

Our regional parks' success is the result of eight decades of hard work by innumerable citizen activists, elected district directors, general managers, district employees, environmental organizations, public officials, volunteers, and taxpayers who have collaborated to ensure local access to a majestic regional park system. Many park sites also contain protected species of plants and animals, as well as Native American historical sites containing rock art, and burial or village locations. Above all, EBRPD's top priority remains aligned with our park founders' original mission: to preserve the natural beauty of the land and protect wildlife habitats.

The future of East Bay Regional Park District is marked by growth and stability thanks to last year's passage of Measure WW, the largest local park bond measure to pass on record.

Seventy-five years ago, Bay Area park advocates demonstrated a pioneering and progressive local spirit, which endures to this day. The rich history of our regional parks has undoubtedly helped lay the framework for the Bay Area's famed conservation movement. It is this continued passion for open spaces and preservation that inspires communities, on a national and global level, to protect and preserve both the environment—and our future.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 15, 2009*

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, on October 14, 2009, I missed the following Rollcall Votes due to a longstanding commitment away from Washington:

1. Rollcall vote No. 775, H. Res. 768, Expressing support for the designation of the Month of October as "National Work and Family Month".

2. Rollcall vote No. 776, H.R. 1327, the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act.

3. Rollcall Vote 777, H. Res. 816, Mourning the loss of life caused by the earthquakes and tsunamis that occurred on September 29, 2009.

4. Rollcall Vote 778, H.R. 3371, Airline Safety and Pilot Training Improvement Act of 2009.

5. Rollcall Vote 779, H. Res. 786, Commemorating the canonization of Father Damien de Veuster, SS.CC. to sainthood.

If present, I would have voted "yea" on all matters.

#### 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ART VAN FURNITURE

### HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 15, 2009*

Mr. PETERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Art Van Furniture, an iconic fixture in the retail world of Michigan that was founded by Art Van Elslander, a much admired and prominent figure in the metro-Detroit community.

The story of Art Van Elslander and the rise of Art Van Furniture to its dominant position in

the retail furniture world is the American Dream fully realized. As a son of Belgian immigrants and growing up on Detroit's east side, Archie "Art" Van Elslander's entrepreneurial spirit shone brightly even as a youngster when he hawked newspapers up and down Detroit's Gratiot Avenue. After high school, military service and working at a local furniture store, Mr. Van Elslander entered the world of entrepreneurs. Heeding his father's advice to "control your own destiny," Mr. Van Elslander mortgaged his home and borrowed against insurance policies to finance his first store.

Through times both flourishing and faltering in the subsequent years, the fortunes of Art Van Furniture ebbed and flowed with the economic cycles of the Michigan economy. Ultimately, it grew to more than 30 locations across Michigan and employing more than 2500. Over the years, Art Van Furniture has adapted to the changing environment, and quite literally so. Art Van has been named a "GreenTailer" by the Michigan Retailers Association after adopting a variety of Earth-friendly practices ranging from the installation of Energy Management Systems to recycling tons of waste. It has been continually named as one of West Michigan's Best and Brightest places to work.

Over the past 50 years, Art Van has grown to be Michigan's largest furniture retailer. And during those years, Art Van Elslander became renowned and admired as a pillar of the philanthropic community and a stalwart business leader committed to Michigan and its citizens. Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join my salute today to Art Van Elslander on 50 years of vision, perseverance and "giving back" to our community; and to Art Van Furniture and each of its thousands of employees over the years, on 50 years of business growth and success.

#### RECOGNIZING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GEORGE BUSH INTERCONTINENTAL AIRPORT IN HOUSTON, TEXAS

SPEECH OF

### HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 14, 2009*

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 138, which honors the George Bush Intercontinental Airport for its 40 years of outstanding service to the residents of Houston, TX, and to travelers from around the world.

Since it first opened in 1969, Bush Intercontinental Airport has transported over 700,000,000 passengers to more than 170 U.S. and international destinations, making it one of the largest airports in the world. This, in turn, has generated tremendous economic benefits for the greater Houston area. Travelers to the region account for more than \$20 billion in annual sales. The airport also employs over 30,000 Houston-area residents and has created over 120,000 additional jobs in local industries. Many of these employees live in our district.

Bush Intercontinental Airport has likewise served as a hub for cargo shipments to the U.S. and Latin America. For four years in a

row, the airport has received Air Cargo World's "Air Cargo Excellence Award" for its facilities. It now handles more than 300,000 tons of freight annually, and this figure continues to grow. In November, the airport plans to open a new import facility for perishable freight, which will expand business in temperature and time-sensitive products.

Together with the Port of Houston, Bush Intercontinental Airport has helped to make Houston a truly international city and one of the leading ports of entry and export in the country. It serves as a model of success in international travel and shipping, and this level of accomplishment should be acknowledged.

I urge my colleagues to support House Concurrent Resolution 138 recognizing the 40th anniversary of George Bush Intercontinental Airport.

PASTOR CHARLES T. SEMBLY AND  
FIRST LADY PAMELA J. SEMBLY

### HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 15, 2009*

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Madam Speaker, I rise before you today to honor Reverend Charles T. Sembly and First Lady Pamela J. Sembly for their 25 years of faithful, dedicated service to Union Bethel A.M.E. Church.

Following in the footsteps of his father, the late Rev. Edgar L. James, Pastor Sembly earned his license to preach on March 17, 1971, and was ordained an African Methodist Episcopal Itinerant Deacon in 1978 and an Itinerant Elder in 1979. In 1982, Pastor Sembly was appointed Pastor of Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church in Knoxville, Maryland. During the mid-year Conference on October 24, 1984, Pastor Sembly was appointed to Union Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Pastor Sembly and Mrs. Sembly have provided noteworthy spiritual leadership in fulfilling their vision of growth and development at Union Bethel A.M.E. Church. During Pastor Sembly's tenure, the church established over 40 ministries and outreach programs to enhance the Randallstown community. Under his leadership, the church created a nonprofit Community Development Corporation to increase its social outreach and opportunities for service to the greater Northwest Baltimore County community. As local President of the Lillian M. Dorsey Senior Missionary, Mrs. Sembly established several on-going outreach programs, which include the Good Samaritan Ministry, the Senior Outreach Ministry and provided additional support to three area shelters.

Pastor Sembly is currently a Trustee and Member of the Finance Committee of the Second Episcopal District Washington Conference, and an Instructor of the Second Episcopal District Washington Conference Board of Examiners. Pastor Sembly conceptualized and developed the Six-Week Lenten Services with seven A.M.E. Churches and is a former Recording Secretary for the Second Episcopal District Washington Conference.

Mrs. Sembly is very active in the Women's Missionary Society of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. She currently serves as the President of the Lillian M. Dorsey Senior Missionary Society of Union Bethel A.M.E.