From 1992 to 1993 Chief Taylor served as the President of the Indiana Fire Chiefs Association. This association strives to increase the professionalism and success of fire departments throughout Indiana. He has served on numerous other boards across the State of Indiana each benefiting greatly from his expertise.

In 2005 Chief Luther Taylor was awarded the Sagamore of the Wabash, the highest honor bestowed by governors of Indiana, by Governor Joe Kernan. This award is given only to those who make major contributions to the lives of Hoosiers.

So today, on behalf of the citizens of South Bend, I thank Luther Taylor for his years of dedication to the safety and security of our community. As he retires from almost 35 years on the South Bend Fire Department, I pay special tribute to one of the finest fire chiefs to ever serve Indiana. His service will always be remembered for numerous lives that were saved as a result of his efforts and the changes that each citizen can see as a result of his leadership.

TRIBUTE TO THE CITY OF LENEXA, KANSAS, ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity today to recognize the 100th anniversary of my community of residence, the city of Lenexa, Kansas, one of the leading communities in the Third Congressional District of Kansas. Lenexa officially became a city on May 8, 1907, and the community is coming together for an eight-day celebration from May 5–12 of this year.

Lenexa was platted in 1869 by French-born civil engineer, Octave Chanute, who, in addition to designing the original Hannibal Bridge over the Missouri River in Kansas City, also served as a mentor to the Wright Brothers in their quest for flight. Lenexa was named for Na Nex Se, a highly respected, hard-working Shawnee Indian woman, the daughter-in-law of Chief Black Hoof. Thirty-eight years later, on May 8, 1907, Lenexa was incorporated as a City of the Third Class in Kansas.

In Lenexa's earliest days, people from various backgrounds and cultures came together to form this great city. With a population of approximately 300, the young city boasted a healthful location, graded schools, three churches, suburban train service, excellent telephone service, and an electric railway station.

Today, Lenexa, which has grown to a population of 46,000 residents and enjoys a healthy business base, is considered a city of choice for a variety of high tech and bioscience companies. The city also is looked to as a leader in local government initiatives such as watershed management and public safety.

Lenexa, which is known as the City of Festivals for the numerous festivals and events it hosts each year, will hold a week-long community celebration (May 5–12, 2007) to mark the occasion of its 100th anniversary.

Madam Speaker, Lenexa cherishes its rich history, heritage and culture, and with this celebration marking the city's 100th anniversary, Lenexa honors its past while looking forward to the future. I join with my neighbors, friends and constituents in Lenexa in honoring this important milestone.

INTRODUCING THE ENHANCED OPTIONS FOR RURAL HEALTH CARE ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I raise to introduce the Enhanced Options for Rural Health Care Act. This legislation allows critical access hospitals to use beds designated for critical access use, but currently not being used for that purpose, for assisted living services financed by private payments.

This bill will help improve the financial status of small rural hospitals and extend the health care options available to people living in rural areas without increasing federal expenditures. Currently, fear that rural hospitals will lose critical access status if beds designated for critical access are used for another purpose is causing rural hospitals to allow beds not needed for a critical access purpose to remain unused. This deprives rural hospitals of a much-needed revenue stream and deprives residents of rural areas of access to needed health care services.

My colleagues may be interested to know that the idea for this bill comes from Marcella Henke, an administrator of Jackson County Hospital, a critical access hospital in my congressional district. Ms. Henke conceived of this idea as a way to meet the increasing demand for assisted living services in rural areas and provide hospitals with a profitable way to use beds not being used for critical access purposes. I urge my colleagues to embrace this practical way of strengthening rural health care without increasing federal expenditures by cosponsoring the Enhanced Options for Rural Health Care Act.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR A NATIONAL FOSTER PARENTS DAY

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of National Foster Parents Day. Foster parents are vital to the development of today's children and tomorrow's leaders. As former President John Fitzgerald Kennedy once proclaimed, "Children are the world's most valuable resource and its best hope for the future." Foster care parents dedicate their lives to care for the less fortunate children, with little compensation or recognition. They perform this noble task under very difficult circumstances with love and care. Recognizing these efforts is important.

There are 523,000 children in foster care in the United States today. Congress has made a number of improvements to foster care laws over the last decade; improvements that have helped support our children and families. It is good to recognize these advances, but we should take a moment to consider how we can improve the system further.

There are currently over 2½ million children being cared for by family members nationally. However, unless these relatives have waivers from the Department of Health and Human Services, they are not eligible for foster care maintenance payments. Withholding financial support from family providers greatly ignores the needs of these children and families. Almost 19 percent of kinship care providers live in poverty, and 30 percent to 40 percent of children in foster care have chronic medical problems. It is unrealistic to expect these providers to afford appropriate care for these vulnerable children simply because they are family. This is a very personal problem to me. The 7th Congressional District in Illinois—my Congressional District—has the highest percentage of children being raised by grandparents in the nation. Two other Chicago districts follow close behind. It also upsets me greatly that the limitations in our system have a disproportionate effect on minority children and families, who tend to opt for guardianship rather than adoption.

So, I join my colleagues in supporting a day to recognize foster parents and their tremendous contribution to society.

VAISAKHI DAY CELEBRATED AROUND THE WORLD

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, on April 13 and 14, the Sikhs community celebrated Vaisakhi Day with events in Washington, New York, London, Canada, Australia, and wherever Sikhs live. It was a very proud day for them. The Washington, DC, event was led by Dr. Paramjit Singh Ajrawat, a well-known Sikh activist and supporter of a free Khalistan.

Large numbers of Sikhs showed up in these locations to celebrate the day. They called for freedom for the Sikh nation. They raised slogans in support of Khalistan, the Sikh homeland. Freedom is the birthright of all peoples and nations.

When America became independent, Punjab was already independent. Dr. Gunnit Singh Aulakh, president of the Council of Khalistan, has called on Sikhs to celebrate Vaisakhi Day by rededicating themselves to achieving the freedom that is their birthright.

Madam Speaker, we should put this Congress on record with a resolution in support of self-determination for Khalistan and throughout the subcontinent. Why is India opposed to a free and fair vote on the matter, in the democratic way? We should end our aid and trade with India until I the basic rights of all are allowed to be enjoyed, the way that democratic countries behave.

VAISAKHI DAY CELEBRATED WITH PARADES, EVENTS

WASHINGTON, DC, Apr. 14, 2007.—Vaisakhi Day, the 308th anniversary of the creation and consecration of the Khalsa Panth by Guru Gobind Singh, is being celebrated with parades and events in Washington, London, New York, Canada, England, Australia, and around the world.

The Washington parade occurs on April 14 under the leadership of Dr. Paramjit Singh

Ajrawat with the cooperation of the local Sikh Gurdwaras. Later in April, the annual Sikh Day Parade in New York will be held.

Guru Gobind baptized the first five baptized Sikhs, known as the Panj Piaras, on Vaisakhi Day in 1699, then asked them to baptize him. He declared, ''In grieb Sikhin ko deon Patshahi (''I give sovereignty to the humble Sikhs'') Just two years after his departure from this earthly plane in 1708, the Sikhs established their own independent state in Punjab.

At the time that America became independent, Punjab was an independent country already. It was independent from 1710 to 1716 and again from 1765 to 1849, when the British conquered South Asia. Today Sikhs struggle to regain the sovereignty that Guru Gobind Singh bestowed upon them over 300 years ago.

Vaisakhi Day is the anniversary of the founding of the Khalsa. On Vaisakhi Day in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh baptized the Sikhs and required them to keep the five Ks. He made the Sikhs into saints and soldiers. That memory is celebrated on Vaisakhi Day each year.

''I send Vaisakhi Day greetings to all Sikhs and I urge all Sikhs to take this occasion to fulfill Guru Gobind Singh's vision by working to liberate our homeland, Khalistan, from Indian oppression,'' said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, which leads the struggle to achieve independence for Khalistan. Khalistan declared itself independent on October 7, 1987. Over 250,000 Sikhs have been killed since the Indian government attacked the Golden Temple in Amritsar in June 1984. More than 52,000 are being held as political prisoners, some for over 20 years.

''Vaisakhi Day should be a time to renew our commitment to freedom for our Sikh brothers and sisters in Punjab, Khalistan so they can live in prosperity, dignity, and security. Only a free Khalistan can end the repression of the Sikh Nation,'' Dr. Aulakh said. ''Always remember our heritage: Raj Kare Ga Khalsa; Khalsa Bagi Van Badshah. Freedom for Khalistan is closer than ever. Now is the time to claim it''

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2007

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 273, a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of Financial Literacy Month.

According to the JumpStart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy, the average high school graduate does not possess basic personal financial management skills. These young people are unable to balance a checkbook, and most have little knowledge of basic practices such as earning, spending, saving and investing.

This lack of awareness has serious consequences for young people. Without a fundamental understanding of finance charges and accumulating interest, young people become prone to credit card abuse, which often results in overspending and long-term debt. As they take on greater and greater financial responsibilities, these men and women are similarly unprepared to finance higher education, handle a mortgage, and save for retirement. The implications of this behavior extend beyond personal welfare. Consumer debt in the U.S. reached $2.4 trillion in 2006, $825 billion of which comes from credit card debts.

Financial literacy should be a fundamental part of every young American's education. The ability to manage one's finances is essential to building wealth and leading a prosperous economic life. On the other hand, those who lack the ability to manage money face lifelong obstacles to fulfilling their human potential and creating a solid economic foundation for their families.

I thank my distinguished colleagues, Congressman HINOJOSA and Congresswoman BIGGERT, for their work leading the House Financial Literacy Caucus, and I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

HONORING CHRISTELLA GRESS ON RECEIVING THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AUXILIARY COMMODORE GREANOFF INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to honor Ms. Christella (Chris) Gress from Grand Island, New York, who today received the first annual Commodore Greanoff Inspirational Leadership Award from the United States Coast Guard.

The Commodore Greanoff Inspirational Leadership Award recognizes the most distinguished United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla Commander, and parallels existing Coast Guard leadership awards for officers, chief petty officers, and civilians. The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, established by Congress in 1939, has more than 27,000 members who are engaged in missions that involve boat safety education, search and rescue, and homeland security operations.

Ms. Gress is the Immediate Past Flotilla Commander of Flotilla 35, District 9 Eastern Auxiliary Region. As Commander of her Flotilla, Ms. Gress dedicated over 800 hours of her time to advance the mission and goals of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary. Her commitment to the Auxiliary becomes even more impressive when one learns that she is holding multiple college teaching-jobs and working on a doctoral dissertation.

Ms. Gress is described as tireless and a natural motivator, and is credited with developing a strong sense of collective identity within her Flotilla. Ms. Gress hosted team exercises and fellowship events that welcomed new members and increased activity among experienced members. Under her leadership, Flotilla membership participation expanded in programs including vessel examinations, operations, and public education. In addition, Ms. Gress was the driving force behind an award-winning Flotilla newsletter.

Madam Speaker, Ms. Gress has earned the respect and high admiration of her community and the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary. I am proud to recognize her as the first recipient of the Commodore Greanoff Inspirational Leadership Award.

TRIBUTE TO THE LAWRENCE, KANSAS, COMMUNITY NURSERY SCHOOL

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, the Lawrence, Kansas, Community Nursery School [LCNS] was founded in 1948 after a group of mothers attended a conference on preschool play offered by the University of Kansas Extension School and sponsored by the Lawrence League for the Practice of Democracy. They founded the school on three main principles—that the school must be: a parent cooperative; integrated, both racially and religiously; and low-cost. Today LCNS is the second oldest operating parent cooperative preschool in the Nation, and those principles remain at the corner of the school.

On April 17, 1948 the school opened with its first class of 10 mothers and 14 children. Financial support for the school came from the Lawrence League for the Practice of Democracy and the Oread Meeting of Friends. The tuition was set at $1.00 per week. In 1951 the Kansas State Board of Health licensed the school, and in July of 1952 the school was incorporated under Kansas State Law as the Lawrence Community Nursery School. The school received its permanent license to operate in 1961.

The school was housed in various churches and schools for its first 6 years. After at least eight different locations, in the spring of 1955 the members of the advisory board, the board, and the general membership voted to start a 3-year building fund campaign chaired by Dr. Helen Gilles, a well known local pediatrician, to raise money to buy a permanent home for the nursery school.

The campaign was a huge success. With support of local businesses, members of the cooperative, and the community at large, they were able to raise over $2,000 in their building fund by May 1956, more than 2 years ahead of schedule. In March 1956, Dr. Gilles presented the idea of buying the Wesleyan Methodist Church at the comer of 7th and Alabama Streets. In August 1956, they put a down payment on the church. In September 1956, the board voted to paint the school ''barn red with white trim.'' This is how the building remains today, and it has become a permanent fixture in the Old West Lawrence neighborhood and the greater community as a whole.

Several months of renovations and sharing the school with the church followed. Although the site was used by the school in the fall of 1956, the church remained. In the summer of 1957 the church moved out, and the Little Red Schoolhouse was the home of the Lawrence Community Nursery School. Madam Speaker, I join with the LCNS community and with all Lawrencians in celebrating the completion of the 50th school year at their permanent home at 645 Alabama Street.