

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join me in honoring Connie Pasqualino for reaching her 100th birthday. I hope we all have the good fortune to live as long as her.

HONORING JEFFERSON HIGH
SCHOOL OF CONCEPTION JUNC-
TION, MISSOURI

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize the outstanding achievements of the students, teachers, administrators, parents, and patrons of Jefferson High School and the Jefferson C-123 School District. Jefferson High School was named a 2008 No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School of the year.

Madam Speaker, in order for Jefferson High School to receive such a prestigious national distinction, they were required to score in the top 10 percent on the State of Missouri's assessment test. I would like to make a special note of Jefferson C-123 School District Superintendent Rob P. Dowis and Jefferson High School Principal Tim R. Jermain for their commitment and leadership to the students of Jefferson High School.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join me in applauding the outstanding achievements of Jefferson High School. It is an honor to have a high school like Jefferson in the Sixth Congressional District of Missouri that strives for educational excellence. We wish them many more years of success.

SITUATION IN GAZA

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, the State of Israel has a right to defend its territory and its people from attack, whether that attack emanates from another sovereign nation, or, as in this case, from a terrorist organization that seized control of Gaza in a bloody putsch 18 months ago.

Hamas clearly chose to escalate its conflict against Israel by unilaterally declaring an end to the ceasefire that was implemented last June and launching a large-scale rocket attack on Israeli population centers. The Israeli government exercised great forbearance in the weeks prior to the formal breakdown of the ceasefire, which Hamas was already violating repeatedly, and had the international community more strongly condemned these attacks and taken action to stop them, the current Israeli offensive may have been unnecessary. But, Hamas bears ultimate responsibility for provoking this attack and for putting 1.5 million Palestinians in harm's way—a fact that Arab leaders from Egypt to Saudi Arabia have noted.

Along with millions of Americans, I grieve the terrible loss of life of innocent Israelis and Palestinians. Hamas's decision to fire rockets from populated areas and Israeli strikes on those targets have resulted in many civilian

casualties, and our hearts go out to all the innocents who have suffered.

It is too early to tell if Israel's military actions will quell the threat of rocket attacks from Gaza and shut down smuggling routes from Egypt. The conflict in Lebanon proved how difficult this can be and a strong international effort will be necessary to avoid a recurrence of missile strikes in both theaters. This will require a level of resolution thus far not demonstrated by the international community.

Israel's long-term security can only be guaranteed by a successful peace process that leads to the creation of a Palestinian state living side-by-side and in peace with Israel. President-elect Obama has committed himself to reinvigorating the search for peace and it is my hope that a timely conclusion of the present hostilities will allow the new President to begin these efforts from the first days of his administration.

STOP THE CONGRESSIONAL PAY
RAISE ACT

HON. HARRY E. MITCHELL

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, earlier today my colleague Dr. RON PAUL and I were joined by more than 50 Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle to introduce the Stop the Congressional Pay Raise Act of 2009.

As you may recall, I introduced similar bills the last two years, seeking to prevent an automatic pay raise for Members of Congress from taking effect in 2008 and 2009. Unfortunately, despite the support of 34 cosponsors, last year's bill failed to reach the floor. As a result, every Member is now receiving \$174,000 this year, a \$4,700 increase since last year.

Madam Speaker, our economy is in a recession, hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops are fighting overseas, and our national debt exceeds \$10 trillion. Unemployment figures are on the rise, home values are falling, and markets around the world are suffering from a devastating loss of credit and consumer demand. The American people aren't getting a \$4,700 pay raise this year. I do not know how in good conscience we, as their Representatives in Congress, can accept one.

In the last year, jobless rates increased in 49 States and the District of Columbia. Unemployment was up 2 percentage point from a year before. In my home State of Arizona, unemployment rose by over 50 percent, leaving nearly 200,000 workers unemployed.

Compounding the situation, economists estimate that nearly \$7 trillion of investor stock wealth was lost in 2008, and Standard & Poor's 500 and the Dow Jones industrial average experienced their worst years since the Great Depression.

When Members of Congress accept this pay raise, we send the wrong message. We should be tightening our belts along with the men and women we represent. Americans are suffering and instead of feeling that pain, Congress is quietly approving pay raises to further insulate us from it. If you want to know why people hate Washington and feel that it is out of touch, it is precisely because of moves like this.

If we are going to talk the talk of fiscal discipline, I believe we need to walk the walk of self-restraint. I will be donating my 2009 pay raise to charity, just as I did with my 2008 pay raise. I encourage my colleagues to do the same, and join me in stopping the next automatic pay raise from taking effect by supporting the Stop the Congressional Pay Raise Act.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 40, THE
COMMISSION TO STUDY REPARATION
PROPOSALS FOR AFRICAN-
AMERICANS ACT

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, today I rise to introduce H.R. 40, the Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act. This 111th Congress marks the 20th anniversary of this bill's introduction. Since 1989, I have believed it to be in the best interest of our Nation to formally address one of our greatest historical injustices.

As evidenced by recent events, the sin of slavery is one that continues to weigh heavily upon us. Following the lead of other churches, the Episcopal Church formally apologized for its role in slavery on October 4, 2008. Florida became the sixth state to apologize for slavery on March 26, 2008, following Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, Alabama and New Jersey. During the internationally renowned Sundance Film Festival, *Traces of the Trade*, a documentary in which descendants of the largest U.S. slave trading family confront this painful history, screened in January of 2008.

Just last Congress, the House passed a slavery apology bill on July 29, 2008, in which the House issued a formal apology for slavery. In recognition of the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade on January 1, 1808, the House and Senate passed legislation creating a commemoration commission, which was signed into law on February 5, 2008, and is currently awaiting funding. Such Federal efforts are significant steps towards proper acknowledgment and understanding of slavery and its implications, but our responsibilities on this matter are even greater.

Establishing a commission to study the institution of slavery in the United States, as well as its consequences that reach into modern day society, is our responsibility. This concept of a commission to address historical wrongs is not unprecedented. In fact, in recent Congresses, commission bills have been put forward.

In 1983, a Presidential Commission determined that the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II was racist and inhumane, and as a result, the 1988 Civil Liberties Act provided redress for those injured by the internment. However, the internment of Japanese Latin Americans in the United States during World War II was not examined by the Commission, resulting in legislation calling for a commission to examine this oversight. Legislation establishing a commission to review the injustices suffered by European Americans, European Latin Americans, and Jewish refugees during World War II has also been proposed.