

world—effectively eliminating the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire.

From these ashes arose hope and promise in 1991—and I was blessed to see it. I was one of the four international observers from the United States Congress to monitor Armenia's independence referendum. I went to the communities in the northern part of Armenia, and I watched in awe as 95 percent of the people over the age of 18 went out and voted.

The Armenian people had been denied freedom for so many years and, clearly, they were very excited about this new opportunity. Almost no one stayed home. They were all out in the streets going to the polling places. I watched in amazement as people stood in line for hours to get into these small polling places and vote.

Then, after they voted, the other interesting thing was that they did not go home. They had brought covered dishes with them, and all of these polling places had little banquets afterward to celebrate what had just happened.

What a great thrill it was to join them the next day in the streets of Yerevan when they were celebrating their great victory. Ninety-eight percent of the people who voted cast their ballots in favor of independence. It was a wonderful experience to be there with them when they danced and sang and shouted, 'Ketse azat ankakh Hayastan'—Long live free and independent Armenia! That should be the cry of freedom-loving people everywhere.

HONORING REGINA MARIE
CATANISE

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 6, 2006

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Regina Marie Catanise who peacefully passed from this earth on Tuesday, April 4, 2006, at the age of 84.

The wife of the late Raymond Catanise, Mrs. Catanise, affectionately known as "Gina," was a cherished member of her community of Waterloo, NY, and was loved by one and all who knew her.

Survived by her three children, her son the Reverend Joseph Catanise, her daughter Candi Catanise, and her other son, Richard, Gina is also survived by two sisters, two brothers, four grandchildren, six great grandchildren, and several nieces, nephews, cousins and dear friends.

I take this moment to honor Gina Catanise, Mr. Speaker, because of the closeness felt to her by my friend, Richard Catanise. Richard spoke to me very often about his family in general and about Gina in particular. While I know today that Richard and his entire family's loss is great, I know, Mr. Speaker, that the entire Catanise family knows and understands the depths of the love felt for them by their mother, Gina.

I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me the opportunity to honor the memory of a great New Yorker, a woman who gave of herself to family, friends and community throughout her life. I am pleased that these remarks will remain a permanent part of the

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD in perpetuity, so that generations to come may reflect upon the life and contributions to family and community made by Regina "Gina" Catanise. May her soul rest in eternal peace.

IN RECOGNITION OF JOHN WHEELER,
CALIFORNIAN SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 6, 2006

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize and congratulate Mr. John Wheeler of Carmel, California. Next week, Mr. Wheeler will be honored as the Small Business Person of the Year for California.

Mr. Wheeler has succeeded through ingenuity and hard work to turn Peninsula Pure Water, Inc., into a very successful business in 8 short years. With the help of a Small Business Administration-backed loan, Mr. Wheeler bought a bottled water company in 1998 with just 50 customer accounts and 70 daily local deliveries and grew the operation into a business with 24,000 customers, and a net income of \$275,000. Beyond his resourcefulness and sheer determination, Mr. Wheeler has shown himself to be a model employer, personally training all new hires and offering to pay half of their tuition costs if they attend college.

Small businesses continue to be the engine of both the Californian and U.S. economies. The success of entrepreneurial businessman like Mr. Wheeler reminds everyone that the American dream is still alive and well. I again congratulate Mr. Wheeler on his well-deserved award as the Californian Small Business Person of the year and wish him much success as he continues to expand Peninsula Pure Water, Inc.

INTRODUCTION OF "FAIRNESS
AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN REORGANIZATIONS ACT OF 2006"

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 6, 2006

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the "Fairness and Accountability in Reorganizations Act of 2006," legislation designed to protect the rights of workers during corporate bankruptcy proceedings which give greater weight to large corporations and the executives who run them.

Many recent corporate bankruptcy filings, including that of the Delphi Corporation, have come under fire for the extravagant bonus packages they reserve for executives while regular workers are forced to accept drastic pay cuts or even job losses. We need legislation to ensure that workers and retirees receive the fair treatment they have earned when their company is facing bankruptcy.

The Fairness and Accountability in Reorganizations Act of 2006 would guarantee that workers are treated more fairly by limiting ex-

ecutive compensation deals and requiring corporations to provide a more accurate picture of their holdings before attempting to modify collective bargaining agreements or promised health benefits during reorganizations. More specifically, this simple and effective legislation would:

Require any executive bonus package to be approved by the bankruptcy court for any corporation undergoing or connected to a bankruptcy reorganization plan.

Consider the debtor company's foreign assets when determining whether or not a company can modify its existing collective bargaining agreement. Some international corporations that are struggling domestically use their losses at home to justify breaking contracts with American workers while their overall company is still thriving.

Require that its provisions apply to account the debtor company's foreign assets when determining whether or not to modify the company's retiree health benefits.

Require that its provisions apply to any chapter 11 bankruptcy case, filed or pending on or after October 1, 2005.

Congress has gone to great lengths to grant advantages to creditors and big business over ordinary Americans. It is time that we include the interest of working families in the bankruptcy law. My legislation would therefore add a small measure of fairness to a playing field that is overwhelmingly tilted against workers.

A TRIBUTE TO PLAINS COTTON
GROWERS

HON. RANDY NEUGEBAUER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 6, 2006

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, this morning I rise to honor an organization based in the 19th district of Texas that has played a vital role in West Texas for half a century.

In 1956, a group of West Texas cotton farmers and agricultural businesses came together to form Plains Cotton Growers. Today, PCG represents cotton growers in 41 counties throughout the High Plains and Panhandle of Texas. These growers produce nearly 20 percent of the nation's cotton crop each year. In the 50 years since its creation, PCG has attained a much-deserved reputation as an organization that producers can trust and rely upon for a wide range of services and information. Under the leadership of presidents from W.O. Fortenberry to Rickey Bearden, PCG has promoted regional cotton interests, served as a resource for cutting-edge agricultural research, and provided its members with information on important legislative matters.

If there is an issue in Congress affecting cotton farmers, then Plains Cotton Growers is on top of it. PCG provides the invaluable service of informing its members on agricultural policy being debated in the Capitols in both Washington, DC and Austin, Texas. PCG also ensures that its members have a voice in both Capitols as it keeps legislators abreast of the views and concerns of farmers.

To the staff and members of Plains Cotton Growers: Congratulations on your 50th anniversary and thank you for your service to the people of West Texas.