

commemorate the 85th Jubilee of the birth of their late President Heydar Aliyev. A larger than life personality and a man of enormous political skill and stature, Heydar Aliyev worked tirelessly for more than 30 years—first as part of the Soviet Union, and later as President of a free and independent Azerbaijan—to build a strong, vibrant, healthy and prosperous nation.

When Azerbaijan regained its independence in 1991, the political and economic vacuum caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union, domestic tensions fueled by competing forces at home and the disastrous war in Nagorno-Karabakh—which resulted in the military occupation of 20 percent of Azerbaijan, and nearly one million refugees and internally displaced people—threatened to rip the country apart. Many Azerbaijanis were fearful that their first experience as the short-lived first Republic in the Muslim world (1918–1920), would be repeated; and that a free and independent Azerbaijan would be nothing but a footnote in history.

Heydar Aliyev, however, had a vision for Azerbaijan. He knew that Azerbaijan's future would be assured if countries around the world had a stake in its independence and he knew that the key to attracting international investment in Azerbaijan's rich resources was stability. In 1993, when Heydar Aliyev became President of the Republic, first by appointment under the constitution, then through direct popular election he moved quickly to implement his vision. First, he negotiated a ceasefire in the war with Armenia—which was implemented in 1994—and next he pushed Parliament to begin enacting a series of laws to make the country friendlier to foreign investment and a member of the international market economy. President Aliyev opened up the country to investment from the United States, Western Europe, Russia, and Turkey and Azerbaijan soon became a pioneer in opening the Caspian Sea to international cooperation and oil and gas exploration. In fact, since the so-called "Contract of the Century" was signed in 1994, Azerbaijan has extensively developed its energy resources to help diversify western energy supplies. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline, for example, which became fully operational in July 2006 and will soon provide one-third of the new oil flowing into the international market. In addition to the BTC pipeline, the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline is now functioning.

President Aliyev was also aggressive in asserting Azerbaijan's place on the international political stage. He became a great friend to the United States and one of the first international leaders to offer unconditional assistance to the U.S.-led fight against global terrorism after 9–11—and was also one of the few Muslim leaders to agree to send troops to Iraq and Afghanistan. The strong relations between our two nations are a monument to his determination and will not be forgotten.

Madam Speaker, despite foreign and domestic critics of President Aliyev's pro-western policies, most people acknowledge that President Heydar Aliyev represented security during those very dark early years of Azerbaijan's second independence; and most Azerbaijanis felt at the time that as long as Heydar Aliyev was at the helm, the ship of state would not sink. Today it's up to the youth of Azerbaijan to steer that ship and to carry on Heydar Aliyev's vision of a strong, vibrant, healthy and

prosperous, and independent Azerbaijan. If they build upon the legacy President Aliyev left, I have no doubt they will succeed.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF MOTHER'S DAY

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 5, 2008

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker. I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 1113, "Celebrating the Role of Mothers in the United States." I would like to thank my colleague, Congressman JEFF FORTENBERRY of Nebraska, for introducing this heartfelt legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as a Mother myself, I am extremely proud to stand before you on a day recognizing mothers. Mothers are the strongest link in the family chain. She holds the family together, nurturing both child and husband.

I want to thank my own mother and grandmother for their support over the years. I also want to thank all of the mothers who take care of not only their natural children but also the children in the community, the children in foster care, and children overseas.

The annual number of Texas children in foster care has risen steadily in recent years. In November 2003, there were about 16,000 children in foster care and an additional 5,000 in other care, such as kinship care; 2,146 children were served in emergency shelters and homes; 671 children were served in placements outside the foster care system, such as nursing homes, mental health/mental retardation facilities, hospitals and juvenile justice facilities.

In a study by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, which oversees the Department of Family and Protective Services, they stated that Black children stay in foster care significantly longer, are less likely to be reunited with their families, and wait longer for adoption than white or Hispanic children.

They are everybody's children, and nobody's children. They are the forgotten children in the Texas foster care system. Black, White, Hispanic, Asian—they all need the love of a mother, the nurturing of a family, and the support of their community. Some of them find homes with caring foster parents, or in treatment centers with experienced and caring providers. And some do not.

Some foster children have been moved among 30, 40, or even more all-too-temporary "homes." Some have been sexually, physically, and emotionally abused while in the system; some have run away and joined the ranks of the missing. A few have even died at the hands of those entrusted with their care.

The mission of the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, DPRS, now called the Department of Family and Protective Services, is to protect the unprotected—children, the elderly and people with disabilities—from abuse, neglect and exploitation. The system responsible for protecting our foster children sometimes is little better than the homes from which they were taken.

Many of these children are not safe, and their futures are uncertain. They didn't ask to be put in foster care, and many endured great suffering before entering the system.

These children need mothers too. They need families. At a time when we are celebrating all that mothers bring, all that grandmothers bring, and all that a real family brings to the upbringing of healthy and successful children; we must remember the children who do not have mothers and we must reach out.

As we near Mother's Day, let me say thank you to all the mothers near and far, in Congress, in my district, and even working in my office. I celebrate you and your children celebrate you. Thank you for all that you do for your children and for the community.

I urge my colleagues to remember not only their mothers but the other women they called mother in their schools, and in their communities. Let's celebrate mothers and H. Res. 1113.

GENETIC INFORMATION NONDISCRIMINATION ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 1, 2008

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, H.R. 493.

I am a cosponsor of this important legislation, which bans genetic discrimination in the workplace and in health insurance on the basis of predictive genetic information. It prohibits insurance companies from denying coverage or increasing premiums because of genetic factors. Also, under this bill, employers cannot consider genetic factors in the process of hiring, firing, or promoting workers.

H.R. 493 is similar to Minnesota law, which I voted for when I was a member of the Minnesota House of Representatives. Minnesota law sets basic privacy protections for the collection of genetic information by Government agencies and private entities. Unfortunately, not all States offer protection against genetic discrimination. This leaves most Americans unsure of how their private information will be protected. National legislation needs to be implemented now, before genetic discrimination becomes more widespread as genetic testing comes into greater use.

Discrimination based on a person's genetic information, just like that based on race or disability, should not be tolerated. Genetic discrimination has the potential to affect every person in the United States. Despite advances in modern medical technology, it is impossible to predict with certainty whether a given individual will actually develop a disease. Patients recognize that few laws exist to prevent health insurers or employers from using their predictive genetic information to deny them coverage or jobs. As a result, fear of such discrimination could cause individuals to refuse potentially life-saving testing or participate in genetic research.

Federal employees are already protected from genetic discrimination by an executive order signed by President Clinton. It is time to extend this protection to the rest of our country.

H.R. 493 will give Americans the security they need to take care of their health needs without worrying that they will face discrimination. This bill has been pending for over 13

years now. Under Republican control there were no hearings on this important topic. Within one year of Democrats taking control of the House this bill was passed, and is now on its way to the President's desk.

This bill is the right thing to do to protect access to health care and against genetic discrimination in the workplace. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

HONORING LOUIS M. THOMSON

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 7, 2008

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Louis M. Thomson, Jr. of Toledo, Ohio.

Louis M. Thomson, Jr., blessed Toledo, OH with his many talents, always giving an enthusiastic word about his native city. Louis passed from this life April 18, 2008, but will always be remembered by his family and friends for his warm smile, quick wit and uncompromising passion to better his community. Louis served as a longtime labor arbitrator, fact-finder, and mediator. Mr. Thomson, a Toledo native, graduated from Scott High School in 1945. Afterwards he served in the U.S. Army from 1945 to 1947, later graduating from the University of Toledo in 1950. Louis started his career with the city of Toledo in 1960 as director of public information and industrial relations, a position he held until 1968.

Following his position with the city of Toledo, he served as the director of the Toledo Labor-Management-Citizens Committee from 1968 until 1991. He worked as an independent arbitrator, fact-finder, and mediator. During his years on the job, he was known for working behind the scenes to improve the local labor climate. His family and colleagues remembered how he enjoyed helping to resolve labor disputes. His wife, Rose Thomson, recalled that the career called on him to be neutral and exercise good judgment. She said, "He liked listening to all the different things and trying to decide if people had been treated properly".

He retired from the job two weeks before his death and only because of his failing health. In addition to his work, Mr. Thomson was involved with a number of local community groups, including the University of Toledo Alumni Association, which he had served as president; the Scott Alumni Association; the City of Toledo Credit Union, of which he was also a past president; the Toledo Museum of Art; the Maumee Valley Historical Society; the Committee on Relations with Toledo, Spain, and numerous other organizations.

Louis simply desired to help people and do things for other, and in the meantime improve the city of Toledo as well. However, the organization closest to his heart was the Toledo Zoo, family members recalled. They estimated he had been involved with the Toledo Zoo for nearly 50 years because it was a landmark for the people of Toledo and surrounding areas. His love for the Toledo Zoo mimicked his love for the Toledo community. Louis always promoted the city of Toledo from an industrial, business and cultural perspective, never ceasing in the opinion that Toledo was a great place to live.

Toledo will miss one of its dearest sons. May his positive spirit and love of community be remembered in word and deed by all Toledo residents.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MOSES WEINSTEIN

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 7, 2008

Mr. CROWLEY. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the passing of a man who I deeply admired and knew for many years; Mr. Moses Weinstein. Mr. Weinstein, or Moe as his friends called him, passed away at the age of 95. He was loved and respected, and served New York and our country honorably throughout his long life.

Mr. Weinstein was a true patriot. He was a World War II veteran, and served our country in Europe. After graduating from Brooklyn Law School and he began working his way up the political ladder. In 1959, he started what would be an 11 year career in the New York State Assembly. During his tenure in the Assembly, he served as Chairman of the Queens Democratic Party; held the prestigious title of majority leader for the 1967 convention, where the New York State Constitution was redrafted; and was elected to the post of Majority Leader from 1965 through 1968 and Speaker of the Assembly in 1968. Much of his work as a legislator focused on the importance of promoting minorities and women to hold judicial positions.

After leaving the Assembly, Moe became a Justice of the Supreme Court of New York in 1970, and held the post for 14 years.

Moe was so accomplished. Yet, he always claimed that he was not anyone's boss, especially in his own home. He claimed that Muriel Marshall, his wife, was the true boss of the household.

I want to extend my deepest sympathies to Moe's family. Jonathan, Peter and Jeremy, your father was an extraordinary man and I feel blessed to have known him.

CONGRATULATING COASTAL BEND COLLEGE ON ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. RUBEN HINOJOSA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 7, 2008

Mr. HINOJOSA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Coastal Bend College, in Beeville, Texas on its 40th Anniversary. Bee County Junior College District was created by election on November 2, 1965. The election resulted from several years of work to establish a community college for Bee County. Support was shown by residents in an overwhelming five-to-one majority for the creation of the district. The desire for a community college was again demonstrated on December 7, 1965, when district citizens approved a tax to support BCC, and bond issues to build the college. Bee County College opened in September 1967 with 790 students, 24 full-time instructors and 11 part-time teachers. Its first class graduated in May of 1968.

In 1998 Bee County College changed its name to Coastal Bend College to reflect its expanding role in the region. Today, the Coastal Bend College service area includes Karnes, McMullen, Live Oak, Bee, Duval, Jim Wells and Brooks Counties, and parts of Atascosa and Kleberg Counties with campuses in Alice, Beeville, Kingsville and Pleasanton. Enrollment in academic, workforce education and continuing education classes during the spring of 2006 was 3,534. More than 100,000 students have passed through at least one of the four campuses over the past 40 years.

Coastal Bend College's current president, Dr. Thomas B. Baynum, came to the college in 2007. Under his leadership, the Texas Coordinating Board recently approved the opening of a full nursing program at Coastal Bend College. This new nursing program will help the school provide training that will not only offer graduates good paying jobs, but will also help alleviate the severe nursing shortage which this rural region faces as well as our State of Texas.

As a Hispanic Serving Institution, Coastal Bend College plays a critical role in graduating Hispanic students who will make up a large portion of our future workforce. The Higher Education Reauthorization Act, which is currently being negotiated in Congress, will help colleges like Coastal Bend increase their recruitment of minority students.

This weekend, Coastal Bend College will be celebrating this important 40th anniversary with a variety of events, including musical performances, art exhibits and most importantly, the graduation of students in its 40th graduating class. I want to again congratulate Coastal Bend College for reaching this important milestone and wish every graduating student success in their future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO THE SCOTTSBLUFF DECA

HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 7, 2008

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, since 1946, DECA has been the premier student organization preparing high school and college students for careers in marketing, management and entrepreneurship. Students are able to develop academic, leadership, communication, and civic responsibility skills.

Through the efforts of this organization, thousands of students have become leaders and have improved their communities in countless ways.

Today, I want to congratulate the thirty-nine students from the Scottsbluff DECA Chapter who qualified for and attended the International DECA Career Development Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. I also want to congratulate their advisor, Mr. Derek Deaver.

Over 14,000 DECA members from all fifty states as well as Canada, Guam, Puerto Rico and Mexico attended the conference, held late last month.

In this international competition, the Scottsbluff DECA Chapter made Nebraska proud. Many members received awards of excellence with one project—whose members include Brittany Shaneman, Jordyn Gray and