

they should have raised them with the regulators. After all, MON 863 isn't new, having been approved to be as safe as conventional maize by nine other global authorities since 2003."

THE 85TH BIRTHDAY OF HELEN
COLLINS FOOTE

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 24, 2005

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, Mr. HOYER and I rise today to honor Helen Foote, a woman of faith, family, a selfless spirit and infectious laughter.

Ms. Foote was born to the late Reverend Benjamin Collins and Henrietta Collins in South River, Maryland. One of eight children, Helen received her education in a one-room school and spent her free time like most children, fishing, hunting and picking apples from the trees in a nearby orchard. On Sundays, Helen and her cousins spent time learning the art of playing the piano. It was here, during those lessons, her already well-known laughter earned her the nickname "KeeKee" embodying the sound of her continuous and infectious laugh.

As she grew up, Ms. Foote developed a reputation for spreading joy both through her laugh and through her altruistic nature. Whether helping wallpaper her parent's bedroom, caring for her ailing mother or donating her time to her church, Helen Foote was the very model of selfless dedication. In fact, her benevolence eventually led Hope Memorial St. Mark United Methodist Church to name her Mother of the Year in 2004. And as a mother of five daughters, one stepdaughter, 10 grandchildren, 5 step-grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren, 6 step-great-grandchildren and 1 great-great-grandchild, that award was well-earned.

The daughter of a Reverend, religion always remained a pivotal aspect of Ms. Foote's family life. At a young age she attended Chews United Methodist Church in Owensville, Maryland. In her later years she became a member of Hope Chapel now referred to as Hope Memorial St. Mark United Methodist Church. It was here Ms. Foote served as a Communion Steward, an Usher and a member of the United Methodist Women.

Today you can still find Ms. Foote doing the things she loves best: working in her yard, cooking meals for her family, rooting for her beloved Baltimore Orioles, and, occasionally, wallpapering a bedroom.

Helen Foote is truly a blessing to all she encounters. She is an inspiration, a foundation for the young and dedicated, and a distinguished and divine family woman. Helen Foote is truly a woman of strength and I am honored to rise today and honor her in this Congress.

THE FAIR LAND TRANSFER
COMPENSATION ACT OF 2005

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 24, 2005

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Fair Land Transfer Compensa-

tion Act, a bill for fee simple transfer of certain federal lands to the District of Columbia to provide partial in-kind compensation for the federally imposed structural balance documented in a 2003 GAO report to be "between \$470 million and up to more than \$1.1 billion." My bill would transfer 65.73 acres of land in Southeast Washington, D.C. known as Reservation 13 and the parcel known as Poplar Point, also in Southeast. The bill introduced today would assist in providing the compensation that would be authorized by H.R. 1586, the Fair Federal Compensation Act (FFCA) introduced by the bipartisan House regional delegation and me in April. The FFCA would authorize an annual federal contribution of \$800 million (to increase annually with the consumer price index) to partially compensate the city and relieve a dangerous structural imbalance.

The extensively documented GAO report confirming exclusive federal responsibility for the District's structural imbalance and the bipartisan sponsorship of the FFCA demonstrate the need for federal action. However, neither the administration nor the Congress has responded, despite the District's continuing apprehension and repeated introduction of the FFCA. Today's bill providing valuable land to partially compensate the District would mark the first significant federal response to the FFCA.

The District of Columbia has had administrative control of Reservation 13, a GSA property, for 150 years and has used the parcel for the D.C. General Hospital, the District of Columbia jail, and other public facilities. Poplar Point is a strip of land owned by the National Park Service but has never been developed for use as a park.

The transfer authorized in this bill has several advantages for the District and for the federal government: an immediate benefit in partial payment that the District has long sought from the federal government to compensate the city for the structural imbalance; satisfaction, through the transfer of valuable federal land, of some of the responsibility the GAO reports that the federal government bears for the District's structural imbalance; the highest and best use for underused land that the District desires for mixed uses that are unavailable if the District continues to have administrative control but not ownership; a continuing revenue stream in the nature of an annual contribution from investments the District will be able to attract following transfer of the land; and compliance with the Federal Property Act (FPA) requirement that the federal government receive value for the transfer. The bill requires an appraisal and estimates of the financial benefit to the District that are necessary to determine the extent to which the bill would reduce the federal government's responsibility for the structural deficit.

The federal government has never used the parcels in my bill, and has no intention of doing so. At the same time, the District is unable to get value from this strategically located land in the city. Achieving maximum use of available sites located in the nation's capital, where the federal government owns and occupies the most valuable land, is essential to maintaining the financial stability of the District of Columbia.

This bill would compensate the District for some of the costs responsible of the structural imbalance which include the federal removal

from the tax rolls of more than 40 percent of District's land for federal and other purposes; services provided by the District to 200,000 federal employees, notwithstanding a ban on taxation of commuters, most of whom are federal employees; and the District's responsibility for several state costs, although the city is not a state and lacks the broad tax base of a state.

The costs to the District to cover this structural deficit are unsustainable. Among the most serious are the city's debt service, the highest in the country; its taxes, among the highest; and deferral of major capital improvements for vital facilities such as schools and for roads, a major factor inhibiting economic and population stability and growth.

The existence, source and danger of the structural deficit imposed by federal mandates have been fully acknowledged and are no longer debatable. In addition to the definitive GAO report and the findings of the District's Chief Financial Officer, the details are reported in two other studies (McKinsey, March 2002, requested by the Federal City Council consisting of regional business representatives; and Brookings, October 2002, led by Alice Rivlin, former director of the CBO and of the OMB).

According to the GAO, the only available options to eliminate the federally imposed deficit are "to expand the District's tax base or to provide additional financial support." The bill I introduce today will "expand the District's tax base," creating a continuing revenue stream because ownership will allow the District to get the highest and best use of valuable land through its own development initiative. I ask that the House begin the process of compensating the District for the federal deficit carried by the city by enacting the Fair Land Transfer Compensation Act.

A TRIBUTE TO RABBI LEONARD
AND MRS. CAROLYNNE GUTTMAN

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 24, 2005

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the National Council of Young Israel Shofar Award recipient Rabbi Leonard Guttman and his wife, Carolynne, and pay tribute to their involvement and commitment to the Young Israel movement and to worldwide Jewry.

Rabbi Leonard B. Guttman Esq. is an Assistant Vice President for Intergovernmental Relations at the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation, the largest public health system in the United States. His prime responsibility is to serve as an advocate in Washington for New York's publicly funded hospitals and its over 1.3 million patients. While new to the Young Israel Ohab Zedek of North Riverdale-Yonkers, in 1988-1989 he worked at the National Council of Young Israel where one of his responsibilities was serving as editor of the Young Israel Viewpoint. He has also been an adjunct Professor at the Borough of Manhattan Community College and Touro College and an Assistant Commissioner of the New York City Department for the Aging. From 1994-1996, he served as First Deputy Commissioner/General Counsel at the New York

City Commission for the United Nations and Consular Corps. He often worked behind the scenes to help Israel and Jewish individuals who are suffering.

Rabbi Guttman is active in a vast array of non-profit organizations. Among these activities, he serves on the Board of the American Friends of the Sanz Laniado Medical Center (Netanya, Israel), which awarded him and his wife its Community Service Award in May 2000, and also on the board of the Metropolitan Council of the American Jewish Congress. Since 1997, Rabbi Guttman has quietly taught a Torah class at the United Nations for its Judaica Club. He has published articles in *Midstream*, *New York Affairs*, *Congress Monthly* and *The Jewish Press* on issues as varied as the Holocaust, Islam and Jewish and Communal affairs and has also lectured extensively. Carolynne, originally from Toronto, Canada, comes from a distinguished family active in Jewish and Communal affairs both in Toronto and Houston, Texas where she spent her formative years. A known expert on medical reimbursements, she serves as billing manager at New Rochelle Radiology.

Mr. Speaker, I have been fortunate to witness the revitalization of the National Council of Young Israel (NCYI). Nationally, the Departments of Synagogue and Rabbinic Services and the Women's Division and the Youth Department provide Young Israel congregations with much appreciated support. When an Orthodox synagogue needs assistance, NCYI is known as the organization to contact. On the international scene, NCYI is at the forefront of speaking out in support of the State of Israel, and to ensure the return of Israel's soldiers who are missing in action. NCYI has spearheaded a campaign to provide the Israel Defense Forces with Torah Scrolls for its troops who are in mobile and isolated posts. NCYI has delivered over 100 Torah scrolls and has not only facilitated but also encouraged many other individuals and organizations to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is incumbent upon this body to recognize the accomplishments of Rabbi & Mrs. Guttman for their outstanding efforts in the betterment of the Jewish community and the City of New York.

**BUSINESS CHECKING FREEDOM
ACT OF 2005**

SPEECH OF

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2005

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Business Checking Freedom Act of 2005, H.R. 1224. Among other things, H.R. 1224 would repeal the prohibition against banks paying interest on checking accounts and authorize the Federal Reserve to pay interest on reserve balances maintained by depository institutions at Federal Reserve Banks. The bill is almost identical to previous legislation on the subject passed by the House, including H.R. 758, which passed in 2003.

H.R. 1224 contains some long overdue changes. I am particularly pleased that this legislation will permit small businesses to earn interest on their checking account balances. Individuals have been able to receive interest

on checking accounts for some time, and small businesses, many of which are individually owned and operated, should have the same ability to receive an equitable return on their checking deposits.

Small businesses face an array of barriers to accessing the capital they need for start-up, operation and expansion. One of these barriers is the Depression-era law that prohibits interest-bearing checking accounts. The law, enacted as part of the Banking Act of 1933, was meant to keep banks solvent during the Great Depression. Almost 70 years later, the law is still in effect, despite evidence that it is no longer valid—or necessary.

In fact, a 1996 joint report issued by the Federal Reserve Board, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, and the Office of Thrift Supervision stated that the law barring payment on business checking accounts “no longer serves a public purpose.” H.R. 1224 effectively repeals this ban and permits small businesses to earn interest on their checking accounts.

Similar to past House bills, H.R. 1224 also includes a section entitled Rules of Construction, which ensure that the existing regulatory treatment of certain services and benefits provided by banks in lieu of interest on escrow accounts maintained to complete the settlement of real estate closing transactions remains as it is today.

Currently, the Federal Reserve's Regulation Q permits banks to offer services and benefits in lieu of interest to depositors. It also specifically provides that the provision or the receipt of such services and benefits does not constitute interest. Using this option, title companies and agents receive bank services, such as free safe deposit and night depository facilities and low-interest loans, in lieu of interest.

This arrangement lowers the cost of maintaining real estate escrows, which in turn lowers the cost of these services to customers of title companies and title agents. H.R. 1224 does not change Regulation Q or any regulatory standard regarding the definition of interest. Rather, it ensures the continued delivery of cost-effective real estate closing services.

H.R. 1224 provides for a long overdue change to federal banking laws that will enable small businesses to gain parity with larger firms that are already able to essentially receive interest on their checking accounts. By doing so, small businesses will be better able to grow and create the new jobs that our country so desperately needs.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

**HONORING JACK HORKHEIMER
FOR HIS OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION
TO THE SOUTH FLORIDA COMMUNITY**

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 24, 2005

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to pay tribute to Jack Horkheimer, the Executive Director of the Miami Space Transit Planetarium. For over 25 years, Jack has been a pioneer in the advancement of science exploration and discovery.

Jack Horkheimer has worked diligently throughout his tenure at the Miami of Science to enhance and transform planetarium presentations. He is best known as the creator, producer and host of the television show, “Star Hustler/Star Gazer,” that has been shown weekly for over 25 years. His sign-off motto, “Keep Looking Up,” has become familiar to many. Mr. Horkheimer has appeared on major television and radio networks, and has led several solar eclipse expeditions, as well as the first Halley's Comet Chase. Presently, Mr. Horkheimer is assisting associates position a telescope on the International Space Station.

In January 2001, the International Astronomical Union renamed “Asteroid 1999 FD,” the asteroid that orbits between Mars and Jupiter, to “Asteroid Horkheimer” in honor of his contributions to astronomy. Mr. Horkheimer has also received the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Astronomical League, as well as the 12 Good Men Award presented to him by the Ronald McDonald House. In May 2000, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate Degree by the International Fine Arts College, and was also the recipient of the Klumpke-Roberts Award from the Astronomical Society of the Pacific. He is the Founding Member of the International Planetarium Society, co-editor of “The Planetarium,” and past editor of “Southern Skies.”

In addition, Mr. Horkheimer has established several annual scholarship funds for young students, providing them the opportunity to study astronomy.

Mr. Speaker, many in my home state of Florida have benefited immeasurably from Mr. Horkheimer's leadership and involvement in our community. My daughters are among many South Floridians that have had the unique opportunity to visit this exceptional facility. It is truly an asset to our community, and I encourage my colleagues in the House to pay tribute to Mr. Jack Horkheimer.

**HONORING SAUL STERN, RECIPIENT
OF THE PROJECT INTERCHANGE AM
YISRAEL CHAI AWARD**

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 24, 2005

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Saul Stern who will receive the Project Interchange Am Yisrael Chai Award on May 25, 2005 at the Park Hyatt Hotel in Washington, DC.

This award is presented by Project Interchange to Mr. Stern to honor his contribution to the organization. Project Interchange is the only national organization solely dedicated to providing educational seminars in Israel for America's policy and opinion makers. With exceptional leadership, Mr. Stern has guided more than 3,500 prominent Americans, including Members of Congress, congressional aides, state officials and other community leaders to experience Israel through intensive seminars. These seminars allow political and civil leaders to witness democracy at work in Israel and to provide an understanding to the complex challenges that face that country.

The Project Interchange Am Yisrael Chai Award recognizes Mr. Stern's contribution to