

counts on a nice boost. Texans know how to show the tourists a good time and make themselves a pretty good living. The show itself has brought in more than \$320 million in the past years and has created more than 7,000 full-time jobs. Not to brag but this is something Texans should take the utmost pride in.

The men of the Houston Rodeo are also known as the “founding fathers.” In 1930, they wanted to create more than just a rodeo. To put it simply, they wanted a rodeo with a purpose so they created a charitable event that contributed to the educational and scientific advancement of Texas agriculture. Throughout the history of the Rodeo, it has awarded \$300 million to Texas youth in various forms, such as scholarships and educational programs. The best part is, all the work is done by several hundred generous volunteers.

As Texans put on their cowboy hats and boots, and saddle up for the rodeo, a Texas-sized thank you goes out to all of the thousands of volunteers who make the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo a success. For those who have never been, this is like the Texas version of Mardi Gras, but with cowboy hats. And there’s nothing quite like it. For Texans, it’s their cultural duty to attend. Every year, they know it’s a good time comin’. God bless Texas. And that’s just the way it is.

RECOGNIZING FEBRUARY 28TH,
2014 AS RARE DISEASE DAY

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 4, 2014

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, Friday, February 28, 2014 was Rare Disease Day. And that is why I rise to let Americans know the importance of research, recognition and advocacy that is critical for individuals facing a rare disease diagnosis—and their families. The over 6000 rare disease can be characterized by a large range of disorders and symptoms, some of which are relatively common. In the United States, a disease is considered rare when it affects fewer than 200,000 persons, and 50% of rare diseases affect children.

While we have made important stride in the diagnosis and treatment of many rare diseases, far too many remind without any treatment or cure. Additionally, these individuals are too-often misdiagnosed, or given the wrong treatments due to a lack of scientific knowledge and information.

Despite these troubling facts, there is some good news. Scientific progress continues to make it possible to cure previously-untreatable conditions. For example, the Ear Foundation of Santa Barbara, California has recently done ground-breaking research into Patulous Eustachian Tube (pET) dysfunction. This rare disease occurs as a result of the Eustachian tube in the ear continuously staying open. Because symptoms include a feeling of ear fullness or oceanic roaring sounds, many physicians are unaware of the disorder and as such are unable to properly diagnose. Thanks to similar research organizations, patient groups, private foundations, and federal research leaders like the National Institute of Health (NIH), patients with rare conditions are finding increased relief.

Additionally, Congress has been making moves to encourage better coordination

among researchers to develop cures and treatments for rare diseases. For example, the National Pediatric Research Network Act, a bipartisan law I co-authored with Congresswoman McMorris-Rodgers from Washington, was an important step to facilitate the creation of pediatric research consortia through NIH focused on improving pediatric disease research, with a special emphasis on rare diseases like spinal muscular atrophy (SMA). With better coordination, researchers can quickly share best practices while fostering partnerships to make research and clinical trials more accessible to those afflicted.

The next step that Congress should take to support individuals with rare diseases is to pass H.R. 460, the Patient’s Access to Treatment Act (PATA), into law. This bipartisan bill that I coauthored with Congressman MCKINLEY from West Virginia would stop insurance companies from moving vital medications—often treatment for rare disorders—into costly “specialty tiers,” ending a significant financial barrier for insured individuals to access the care they need. With over eighty cosponsors thus far, this bill has the opportunity to affect positive change in the lives of thousands of patients and their families. I encourage my colleagues to join me as a cosponsor of this legislation to support all Americans currently living with rare diseases and those who will be diagnosed in the future.

B J HAMBLETON

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 4, 2014

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud B J Hambleton for receiving the Ambassador of the Year award from the West Chamber serving Jefferson County.

The West Chamber Ambassadors are the hospitality arm of the Chamber. They help members by inviting them to events, introducing them to each other and making new members feel a part of the West Chamber family more quickly.

B J has been an Ambassador since 2009, and when it comes to helping out, B J is the first person to volunteer. She is dedicated to helping members get the most out of their membership. You can find B J staffing the registration tables at most Chamber events, and she is known for her quick response to the many questions members ask.

I extend my deepest congratulations to B J Hambleton for her well-deserved honor from the West Chamber serving Jefferson County. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all her future accomplishments.

HONORING ST. GABRIEL MERCY
CENTER

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 4, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable Civil

Rights Organization, St. Gabriel Mercy Center in Mound Bayou, Mississippi.

On November 9, 1948 Father John W. Bowman was appointed head of the project mission in Mound Bayou. In 1949 St. Gabriel Parish began. Five acres of land were given to the Catholic Church and five acres were purchased by Father John.

On September 7, 1954 St. Gabriel Mission School for kindergarten through eighth grade was founded by the Oblate Sisters of Providence of Baltimore, Maryland, who were the first successful Roman Catholic sisterhood in the world established by women of African descent. The sisters had been invited to Mound Bayou by the Society of Divine Word Fathers under Father John Bowman.

The high school was added in 1958 and closed in 1961. The present church was built in 1960 and the convent was built in 1962.

After 30 years the Oblate sisters left and were followed by the Sisters of St. Agnes of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, who stayed five years; following from 1990–2001 by the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart from Reading, Pennsylvania, who opened an early childhood school after the grade school closed.

In 1994 the upper grades closed and the Early Childhood School opened for ages two through four year olds. In 1995 Sister Helen Papan, a Certified Parents as Teachers Educator, arrived and started a parenting program.

In 1997, the Gabriel Center was opened by Christian Brother Tom Geraghty and in 1999 three Sisters of Mercy arrived. In 2001 the early childhood school closed and the building became a community center for the citizens of Mound Bayou to continue their legacy of being an asset to an improvised community. The current Executive Director, Sister Donald Mary Lynch, joined St. Gabriel Mercy Center in 2001 and continued to expand on program offerings.

In 2002 the Mound Bayou County Library opened in the center. The library closed in 2010 due to renovations of the center and was relocated and reopened in 2011 to its current location in the Mound Bayou Community Facility Building. Sister Donald Mary Lynch is very involved in the community of Mound Bayou: working with school officials, former and current city officials, partnering with the local AARP chapter, working with the Taborian Project, serving on Congressman Thompson’s Military Advisory Board and other civic organizations.

St. Gabriel Mercy Center offers numerous programs and services to the community of Mound Bayou and the surrounding communities such as: the Parent Education and Family Support program, which serves families throughout pregnancy until children reach the age of three; Parent Educators visit the new family in their home each month; Senior Outreach Program; Parents as Teachers; GED Program; St. Gabriel’s Closet; Computer and Learning Lab; and Basic Emergency Needs & Jobs Opportunities Programs.

St. Gabriel Mercy Center continues the legacy of being a forerunner as a champion of civil rights, offering opportunities for the less fortunate, when others are afraid to take the lead.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing an amazing Civil Rights Organization for their dedication for change and equality.