

Mr. Speaker, as time goes by, this legislation takes on increasing importance. The State of Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs has informed me that if the cap on veterans bonds is not lifted this year, the State will be forced to disband the program because too few veterans are eligible for the program.

This legislation would simply eliminate the cutoff that exists under current law. Under our proposal, former servicemen and service-women in the five states who served our country beginning before or after January 1, 1977 will be eligible to qualify for a state-financed home mortgage. This legislation does not increase federal discretionary spending by 1 cent. It simply allows the five states that have a mortgage finance program for their veterans to provide mortgages to all veterans regardless of when they served in the military.

There is no justification to allow some veterans to qualify for a home mortgage while others cannot. Mr. Speaker, I urge the House to help those veterans who have served after January 1, 1977 to own a home and pass this important legislation into law.

TRIBUTE TO DEBERAH
BRINGELSON

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 23, 1999

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Deberah Bringelson, an extraordinary citizen of San Mateo County, California, who is being inducted into the San Mateo County Women's Hall of Fame.

Deberah Bringelson has served San Mateo County for more than 14 years, both as a professional and a volunteer. She has brought her energies and expertise to the issues of civil justice reform, child protection, toxic cleanup, as well as water and land use policies. Deberah has made significant contributions in the field of criminal and juvenile justice reform, reforming the system and creating efficiencies of operation. Her commitment to the issues of drug abuse and violence arise from her own personal experiences.

Deberah helped create the County Adult and Juvenile Drug Courts, and designed a comprehensive life skills treatment program which serves female offenders and focuses on mothers. Deberah serves as a mentor for young women, coaching several girls' athletic teams. She's been honored for overcoming the personal trauma and violence of her childhood and for bringing her talents, compassion and energy to our community.

Mr. Speaker, Deberah Bringelson is an outstanding woman and I salute her for her remarkable contributions and commitment to our community. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring her on being inducted into the San Mateo County Women's Hall of Fame.

LEARNING THE LESSONS OF
HISTORY

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 23, 1999

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Capuchino High School of San Bruno, California, for an extraordinary program they have instituted called "Sojourn to the Past." Envisioned by Jeff Steinberg, a history teacher at Capuchino High School, this ten-day trip recently led eighty-five high school students through a history of the civil rights movement that was made very personal.

The trip began in Washington, D.C., and ended in the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, in the hotel room where Martin Luther King, Jr., was martyred. Along the way the students met with several major figureheads of the civil rights movement, including Chris McNair, father of one of the Birmingham Four, Elizabeth Eckford, who de-segregated Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, and my own good friend, Congressman JOHN LEWIS, who introduced the students to his philosophy of non-violence.

History came alive for these young people as they followed the trail of the most significant movement of the twentieth century. They found it impossible to take their own civil rights for granted when confronted with first-person accounts from those who risked their lives fighting to attain those very rights.

But a sense of the reality of history was not the only thing the students took home. The testimonies of the people with whom they met emphasized forgiveness and tolerance, fairly foreign concepts to American high school culture. The idea of using non-violence and tolerance as a mode of dealing with day-to-day problems was initially received with suspicion but seemed to have hit home by the end of the trip.

In a letter written to Congressman JOHN LEWIS, junior Kristin Agius wrote: "Your message has made me rethink my idea of what it means to be important. . . . I've come to the conclusion that a step forward, even a small step, is better than aspiring for something that will only benefit myself."

Mark Simon, a reported from The San Francisco Chronicle, accompanied the students on their journey to the past. I ask that Mr. Simon's excellent report on this outstanding educational experience be included in the RECORD.

CIVIL RIGHTS TOUR

[From the San Francisco Chronicle, Feb. 28, 1999]

Day 1: Thursday, Feb. 11, Washington, D.C.

They had flown east all day, leaving the morning light of the Bay Area for the nighttime darkness of the Nation's capital. With barely a pause, they piled into two buses, went to dinner, and then, as the hour neared 10 p.m., they went as a group to the Lincoln Memorial, where they sat on the steps, huddled together.

Then they listened to a recording of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s conscience-rousing sermon to the 1963 March on Washington, in which he told an assembled multitude of 250,000 that he had a dream of true

equality and justice for a nation riven by hatred and racism.

And so it began.

Eighty-five students from Capuchino High School in San Bruno, the most diverse in the San Mateo Union High School District, had embarked on a 10-day journey called "Sojourn to the Past." It was organized by Jeff Steinberg, a history teacher gifted with energy and devotion to match his vision.

The students went wherever the civil rights movement had gone, seeing the people who had been there, hearing tales of heroism and sacrifice and walking in the footsteps of greatness large and small.

This was a spirituality journey—a journey of forgiveness and tolerance, of faith and hope, a journey to the past and for the future.

It was to be an education. There were lessons to be learned.

FORGIVENESS

It was a sustaining theme of the trip. Everywhere the students went, they met historic figures who had been mistreated, neglected, imprisoned and beaten.

And to a person, these people had found within themselves the capacity to forgive.

At the Jewish Community Center in Washington, D.C., they met Ernest Green, one of the Little Rock Nine, who integrated the all-white Central High School in Little Rock, Ark., in 1957, amid violence, daily torture and taunts.

Short, balding, bespectacled and a little portly, Green was good-humored, upbeat and remarkably short on the details of his year at Central, something that clearly frustrated the students.

But his message was that the students should keep looking forward, not back.

"Life is not like a VCR. There's no reverse," he said.

In Birmingham, Ala., they met with Chris McNair, a county commissioner and father of one of the four little girls killed in a Birmingham church bombing in 1963.

"I'm a happy man, in spite of the things that happened to me," he said in a deep, rough voice.

"You're precious to me," he said. "In this world, justice means so much. I hope you can reach a point where you can get out of the hate mode. In that mode, you're the one who truly suffers."

When the trip was over, and the students had been to the deepest South and the deepest parts of their soul, African American senior Ke'Shonda Williams said she had learned something from the spirit of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

"(King) never had hate in his heart for anybody. He found the goodness in his heart to forgive people. If someone did something wrong to me, I just couldn't forgive them for it. I haven't been through half the things he'd been through. If he could forgive them and move on, I think I should be able to forgive. I'm going to try."

The student's capacity for forgiveness was put to its hardest test in Montgomery, Ala., in the office of George Wallace Jr., associate commissioner of the Alabama Public Service Commission, and son and namesake of the famous governor.

Wallace has just moved into his office, and the floor, chairs and tables were covered with yet-to-be-hanged pictures and memorabilia.

Dressed in a pinstripe suit, his voice soft and his words thoughtfully chosen, Wallace told the students about his father.

In his most famous speech, his inaugural address in 1963, Governor Wallace declared "Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever."