

achievement. Mr. Kryza, who is now the Michigan State Veterans Director, will also be on hand to celebrate this occasion and spread the holiday cheer.

I would like to recognize Gary Bjorkquist for his vision and his tenacity in keeping the Veterans Food Drive alive and running all these years. As old and new volunteers gather on December 14, 2007 for the 20th anniversary Veteran Food Drive, I salute the great number of individuals who volunteer their time going door to door with holiday baskets in hand as well as those who have graciously donated to the Veterans Food Drive each year.

The duty, honor, and commitment these volunteers show to those who have sacrificed for our country are just a few of the values that make this Veterans Food Drive special.

Madam Speaker, as we honor our brave fighting men and women serving around the world and especially in Iraq and Afghanistan this holiday season, it is important that we care for their families. In that spirit, for 20 years, the Veterans Food Drive has truly provided a helping hand to those who have served our country. Given the unique spirit of volunteerism and community service exhibited by Gary Bjorkquist and the local community, I know we can expect the Veterans Food Drive to be serving today's soldiers, when they are tomorrow's veterans, 20 years from now.

Madam Speaker, I close by asking that you and the U.S. House of Representatives join me in paying tribute to the Veterans Food Drive, Gary Bjorkquist, and all the volunteers and contributors who are truly serving those who have served all of us. In this time of conflict, it is more vital than ever that we retain those values of volunteerism, duty, honor, and commitment—values that the Veterans Food Drive truly exemplifies.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RANDY NEUGEBAUER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 13, 2007

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Madam Speaker, due to official business in my district, I missed rollcall votes 1145 through 1155 on Wednesday, December 12, 2007.

Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 1145.

On rollcall vote 1146, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall vote 1147, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall vote 1148, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall vote 1149, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall vote 1150, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall vote 1151, I would have voted "aye."

On rollcall vote 1152, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall vote 1153, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall vote 1154, I would have voted "nay."

On rollcall vote 1155, I would have voted "aye."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 13, 2007

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, December 12, 2007, I inadvertently missed two votes. Had I been present and voting, I would have voted as follows:

(1) Rollcall No. 1154: "yea." On motion to postpone consideration of the veto message.

(2) Rollcall No. 1155: "yea." On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ACCESS AND IMPLEMENTATION ACT OF 2007

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 13, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Environmental Justice Access and Implementation Act of 2007. I am pleased to stand with my friends Representatives Hilda Solis, Keith Ellison and John Conyers for the environmental health of all communities by reintroducing this legislation updated from its previous introduction as H.R. 1648 in the 109th Congress. Once again, this bill will seek to direct federal agencies to establish offices of environmental justice, integrate environmental justice into the core missions of Federal agencies, and establish community technology centers to increase access to information about environmental hazards.

Since the late 1970s and early 1980s, environmental injustices against communities of color and lower-income families have been identified throughout the Nation. Coupled with decades of thorough research acknowledging "environmental racism" and encouraging the pursuit of "environmental justice," a tremendous movement has emerged.

Recently, the United Church of Christ report "Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty: 1987–2007" was released, synthesizing decades of environmental justice movement developments. This groundbreaking document chronicles the experiences of many communities throughout our Nation disadvantaged by environmental burdens. This report and other research demonstrate that federal agencies need to put their money where their mouth is to meet the expectations of Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations, which was signed by former President Clinton on February 11, 1994. Our communities deserve access to information about the hazards of their immediate environment and have waited well over a decade for the goals set forth by the Executive Order to be met.

Madam Speaker, I first introduced this legislation with a number of my colleagues in 2005 and eventually garnered the support of 67 co-sponsors. To once again meet these goals and better compliment other legislative initiatives to achieve environmental justice, I have made a few key updates to this legislation in consultation with many stakeholders. Updates

to this legislation include authorization of \$1,000,000 annually for each established office of environmental justice in relevant agencies, as well as reporting requirements to increase the effectiveness of federal agency implementation and ensure proper Congressional oversight. This legislation has also been updated to refine criteria for the development of community technology centers, which will increase the accessibility of information about environmental hazards in many communities.

For over a decade, agencies have been mandated to examine the impact of their policies on the environmental health of minority and low-income communities. Once we give those mandates true legal standing, we will be able to turn those mandates into action that directly serves our communities. We must legislate accountability and conscience in our permitting processes and environmental action to reduce the burden on low-income populations and communities of color. I am confident that the provisions of the Environmental Justice Access and Implementation Act will do just that.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I encourage my colleagues to support this necessary legislation and look forward to its expedient passage.

DENIEL BENAC RETIREMENT TRIBUTE

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 13, 2007

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to a man who is a long-time activist in labor, politics, and community service in Northern Michigan. With that in mind, I ask that all of my colleagues join me in celebrating the retirement of Daniel A. Benac of Montmorency County, Michigan. Dan Benac will retire on January 4, 2008 after a distinguished career in the United States Army, at General Motors, and as an advocate for his fellow workers and veterans.

Dan Benac was born in Alpena, Michigan on June 8, 1922, as one of twelve children of George and Rose Benac. Nearly 65 years ago he married Geraldine on February 9, 1943 and the couple raised three children: Charlotte, Carolyn, and David. Dan and Geraldine have eight grandchildren and fourteen great-grandchildren.

Dan Benac served in the U.S. Army's 103rd Infantry Division from 1942 until receiving an honorable medical discharge. After serving his country, he then began his career as a skilled tradesman at Besser Manufacturing in Alpena.

Dan then worked at a small manufacturing plant in Walled Lake, Michigan before taking a position with Pontiac Motors in 1948. He tried his hand as an entrepreneur in 1955, when he started and operated two gas stations. During the time he ran these businesses he began an apprenticeship as an electrician and earned the status of a journeyman electrician in 1962.

In 1969, Dan Benac took his skills to Warren, Michigan, where he worked at General Motors' Chevrolet plant. He began his union career in 1948 when he joined the United Auto Workers. While at the Chevrolet plant, Dan accepted the position as a UAW committeeman.

In 1974 Dan Benac took a medical retirement from General Motors, but as with so