

and addressing California water issues so important to our collective future.

Sincerely,

TOVEY GIEZENTANNER,  
President and CEO,  
Conaway Preservation Group, LLC.

RECLAMATION DISTRICT 2035,  
Woodland, CA, October 6, 2009.

Re Support for water transfer legislation.

Hon. JIM COSTA,

House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN COSTA: On behalf of Reclamation District 2035, thank you for introducing legislation authorizing and establishing a permanent long-term program to promote and manage water transfers in the Central Valley of California. Reclamation District 2035 (RD 2035) was formed in 1919 to provide flood control and water delivery for approximately 22,000 acres in Yolo County, California. While RD2035 does not own water rights, it is responsible for the delivery of CVP water to its agricultural customers whose crops represent the top three agricultural commodities in Yolo County.

As you are aware, the devastating impacts of diminished water deliveries to the CVP as a result of three years of below average precipitation have been made even greater by the various regulatory restrictions, including the requirements established by the recent federal biological opinions for endangered fish under the ESA. Your legislation will provide immediate, much needed relief in the form of a flexible and useful tool that will allow water to be transferred from willing parties to those in need within the CVP. Further, the language in your legislation directing the Bureau of Reclamation to work with other federal agencies to develop the necessary long-term environmental documentation addressing impacts of a water transfer program on the ESA-listed Giant Garter Snake is a critical and necessary near-term next step.

We look forward to working with you and your staff on this important legislative effort.

Sincerely,

REGINA J. CHEROVSKY,  
Chairperson.

CONGRATULATING DANIEL J.  
SANTORO UPON RECEIVING THE  
2008 CHENEY AWARD

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 8, 2009

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor CPT Daniel J. Santoro, a member of the Tampa Bay community for receiving the 2008 Cheney award for distinguished service in the United States Air Force.

Captain Santoro is a C-130E instructor pilot, assigned to the 37th Airlift Squadron, 86th Operations Group, 86th Airlift Wing, at Ramstein Air Base in Germany. Captain Santoro was born in Las Vegas, Nevada, October 1977; he attended the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado, graduating in 2000 with a Bachelor's of Science in Human Factors Engineering.

After graduation, Captain Santoro continued his pilot training at Whiting Field Naval Air Station, in my home State for Florida. His service to our country has taken him to numerous States: Oklahoma, Arkansas, and North Carolina where he constantly worked to improve

his skills to keep our country safe. Often recognized for his leadership and tireless dedication, Captain Santoro was assigned to Ramstein Air Base in Germany, where he would serve bravely in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, among others.

In 2008, as the Chief Tactics and Instructor Pilot, his squadron completed 29 missions and delivered 211 tons of humanitarian cargo, including food and hygiene kits, to the country of Georgia. It is because of these heroic actions that Captain Santoro is receiving the 2008 Cheney Award; which is given for an "act of valor, extreme fortitude, or self-sacrifice in a humanitarian interest, performed in connection with aircraft, but not necessarily of a military nature, by an Air Force officer or enlisted member." The award is named after Lt. William H. Cheney, who was killed in an air collision in Italy in 1918.

Madam Speaker, Captain Santoro is a true testament to the bravery and the sacrifices made by the men and women in the Armed Forces. His accomplishments are significant and an inspiration.

CONGRATULATING ALICIA SEIDEL

HON. DAVID G. REICHERT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 8, 2009

Mr. REICHERT. Madam Speaker, today I rise in recognition of a brave young girl in my district, Alicia Seidel, and congratulate her for being named an honoree at the 2009 Arthritis Walk happening this Saturday in Bellevue, Washington, and for living her life so bravely while battling her disease.

Alicia, a ten-year-old fifth grader from Sammamish, Washington, was diagnosed in 2007 with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. Immediately before and for some time following the diagnosis, Alicia struggled to do something as simple as holding a pencil. Thankfully, the wonderful doctors, specialists and staff at Swedish Medical Center and Children's Hospital in Seattle worked to alleviate the pain Alicia was under, which allowed her to act like the vivacious girl she is. My office had the opportunity to meet Alicia and her mom, Cynthia, more than a year ago to discuss Alicia's ailment and a photo from that meeting is proudly displayed in our office; her infectious nature and sweet disposition made a lasting impact.

The Arthritis Prevention Control and Cure Act, H.R. 1210, of 2009 is legislation I'm proud to have co-sponsored. At this time, the legislation is in the House Committee on Energy and Commerce and I encourage the entire House to act on it as quickly as possible because it is an important bill. The bill would, among many other things, focus attention on juvenile arthritis research by creating a juvenile arthritis database and provide financial incentives to encourage more health professionals to enter the field of pediatric rheumatology. Additionally, I will continue to work on behalf of young people like Alicia to urge Congress to make a long-term, sustained investment in medical research through the National Institutes of Health because it represents our greatest hope for finding cures and treatments for debilitating conditions like arthritis and freeing Alicia and her family from the constraints of arthritis.

On behalf of the House of Representatives, I extend our sincerest congratulations to Alicia, for her courageous spirit and the inspiration provided to 300,000 other young people struggling with this disease today, and our best wishes in the 2009 Arthritis Walk.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CIVIL  
ACCESS TO JUSTICE ACT OF 2009

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 8, 2009

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to join Representative BOBBY SCOTT and Chairman JOHN CONYERS in introducing the Civil Access to Justice Act of 2009. This important legislation will expand civil legal services to low-income families and individuals.

In 1974, Congress established the Legal Services Corporation ("LSC") to operate as a private, non-profit corporation to promote equal access to justice under the law and to provide grants for high-quality civil legal assistance to low-income persons. LSC distributes more than 95 percent of its total funding to 137 independent nonprofit legal aid programs to represent low-income individuals and families in every congressional district. Programs receiving LSC grants help the most vulnerable, such as families facing unlawful evictions or foreclosures, displaced persons attempting to obtain federal emergency assistance, and women seeking protection from abuse. In fact, many programs have been besieged recently with requests for foreclosure assistance because of the subprime mortgage crisis.

The current economic downturn will likely lead to more families and individuals needing legal assistance. According to a recently released study commissioned by LSC's Board of Directors, Documenting the Justice Gap in America, many recipient programs of LSC funds must turn away half of all individuals who qualify and seek their assistance because of the lack of resources. Unfortunately, state, local, and private funding and pro bono support have been unable to help close the access to justice gap. The underfunding may result in a potential catastrophe for millions of low-income families and individuals throughout the country who need, but are unable to obtain, legal assistance in matters relating to their housing, employment, and access to health care. Currently, LSC is funded at \$390,000,000, which is insufficient to provide legal representation to all of the impoverished in need of legal assistance. This legislation authorizes an increase in funding for LSC of \$750,000,000, which represents an inflation-adjusted funding level from fiscal year 1981. This funding will help close the justice gap and provide civil legal assistance to all potential eligible clients.

Additionally, the Civil Access to Justice Act eliminates certain restrictions that have significantly limited the ability of legal aid attorneys to represent all low-income families and individuals. First, the bill would remove many restrictions on the use of state, local, and private money by LSC-funded programs. Second, it would eliminate restrictions on the ability of LSC-funded attorneys to represent clients in class action cases. Also, the bill would provide

programs the opportunity to seek court-ordered attorneys' fees, which they are currently prohibited from seeking.

Finally, this legislation codifies recent recommendations from the Government Accountability Office to improve LSC governance and accountability. These recommendations should lead to better management and oversight of LSC-funded programs.

I urge my colleagues to join me, Mr. SCOTT, Chairman CONYERS, and others, and cosponsor this important and timely legislation. I am optimistic that Congress can send a bill to the President for his signature so that the doors of justice will always remain open to those in need.

RECOGNIZING LIEUTENANT DANIEL CHOI FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER EQUALITY MOVEMENT

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 8, 2009*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize LT Daniel Choi for his service to the United States of America and outstanding contributions to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender, LGBT, equality movement as an Army officer, Iraq War veteran, and now civil rights activist. In clear defiance of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the unjust law that prohibits LGBT service members from serving openly and honestly in the military, Lieutenant Choi courageously spoke three words on national television—"I am gay." In doing so, he knew that he was risking his military career, but was firm in the belief that he had chosen the harder right over the easier wrong. Lieutenant Choi was ultimately discharged, but has since devoted his life to activism in the hope that, one day soon, Don't Ask, Don't Tell will be repealed.

Lieutenant Choi's story is one of excellence and leadership. He was born in February 1981 in Orange County, California and attended Tustin High School, where he was student body president, participated in the American Legion Boys State program, and was involved in various extracurricular activities ranging from Christian Club and Model United Nations to varsity swimming and marching band. It comes as no surprise that Lieutenant Choi was admitted to the prestigious U.S. Military Academy at West Point, where he continued to excel and learn the values that gave him purpose as an officer in the Army and activist for LGBT rights. It was at West Point that Lieutenant Choi first recited the Cadet Honor Code: "A cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do."

In 2003, Lieutenant Choi became one of only eight graduates in his class to earn a degree in Arabic Language, in addition to Environmental Engineering. During his 10 years of honorable service to this nation, Lieutenant Choi served as an Infantry Officer. Specifically, he was a Platoon Leader, Company Executive Officer, Battalion and Brigade Staff Officer, Iraqi Arabic language instructor, and

civil-military and reconstruction engineer in the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, New York. For 15 months from 2006 to 2007, Lieutenant Choi saw duty as an Infantry Platoon Leader and Arabic linguist in South Baghdad, Iraq, providing an invaluable service to his fellow soldiers and the United States' mission by communicating quickly and clearly with the Iraqi people. In 2008, Lieutenant Choi became an Infantry Platoon Leader in the Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry in Manhattan, New York.

While an officer with the Army National Guard, Lieutenant Choi co-founded KNIGHTS OUT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender West Point Graduates, an organization of West Point alumni, staff, and faculty who are united in supporting the rights of LGBT soldiers to openly serve their country. On March 19, 2009, Lieutenant Choi appeared on MSNBC's The Rachel Maddow Show to discuss the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy. In a surprising announcement, Lieutenant Choi revealed that he was gay. Fully aware of the consequences, he refused to lie about who he is and accept a policy that compromises the integrity of the U.S. military and its service members. Despite testimony from his commanding officer, members of his unit, and fellow soldiers who served in Iraq, as well as 260,000 letters and signatures of support, a panel of New York National Guard officers recommended that Lieutenant Choi be discharged on June 30, 2009.

Guided by the same values he learned at West Point and in the Army, Lieutenant Choi now advocates for the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell and the reversal of Proposition 8 in California, an amendment to the state constitution that recognizes marriage as between only one man and one woman. He continues to raise public and political awareness of issues that affect LGBT service members and the LGBT community as a whole.

Madam Speaker, the West Point Cadet Prayer teaches cadets ". . . never to be content with a half-truth when the whole can be won." Don't Ask, Don't Tell is a no-truth policy and must be repealed. I am honored and humbled by Lieutenant Choi's selfless example and, although he is no longer in uniform, he continues to fight for the freedom of all Americans to be the best they can be, gay or straight.

PROVIDING FOR A TRANSITION PERIOD FOR THE GUAM-CNMI VISA WAIVER PROGRAM

**HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO**

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 8, 2009*

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, today I introduced legislation to amend the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008 (CNRA), Public Law 110-229, for the purpose of providing for a transition period for the implementation of the new Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program. Section 702 of the CNRA extends the immigration laws of the United States to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). It also provides for a visa waiver program for travel to Guam and the CNMI consistent with the new arrangements for control of immigration in the CNMI and that

would be based on and succeed the highly successful Guam-only visa waiver program, which was authorized by the Omnibus Territories Act of 1986.

The Department of Homeland Security will commence control of six ports of entry in the CNMI on November 28, 2009, in accordance with the CNRA. The bill I have introduced today would make a technical correction to the CNRA, by delaying for one year the start of the authorized joint Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program. Its effect would be to allow for federal control of immigration to commence in the CNMI on November 28, 2009, but also for the existing CNMI visitor entry program under CNMI law to continue but be controlled and administered by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) under the Department of Homeland Security. The current approved countries under the Guam-only visa waiver program and the CNMI visitor entry program would be maintained, respectively for each territory, for an additional year. Such a continuation of the visitor entry rules for both of these territories would afford the Department of Homeland Security additional time to devise rules and allocate the resources necessary in both the CNMI and Guam for the successful operation and administration of the new Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program consistent with Congressional intent. The additional time will also provide for an orderly transition to occur in both territories.

Most importantly, this bill would allow the Department of Homeland Security to focus its resources initially on the standing-up and control of six ports of entry in the CNMI and also protect the economic interests of the CNMI with the continuation of its visitor entry program. The CNMI economy is heavily reliant on tourism and its visitor sector is accustomed to operating under the territory's visitor entry program.

The bill also authorizes a study to be conducted by the Secretary of the Interior, analyzing the economic situation and forecast for the CNMI. This report will be provided to the committees with jurisdiction, the House Committee on Natural Resources and the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, within 30 days of enactment. This report will help the Committees exercise oversight of the implementation of the CNRA and the transition by the Department of Homeland Security to the new joint, Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program.

I look forward to working with my colleagues as this bill moves forward in the legislative process.

IN HONOR OF DR. DANIEL SIMMONS AND THE MOUNT ZION BAPTIST CHURCH

**HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 8, 2009*

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Dr. Daniel Simmons and the Mount Zion Baptist Church of Albany, Ga. On Sunday, October 11, the Mount Zion Baptist Church will jointly celebrate Dr. Simmons' 18th year as the Senior Pastor and the church's 144th anniversary. I have known Pastor Simmons for many years