

Senator May's lifelong dedication to public service began when he joined the Air Force in 1953. During his twenty-year military career, Senator May gained extensive knowledge in the areas of computer programming and technology. This training shaped his post-military career as he was a charter member of the United States Internet Council, and served on Colorado's Information Management Commission as well as the Multi-Use Network Service.

In the State legislature, Senator May's technological expertise was invaluable, as was his dedication to transportation infrastructure. Senator May worked tirelessly to create funding within the budget that was devoted solely to Colorado roadways, an action that demonstrated his commitment to responsible government spending.

Today I honor Senator May's selfless career and express my gratitude, as a resident of Colorado Springs, for the positive things he has done for our city, county, and State. He was a reliable vote for and a proponent of the conservative values upon which our country was founded. Although I am sad to see his public career come to an end, I know that we will continue to benefit from Senator May's legacy. I wish him and his wife, Onella, their fine children, and grandchildren, all the best in his new career and life.

HONORING FIRE CHIEF LUTHER
FINCHER

HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

Mrs. MYRICK. Madam Speaker, Charlotte, NC is losing one of its most dedicated public servants with the retirement of Fire Chief Luther Fincher after 45 years. I have personally known and worked with Luther for over 24 years. His professional achievements are many—including managing our Homeland Security Programs and the Urban Area Security Initiative. Luther was instrumental in the development of our ALERT team and led it with distinction. It was his dedication and experience that made it a reality and has helped Charlotte to be recognized as the third most prepared city in the country for emergency management.

He is a charter member and past president of the International Association of Fire Chiefs and has represented this organization all over the world, as well as playing a role in passing significant fire legislation on a federal level. He was also instrumental in establishing the four-year program on Fire Engineering Technology at UNC-Charlotte.

His awards and accomplishments are many, but I am most proud of the fact that Luther Fincher is one of the most loyal, sincere, family-oriented men I have ever known. I am proud to call him friend.

He is retiring as Fire Chief, but I know he will continue to lend his expertise to our city and the Nation.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL SPINA
BIFIDA MONTH

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, as Co-Chair of the Congressional Spina Bifida Caucus I rise today to recognize October as National Spina Bifida Month. Currently, more than 70,000 people in the United States live with Spina Bifida, the Nation's most common permanently disabling birth defect. Each October we honor these Americans during National Spina Bifida Month, but we must be steadfast in our efforts year round to prevent and reduce suffering from this devastating birth defect.

Spina Bifida is a neural tube defect that occurs in the first month of pregnancy when the spinal column does not close completely. An average of eight babies a day are born with Spina Bifida or a similar birth defect of the brain and spine. Currently, approximately 3,000 pregnancies each year are affected by Spina Bifida; however, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, estimates that up to 70 percent of Spina Bifida and other neural tube defects could be prevented if all women of childbearing age consumed 400 micrograms of folic acid daily, prior to becoming pregnant.

Fortunately, the CDC's National Spina Bifida Program—which I helped to create with my colleague and caucus co-chair Representative BART STUPAK—plays a critical role in addressing both sides of the Spina Bifida equation—preventing the birth defect and providing support and quality-of-life enhancement for people living with it. I am proud that the National Spina Bifida Program—in its more than 4 years of existence—is making a significant difference in the lives of people with Spina Bifida. Now patients, parents, health professionals, and caregivers have the information and resources they need to ensure that quality-of-life is maximized for all who live with this condition and that we are doing our best to reduce the number of Spina Bifida affected pregnancies through education and awareness of women about the importance of their consumption of folic acid prior to becoming pregnant.

I want to express my deep gratitude to my colleagues on the House Appropriations Committee who allocated \$5.535 million for the National Spina Bifida Program in the FY 2008 Labor-Health and Human Services-Education, LHHS, bill. As members of the House and Senate LHHS Subcommittees work to reconcile the differences between their bills, I urge my colleagues to cede to the House allocation and help ensure that the National Spina Bifida Program receives adequate funding in the final FY 2008 LHHS measure so it can sustain and expand its important initiatives.

In addition, I hope my colleagues will support the report language from the Senate FY 2008 Agriculture Appropriations measure which urges the FDA to review—and hopefully expand—current folic acid fortification standards so that we can continue to make strides in reducing the number of preventable neural tube defects.

Lastly, I wish to thank the Spina Bifida Association, SBA, for playing a critical role in

helping those living with and affected by this debilitating birth defect. Founded in 1973, SBA is the nation's only organization solely dedicated to advocating on behalf of the Spina Bifida community. Through its nearly 60 chapters in more than 125 communities, the SBA brings expectant parents together with those who have a child with Spina Bifida. This interaction helps to answer questions and concerns, but most importantly it lends much needed support and provides hope and inspiration.

I thank the SBA for its partnership and its commitment to ensuring that we are doing all that we can to reduce and prevent suffering from Spina Bifida. I encourage my colleagues to join with me in recognizing October as National Spina Bifida Month and in educating our constituents about the importance of folic acid consumption among women of child-bearing age. Together, with the SBA, we can help prevent Spina Bifida.

A TRIBUTE TO ELIZABETH SHELL
CARR

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an exceptional and caring woman on this day of her retirement, Elizabeth Shell Carr. Elizabeth Carr, a New York licensed Clinical Social Worker, spent her first years in Virginia with the Harlem Veteran's Center as a Military Sexual Trauma Counselor for combat and non-combat veterans.

Elizabeth Carr recalls one of her most gratifying experiences as the organizer of a successful SPA Treatment Day which included breakfast, lunch, and the dissemination of information by the Mayor's Office of Veteran Affairs. Nearly 50 women attended, each of them receiving a gift, as well as a certificate of appreciation from New York State Senator Velmanette Montgomery for their service to our country.

For the past 2 years, Elizabeth Carr enjoyed working closer to home at Brooklyn's VA Medical Center. She is a former member of the Social Work Education committee, assisted with annual programs for "Women in Government" and Black History Month at the VA. She received a monetary performance award for her outstanding contribution to the Employee Assistance Program.

Elizabeth Carr is a clinician with more than 25 years experience in health and mental health. She was previously employed with St. Luke's Roosevelt Medical Center and was also an adjunct professor of Graduate Social Work at both Columbia University and New York University.

Elizabeth Carr is a long time resident of the Willoughby Walk Cooperative Apartments in Brooklyn. She is proud of her close knit community and is actively involved. She has served many years as floor captain within the co-op. She is also active in her church, Emmanuel Baptist. She was co-editor of the church newspaper, member and chairperson for the Missions and Benevolence Ministry, and committee member for the church and cooperative's commemorative anniversaries in both 2006 and 2007.

Elizabeth Carr has many plans for this new phase of her life including completing a journal and a book of poetry, visiting family and friends, and traveling.

Madam Speaker, Elizabeth Shell Carr has given a lot to America's veterans, her church, and her community. I would like to recognize all of her accomplishments and achievements and congratulate her on her retirement.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to this wonderful woman.

TRIBUTE TO DEXTER AND BIRDIE
YAGER

HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

Mrs. MYRICK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a great couple who are a wonderful example of what is right with America. Dexter and Birdie Yager are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. Sadly, in America, it has become a rare thing for two people to stay together this long.

They are the proud parents of seven kids. The Yager family is extremely close—even working in a very successful business together. They exemplify achieving the American dream through hard work, and they demonstrate the love of a strong family who are there to help each other and others daily. I wish them many more happy years!

RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING
EFFORTS TO RAISE AWARENESS
ABOUT AND HELP END THE
WORSENING HUMANITARIAN CRI-
SIS AND GENOCIDE IN DARFUR,
SUDAN

SPEECH OF

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 29, 2007

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 573 and to commend grassroots and advocacy groups across the country for their powerful voices and invaluable efforts to raise awareness about the deepening humanitarian crisis in Darfur. This resolution will honor these groups for their hard work and urge the government to use its influence to halt the killing of innocent people in Darfur. Local communities continue to insist that the international community honor its responsibility to end the ongoing genocide in Darfur. We must heed their message, because it is one we cannot afford to ignore.

As a member of the House Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, the Congressional, the Human Rights Caucus, and the Congressional Sudan Caucus, I share their immediate concern that our country must do everything it can to end the genocide in Darfur. More than 2.5 million Darfurians have been displaced from their homes and as many as 400,000 Darfurians have needlessly died

over the last four years as a result of violence, hunger, and disease.

The tragic events unfolding in Darfur have been felt intensely by local communities across the world. The strongest efforts to end the genocide will grow from the concerns of American citizens who can no longer sit quietly by while the atrocities in Sudan continue unabated. I am proud to represent the people of California's Sixth Congressional District, who are among the people most involved in stopping the genocide in Darfur since the crisis started.

Dear Sudan, now an international movement, began in my hometown of Petaluma in 2004. Their goal was to raise enough money from citizens of Petaluma to feed the refugees from Darfur for one day. Dear Sudan, Love Petaluma was so successful that other communities began organizing first locally, then spread across the Nation, and recently founded chapters in other countries across the world.

Dear Sudan, Love Marin has hosted educational forums and worked to develop a broad coalition of religious and community groups, encompassing the entire San Francisco Bay Area. Another group, Marin Interfaith, has been instrumental in spreading the message about the ongoing genocide to the religious community at large.

Additionally, students throughout the Sixth District have organized under Save Darfur, other national organizations, or on their own to help raise awareness for the crisis in Darfur by planning educational forums, rallying, and washing cars to raise funds for refugees. Just this past weekend, a student group in Santa Rosa held a car wash at a local market, and this December, a group of students from Terra Linda High School are planning a half-day conference on the genocide.

Groups like these demonstrate the best elements of our Nation, where people can come together to work for change in the world. It is with their energy and passion in mind that we must renew our commitment to end the genocide in Darfur.

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDENT
LOAN AUCTION MARKET (SLAM)
ACT OF 2007

HON. THOMAS E. PETRI

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

Mr. PETRI. Madam Speaker, today, I am introducing the Student Loan Auction Market, SLAM, Act to continue the process of comprehensive, structural reform of the guaranteed student loan program. I believe this legislation would mark a critical step towards full market-based reform of the program and build on the reforms incorporated in the bipartisan College Cost Reduction and Access Act, which was recently signed into law by President Bush.

Specifically, the SLAM Act would further efforts to study and pilot several market-based reforms, including auction and asset-backed securities models. The politically-set subsidy rate to lenders is a fundamental flaw in the ar-

chaic structure of the guaranteed loan program. I believe we can all agree that some type of comprehensive, market-based reform will be necessary to ensure the long-term viability of the guaranteed loan program and ensure taxpayers' interests are better served.

My proposal would require the Secretaries of Education and the Treasury, in conjunction with the Government Accountability Office, GAO, the Office of Management and Budget, OMB, and the Congressional Budget Office, CBO, to conduct a joint planning study to determine which market-mechanism model for determining lender returns on guaranteed loans would best serve borrowers and taxpayers. This study would allow the experts to weigh the pros and cons of each proposal and determine which option would be most favorable for trial in the pilot program.

The pilot model will be selected by the Secretaries based on key criteria, such as ensuring sufficient loan availability to all participating institutions, minimizing administrative complexity to borrowers and lenders, and reducing the Federal cost if used on a program-wide basis. Within 6 months of enactment of this legislation, the study group would report its findings to Congress and begin implementation of a voluntary pilot program.

The voluntary, 2-year pilot program will begin in July 2008 and incorporate up to 10 percent of the guaranteed loan portfolio, increasing up to 20 percent in 2009. To encourage meaningful college participation in the pilot, any savings from the increased efficiency in the market model will be returned to the institution in the form of supplemental, need-based grant aid. Finally, GAO would conduct an independent evaluation of the pilot program and report its findings to Congress and the Secretaries within 120 days after termination of the pilot.

I believe that both the study and the pilot will provide critical and necessary information to Congress on how market-based reforms will impact the guaranteed loan program, before such reforms are implemented on a program-wide basis. This is a measured and responsible proposal that is based on voluntary participation by both colleges and lenders. It is something that both supporters and skeptics of the guaranteed loan program should embrace.

Although a much narrower and prescriptive auction pilot was included in the College Cost Reduction and Access Act, it has raised significant concerns among reform advocates, the Administration, and lenders about its feasibility and efficacy. My bill would not alter the Senate pilot that was agreed to in conference, but would require a second pilot by which to compare outcomes between the two models. It is a responsible and pragmatic addition to the current auction pilot.

I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation to further our understanding of market-based reform options. Congress should always encourage innovation in the administration of our student loan programs and continually strive to better serve students and taxpayers.