

As the Ranking Member and former Chairman of the House Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, I have visited many Caribbean countries and have learned the importance of the region to the United States and the entire Western Hemisphere. In fact, last year I wrote an amendment, which passed the Foreign Affairs Committee unanimously, urging the State Department to place U.S. Embassies in five Caribbean countries that are without a permanent diplomatic post. I strongly believe that bolstering U.S.-Caribbean relations needs to be a priority, and opening these embassies would benefit U.S. ties with the entire region. I also had the honor of joining President Obama earlier this year at the Summit of the Americas where we reinforced our dedication to the Caribbean and, last year, had the unique experience of traveling with a delegation of Caribbean ministers to Israel.

My time spent with my Caribbean American constituents and in the great countries that make up the Caribbean has helped me to truly appreciate the influence of Caribbean culture on the U.S. This June, I am pleased to take this opportunity to commemorate Caribbean Americans Heritage Month, and look forward to a future of working closely with the Caribbean American community ensure positive cross-cultural relations.

HONORING ISRAEL SOTO, LEADING
EDUCATOR

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 5, 2012

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize a great force in the education of our children, Israel Soto, principal of PS/MS 57. He is retiring after a long career in public service. Mr. Soto got his start in education teaching in Washington Heights, in my congressional district. As a Puerto Rican immigrant, he has taken an active role in bilingual education, having served as a school Bilingual Coordinator and Assistant Director of Bilingual Education.

In 1999, Mr. Soto ascended to principal of PS/MS 57, a pre-K-8 school in East Harlem. Last year, 67 percent of enrollees were Hispanic or Latino. Mr. Soto's expertise in bilingual education and the fact that his second language was English, like many of the school's students, made him an ideal choice for principal. His talents extend to all facets of education, however. Under his leadership, PS/MS 57 has gone from a near-failing school to one that received a grade of "A" in its latest Progress Report and is ranked in the 93rd percentile of all New York City K-8 schools.

Mr. Soto has deservedly received numerous awards during his tenure as principal. In 2001, he was named "Principal of the Month" in his school district and in 2004 was recognized as the "Educator of the Week" by Channel 41. He has also been inducted into the "Calm Fellows Program for Distinguished Principals" at Columbia University as well as being honored by Children 4 Children, the YMCA of New York, the New York Post and El Diario La Prensa.

Mr. Soto's work at PS/MS 57 serves as a model for current and future educators. He has built strong partnerships with teachers,

parents, community organizations and the private sector while keeping his focus internal, on his students. This outreach has significantly increased the academic resources available to his students and demonstrates the supreme importance of an active and charismatic principal such as Mr. Soto.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my colleagues join me in honoring a great man and an impassioned educator who, first and foremost, believes in all of our extraordinary children.

MELANIE KURTZ

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 5, 2012

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Melanie Kurtz for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Melanie Kurtz is an 8th grader at Oberon Middle School and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Melanie Kurtz is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Melanie Kurtz for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all her future accomplishments.

TO AMEND THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE ACT OF 1990 TO MAKE CERTAIN UNITED STATES TERRITORIES ELIGIBLE FOR NONPROFIT CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS UNDER THAT ACT

**HON. GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO
SABLAN**

OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 5, 2012

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing legislation that will amend the National and Community Service Act, as amended by the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, to make the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands eligible for the Nonprofit Capacity Building Grants under that Act.

The Nonprofit Capacity Building Grant Program awards intermediary nonprofit organizations with funding to provide development training to small and mid-sized nonprofits on best practices, financial planning, grant writing, and compliance with applicable tax laws.

In my district, we have hard working nonprofit organizations and advocates who commit themselves to truly noble causes. Whether it is the protection of families from domestic violence or raising funds to find a cure for cancer, nonprofits work tirelessly for the greater

good of all members of our community. The technical correction I offer here today would allow organizations in the Northern Marianas and other U.S. territories an equal opportunity to apply for federal funds to increase the effectiveness of nonprofits and to expand their impact within their communities.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and allow the U.S. territories an equal opportunity to compete for this program.

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION
REFORM ACT OF 2012

SPEECH OF

HON. CLIFF STEARNS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 30, 2012

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, the Food and Drug Administration Reform Act, H.R. 5651, is based on user fee negotiations between FDA and the prescription drug, generic drug, biologic, and medical device industry. This reauthorization of the FDA user fees will provide stability with FDA's new product review as companies submit new and innovative devices and drugs for approval.

In codifying the User Fee Agreement, this committee has included additional provisions designed to address some of the defects of the regulatory structure and overreach by the FDA. Under my Chairmanship of the Oversight and Investigation Subcommittee, we held a hearing into FDA's regulatory efforts in the medical device space. During our hearing, many of the witnesses talked about the reluctance of FDA to approve devices and how FDA continually moved the goalposts for approval. I am glad that Title VII of this bill includes a significant number of reform provisions designed to bring certainty to the medical device field.

In addition to reforming approaches to medical devices through Title VII, the FDA's approach to rare diseases must also be modernized. I'm happy the Committee included the Faster Access to Specialized Treatments Act, FAST Act, H.R. 4132, which I introduced with my friend and colleague, Representative ED TOWNS. FAST updates and modernizes Section 506 of the Food, Drug & Cosmetic Act, and updates the Accelerated Approval statute to reflect two decades worth of medical sciences that has occurred since Accelerated Approval was first created. FAST will help FDA implement broadly effective processes for the expedited development and review of innovative new medicines intended to address unmet medical needs for serious or life-threatening diseases by using modern scientific tools.

The use of surrogate endpoints may result in fewer, smaller or shorter clinical trials without compromising FDA's existing high standards for safety or efficacy. Surrogate and clinical endpoints only need to be reasonable predictors of clinical benefit to support accelerated approval. They do not need to be validated or proven first. The changes made to current law permitting the Secretary to require validation of surrogates following accelerated approval is not intended to change FDA's long history of granting accelerated approval based on unvalidated, but predictive, surrogate endpoints.