

especially in areas such as tourism, transportation and climate change and establishing common areas of research and outreach that are particularly aimed at improving the quality of life of citizens in the Caribbean and New York in such areas that connect education to health, trade, culture and promote greater public awareness especially to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS, prevention of NCDs advancing cultural industries and thereby capitalizing on some of the assets of the Caribbean Diaspora.

Prime Minister also suggested the involvement of the private sector both in the CARICOM Community and New York to sponsor goodwill tours to enhance the understanding of groups and stakeholders that share common cultural and educational objectives; placing greater emphasis on promoting courses on Caribbean Studies and the American connections in the region's Tertiary Learning Institutions (TLIs) and establishing a Charles Rangel Professorship to commemorate this momentous occasion in the annals of Caribbean-USA relations.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will foster greater ties between the two tertiary institutions in specific areas of importance to the Caribbean and the Diaspora in New York.

Professor Nigel Harris, UWI Vice Chancellor and Dr. Edison Jackson, President of the Medgar Evers College signed the MOU at the Education Symposium at the New York Marriott at the Brooklyn Bridge. The signing came at the end of the Opening Ceremony of the Symposium which was staged as part of the two-day New York Conference on the Caribbean which began 19 June. The Symposium was held under the theme "Strengthening Collaborative Ties between New York and CARICOM Higher Education Institutions."

The Conference is geared at boosting existing ties with the United States in general and New York in particular, in the areas of education, trade and investment.

High level meetings were held between Heads of Government and key officials included Congressman Hon. Charles Rangel, Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives, the Hon. David Paterson, New York Governor; Mr. Michael Bloomberg, Mayor of New York; Mr. Marty Markowitz, Brooklyn Borough President, and top executives of Wall Street. In a brief statement Professor Harris extended gratitude to Dr. Jackson for making the symposium possible and indicated that though UWI and Medgar Evers had signed other similar documents, this one was special since it was aimed at building a relationship in areas of relevance to the Caribbean and to the Caribbean Diaspora in New York such as youth development and immigration. He expressed the hope that the MOU would usher in a partnership that would serve as a model for other relationships. The panelists at the two-hour long Symposium were Professor Nigel Harris, Professor Frances Negron Muntaner of Columbia University, Dr. Garrie Moore, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, CUNY, Ms. Myrna Bernard, Director, Human Development, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, and Dr. David Jones, President, Community Service Society.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 16, 2008*

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Madam Speaker, unfortunately Monday night, July 14, 2008, I

was unable to cast my votes on H. Res. 1067, H. Res. 1080, and H. Con. Res. 297, and wish the record to reflect my intentions had I been able to vote.

Had I been present for rollcall No. 486 on suspending the rules and passing H. Res. 1067, Recognizing the 50th anniversary of the crossing of the North Pole by the USS *Nautilus*, I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for Roll Call No. 487 on suspending the rules and passing H. Res. 1080, Honoring the extraordinary service and exceptional sacrifice of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), known as the Screaming Eagles, I would have voted "aye."

Had I been present for Roll Call No. No. 488 on suspending the rules and passing H. Con. Res. 297, Recognizing the 60th anniversary of the integration of the United States Armed Forces, I would have voted "aye."

#### OHIO HOUSING CRISIS

### HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 16, 2008*

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support the inclusion of neighborhood stabilization funds as part of the comprehensive housing package currently pending in Congress.

Last month, Chairwoman WATERS convened a field hearing in my congressional district on the housing foreclosure crisis in Ohio. During this hearing, we heard testimony from State and local government officials and housing advocates about the devastation that has been caused by subprime mortgage lending practices.

The hearing panelists shared information on their aggressive foreclosure prevention efforts which include: Governor Strickland's establishment of a Compact with major servicers to help Ohioans stay in their homes; State laws and city resolutions to address issues surrounding vacant and foreclosed properties; litigation initiated by the City of Cleveland against lenders for their violations of Ohio's public nuisance statute; and housing counseling services provided by full-service public interest organizations.

Despite all of these efforts within the State of Ohio, a common theme we heard throughout the field hearing was the dire need for an aggressive Federal response to the housing crisis. Specifically, panelists repeatedly emphasized the need for community stabilization funding.

Neighborhood stabilization funds will allow States and local governments to facilitate the purchase, rehabilitation, or demolition of vacant and foreclosed properties. During last month's field hearing, State and local government officials noted their severe lack of resources as well as the need for Federal funds to halt the cycle of disinvestment. Housing stakeholders in Ohio and across the country stand ready to utilize these emergency stabilization funds to reverse the continued downward cycle of property abandonment and declining property values.

As negotiations continue this week on this important housing legislation, I strongly urge my colleagues to support the inclusion of neighborhood stabilization funds in the final legislative package.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 16, 2008*

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, on July 14, 2008, I missed rollcall votes numbered 486, a resolution recognizing the 50th anniversary of the crossing of the North Pole by the USS *Nautilus* (SSN 571); 487, a resolution honoring the extraordinary service and exceptional sacrifice of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), known as the Screaming Eagles; and 488, a resolution recognizing the 60th anniversary of the integration of the United States Armed Forces.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes numbered 486, 487, and 488.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING THE 175TH ANNIVERSARY OF CLARK TOWNSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH

### HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 16, 2008*

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker: Whereas, Clark Township Baptist Church was founded in June 1833 and is celebrating its 175th anniversary in Warsaw, Ohio; and

Whereas, the congregation of Clark Township Baptist Church continue to be active, enthusiastic members of our community; and

Whereas, the 175th anniversary of Clark Township Baptist Church has drawn new and old congregation members to Warsaw, Ohio to celebrate the life of their church; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that along with the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I commend Clark Township Baptist Church and its congregation for their unwavering commitment, dedication and contributions to their community and country in recognition of their 175 years.

HONORING THE MARYLAND STATE MATHCOUNTS TEAM

### HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 16, 2008*

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievement of the Maryland Mathcounts team at the National Mathcounts Competition held in Denver on May 9, 2008. Represented by Jason Hyun, Ben Lowenstein, and Sam Zbarsky of Takoma Park Middle School, and Linus Hamilton of Hyattsville Middle School, the participants performed exceptionally well in the country's largest middle school math competition, earning a third place overall group finish. Two members of this young team also performed well individually, finishing in the top of the quarterfinal round.

Sarah Manchester, who teaches math at Takoma Park Middle School and coached the Maryland team in this impressive performance,

deserves special recognition. Maryland was the only state to be represented by more than one finalist in the individual playoff round, and Sarah's efforts to ensure that the students were prepared for this competition are reflected in the team's success. Sarah has taught Mathcounts students for a decade and continues to donate her time and energy to help her students excel.

More than 6,000 schools participate annually in the Mathcounts competition. Since it began in 1983, Mathcounts has had over seven million gifted young math students study in the program and participate in its competitions. Funded by the donations of generous individuals and corporations, the scholarships awarded to the participants provide a strong incentive for young people to commit themselves to an extracurricular program that builds math skills, improves critical thinking, and fosters teamwork. The 17,000 volunteers, like Sarah Manchester, who coach the 500,000 middle school students who participate each year pass on an enthusiasm for mathematics that is rewarding for all those involved.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to commend the students and educators who make Mathcounts such a remarkable and successful program. I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding the efforts of all the Mathcounts participants, and I look forward to watching the program continue to showcase the extraordinary talents of our students and their dedicated teachers in the years to come.

#### TRIP TO BEIJING, CHINA

### HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2008

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, over the Fourth of July recess, Representative CHRIS SMITH and I traveled to Beijing, China.

We had become increasingly disturbed by reports of harsh crackdowns by Chinese security forces on the dissident community in the run up to the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.

Although both Representative SMITH and I have been outspoken critics of the Chinese government over the years, we embarked on this trip with open minds ready to be convinced that the Chinese government had taken steps to improve its abysmal human rights record.

Unfortunately, what we saw while we were on the ground cannot be considered by any stretch of the imagination to be progress.

Upon our arrival, we were informed that the three people that we had invited to have dinner with us that evening were threatened by Chinese security forces not to attend and placed under house arrest. One of these individuals, a prominent human rights lawyer to whom I had presented the National Endowment for Democracy Award just weeks earlier on Capitol Hill, was taken several hours outside of Beijing and detained for the duration of our trip.

I insert two articles for the record from The New York Times and The Washington Post, which further detail the detention of these individuals.

We also visited a "house church," an underground Protestant church which is forced to

operate illegally out of private homes because the Chinese government refuses to recognize these churches as legitimate places of worship.

It was clear that we were being followed to the house church by Chinese security forces so we were only able to stay a short time because we did not want to endanger members of the congregation.

House church members and leaders are often targeted for harassment and detention by the Chinese security forces because they are viewed by the government as a threat to the stability and control of the communist regime.

One example of this repressive policy is Pastor Zhang Rongliang, also known as Uncle Liang. Pastor Zhang is the leader of the China for Christ Church, a network of house churches that is estimated to have over 10 million members throughout China.

Chinese authorities raided Pastor Zhang's home on New Year's Eve 2005 and formally arrested him. He was detained for 6 months without being charged. On June 29, 2006, Pastor Zhang was charged and convicted of fraudulently obtaining border exit documents and sentenced to 7½ years in prison. Pastor Zhang is currently being held at Henan Prison Number One and has reportedly been subjected to electric shock while imprisoned. He suffers from diabetes and hypertension. He is only allowed one 30-minute visit a month from members of his family and prison guards surround him during these visits.

During a two-hour meeting with Ambassador Li Zhaoxing, the former Chinese foreign minister who now chairs the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress, Congressman SMITH and I both pressed for the release of detained individuals, such as Pastor Zhang. We presented Ambassador Li with a partial list of political prisoners compiled by the Congressional-Executive Commission on China and asked for the immediate release of all 734 individuals on the list. A copy of this list is available online at [www.cecc.gov](http://www.cecc.gov).

I have met with many former political and religious prisoners and dissidents like Pastor Zhang. These are peaceful people. They are not violent rogues seeking to overthrow the Chinese government. All they ask for is freedom; they yearn for freedom—the freedom to gather together and worship and celebrate and share their religious beliefs.

But the Chinese government will not allow this. They throw their own people in jail and subject them to the most base and violent forms of torture. And despite all this, the government of China was awarded the honor of hosting the 2008 Olympic Games.

In 1988, in the midst of the cold war, President Ronald Reagan publicly addressed religious leaders at the Danilov Monastery in Moscow and called on the Soviet Union to promote religious tolerance.

I call on President Bush to follow the example of Ronald Reagan. While he is in Beijing for the opening ceremonies of the Olympics, he should make a public speech calling on the Chinese government to release all the political and religious dissidents who languish in labor camps and prisons across China.

The people of China, and the dissidents who sit in their jail cells day after day, week after week, year after year, should know that the President of the United States of America and leader of the free world stands with them

in their quest for freedom, and not with the repressive communist regime of China.

[From the Washington Post, July 1, 2008]

U.S. LAWMAKERS DECRY OLYMPICS AFTER  
DISSIDENTS BLOCKED

(By Chris Buckley)

BEIJING.—Two U.S. Congressmen on Tuesday urged President George W. Bush to rethink attending the Beijing Olympic Games after they were prevented from meeting Chinese human rights activists.

Republican Congressmen Frank Wolf from Virginia and Chris Smith from New Jersey said they had come to Beijing to meet Chinese citizens pressing for greater political and religious freedoms, including two who recently met the U.S. president.

But Chinese authorities pressured or forced nine activists from meeting them at a dinner on Sunday or subsequently, according to a document handed out by the lawmakers.

They said such actions, and other repressive steps taken by the Chinese Communist Party, have cast a shadow over the Games and over Bush's vow to attend them.

"Tragically, the Olympics has triggered a massive crackdown designed to silence and put beyond reach all those whose views differ from the official 'harmonious' government line," Smith told a news conference held in the U.S. embassy in Beijing.

The friction between the visitors and wary Chinese authorities has underscored the political tensions of the Games, with Beijing under criticism from Western politicians and international rights groups over Tibet, censorship and restrictions on religion and political dissent.

Wolf, who with Smith presented Chinese officials with a list of 734 Chinese prisoners they said were jailed for dissent, said Bush should not attend the Games unless there were big changes.

"I personally believe that unless there's tremendous progress over the next few weeks whereby they release some of these prisoners, I personally do not believe the president should attend. Nor do I think the Secretary of State should attend," said Wolf.

"SIMPLY RIDICULOUS"

China later hit back, saying the politicians' attempted meetings violated the claimed purpose of their visit.

"The two U.S. Congressmen came to China as guests of the United States Embassy to engage in internal communications and consultations," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao told a news conference.

"They should not engage in activities incompatible with the objective of their visit and with their status."

Speaking by telephone before leaving Beijing, Wolf called China's explanation "simply ridiculous" and said he expected the U.S. ambassador to Beijing to take up the issue.

Two of the Chinese citizens who could not meet the lawmakers, Beijing-based lawyers Li Baiguang and Li Heping, met Bush at the White House on June 23 after receiving awards from the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy.

Li Heping said security officers had ostentatiously tailed him and told him not to meet the U.S. politicians. He said by telephone that he was surprised the audience with Bush had not given him and Li Baiguang some immunity.

"He said he was very concerned about human rights and the rule of law in China, especially religious freedom and the freedom of the press," Li Heping said of the meeting.

"He also said that when he comes to Beijing for the Olympics he will raise these issues with President Hu."

Li Baiguang, an evangelical Christian who has now met Bush twice, could not be contacted. His mobile telephone was cut off and