

I have been proud to support the Occaneechee Council of the Boy Scouts in North Carolina through volunteer work and vital fundraising. I have been honored to receive the Silver Beaver, the Scouts' highest award for volunteering.

Scouting has contributed to the fabric of American life for nearly 100 years. The Boy Scouts of America was incorporated on February 8, 1910, and chartered by Congress in 1916. The Boy Scouts of America's original mission was to provide an educational program for boys and young men to build character, to train in the responsibilities of participating in citizenship, and to develop personal fitness.

You know, North Carolina and America and indeed the entire world have changed a great deal since 1910, yet the Boy Scouts endure. The Boy Scouts remain a mainstay of American life because the message of this organization is timeless: developing American citizens who are physically, mentally and emotionally fit.

The leadership and service skills learned as a Boy Scout have enabled men to become leaders in all walks of life: government, business, sports, science and the arts. These include such distinguished individuals as: President Gerald R. Ford, our first Eagle Scout to become President; Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; and my friend, Richard Gephardt, the former Majority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives, and Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer. Closer to my home, former North Carolina Governor and Senator Terry Sanford was an Eagle Scout.

The Boy Scouts of America is an institution that contributes so much to the strength of our social fabric. The activities of the Boy Scouts reinforce our moral core and help sustain our American values, generation after generation.

I support the issuance of this commemorative centennial coin, and I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this bill.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT AMENDMENT'S BILL

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2008

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, as another presidential election fast approaches, I am pleased to introduce a bill to amend and improve the Help America Vote Act of 2002, HAVA, which was enacted after the chaos of the 2000 presidential election. The genesis of my bill is my own experience and observations from the 2004 elections here in the District of Columbia and campaigning in other parts of the country during the 2004 presidential elections.

The first provision is in response to the long lines that voters have been forced to endure throughout the country that may have deterred significant numbers of voters and would require States to permit counties or other subdivisions upon request to begin voting prior to the scheduled date of an election. During the 2004 election, some subdivisions had voting machines that were modern and plentiful, while other jurisdictions in the same State were burdened with scarce and out-of-date

machines, resulting in long lines. In the pivotal state of Ohio, which determined the outcome of the close 2004 presidential election, the controversy was deepened by reports that lines were particularly long in counties where there were large minority populations compared with largely white counties. One reason for the difference is that in many States, voting machines are purchased by counties or other jurisdictions. Differences in income levels, tax bases and other issues often result in large disparities within the same State in the availability of machines. Small changes in the calendar day that voting begins can help eliminate these disparities and the lines that discourage the exercise of the right to vote, and without the often significant capital investment in new equipment.

The second provision of my bill adds a section to HAVA that responds to calls my office received regarding absentee ballots sent in that inadvertently did not include postage, or had insufficient postage. My bill would require officials to accept such absentee ballots. Postage mistakes may be made depending on the number of issues on the ballot and the resulting size and weight of the envelope containing the ballot. The cost to authorities, if any, is de minimis. The public interest in counting every ballot voters have cast outweighs the incidental, virtually immeasurable cost, if any. There should be no doubt that such ballots should be counted.

A third provision amends HAVA to eliminate the confusion that arises when voters go to the incorrect voting sites because they are first-time or infrequent voters or their usual voting site has been changed. To encourage participation, my bill would allow voters registered anywhere in the State to cast a provisional ballot and have it counted and verified. However, voters would be told the correct polling site to allow the option of going to the correct site and thereby avoiding any doubt that their ballots would be counted.

The 2000 presidential election was a calamity of such historic proportions that it cast doubt on the validity of the election of the President of the United States and led to the enactment of HAVA. The continuing problems in the 2004 elections were very serious, unacceptable, and controversial. Although that election was also razor thin close, its problems took longer to surface and there was no delay in the certification and settlement of the final result through the Supreme Court in *Bush v. Gore* in 2001. However, the 2004 elections were another close call that yielded bitter controversy. Beyond the recent election controversies, the voting franchise is precious enough for us to want and endeavor to protect its full expression. Congress must be willing to learn from our continuing experience to make improvements in protecting the right to vote as they are needed. My bill simply uses the experience from my own district and elsewhere to contribute to this effort.

CONCERN ABOUT TREATMENT OF U.S. CITIZEN IN BELARUSIAN DETENTION

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2008

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, as Chairman of the Commission on Security

and Cooperation in Europe, I would like to draw attention and concern to the case of Mr. Emanuel Zeltser, a U.S. citizen who was detained March 12th upon his arrival in Minsk, Belarus, charged with "use of forged documents." In the entire time that Mr. Zeltser has been detained, he has only been allowed visitation by the U.S. Embassy twice, on March 21st and April 25th. Upon the latter visit it was noted by the U.S. consul that Mr. Zeltser had been beaten several times and appeared in greatly weakened health. Mr. Zeltser suffers from Type 2 diabetes and a severe form of arthritis. Though his condition causes him severe pain and has further deteriorated during his incarceration, the authorities in the detention facility where he is held have reportedly denied him necessary medications. Without proper medications, Mr. Zeltser may not be able to survive the harsh conditions of his detention. Furthermore, according to his lawyer, Belarusian authorities have recently extended the period of Mr. Zeltser's term of detention.

It is incumbent upon the Belarusian government to provide Mr. Zeltser full consular access, proper medical care, and ensure that he is not subjected to further physical abuse and degrading treatment—consistent with its international legal obligations and basic human rights standards.

Time is of the essence in Mr. Zeltser's case, as further delays could lead to further deterioration of his health to the point of endangering his life.

Madam Speaker, I call upon the Belarusian authorities to ensure that Mr. Zeltser immediately receives the medication his doctor has prescribed, and is protected from further ill-treatment, given access to U.S. consular representatives and any medical attention he may need. On April 25, the State Department requested the Government of Belarus to release Emanuel Zeltser on humanitarian grounds. I urge the Belarusian Government to favorably consider that request.

CELEBRATING TAYLOR'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2008

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge, honor, and celebrate the City of Taylor on the occasion of its 40th Anniversary. Incorporated as a city on May 13, 1968, and named after our country's 12th president, Taylor's roots as a community date to the mid-19th Century. What began as a largely agricultural town grew into a prosperous and diverse city which features ample retail and industry for employment and safe neighborhoods for her citizens.

Taylor first began as a Township when residents succeeded in petitioning for their own government in 1847. Like many Michigan communities, Taylor began to thrive when Ford Motor Company opened the nearby Rouge Plant. The Rouge, as it was often simply called, provided over 100,000 jobs at one time during the 1930s. This mighty economic engine created a boom in the burgeoning town that would carry it through the Great Depression and World War II, during which it played an invaluable part of the American war effort.