

very best of the Information Age true superstars in the information technology arena that is helping to fuel the economy in my home state of Virginia and across the entire nation.

These nine enterprises are fostering the emergence of an exciting new market for African American entrepreneurs. At the top of the IT industry, Universal System Technology Inc. (UNITECH); Digital Systems International Corp; SENTEL; Innovative Logistics Techniques, Inc.; Advanced Resource Technologies, Inc.; Houston Associates, Inc., and Armstrong Data Service, Inc. (ADS) are transforming Northern Virginia into one of the world's leading technology hubs.

It is not by chance that African-American owned businesses are finding their success stories in Northern Virginia. Our region's concentration of fine colleges and universities provides a vast pool of potential employees. Emerging businesses may also choose from a large number of former government employees seeking high-tech jobs in the private sector. Furthermore, close proximity to our nation's political center renders opportunities for government contracting and access to key decision-makers.

The area also boasts a plethora of organizations that provide resources to emerging businesses. The Northern Virginia Technology Council hosts networking sessions, helping young companies build relationships with large, established IT firms. The Fairfax County Economic Development Authority and the Center for Innovative Technology provide technical, financial and business assistance.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to send my sincere congratulations to the African-American entrepreneurs who are using Northern Virginia's existing resources well, while creating jobs and contributing to the area's supportive community and excellent quality of life. We celebrate their entrepreneurial spirit, we honor their commitment to the state of Virginia and applaud their vital role in the information and technology industry.

HONORING DR. MARILYN WHIRRY,
CALIFORNIA'S TEACHER OF THE
YEAR

HON. STEVEN T. KUYKENDALL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. KUYKENDALL, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an exceptional individual from my district, Dr. Marilyn Whirry. Dr. Whirry, an English teacher in Manhattan Beach, was recently named California's Teacher of the Year. She is the first South Bay teacher to win this award and advance to the National Teacher of the Year competition.

For over 30 years, Dr. Whirry has taught English to students in grades 9-12 at Mira Costa High School. She has touched the lives of thousands, instilling in her students the importance of education.

She currently teaches Advanced Placement English to Mira Costa seniors. When Dr. Whirry took over the program 9 years ago, only 26 students were in the class. The program has since developed under her direction

and now enrollment is roughly 150 students. She expects a lot from her students, and implements a challenging curriculum focused upon rigorous learning and discovery.

Dr. Whirry's commitment to educational excellence extends beyond the Manhattan Beach Unified School District. She is also a professor at Loyola Marymount University and regularly conducts reading workshops throughout southern California. She has been a consultant for several states including California, and she has also advised President Clinton. Last year she was selected as the chairperson of the National Assessments Governing Board's committee to develop a voluntary national reading test to assess fourth graders. Over her career, she has become a national leader in education.

I congratulate Dr. Marilyn Whirry on being selected as California's Teacher of the Year. It is a testament of her commitment to her students as well as a reflection of the quality of education in the South Bay. She is a valuable member of the community, and I wish her much success in the national competition. The students and parents of Manhattan Beach are grateful to have her as an educator.

H.R. 3375: CONVICTED OFFENDER
DNA INDEX SYSTEM SUPPORT
ACT OF 1999

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, today, I'm introducing H.R. 3375, the Convicted Offender DNA Index System Support Act of 1999. This legislation will provide assistance to the States to eliminate their backlog of convicted offender DNA samples, provide grants to the States to eliminate their backlog of DNA evidence for cases for which there are no suspects, provide funding to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to eliminate their unsolved casework backlog, expand collection efforts to include Federal, District of Columbia (DC) and military violent convicted offenders into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), and authorize the construction of a missing persons database. Joining me as cosponsors are, my friends and colleagues, co-chairman of the Congressional Law Enforcement Caucus, Congressmen JIM RAMSTAD of (Minnesota) and BART STUPAK of Michigan.

Mr. Speaker, in 1994, the Congress passed the DNA Identification Act, which authorized the construction of the Combined DNA Index System, or CODIS, to assist our Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies in fighting violent crime throughout the Nation. CODIS is a master database for all law enforcement agencies to submit and retrieve DNA samples of convicted violent offenders. Since beginning its operation in 1998, the system has worked extremely well in assisting law enforcement by matching DNA evidence with possible suspects and has accounted for the capture of over 200 suspects in unsolved violent crimes.

However, because of the high volume of convicted offender samples needed to be ana-

lyzed, a nationwide backlog of approximately 600,000 unanalyzed convicted offender DNA samples has formed. Furthermore, because the program has been so vital in assisting crime fighting and prevention efforts, our States are expanding their collection efforts. Recently, although New York State already has a backlog of approximately 2,000 samples, Governor George Pataki recently announced that the State will be expanding their collection of DNA samples to require all violent felons and a number of nonviolent felony offenders.

State forensic laboratories have also accumulated a backlog of evidence for cases for which there are no suspects. These are evidence "kits" for unsolved violent crimes which are stored away because our State forensic laboratories do not have the support necessary to analyze them and compare the evidence to our nationwide data bank. Presently, there are approximately 12,000 rape cases in New York City alone, and, it is estimated, approximately 180,000 rape cases nationwide, which are unsolved and unanalyzed. This number represents a dismal future for the success of CODIS and reflects the growing problem facing our law enforcement community. The successful elimination of both the convicted violent offender backlog and the unsolved casework backlog will play a major role in the future of our State's crime prevention and law enforcement efforts.

The Convicted Offender DNA Index System Support Act will also provide funding to the Federal Bureau of Investigation to eliminate their unsolved casework backlog and close a loophole created by the original legislation. Although all 50 States require DNA collection from designated convicted offenders, for some inexplicable reason, convicted Federal, District of Columbia, and military offenders are exempt. H.R. 3375 closes that loophole by requiring the collection of samples from any Federal, military, or DC offender convicted of a violent crime.

Moreover, this measure includes a provision, which will permit the FBI to construct a missing person database. This program will permit family members who have lost a loved one to voluntarily enter their DNA profile into a national registry. Should a missing child be found, this database will provide our law enforcement agencies with a system to locate the displaced families and bring the child home. Furthermore, it will allow individuals who, in later years, suspect they have been abducted to refer to the FBI in search of a match to their DNA.

I recently assisted in coordinating a pilot program between the National Center for Missing and Abducted Children, the Department of State, the Department of Justice, and the Rockland County, New York Clerk's and Sheriff's Offices, which will assist in stopping individuals from smuggling children out of the country. This program is an important step in protecting our Nation's children. However, constructing a missing person's database will provide a strong, national foundation to assist our Nation's families and law enforcement in the fight against child abduction.

Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, our Nation's fight against crime is never over. Every day, the use of DNA evidence is becoming a more