

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE TO THE HUNTINGTOWN HURRICANES

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 2, 2011

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate a remarkable team of young women from Maryland's fifth congressional district. The Huntingtown Hurricanes won the 3A Maryland state track and field finals on May 28, becoming the first high school team in Calvert County history to bring home a state championship title. This momentous victory was made all the more significant given the caliber of their competition.

Following an arduous, three day meet at Morgan State University's Hughes Stadium, the Hurricanes edged out John F. Kennedy High School and Catonsville High School, who tied with 47 points, by just one-and-a-half points.

This victory demonstrates that with hard work, determination, and discipline, we can reach our goals. For the past three years, the Huntingtown Hurricanes have placed second in the 3A South Region—a significant achievement—but this year, the team broke through and won the 3A South Region meet on May 21.

Fourteen student-athletes qualified for the state meet, and they remained focused and determined to achieve their dream of victory at the statewide competition.

I want to applaud Head Coach Valerie Harrington and her coaching staff—Mike Henshaw, Jim Hall, Raffaele Simpson and Deb Fillippi—for their dedication and commitment to training these superb student-athletes. And I send my hardest congratulations to the members of the championship team—Cassidy Aley, Linsey Aley, Maia Burke, Diarra Butler, Shania Collins, Erin Dix, Taylor Fallin, Ellie Frazier, Zanae Freeland, Mercedes Jackson, Payton Muse, Leea Parker, Shelby Taylor, and Hanna Weis—on their victory. I'm very proud of these young women, and I congratulate all those involved in bringing home the championship title.

Let me close by echoing Coach Harrington's sentiments after the meet. She proudly stated that this was a banner year and one that will go down in the history of Huntingtown's girls' track and field program. I know that many other women's teams will win the title in the future, but this year's Hurricanes can always hold their heads high and recall that they were the first team to win for Calvert County.

I ask that my colleagues join me in applauding this significant accomplishment.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRUCE L. BRALEY

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 2, 2011

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I regret missing floor votes on Wednesday, June 1, 2011. Had I registered my vote, I would have voted:

Nay on rollcall 380, On Consideration of the Resolution for H.R. 2017—Providing for consideration of H.R. 2017, making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes.

KENNEDY CENTER JUNE 21, 2011 PERFORMANCE SONGS OF LIFE CELEBRATES THE LARGEST RESCUE OF JEWS DURING THE HOLOCAUST WITH THE WORLD-PREMIERE OF THE ORATORIO "A MELANCHOLY BEAUTY"

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 2, 2011

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to announce that on June 21st, the oratorio, *A Melancholy Beauty*, will premier at 8 p.m. at the Kennedy Center in Washington (Concert Hall). The oratorio is a choral-orchestral work for mixed choir, children's choir, symphony orchestra, soloists, narrator, folk vocal ensemble, and indigenous folk instruments. It is dedicated to the Rescue of Bulgaria's 49,000 Jews by ordinary citizens during the Holocaust of World War II. The oratorio traces this event chronologically through the language of music in seven movements.

Songs of Life is an international music festival that reenacts the heroic deeds of little-known events by composing and performing choral-orchestral works for those who have not yet had a voice to sing their song. On the 65th anniversary of the rescue of Bulgaria's Jews, the 1st edition of *Songs of Life* debuted in four cities of Israel and Bulgaria featuring "Sacred Service" by Ernest Bloch with the participation of the Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra, The Raanana Symphonette Orchestra, choirs from Israel, Bulgaria, Canada, and America.

A Melancholy Beauty "echoes a thank you, paying tribute to the brave Bulgarian people and offering a source of inspiration, hope and change for people everywhere today," said Kalin Tchonev, who together with his wife, Sharon, founded *Songs of Life* in 2008. No Bulgarian Jews went to the concentration camps during World War II. "This oratorio could not be timelier, when people and nations are burning bridges instead of building them. It inspires its performers and audience to stand up for justice and acceptance in the face of bigotry and hatred."

The oratorio was composed by the award-winning Bulgarian composer Georgi Andreev, who combines classical choral-orchestral music with traditional rhythms and folk styles rarely encountered today. The motet was composed by internationally renowned cantor and composer, Charles David Osborne, while a team of writers penned the libretto, including lyricist Scott Cairns and contributing author Aryeh Finklestein.

"*A Melancholy Beauty* is a major choral-orchestral oratorio that brings 300 superb choristers and instrumentalists to the stage in an unparalleled music celebration," Sharon Tchonev said. This moving oratorio will be conducted by internationally acclaimed choral director Maestro Henry H. Leck. The festival includes performances by the Indianapolis Children's Choir; the Tel Aviv Chamber Choir, Israel; the Philip Kutev National Folklore Ensemble, Bulgaria; the Victor Valley College Singers and the Master Arts Chorale, CA. The oratorio will be accompanied by the National Philharmonic in the Washington and New York performances and by the Boston Modern Orchestra Project in Boston. This coming together of musicians from countries impacted by these crucial events "is intended to redefine freedom and harmony through the power of music," Sharon Tchonev said.

Songs of Life invites people to pay tribute to victims and survivors and to speak out against intolerance today by attending one of the following performances of *A Melancholy Beauty*: The Citi Performing Arts Center, Wang Theatre, Thursday, June 23, 2011, 7:30 PM; Boston, The Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center, Sunday, June 26, 2011, 3 PM; New York City.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

SPEECH OF

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 1, 2011

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2017) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes:

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Chair, I rise to support the Clarke-Higgins-Reichert-Capps Amendment.

This bipartisan effort will ensure funding for the country's urban areas involved in preventing and responding to natural disasters and acts of terrorism.

The Urban Area Security Initiative focuses on enhancing preparedness in urban areas.

It does so by directing federal funds to places deemed to be at the highest risk for man-made or natural disasters.

For example, metropolitan Oxnard—located in my congressional district—has been included several times in recent years due to the strategic assets located in the area.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

However, the underlying bill would arbitrarily limit eligibility to 10 urban areas total.

This would eliminate the Oxnard's ability to access the funds necessary to prevent and prepare for all types of hazards.

Mr. Chair, the Oxnard metropolitan area has just as much need to protect its citizens from terrorist threats as any other large city in the U.S.

For example, Oxnard is home to Naval Base Ventura County. This strategic military installation supports ongoing military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as important D.O.D. weapons testing programs.

The Port of Hueneme—the only deepwater harbor between Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay area—serves international businesses and ocean carriers from the Pacific Rim and Europe.

The Oxnard coastline is dotted with offshore oil and gas platforms, power plants and chemical facilities.

And Oxnard is located alongside U.S. Highway 101—the only north-south evacuation route on California's Central Coast.

That's why the Department of Homeland Security has granted millions of dollars to the Oxnard UASI over the years.

It's recognized the need to support this community's efforts to: train and equip first responders, improve interoperable communications, establish fusion centers, and protect critical infrastructure.

It knows it must enhance the capacity to respond to all-hazard events, including tsunamis, wildfires, mudslides or earthquakes.

And it understands that investing in local programs, like "Ventura Get Ready," will help ensure the safety and security of our citizens.

Mr. Chair, we all know this is a tough budget environment and that we need to make targeted investments.

But making more than 50 cities ineligible for UASI funds—regardless of threat and vulnerability levels—is shortsighted and wrong.

These communities contain numerous assets, resources and critical infrastructure that are vulnerable to attack and that are tremendously important to the nation.

Now is not the time to eliminate the eligibility of our threatened urban areas from UASI funding.

We cannot lay the entire financial burden of securing our cities on local authorities, first responders, and law enforcement and expect to adequately protect our citizens and make our cities safe.

Let's remove this harmful UASI language from the bill and ensure our cities have the necessary capabilities to safeguard our communities.

Vote "yes" on the bipartisan Clarke-Higgins amendment.

COMMEMORATING AZERBAIJAN'S
REPUBLIC DAY AND 20 YEARS
OF U.S.-AZERBAIJAN RELATIONS

HON. JOSEPH R. PITTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 2, 2011

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, last week we celebrated Azerbaijan's Republic Day, which commemorates the 93rd anniversary of Azerbaijan's independence from the Russian Em-

pire. Later this year, Azerbaijan will also celebrate the 20th anniversary of its freedom from the Soviet Union and the state of diplomatic relations with the United States.

The U.S.-Azerbaijan partnership is based on shared values and common goals. Over the last 20 years, Azerbaijan has become a key strategic ally of the United States and has helped the United States achieve important security and economic objectives in a complex part of the world.

Azerbaijan supports U.S. and NATO operations in Afghanistan, sending troops and civilian personnel to Afghanistan to serve alongside U.S. troops, as well as training civilian and security officers both in Azerbaijan and Afghanistan. Azerbaijan is also a key part of the Northern Distribution Network, which provides ground and naval transit for roughly 25 percent of the Coalition's supplies bound for Afghanistan.

Azerbaijan also plays an important role in strengthening U.S. and European energy independence and is currently expanding its commercial and economic ties with the United States. Azerbaijan, which provides roughly a quarter of Israel's oil, is a secular Muslim country that maintains close friendly ties with Israel.

Please join me in honoring Azerbaijan's 93rd Republic Day and celebrating a healthy U.S.-Azerbaijan relationship.

IN HONOR OF THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE AU PAIR IN AMERICA
PROGRAM

HON. JAMES A. HIMES

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 2, 2011

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 25th anniversary of the Au Pair in America Program. Based in Stamford, Connecticut, the American Institute for Foreign Study (AIFS) and its Au Pair in America Program have been leaders in providing young people with exceptional cultural exchange programs.

The Au Pair in America program began in 1986 with the goal of providing young people with unique cultural exchange opportunities. The first authorized sponsor for au pair programs, Au Pair in America has brought more than 87,000 au pairs from over 60 countries to live with an American family, care for children, and pursue educational interests for a year.

On June 9, 2011, the State Department will be hosting a reception in honor of the program's 25th anniversary. I congratulate AIFS and Au Pair in America on the continued success of this educational and cultural program, and extend my best wishes to all the program participants in their work to foster global exchange.

THE UNIVERSAL RIGHT TO VOTE
BY MAIL ACT OF 2011

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 2, 2011

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Universal Right to Vote

by Mail Act of 2011—a bill to allow any eligible voter to vote by mail in a federal election if he or she chooses to do so.

In my home state of California, voters already have this right. California is one of the twenty-nine states that, along with the District of Columbia, already provide this convenient alternative to voters.

While I love the ritual of going to the polls to vote, I know that getting to the polls on Election Day is often difficult. For some, it's impossible.

That is why I have introduced a bill that builds upon the growing trend of states to bring the polls to the voters. I believe we should try to meet our constituents halfway by increasing access to the electoral process.

What I am proposing is not new or even untested. States ranging from my home state of California, to Wisconsin, to North Carolina, to Maine have already adopted this voter-friendly policy.

With mail voting, citizens can vote from the convenience of their own homes. They will have more time to mull over their choices and make informed decisions, and they will be able to do so on their own terms.

Not surprisingly, studies have shown that some of the biggest supporters of voting by mail are parents, who must schedule time to go to the polls around so many other obligations.

Studies have also indicated that adding the option to vote by mail does not create a partisan advantage for one political party over the other.

Republicans and Democrats both benefit from similar increases in voter turnout when voters are given the choice to mail in their ballots.

In fact, overwhelming support for voting by mail is consistent across nearly every demographic—including age, income level, race, education, employment status and ideology. It is a win-win for all Americans.

After adopting a universal right to vote by mail system in 1978, California saw a thirty percent increase in the use of mail-in ballots.

Other states that have implemented this policy have seen the same degree of support from voters, which is why it is hardly surprising that States offering the option of mail-in ballots often experience greater voter participation.

There is also an extremely low incidence of fraud with voting by mail when compared to other methods of voting.

As the former President of the League of Women Voters of San Diego, I care deeply about the integrity of our electoral system.

Twenty-nine states and the District of Columbia have already proven this option works, and it is safe. It is time to give voters in the remaining states this convenient, secure and affordable alternative.

While I am proud to be from a state where citizens already have this right, I believe democracy works best when all citizens have an equal opportunity to have their voices heard.

Right now, an uneven playing field exists between states that already offer the option of mail-in ballots and states that do not.

When the same election is more accessible to voters in California than it is to voters in other states, the system is unfair.

States that fail to offer this choice stand to compromise their leverage in federal elections by curbing the greatest level of voter participation.