The report accompanying H.R. 2475 also highlights the work of the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC). Although EPIC is funded through DEA in other legislation instead of this bill because of its drug-related intelligence mission, its work is critically important to the U.S. national security overall. I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure EPIC’s activities are funded at an appropriate and consistent level.

In addition to highlighting the strengths of this bill, I must also note my serious concerns about the general oversight of systematic failures related to handling and interrogation of detainees. While it is critical that we collect actionable intelligence from detainees to prevent future threats, it is imperative that we do so in a way that respects U.S. law, and international conventions and treaties.

Although there were some issues some of us would have resolved differently, H.R. 2475 is, on balance, a sound bill.

ROSE GARCIA, RECIPIENT OF THE 2005 NATIONAL HOMEOWNERSHIP MONTH HERO AWARD

HON. STEVEN PEARCE
OF NEW MEXICO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Friday, June 24, 2005

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the accomplishments of one of New Mexico’s most devoted citizens, Rose Garcia. This morning at the Anthony Community Center in Anthony, New Mexico, Rose Garcia is receiving New Mexico’s 2005 National Homeownership Month Hero Award. For more than 20 years, she has worked to provide housing for residents of rural and urban communities along the U.S.-Mexico border. In her tireless pursuit of creating opportunities for affordable housing, Rose Garcia has made the American dream of homeownership a reality for thousands of New Mexican families.

With this award, the New Mexico Partners in Homeownership are recognizing Rose especially for her work on behalf of very low income, underserved and colonia populations. Colonias are rural border communities and neighborhoods that lack safe and sanitary housing, along with basic conveniences we take for granted, such as sanitary water and sewer systems, street lighting and roads. Tierra del Sol Housing Corporation, of which Rose is Executive Director, not only provides housing but also builds the infrastructure to support these neighborhoods.

There are many obstacles one faces in the quest to own a home. Rose Garcia helps her clients through every step of the process and provides special assistance in one of the most important aspects—education. Tierra del Sol provides homeownership counseling and training, before and after the home purchase. Residents are given the tools to help themselves and begin a new tradition of ownership—and hope. Through her work for the last 23 years, Rose Garcia has helped countless otherwise neglected persons achieve the social and financial benefits of homeownership, despite economic and cultural challenges.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss not to mention the only other recipient of this esteemed award—the Honorable Joe Skeen. Congressman Skeen was an ardent supporter of homeownership programs in New Mexico, and Rose Garcia worked with him in that endeavor. She continues this legacy, not only through her commitment to homeownership, but in her dedication, her creativity and her unaltering spirit.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to congratulate Rose Garcia on this well-earned distinction and express my gratitude for the dedication and innovation she has demonstrated. I commend Rose for the hard work she continues to perform, and I am proud to recognize her—a true model of commitment to homeownership—today before my colleagues.

“The American Dream of Homeownership.” For thousands of New Mexicans, Rose herself is a dream come true.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. J. GRESHAM BARRETT
OF SOUTH CAROLINA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Friday, June 24, 2005

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that one of my votes yesterday, Thursday, June 23, 2005, was not recorded by the electronic device.

I ask that the RECORD reflect that I would have voted “yes” on rollover vote #307 (On Agreeing to the Bradley Amendment to H.R. 3010).

DR-CAFTA

HON. RUSH D. HOLT
OF NEW JERSEY
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Friday, June 24, 2005

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my opposition to the proposed US-Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA).

Former U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick led the team of U.S. negotiators who concluded what they consider to be a good trade agreement in DR-CAFTA, and President Bush signed it the summer of 2004. This agreement will not take effect, however, until it is formally submitted to the Congress for a straight up-or-down vote, pursuant to the fast-track trade negotiating authority that Congress approved in 2002.

Fast-track trade negotiating authority was first approved by Congress when the Trade Act of 1984 was enacted. As a result the Congress ceded much of its power to amend trade agreements negotiated by the President.

I voted against giving the President a 5-year extension of fast-track trade negotiating authority in 2002. Fundamentally, I believe Congress ought not cede such open-ended, blanket trade negotiating authority to any President. Nevertheless, the DR-CAFTA agreement has been negotiated by the President’s representatives and will come before Congress.

International trade is not just inevitable, it is a good thing. But lowering the cost of goods and increasing their availability is not the single goal of trade. Trade done right helps lift the global standard of living and works to protect the irreplaceable environment we inherit.

APPLAUDING ASSISTANCE TO MILITARY FAMILIES

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Friday, June 24, 2005

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, “Operation Helping Hand,” a program of the Tampa Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), was recognized for its efforts to assist the families of service members wounded in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

The James A. Haley VA Medical Center is one of four designated polytrauma centers within the Department of Veterans Affairs.