

These policies help businesses retain key talent, reduce absenteeism, and enhance employee productivity. President Obama's Council on Economic Advisors found that as more firms adopt flexibility practices the benefits to society, in the form of reduced traffic, improved employment outcomes, and more efficient allocation of workers to employers, may be greater than the gains to individual firms and workers. In addition, a 2011 U.S. Government Accountability Office report found that a flexible work environment can increase and enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Flexibility is clearly a win-win for employees and employers. I offer special thanks to Senator BOB CASEY for introducing Senate companion legislation, and to my colleagues Representatives JOHN LEWIS, GEORGE MILLER, and JOSÉ SERRANO for their cosponsorship.

HONORING MR. ROELOF VAN ARK

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 2012*

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Mr. Roelof van Ark, who will soon end his term as the chief executive of the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CAHSRA). There is no textbook on how to build high-speed rail in America; it has never been done before. For the past two years Mr. van Ark has written the first chapters of that book by dedicating himself wholly to building the nation's first true high-speed rail system in California. He deserves our recognition and true appreciation for all the work he has done for California and our nation.

For three decades, Mr. van Ark has worked on high-speed rail and other transportation systems throughout the world. Before becoming only the second chief executive since the Authority was formed in 1996, he led ALSTOM Transportation, Inc., for five years. Mr. van Ark previously worked in Germany and South Africa for Siemens Transportation Systems, a global leader in high-speed rail systems. During his more than 20 year tenure with Siemens, he successfully constructed complex infrastructure projects such as the "Skytrain" in Bangkok, several subways throughout China, and high-speed rail lines in Germany. He ended his time with Siemens while working in Sacramento as President and Chief Executive Officer of the company.

His lifetime of experience enabled him to bring such tremendous expertise and leadership to the implementation of California's high-speed rail project.

I applaud Roelof van Ark for his years of tireless work on behalf of the California High-Speed Rail Authority and the state of California. Mr. van Ark has truly laid the groundwork for the nation's first high-speed rail system, and I hope he will join me in riding the first train that departs from San Francisco en route to Los Angeles via the San Joaquin Valley. All Californians will be better off due to the service and sacrifice of this great leader.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great appreciation that I ask my colleagues to stand with me in thanking Roelof for his work in advancing modern modes of transportation within the United States and around the world. Please

join me today in recognizing the commitment, dedication and success of Mr. Roelof van Ark and wish him well as he embarks on new endeavors.

IN RECOGNITION OF JANICE G. MURPHY

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 2012*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Janice G. Murphy and to acknowledge her receipt of the Walks of Life Award from the Irish American Archive Society. A Cleveland native, Mrs. Murphy has dedicated her life to improving the health of others.

Mrs. Murphy began her career in the health care industry while serving as a nun with the Sisters of Notre Dame. She left the convent upon discovery of her true calling in life and began classes at Fairview Hospital's School of Nursing. She later earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from Bowling Green State University and a master's degree from the University of Akron.

Mrs. Murphy worked as a nurse at Fairview Hospital in oncology and later coronary care. She was named chief nursing officer and in 2007, became the hospital's chief operating officer. While leading Fairview Hospital, Mrs. Murphy was also the president of Lakewood Hospital, a role in which she served for nearly three years. Today she remains the president of Fairview Hospital.

In addition to running two of Cleveland's premier hospitals, Mrs. Murphy serves on the boards of the Ursuline Community Advisory Board, North Coast Health Ministry, St. Joseph Academy and Hospice of Western Reserve. She has also been awarded the Cleveland Clinic Western Region Leadership Award and Baldwin Wallace Healthcare Award.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in congratulating Janice G. Murphy as she is honored by the Irish American Archive Society.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF U.S.-AZERBAIJAN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

**HON. GENE GREEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 2012*

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my Colleagues to join me in recognizing the 20th year of diplomatic relations with our friend and key ally, Azerbaijan.

On February 19, 1992, the United States and Azerbaijan initiated formal diplomatic relations and on March 6 of that year Azerbaijan opened their embassy in the United States. The United States opened our embassy in Baku, Azerbaijan on March 16.

After the fall of the former Soviet Union and the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, we have seen a growing need for strong allies in the region. Azerbaijan, a predominantly secular Muslim country bordered by Russia to the north and Iran to the south,

is a natural partner to promote peace, stability, and economic prosperity in this important part of the world.

Azerbaijan was among the first to join us in the War Against Terror, sending troops to Afghanistan that served alongside our servicemen and women, and later in Iraq. Today, Azerbaijan offers a crucial route to transport supplies to our troops in Afghanistan.

Azerbaijan is also a key contributor in promoting energy security internationally. The opening of the BTC pipeline in 2005 allowed Caspian oil to reach the world market via Georgia and Turkey, bypassing Russia.

With the recent arrival of Ambassador Elin Suleymanov to Washington, DC, I look forward to working with the Embassy to further strengthen this important relationship.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

**HON. MIKE COFFMAN**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 2012*

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$15,442,120,983,663.88. We've added \$4,815,243,934,720.08 to our debt in 3 years. This is debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. MIKE CLEARY

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 2012*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Mr. Mike Cleary and to acknowledge his receipt of the Walks of Life Award from the Irish American Archive Society.

Mr. Cleary was raised in East Cleveland by his parents, both of whom were immigrants from Ireland. He graduated from St. Ignatius High School before attending John Carroll University. Mike also served for the U.S. Navy for two years aboard the USS *Lake Champlain*, an aircraft carrier.

Prior to his retirement in 2011, Mr. Cleary worked in the collegiate and professional sports arena for 46 years. Early on in his career, he worked as a general manager for the Cleveland Pipers and Kansas City Steers. He later entered intercollegiate athletics and worked as the director of championship events for the National Collegiate Athletic Association. In 1965, he was hired as the executive director for the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics.

Mr. Cleary was also the fund administrator for the John McLendon Minority Scholarship Foundation and served on the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority and U.S. Olympic Committee. He is highly regarded in the athletic world and has been recognized by the National Football Federation, College Hall of Fame, and in 2009, he was inducted into the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in congratulating Mr. Mike Cleary as he is honored by the Irish American Archive Society.

HONORING JOSEPH J. VINCI, SR.,  
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 100TH  
BIRTHDAY

**HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 2012*

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to join family, friends, and the City of Middletown in honoring one of its most outstanding community members, Joseph J. Vinci, Sr. as he celebrates his 100th birthday—a remarkable milestone for this extraordinary citizen.

A lifelong Middletown resident, J.J., as he is affectionately known, married his wife, Mary, in November of 1934. Together, they not only raised three wonderful children, Joseph J. Jr., Robert, and Rosemarie, they also opened and ran the family business, J.J. Vinci Oil. The home heating oil business is not the easiest of businesses to run, but J.J. and Mary worked hard every day to build the business and provide for their family. For more than seven decades, J.J. Vinci Oil has been a staple in the Middletown business community and its success over the years has been because of the dedication of its founder, J.J., who at 100 years young can still be found in the office every day.

J.J. has not only been an outstanding business leader, but an exemplary civic leader as well. He has always understood that his community is only as strong as those who give back to it. Throughout his life, J.J. has devoted countless hours to a variety of local service organizations. The myriad of awards and commendations which have been bestowed on him are testament to his unparalleled efforts on behalf of the community. He is a charter member of the New England Association of Fire Marshals, Connecticut Chiefs of Police Association, twenty-five year charter member of the Connecticut Independent Oil Men's Association, life member of the State of Connecticut 100 Club, one of the original founders of the Middletown Italian-American Civic Order, twenty-five year Chairman of the St. Sebastian Cadillac Committee, member of the St. Sebastian Renovation Committee, lifetime member of the Benevolent Protective Order of the Elks, Moose Club, and Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree, to name but a few. Through his work with each of these organizations, J.J. has made a difference in the lives of others and has enriched the community.

Marking decades of hard work, this birthday celebration reflects J.J.'s extraordinary resilience and strength of spirit. Over the course of his life, he has not only witnessed remarkable changes and tremendous progress he has helped to shape the very character of the City of Middletown. It is with my warmest regards that I join his children, Joseph Jr., Robert, and Rosemarie, his grandson, Michael, and his great-grandchildren, Nicholas, Lauren, and Christian in extending my heartfelt congratulations to Joseph J. Vinci, Sr. as he celebrates his 100th birthday. Happy birthday J.J.! My very best wishes for many more years of health and happiness.

“STOP DEMAGOGUING THE  
HUNGRY”

**HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 2012*

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, demagoguing the hungry, unfortunately, has become a regular occurrence during this Republican presidential primary season. The truth is that the majority of the hungry struggle to put food on their table not because they are lazy but because of circumstances outside of their control. Many are unemployed at no fault of their own. Others simply don't earn enough and need help supplementing their monthly budget. But all of the hungry, all of those who are relying on America's anti-hunger safety net programs, deserve the helping hand they are receiving. And none of these 50 million food insecure people deserve to be demagogued simply because they have trouble putting food on their kitchen tables.

Last week, I met with Andrew Morehouse, the executive director of the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. Mr. Morehouse shared with me an op-ed he wrote for the Daily Hampshire Gazette titled “Stop demagoguing our food safety net.” Mr. Morehouse makes a clear, coherent and smart argument that attacking the hungry is wrong for both moral and economic reasons. I respectfully urge my colleagues to read this important op-ed.

I submit this op-ed into the RECORD.

[From the GazetteNET, Feb. 7, 2012]

ANDREW MOREHOUSE: STOP DEMAGOGUING OUR  
FOOD SAFETY NET

HATFIELD.—Former Northampton Mayor Clare Higgins made some eloquent points about hunger and food stamps in her recent column, “Beyond food stamp buzzwords” (Jan. 28).

I, too, feel compelled to set the record straight so that the general public has a more complete picture of this critical issue at this juncture in our nation's history. Attacks on SNAP (the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps) are rampant in some corners of the public discourse these days. Republican presidential candidates have blamed entitlement programs such as SNAP—and those Americans who receive benefits from them—for the country's deficit problem.

Newt Gingrich has even claimed that “more people are on food stamps today because of Obama's policies than ever in history.”

It's true that the number of food stamp recipients has risen over the past few years, but the unemployment rate has also increased 110 percent since 2006. As millions of Americans find themselves out of work, those same Americans seek assistance from programs like SNAP to help meet their basic needs. The Census Bureau estimates that food stamps helped to keep 3.9 million people above the poverty line in 2010.

Equally misleading is Gingrich's characterization of SNAP as a race issue, with comments like, “I'm prepared, if the NAACP invites me, I'll go to their convention and talk about why the African-American community should demand paychecks and not be satisfied with food stamps.”

This statement reinforces a false perception that people of color are the primary recipients of SNAP benefits. The truth is that

49 percent of SNAP recipients are white, while blacks comprise 26 percent and Latinos 20 percent of recipients.

SNAP received more biased criticism in a recent Wall Street Journal opinion piece by Warren Kozak (Jan. 30), which declared hunger in America a myth.

Kozak claims that federal government programs like SNAP waste billions of dollars providing food to people that are not really in need of help. Tell that to the 110,000 people in western Massachusetts alone—primarily children, elders, or the disabled—who wouldn't have a meal tonight without their SNAP benefits or food assistance from our region's emergency food network.

What Gingrich and Kozak don't seem to understand is that SNAP is not only a lifeline for millions of households facing hunger, it is also an economic stimulus. SNAP allows families to put food on their table, and provides food dollars that are spent locally.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, SNAP generates approximately \$406 million annually in total economic activity in western Massachusetts. SNAP doesn't cause recessions, it responds to them until the economy turns around by supporting vulnerable households while injecting much-needed revenue for local food businesses that employ thousands of residents in our communities.

The fact is that hunger is a very real problem in our country—and right here in Western Massachusetts. At least one in every eight residents of western Massachusetts relies on emergency food to avert hunger. More than 45,000 people seek food assistance each month in our region, a 25 percent increase compared just three years ago.

Here at the Food Bank, we believe that no one should have to go hungry. Without jobs that provide the necessary income to support households, SNAP and other government nutrition programs are essential to solving the hunger crisis facing our country. Without these programs, thousands more households in our region would find their cupboards empty on a regular basis.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF MR.  
STEPHEN O'CONNOR DIEMERT, JR.

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 2012*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of Mr. Stephen O'Connor Diemert, Jr.

Born in 1932, Stephen was destined to serve his country and the Greater Cleveland community. He served as a private in the United States Army from July 1953 through March of 1955. After returning home, Mr. Diemert began his career as a firefighter in January of 1961. He served as a fireman for 24 years until January of 1985. Mr. Diemert was also a long-time member of the American Legion Firefighter Post 339 and served as the Director of Fire Affairs for Silver and Gold, a fraternal organization dedicated to “supporting the Safety Forces of Northeast Ohio.”

I offer my condolences to his wife, Carol; children, Stephen (deceased) and Cindy, Robert, Laura and Tony, Mary Lou and Mike and Matthew and Vicki; grandchildren, A.J., Sara, Stephanie, Hanna, Katie and Gary; great-grandchildren, Karen, Fallon and Brucey (deceased) and eight siblings.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring the memory of Mr. Stephen O'Connor Diemert, Jr.