

May 27, 1999

these efforts, to rapid response teams for fuel spills, to responses to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) inquiries, NAS Oceana has been praised on all fronts.

Captain Benson is an active member of the Hampton Roads Rotary and the City of Virginia Beach Neptune Festival Committee, further enhancing the cooperation and community leadership between the base and the public at large.

A totally dedicated professional, Captain Benson has set a superior personal example of all military leaders to emulate. His many contributions will continue to be felt for many years to come in the Hampton Roads area. Because of his outstanding and distinguished record of accomplishments, his tenacious efforts to keep the local community informed and his outgoing personality, Captain Benson is truly worthy of recognition. We will surely miss him at Oceana Naval Air Station.

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IN RECOGNITION OF JOSEPH  
POSEDEL

**HON. MIKE THOMPSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 27, 1999*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to recognize Joseph F. Posedel who is retiring as Business Manager of Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 343 under the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry.

In his 36 years with the union, Mr. Posedel has worked to create a solid foundation for Local 343.

He joined the union in 1963 as a building trades apprentice. He became a trustee for the Trust Fund in 1970. Subsequently, he served as Vice President, President, Business Agent and Apprenticeship Coordinator for the union. In January 1996 he assumed the important leadership position of Business Manager.

As Business Manager, Mr. Posedel successfully negotiated an improved wage package, including health, welfare, and pension benefits, for union members.

Mr. Posedel is a native of the San Francisco Bay area. He grew up in Rodeo and attended St. Mary's High School, graduating in 1955. He also attended St. Mary's College in the same community.

He and his wife, Patricia, have been married for 39 years. They have three children and six grandchildren.

Following his retirement, Mr. Posedel will continue to serve Local 343 as a Trustee of the Trust Fund.

Mr. Speaker, because of Joseph F. Posedel's long and devoted service to Local 343 of the Plumbers and Steamfitters Union, it is fitting and proper to honor him today for his accomplishments, and to wish him well in his retirement.

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF TAIWANESE PRESIDENT LEE IN OFFICE

**HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 27, 1999*

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, permit me to take this opportunity to convey to Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui, on the eve of his third anniversary in office, our best wishes and congratulations. Taiwan is very fortunate to have Dr. Lee as its President.

A man of vision, President Lee supports the reunion of Taiwan and mainland China according to the principles of democracy, freedom, and the equitable distribution of wealth. During his tenure in office, he has made every effort to resume the cross Strait dialogue and to maintain peace and security in the Taiwan Strait.

Accordingly, I invite my colleagues to join in extending congratulations and best wishes to President Lee and we look forward to his continuing accomplishments in the coming years.

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INTRODUCTION OF THE TEACHER  
EMPOWERMENT ACT

**HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 27, 1999*

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, today I am joining with the distinguished Chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, Mr. GOODLING, Mr. CASTLE, the Speaker of the House, the Majority Leader, Mr. WATTS, Mr. BLUNT, Ms. PRYCE, and other distinguished Members of the House to introduce the Teacher Empowerment Act. This legislation will make a significant and positive impact on how we prepare our Nation's teaching force by providing States and local school districts with needed funding for the provision of high quality teacher training and for the hiring of new teachers, where necessary.

In the development of the Teacher Empowerment Act, we have made every effort to put together a bill that is in the best interests of children, parents, and teachers. We have also tried to include the best elements of teacher training proposals from the Governors, the Administration, and different Members of Congress, on a bipartisan basis. I hope that by the time this legislation is considered by the full House, we will have a bipartisan proposal that will vastly expand training opportunities for our Nation's teachers and increase the achievement of all of our Nation's students. I intend to work closely with Mr. Martinez, the Ranking Democrat Member on the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education, Training and Life-long Learning, and others, on a bipartisan basis, to bring this bill to the floor of the House as rapidly as possible.

We believe that parents and other taxpayers have the right to information about student

achievement and the quality of the teachers in their schools. Our bill holds schools accountable for raising student academic achievement, and we ensure that parents know the quality of their children's teachers.

We encourage intensive, long-term teacher training programs, focused on the subject matter taught by the teacher. We know that this works. If localities are unable to provide such professional development, teachers will be given the choice to select their own high quality teacher training programs. For the first time, we're giving teachers a choice in how they upgrade their skills. Our Teacher Opportunity Payments will empower individual teachers, or groups of teachers, to choose the training methods that best meets their classroom needs.

The Teacher Empowerment Act maintains an important focus on math and science, as under current law, but the legislation expands teacher training beyond just the subjects of math and science. The legislation ensures that teachers will be provided with training of the highest quality in all of the core academic subjects.

By combining the funding of several current Federal education programs, the Teacher Empowerment Act provides over \$2 billion annually over the next five years to give States, and more importantly local school districts, the flexibility they need to improve both teacher quality and student performance. This legislation also encourages innovation in how schools improve the quality of their teachers. Some localities may choose to pursue tenure reform or merit-based performance plans. Others may want to try differential and bonus pay for teachers qualified to teach subjects in high demand. Still others may want to explore alternative routes to certification.

The Teacher Empowerment Act continues to support local initiatives to reduce class size. In fact, schools would be required to use a portion of their funds for hiring teachers to reduce class size. However, unlike the President's program, no set amount is required for the hiring of new teachers. Schools will be allowed to determine the right balance between quality teachers and reducing class size. Schools will also be allowed to hire special education teachers with these funds.

All of these are feasible in our legislation, because we don't try to tell schools what the approach should be. We don't want to impose any one system that every school must follow in order to upgrade the quality of its teachers. That won't work, because one size does not fit all.

The Teacher Empowerment Act is good, balanced legislation. It provides the flexibility that States and local school districts need to improve the quality of their teaching force with two goals in mind: increases in student achievement; and increases in the knowledge of teachers in the subjects they teach. I encourage all of my colleagues in the House to support this important legislation as we work to improve our nation's schools.

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