

Assembly District which covers parts of Los Angeles. Assemblywoman Bass's leadership skills were recognized early on, as she was selected in her first term to the influential position of Assembly Majority Whip. In her second term, Assemblywoman Bass was elevated to the powerful post of Assembly Majority Leader. During her first two terms in the State Assembly, Speaker-elect Bass had 17 of her bills signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger on issues ranging from foster care reform to children's health insurance.

Before entering elected office, Speaker-elect Bass founded and ran the Community Coalition, a community based nonprofit organization in South Los Angeles. As Executive Director, she built the Community Coalition into an important social justice organization that empowered residents and helped clean up neighborhoods ravaged by the crack cocaine epidemic. Today, the organization is considered a model of community engagement throughout the country.

Speaker-elect Bass grew up in the Venice/Fairfax area of Los Angeles, California. She is the daughter of DeWitt and Wilhelmina Bass. Her father worked as a mail carrier and her mother was a full-time stay-at-home mom who raised four children. Speaker-elect Bass is a graduate of Hamilton High School, received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Health Sciences from Cal State Dominguez Hills and has a Physician Assistant Certificate from the University of Southern California School of Medicine.

Within a matter of a few short years, Speaker-elect Bass went from being a community organizer to an elected official, and beginning next week, will be one of the most influential legislative leaders in the largest State in the country. Her rapid ascension is a testament to not only her leadership skills, but also to her dedication to the people that she serves.

On behalf of all 34 members of the California Democratic Congressional Delegation, I congratulate Speaker-elect Bass on her historic election and look forward to working with the new Assembly Speaker as we move forward together to address the issues facing the State of California.

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INTRODUCING A BILL TO AUTHORIZE APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

**HON. MAZIE K. HIRONO**

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 8, 2008*

Ms. HIRONO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill authorizing appropriations for the National Tropical Botanical Garden. This is a companion to S. 2220, which was introduced by Senator DANIEL K. AKAKA and cosponsored by Senators DANIEL K. INOUE, BILL NELSON, and MEL MARTINEZ. S. 2220 was approved by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on April 10, 2008. I am joined in introducing this bill by Congressman NEIL ABERCROMBIE of Hawaii and Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN of Florida.

The Pacific Tropical Botanical Garden was chartered by Congress in 1964; it was renamed the National Tropical Botanical Garden in 1988 through an Act of Congress. The pur-

poses of the garden as set forth in the 1964 charter was to: establish, develop, operate and maintain an education and scientific center with libraries, herbaria, laboratories and museums appropriate and necessary for encouraging and conducting research in basic and applied tropical botany; foster and encourage fundamental research with respect to tropical plant life and to encourage research and study of the uses of tropical flora in agriculture, forestry, horticulture, medicine and other sciences; disseminate through publications and other media the knowledge acquired at the gardens relative to basic and applied tropical botany; collect and cultivate tropical flora of every nature and origin and to preserve for the people of the United States species of tropical plant life threatened with extinction; and provide a beneficial facility that will contribute to the education, instruction, and recreation of the people of the United States.

Although its charter does not include authorization of appropriations, the National Tropical Botanical Garden has endeavored, with notable success, to live up to the goals set forth in its charter. Its work has been almost exclusively supported by private donations from individuals and foundations. Operating support of nearly \$100 million has been provided through donations in the 43 years of the Garden's existence; assets valued at \$50 million, including endowments, trusts, land, buildings, and rare books are owned by the Garden. During its 43 years, the Garden has received less than \$5 million in federal grants and contracts. The National Tropical Botanical Garden files an audit report with the Senate each year by an independent auditing firm in accordance with the terms of its Congressional Charter.

The National Tropical Botanical Garden manages five tropical botanical gardens and three preserves, which comprise 1,800 acres. Four of the gardens and the three preserves are in Hawaii's second Congressional District, which I represent. One of the gardens is located in Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN's district in Florida. More than a collection of beautiful and rare plants, the National Tropical Botanical Garden also has important research and educational facilities. These include the Loy McCandless Marks Botanical Library, the largest and most important botanical/horticultural library collection in Hawaii, and a major regional herbarium used by scientists throughout the world.

The Garden conducts world-class, state-of-the-art tropical biodiversity research and conservation, which distinguishes it from display-oriented gardens and parks in the United States and abroad. The Garden has extensive national and international alliances with botanical gardens, universities, and research centers. It has a visiting scientist program and the library is used by a wide array of scientists, including federal researchers. However, these facilities badly need to be updated. The Garden has a plan to construct a new Botanical Research Center. Such a Center would bring the Garden's significant botanical, research, and rare book libraries and its unique and important herbarium collections together under one roof, along with research laboratories, offices, and dedicated space for students and visiting researchers.

The Garden's research focuses on field research, including discovering new species; documenting and conserving ecosystems, en-

dangered species, and cultural knowledge; and addressing invasive species and restoration ecology issues. Its scientists are involved in a number of international science programs focused primarily on the Pacific Islands.

Some 90 percent of all biodiversity exists in the tropics. Hawaii, the only U.S. State in the tropics, is home to more endangered plants and animals than any other State. This is due to the high percentage of unique, endemic species that evolved because of Hawaii's geographic isolation and their susceptibility to the impacts of aggressive nonnative species and diseases. However, over the past 30 years, the National Tropical Botanical Garden has rediscovered some two dozen species that were thought to be extinct and discovered 30 new species previously unknown to science. Many of the species that the Garden is working to preserve and protect hold promise for the future development of drugs to cure diseases. The Garden's research teams conduct ethnobotanical research to study and document how indigenous people used plants. Ethnobotanical fieldwork is augmented by laboratory studies using state-of-the-art technology to determine a plant's molecular composition and medicinal properties. This research has yielded potential new anti-HIV medication and provided clues to the genesis of ALS and Parkinson's disease.

While the National Tropical Botanical Garden has achieved much over the past four decades, there is so much work that is needed. Although the primary support for the Garden will always be private funding, it is fitting that we have an opportunity to appropriate funds to support this institution in achieving its Congressional Charter. Our bill authorizes annual appropriations up to \$500,000 for operation and maintenance expenses. The 2008 budget for the Garden is \$9 million, 95 percent of which will be provided from private sources.

I invite all of my colleagues to come to Hawaii or Florida to visit the National Tropical Botanical Garden and to observe firsthand the important conservation and research activities taking place. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

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A TRIBUTE TO PHILMORE GRAHAM

**HON. GEORGE MILLER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 8, 2008*

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today and invite my colleagues to join me in honoring Philmore Graham, of Vallejo, California, for his many years of service to our Nation and our community. Mr. Graham has provided remarkable leadership to our young people during his lifetime, especially by founding and then expanding the Continentals of Omega Boys and Girls Club.

Philmore Graham, the ninth of ten siblings, was born August 29, 1938, to now deceased parents, John Archie and Louise Graham, in Laurinburg, North Carolina. He attended Laurinburg and Lincoln Heights High Schools and was a well-rounded student with a 3.9 grade point average. He was president of his class from eighth grade through the completion of high school, was captain of the football team, played basketball and was principal for a day.