its residents. There are more than 1,300 commercial and industrial businesses and services within the City and the City is proud to have a majority of small businesses, as well as more than 100 major companies within its borders.

The Madison Heights City motto is "The City of Progress" and it's well deserved. Over 31,000 people call Madison Heights home and enjoy the many benefits of living in a full-service and forward-thinking community. The city leadership has been central to providing growth as well as maintaining a sense of community.

As the city of Madison Heights celebrates this auspicious occasion, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating its citizens as they celebrate the past and focus on the future.

BLINDNESS DOES NOT PREVENT
CHRISTIAN PEREZ FROM BECOMING
SPELLING BEE CHAMPION
OF IMPERIAL VALLEY!

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 14, 2005

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the achievement of Christian Perez, an eighth grade student at Bill E. Young Middle School in Calipatria, a small city in Imperial County, California.

Christian, who is 14, recently participated in the first ever regional Scripps Howard Spelling Bee in Imperial County. As most are aware, the winner of the regional Scripps Howard Spelling Bee moves on to the nationals held

here in Washington, D.C. to face students from across the country.

To prepare for the Spelling Bee, contestants, like Christian, dedicate a large portion of their young lives to the Herculean task of memorizing and learning thousands of words, which in itself is worthy of Congressional recognition.

Despite stiff competition and some very tense moments, Christian won the regional Spelling Bee upon correctly spelling "synapse." The 170 people who were watching the Spelling Bee at the Southwest Performing Arts Theater in El Centro gave Christian a standing ovation.

When asked about the competition, Christian said, "she felt relieved as soon as the competition was over and . . . her only dilemma might be which sister to take to nationals in early June."

Christian's story, however, doesn't end there. Unlike other contestants, who had a wide assortment of dictionaries and word lists to review, Christian's preparation was a little more arduous, as all of her study materials had to be in Braille. Fortunately, Christian did not let lack of sight stand in her way of becoming the spelling champion of Imperial County!

INTRODUCTION OF THE "VICTIMS
OF CRIME FAIRNESS ACT"

HON. ROB SIMMONS

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 14, 2005

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Victims of Crime Week and to introduce legislation to help crime victims and their families.

The Victims of Crime Act, or VOCA, was a tremendous victory in the fight to aid those affected by crime. It established a trust fund composed of criminal fines, forfeited bail bonds, penalty fees and special assessments collected by the U.S. Attorney's Offices, U.S. Courts and Federal Bureau of Prisons. These dollars come from federal criminals, not from taxpayers.

Money from this fund is used for a variety of services such as crisis intervention, emergency shelter, emergency transportation, counseling, and criminal justice advocacy. There are approximately 4,400 agencies that depend upon VOCA to provide services to 3.6 million crime victims a year. Currently, VOCA is the only federal program that supports services to victims of all types of crimes including homicide fatalities, domestic violence, child abuse, drunk driving, elder financial exploitation, identity theft, rape, and robbery. These services are essential to helping people cope with their victimization and move on with their lives.

Sadly, a spending cap was installed on the VOCA trust fund. In fiscal year 2005, over \$800 million was deposited into the fund. Due to the spending cap, only \$620 million will be distributed to the states this year. While the balance of VOCA sits unused, state crime victim assistance programs struggle to remain fully funded. My legislation, the "Victims of Crime Fairness Act" would eliminate this spending cap and direct the money toward its original intention, helping victims of crime.