

four high schools, as well as the Mercy Educational Resource Center Sacramento which opened in 1992. This center offers services to all in need, especially those who are emotionally distressed and educationally disadvantaged due to learning disabilities and societal circumstances. It is a comfortable environment that offers students a wonderful place to learn.

Coming to Sacramento as teachers, the Sisters of Mercy also became the first visiting nurses in the region. In times of need, including the devastating floods in December of 1861 that kept parts of Sacramento under water for six months, the Sisters treated malaria, typhoid fever and tuberculosis. Their contributions did not go unnoticed as members of the medical community encouraged the Sisters to open a hospital in hopes of expanding their efforts. In 1896, the sisters added a hospital ministry. In 1897, to strengthen this new ministry, the sisters opened the first private hospital in Sacramento, the Mater Misericordiae Hospital, which also was known as the Sister's Hospital. Following the hospital's opening, a nursing school was added to train others.

The Sisters of Mercy's mission has been preserved and strengthened throughout the years. In 1925, the sisters opened the new Misericordiae Hospital, now known as Mercy Hospital in Sacramento. In 1950, Mercy Children's Hospital was opened. This hospital focuses on the special needs of the community's youth. Today there are four local Mercy hospitals, Mercy General Hospital, Methodist Hospital of Sacramento, Mercy Hospital of Folsom, and Mercy San Juan Medical Center, as well as five free healthcare clinics that continue to assist those who cannot pay for their medical care. The sisters have also created Mercy Housing, which develops affordable housing and support services for those in need. They have since created hundreds of affordable housing units across Sacramento.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to the Sisters of Mercy's distinguished commitment to the well-being of the Sacramento community. Their dedication has withstood both physical and financial hardships. Over the last 150 years, the Sisters have expanded their mission with the changing of times and have been true champions of the needy. As the Sisters of Mercy's colleagues, supporters, families and friends gather together at the 150th gala celebration, I ask all my colleagues to join me in wishing them continued good fortune.

TRADE AND GLOBALIZATION
ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3920, the Trade and Globalization Assistance Act of 2007. This bill will provide American workers displaced by globalization and trade policy with the necessary tools and assurance to compete in the global economy.

Created in 1962, the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program offers trade-displaced workers up to two years of job training and in-

come support while they transition to different jobs often in new sectors. Unfortunately, for too long, thousands of our workers have been denied services they are otherwise eligible to receive because of a lack of funding or restrictive interpretations of current law. H.R. 3920 bridges this gap, by not only doubling training funds to \$440 million but also by providing states with funds for vital outreach to ensure that our workers are not lost or forgotten in this increasing global age. Eighty percent of all workers in the United States work in the service sector industry and I am proud that for the first time they will be fully eligible for coverage through this legislation.

H.R. 3920 also intends to protect our most vulnerable workers—women and minorities. While Latinos represent 12.6 percent of the total U.S. workforce, they account for 26 percent of textile and apparel industry workers. In California, Latinos make up an estimated 80 percent of the California garment industry, which has been especially hard-hit by NAFTA's impact. As a result, Latino workers have been significantly hurt by poorly crafted trade policy. According to the Department of Labor, 47 percent of individuals that applied for NAFTA's TAA program due to lay offs were Latino.

Unfortunately, President Bush is threatening to veto this legislation, continuing his policy of favoring wealthy Americans over middle-class workers. I believe that it is well past time to acknowledge the hard fact that trade policy has had a negative impact on our nation's workers and it is our job to give them the support they need to be active members of our workforce. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, so we can provide displaced workers with the tools and resources necessary to compete in the 21st century, and I urge President Bush to reconsider his callous threat and stand with us to support American workers and American jobs.

TRIBUTE TO CASA

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 1, 2007

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, I am enormously proud to rise in celebration of the 30th anniversary of one of Seattle's finest start-ups, one that is valued throughout the country today. You may initially think I am speaking of Boeing, or UPS, REI or Starbucks. Rather, I refer to the CASA movement—Court Appointed Special Advocates.

Every year more than 800,000 children enter the court system after being removed from their homes and placed in foster care. They have not committed any crime, instead, they are simply child victims of abuse, neglect, or abandonment. It is up to a judge to decide their futures—what healing services they will receive, where they should live and with whom, and if they can be safe. In order to reach such critical decisions, judges need to be fully informed about the child's situation.

In 1977, King County Superior Court Judge David W. Soukup of Seattle, Washington believed that he was not getting all of the facts he needed to make well-informed decisions affecting the futures of children coming before him in child welfare cases. The judge con-

vened a meeting of community representatives to discuss his idea for recruiting citizen volunteers to do the detailed research that judges could not. Judge Soukup envisioned trained volunteers who would speak to the children and their teachers, therapists, foster parents, and family members, then write reports for the court including the volunteer's recommendations for the child's best interests. This vision was the impetus for the first CASA program.

Before coming to Congress, I sometimes had occasion to testify as an expert witness in Judge Soukup's courtroom. He was both a thorough and caring jurist. He explained that he founded the CASA movement because he wanted someone in his courtroom whose only job was to provide a voice for the children. Caseworkers are obligated to their agency, the parent, and others. An attorney appointed as the child's legal representative cannot testify about privileged, and potentially harmful, information that the child may have revealed. Attorney guardians ad litem simply could not afford the time to do a thorough investigation of all the facts, interview significant adults in the child's life, and advocate for the mental and social needs of the child.

Judge Soukup's innovative vision has grown to become a strong and respected national program of advocacy for children. It is estimated that CASA volunteers serve 30 percent of children who are in foster care and court systems because of abuse and neglect. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the founding of that first CASA program in Seattle—it is also the year in which the two millionth child will be served by a CASA volunteer.

Many of my colleagues are equally proud and supportive of the remarkable work that CASA volunteers perform within their districts to assure that a child's needs are recognized and addressed by the courts and social service systems. There are more than 900 CASA programs in 49 states. Nearly 60,000 CASA and volunteer guardians ad litem served 220,000 children in 2006 alone.

Several studies demonstrate the effectiveness of CASA advocacy for children. Judges appoint CASA volunteers to their most difficult cases, in which children face an even higher-than-normal factor of risk. In spite of the difficulty of their cases, children with a CASA volunteer are substantially less likely to spend more than three years in foster care or ever to re-enter foster care. A greater number of targeted services are ordered for children and their families when the child has a volunteer. In four out of five cases, all or almost all of the CASA volunteers' recommendations are accepted by the court. Judges today identify a great need for more volunteers to be assigned to children's cases.

I thank Judge Soukup for his inspiration. He must feel enormously rewarded by the knowledge that his idea has helped provide better outcomes for two million children today. Congratulations to the King County Dependency CASA Program on this 30th anniversary. I applaud the National CASA Association for its leadership in expanding that single program in Seattle to more than 900 offices in 49 states today. I salute Washington State CASA, also located in Seattle, for undertaking the largest expansion of CASA within the state. Finally, I congratulate and thank the hundreds of thousands of citizens who have served as CASA volunteers over these last 30 years for their steadfast advocacy to assure that the interests