

Missouri. Elizabeth is a very special young woman who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Girl Scouts of America, and earning the most prestigious award of Girl Scout Gold Award.

Elizabeth has been very active with her troop, participating in many scout activities. In order to receive the prestigious Gold Award, Elizabeth has completed all seven requirements that promote community service, personal and spiritual growth, positive values and leadership skills.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Elizabeth Cruz for her accomplishments with the Girl Scouts of America and for her efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Girl Scout Gold Award.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURT, OFFENDER SUPERVISION, PAROLE, AND PUBLIC DEFENDER EMPLOYEES EQUITY ACT OF 2008

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today Congressman TOM DAVIS (R-VA) and I introduced a bill that will correct a long overdue oversight affecting the non-judicial employees of the D.C. Courts, the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency, CSOSA, and the D.C. Public Defender Service, PDS.

Under the 1997 National Capital Revitalization and Self-Government Improvement Act of 1997, the Federal Government took over the operation of the District of Columbia Courts and related services making the non-judicial employees of the D.C. Courts and the employees of CSOSA Federal employees. In 1998, employees of PDS were similarly transferred as part of the District of Columbia Courts and Justice Technical Collections Act. As Federal employees, these court, CSOSA and PDS employees were brought under the Federal Retirement Program, FERS. However, for the employees transferred in 1997 and in 1998, "creditable service" for the purposes of determining when they would be eligible to retire and the amount of annuity they would be entitled to under FERS only began from the date of the transfer. That is, the 1997 and 1998 laws made no provision for treating their year of service as court and related services employees prior to these laws as creditable service for retirement.

Accordingly, the bill we introduced today will amend these laws to require that the time served by these employees before 1997 will count towards their overall Federal retirement eligibility as "creditable service." So for example, if an employee is 60 years old today and has worked 20 years (i.e., since 1985) for the D.C. Courts, under our bill he would be eligible for Federal retirement today (whereas without our bill he would have to work another 12 years).

I should also note that to avoid the problem of "double dipping," since the employees are still entitled to their D.C. retirement benefits

(based upon their work status up until 1997), our bill does not count the pre-1997 years spent as D.C. government employees towards the amount of Federal retirement annuity an employee is eligible to receive.

However, it is only fair and just that the court and related services employees who started their jobs with the expectation that would be able to retire without penalty after 20 years of service or more should be allowed to do so. Our bill today does just that, it restores their "lost time."

CELEBRATING THE GRANADA THEATER

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Granada Theater located in Mt. Vernon, Illinois, as the community celebrates its 70th anniversary.

The Granada Theater was designed in 1937 by the Boller Brothers and was recently reopened to the public with a weekend long celebration. Many wonderful memories were shared by community members who recalled the original theater and several great movie classics. The announcement that Pearl Harbor had been attacked and the first air conditioning system in the theater were among many unforgettable memories. However, one of the greatest memories that will be shared for years to come was created that night with the relighting of the marquee.

Countless hours of hard work and dedication from community members, along with local businesses, came together to make this celebration possible. Along with the memories shared there were theatrical performances, and the first movie was shown in the renovated theater. The renovated theater is intended to be used for other community events, such as dinner theaters and wedding receptions.

I am pleased to congratulate the Granada Theater on its 70th anniversary celebration.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RON KLEIN

OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Madam Speaker, today I submit a record of how I would have voted on Tuesday, March 11, when I was unavoidably detained. Had I voted, I would have voted "no" on rollcall No. 120.

HONORING GLORIA CHESTNUT

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Gloria Chestnut, a native of Wash-

ington, DC, whose lifelong dream was to further her education. However, she was faced with a critical decision, as she was a single mother, sole provider in her home and yet would have to learn to cope with the challenges of being a student with homework as well as being a full-time breadwinner. Yet she did just that, beginning her amazing journey at the age of 45.

In 1988, Gloria did continue her educational dream by enrolling in Medgar Evers College and was still a liberal arts student there when she retired from the U.S. Postal Service after 27 years of service. She began an introspective search into what would ultimately be her true calling. After graduating with an associates degree from Medgar Evers College, she entered the Graduate Center CUNY B.A./B.S. program and began classes at Brooklyn College in 1995.

It was there in 1997 during a class in the radio and television masters program, when a fellow classmate shared his experience with Brooklyn Community Access Television, BCAT, that she realized her future potential. Here she was, a 67-year-old mother, grandmother of seven, and a great-grandmother of two found a career in the arts through the venues of film, video, radio, and television. Gloria volunteers much of her time assisting producers with their productions as well as editing her own weekly show at BCAT. She produces weekly shows that reflect spirituality: "Expressions of Faith" and "Expressions of Faith Ministries" are programs that explore faith and the healing power of prayer.

Gloria Chestnut is a member of various organizations: GAMA, Grandmothers As Mothers Again; United Parents For Justice; Church Women United; JPAC, Jewish Association for Services for the Aged; NCNW, National Council of Negro Women; AARP Brooklyn Chapter #180; St. Gabriel and Ft. Greene Senior Centers; JASA, Institute for Senior Actions, as a former volunteer cameraperson for Jazz 966 and Jazzy Jazz. As an independent producer, Gloria has numerous productions to her credit: Aids in the Black Church; The Messiah Is Coming; The Real Life of Harriet Tubman; Malachi Roots Revisited; Mighty Men in the Bible; and many more.

Madam Speaker, I believe that it is incumbent on this body to recognize the accomplishments of Gloria Chestnut as she offers her talents and services for the betterment of our community. Since 1999 she has been rewarded the Hardy Smallwood Foundation Community Service Award, first place PEGASY Religious Import Award, third place in the Alliance for Community Media/Northeast Region Festival, Women's History Month Access Fund Award, Bethune Recognition Award for Loyal and Faithful Service, and the International Library of Photography Editor's Choice Award.

Madam Speaker, Gloria Chestnut is a remarkable woman who demonstrates that she has reinvented the wheel as a senior citizen with a wonderful second career as a video producer.