

At this time in history, given our economic and political climate, changes should not be made to the mortgage interest deduction, the 30 year fixed interest mortgage, or downpayment requirements that are pragmatic and beneficial to our constituents and our economy, especially while the housing market recovery remains fragile. They would reduce the availability and increase the cost of mortgage capital for millions of Americans.

President Obama has declared June 2011 as National Homeownership Month. It is my sincere hope that this Administration will do the right thing and leave time tested deductions, requirements, and downpayments alone.

I strongly support June 2011 as declare my steadfast opposition to the proposed qualified residential mortgages proposal, modifications to the mortgage interest deduction, and changes to the 30-year fixed interest mortgage.

IN CELEBRATION OF THE UNVEILING OF THE 2011 "BID ON CULTURE" WINNING BANNERS RECOGNIZING BLACK MUSIC MONTH

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 24, 2011

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Artists whose designs were selected through the BID on Culture banner design competition. On Tuesday, June 21, the 125th Street Business Improvement District along with the Harlem Arts Alliance, Inc. and the Harlem Community Development Corporation, unveiled the 2011 "BID on Culture" winning banners in recognition of June Black Music Month.

BID on Culture is a new initiative developed through the partnership between the 125th Street Business Improvement District (125th BID), the Harlem Arts Alliance (HAA) and the Harlem Community Development Corporation (HCDC) to showcase and promote our rich unique heritage while bringing recognition to the many talented entertainers and venues throughout, as Harlem celebrates Black Music Month.

The "BID on Culture" Banners have added to the branding of 125th Street as the center of culture in Harlem, highlighting our community's diversity, history, and contributions to and throughout our Nation and the world. Currently, there are 36 new banners that are now flying on streetlight poles along the world-renowned famed 125th Street corridor. Let me now recognize the six winning designs that were selected from 41 submissions in the 3rd Annual "Bid on Culture" banner design competition. Corine Campbell for Billie Holiday; Misha McGlown for Jimi Hendrix and Josephine Baker; Tomo Mori for Somos la Musica; Soyca Mphahlele for New Colors; and Hubert Williams for True Colours.

Harlem resident Artist, Corine Campbell says her creativity usually starts from a simple place like spotting a color combination that she wants to incorporate into a painting, expressing feelings with lines indescribable to words or finding attractive shapes to produce a portrait. She usually depicts women, while experimenting with different media, such as, paint, ink, pencils, yarn, fabric, and computer

software. "It has been that way ever since I was a child drawing in my sketchbook in Harlem. Art allows me to escape somewhere fun while discovering numerous possibilities," Campbell said. Her design in the 2011 banner competition features legendary jazz vocalist Billie Holiday.

Detroit, Michigan Artist, Misha McGlown attended Wayne State University and Center for Creative Studies. Although she began painting professionally in 2006 and has since exhibited throughout the New York area, she is best known for her jewelry collection, under the Omo Misha brand. She was awarded her first solo exhibit by Columbia University in 2008 and on behalf of arHARLEM, she curated EVOLUTION: The Changing Face of Harlem—an exhibit, hosted by Columbia University, featuring the works of 25 Harlem artists. She is currently Curator-in-Residence for Harlem's Café One and has worked in programming and development for The Children's Art Carnival, and led residencies and youth workshops for numerous organizations in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. A multifaceted artist and visionary, Misha is a published author and creator of The Omo Misha Times—a webzine covering art, fashion, politics, fun and social awareness. She has been the recipient of artistic awards by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the Puffin Foundation, and Harlem Arts Alliance. Her designs in the 2011 banner competition feature Josephine Baker and Jimi Hendrix.

Artist Tomo Mori was born in Shijonawate in the countryside of Osaka, Japan and later moved to Tokyo. There, she discovered a severe affliction with allergies that kept her house-bound, but allowed her to find a new freedom: art. At 15, she enrolled in the Tokyo Metropolitan High School for Music and Fine Arts and a year later traveled to California to study English. She returned to Japan, where her first large scale painting, "Scream," was exhibited at the prestigious Metropolitan Museum in Ueno. In 1991, she moved to Atlanta, and studied at the Atlanta College of Art. Tomo worked as a graphic designer for 16 years but last year, she decided to focus on her art. She has found her artistic home at Harlem where she says she thrives from the creative energy. Inspiration struck while she was taking a dance class in Mali. She realized that her life experience among different cultures combined with her boundless curiosity fuels the engine that makes her art original. Her focus on music/dance, process, and color are the catalysts for her 2011 banner competition design submission of the vibrant dancers, Somos la Musica, which will find a stage along 125th Street.

Originally born in Zambia, Africa, Harlem resident Artist Soyca Mphahlele grew up in the Parkside Projects in the Bronx and went on to attend the Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music and Art and Performing Arts and later graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Communication from the Maryland Institute College of Art. He has lived, worked, and worshipped in Harlem since he was a child. Soyca says his work "represents the tone of the real New York and his enduring respect for the art of the streets." His 2011 banner competition design, New Colors, does just that.

Artist Hubert Williams was born in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, but moved to New York in 1964. A versatile photographer, filmmaker,

and visual artist as well as a musician (organist) had his first encounter with a camera in 1976. He has since gone on to photograph his viewpoint of people, places, and structures as well as weddings, fashion events, opera, and jazz concerts. "I live to shoot," Williams says of his passion for photography through his vivid 2011 banner competition design submission True Colours.

In addition to the banner competition, BID ON CULTURE presents Black Music Month in Harlem featuring nearly 100 events at nine venues throughout the area. The month-long celebration features Jazz, Blues, Gospel, R&B, Classical, Caribbean, Salsa, Afro-Cuban, Funk, and Soul music performances as well as spoken word, art, and other entertainments. Known worldwide as the epicenter of Black culture, Harlem's contribution to American music and all the arts is legendary. Concerts include the Michael C. Lewis Jazz Experience at the Aloft; Nate Lucas Organ Trio, and Paul Mooney "Live In Harlem," at the Lenox Lounge; the Danny Mixon Trio at Showman's Jazz Café; the Oral Tradition of Gospel Music in Harlem at the Dwyer Cultural Center; the Ben Williams & Sound Effect at the Harlem Stage Gatehouse; and Karaoke & Martini Thursday at Sylvia's Also.

Bid on Culture is also a participant in Make Music New York, a live, free musical celebration across the city that takes place each June 21, the longest day of the year, where hundreds of public spaces throughout the five boroughs become impromptu stages for more than 1,000 free concerts.

The 125th Street BID is a non-profit organization funded primarily from an additional tax assessment collected from the property owners within the defined boundaries. Organized in compliance with State and city laws, the property and business and business owners determine the services and programs needed for the district. The BID will utilize the competition to bring visibility to its streetscape improvement efforts and to enliven the community's central business district. www.125thstreetbid.com.

The Harlem Arts Alliance (HAA) is a not-for-profit arts service organization committed to its mission of nurturing the artistic growth of artists and the organizational development of arts organizations based in Harlem and surrounding communities. Comprised of over 750 individual artists and arts organizations, HAA plays an essential role by helping to build the resources, network, and capacity of its richly diverse membership. Counted among its members are young emerging artists as well as established and internationally recognized artists. Also represented are small grassroots organizations and major cultural institutions in Harlem and beyond. In addition, HAA maintains strong partnerships with numerous arts organization and institutions throughout New York State, the region, and the nation to maintain vital collaborative efforts to promote the arts in communities (www.harlemaa.org).

Harlem Community Development Corporation ("Harlem CDC"), a New York State public benefit corporation, was created in 1995 to serve the greater Harlem community, including East Harlem, Central Harlem, West Harlem and Washington Heights, through planning and facilitating the development of a range of community development projects and revitalization initiatives and restore Upper Manhattan

as an economically stable and culturally vibrant community. Harlem CDC targets the redevelopment of vacant or underutilized commercial and residential property and publicly-owned spaces (www.harlemcdc.org).

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join with me in recognition of the 2011 "BID on Culture" Winning Banners and in celebration of Black Music Month.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

SPEECH OF

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 23, 2011

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2219) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes:

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of the Fiscal Year 2012 Defense Appropriations bill. Ensuring that our military receives funding for the coming fiscal year is an essential duty of this Congress and key to maintaining the capabilities of our Armed Forces. I applaud the work of the subcommittee and full committee for considering this legislation in regular order. I also give credit to my colleagues on the Rules Committee for ensuring that the House has once again returned to the days of open rules on appropriations bills, so every Member's voice can be heard.

Furthermore, it is with the utmost appreciation that I commend the Appropriations Committee for working in partnership with the Armed Services Committee on matters relating to our military. As Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, I remain fully committed to providing our troops with the resources needed to fulfill their missions. To that end, I am pleased to see that this bill provides the full amount of funding requested by the President for fiscal year 2012 to fund Overseas Contingency Operations, which is essential to achieving victory in ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

However, I do have reservations about the cut to the defense base budget during a time when we are engaged in several overseas conflicts and facing an abundance of emerging threats to our security. Despite the fact that our nation's heroes got Osama bin Laden, we are still a nation at war—a war that we did not start. Al Qaeda has named bin Laden's successor and there is no doubt in anyone's mind that their primary goal is to kill Americans.

I recognize that on a percentage basis, an \$8.9 billion cut may not seem significant—less than two percent. But two percent is the same amount Secretary Gates has been trying desperately to find through efficiencies to reinvest in our force structure and modernization accounts. We have applauded his efforts and supported his goal. Now, unfortunately, this bill would take those dollars away.

Nevertheless, it is clear that we are experiencing a fiscal crisis due to excessive government spending. I fully support ongoing efforts to responsibly cut excess spending to put our nation on the path to economic recovery and lasting prosperity. There are larger battles

looming in the days ahead, in which we must tackle monumental issues such as the nation's debt ceiling. This is where our focus must be. I urge my colleagues to stand united as we move forward to ensure that we do not lower military spending to a level which threatens the safety of American citizens. To do so would be an investment in the decline of our national security.

Once again, I thank my colleagues for bringing this bill to the floor. I believe this bill strikes a reasonable balance of fiscal responsibility and providing for our armed services, and will therefore oppose amendments that would further reduce the resources available for our men and women in uniform and their families. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the passage of this bill.

A TRIBUTE TO BENJAMIN J.
BUFFINGTON

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 24, 2011

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Benjamin James Buffington for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

The Eagle Scout rank is the highest advancement rank in scouting. Only about five percent of Boy Scouts earn the Eagle Scout Award. The award is a performance based achievement whose standards have been well-maintained over the years.

To earn the Eagle Scout rank, a Boy Scout is obligated to pass specific tests that are organized by requirements and merit badges, as well as completing an Eagle Project to benefit the community. Benjamin's project was to work with other troop members to construct a three tier fence that will help develop an outdoor horse arena for Harmony Ranch in Clear Lake, Iowa. Harmony Ranch is a faith-based organization that provides therapeutic horseback riding ministry for individuals with disabilities. When the project was finished Benjamin's fence enclosed a 100 foot by 200 foot area to provide the much needed riding area.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by this young man and his supportive family demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication and perseverance. Benjamin's efforts embody the Iowa spirit and I am honored to represent him and his family in the United States Congress. I know that all of my colleagues will join me in congratulating him on achieving an Eagle Scout ranking and will wish him continued success in his future education and career.

CELEBRATION OF CARIBBEAN
AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 24, 2011

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, as the month of June draws to a close, I rise to recognize the celebration of Caribbean American Heritage Month. The past, present and future of the Caribbean is closely associated with that of this country, as our islands exist be-

tween two great continents and are affected by the social, economic and political decisions that are made by our neighbors to the north and to the south. The Caribbean, and Caribbean Americans were there at the founding of this great country and continue to be a part of its evolution into the 21st century.

As it relates to the territory that I represent, the U.S. Virgin Islands, from the rum trade that helped to fund the American Revolution, to the first salute of the colors of the newly declared nation to being the place where the young Alexander Hamilton spent his formative years, our contributions to the American story are well documented. Less known, is that our territory was purchased from Denmark almost 100 years ago in conjunction with the building of the Panama Canal as a means to defend that and other American interests in the region. Also less known are the contributions of our citizens who left the islands to live in this great nation and to contribute as average citizens who are teachers, doctors, and businessmen, and as standouts in the Harlem Renaissance and the civil rights movement in this country. The Virgin Islands and the wider Caribbean have contributed and continue to contribute soldiers, historians, activists, legislators and yes, Members of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, this year, the Institute of Caribbean Studies led by the indomitable Dr. Claire Nelson has recognized Members of Congress of Caribbean American Heritage who served in the past and who serve now. In addition to myself, the Honorable BARBARA LEE, the Honorable SHEILA JACKSON LEE, the Honorable YVETTE CLARKE and the Honorable FREDERICA WILSON who proudly serve now, they also recognized former Members, the Honorable Mervyn Dymally and the late, great Shirley Chisholm. Caribbean American members continue to serve this country in every walk of life in entertainment, in law, in finance, in economic development. The countries in the Caribbean Basin continue to be friends and allies of our great nation. It is only fitting that Caribbean American Heritage be a relationship that is honored and recognized on an annual basis.

CONGRATULATING THE ST. CLAIR
HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL TEAM
ON WINNING THE MICHIGAN
DIVISION II STATE TITLE

HON. CANDICE S. MILLER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 24, 2011

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct privilege to recognize a special achievement recently accomplished by the St. Clair High School Saints Baseball Team. St. Clair capped off a remarkable and extremely memorable 2011 season by taking home the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) Division II Team State Title! Forty-Eight years have passed since St. Clair won their last state high school championship which was in boys' gymnastics, so this was truly a time for celebration and jubilee. The St. Clair High School Baseball Team exhibited true-grit, determination and solidarity to reach the pinnacle of this historic season.

With "Skipper" Bill McElreath leading the charge, the Saints played strong fundamental