

SAN ANTONIO MOURNS THE LOSS  
OF POLICE OFFICER JOHN AN-  
THONY RIOJAS

**HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 6, 2001*

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, today the San Antonio community mourns the loss of one of its young police officers, John Anthony Riojas. As his community grieves this week, not only should this officer's story be remembered, but so should the story of every law enforcement officer who takes risks daily to protect us.

This past Friday, Officer Riojas, a member of the Street Crimes Arrest Team unit and eleven-year veteran of the San Antonio Police force, was mortally shot while on duty. He was one of nine officers participating in an operation to stop a rash of property crimes plaguing an apartment complex. At the time of his fatal injury he was attempting to apprehend an individual on foot. He overtook the suspect, who reportedly shot the young officer with his own weapon.

Sadly, John Riojas, known to his friends as "Rocky," joins 42 other San Antonio police officers killed in the line of duty and is the fourth death of an officer in the past 45 days. We in this great House of Representatives join his family, fellow officers and many friends in mourning this tragic loss.

This 37-year old father of two was seen as a man who was trying to make the community a better place by those who worked with him. Officer Riojas graduated in 1982 from St. Gerard's Catholic High School in San Antonio. A star football player, his friends recall Riojas' excitement upon entering the police force because he wanted to make a difference. And he has.

Our condolences go out to his widow, two young children, and his entire family. His children, a two-year old daughter and a son of only eight weeks, have lost their father. Hopefully, they will always know his devotion and sacrifice on behalf of his community. All too often, we forget that our sense of safety is rooted in the work of law enforcement officers like John Riojas. His service and devotion to his family, community, and country exemplify the best in our society. May his children and family always see the work he did in their community and be proud of the example he set.

INTRODUCTION OF VETERANS  
RESOLUTION

**HON. JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI**

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 6, 2001*

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, today I offer a resolution regarding some of the neediest and most deserving citizens of our country: elderly veterans. I was pleased to support efforts in the 106th Congress to make long-term care for our veterans a priority, but more remains to be done. My resolution calls for additional re-

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

sources to be directed towards addressing Alzheimer's in the veteran population.

Alzheimer's, a degenerative brain disease, gradually causes a person to forget recent events or familiar tasks. Attempts to perform basic daily functions can turn into dangerous situations, and the disease eventually forces the afflicted to become totally dependent on others.

Dementia, an umbrella term used to describe the loss of cognitive or intellectual function, is commonly associated with Alzheimer's. Caused by a number of diseases, dementia refers to memory loss, having difficulty making use of simple words, and poor or decreased judgement. In addition, dementia creates problems with abstract thinking and can result in personality changes.

Veterans are widely affected by dementia in general and Alzheimer's specifically. Nearly 8 million, 37% of the total veterans population, suffer from dementia caused by Alzheimer's. Due to the severity of this condition, and the inability of those afflicted to care for themselves, specialized care is needed.

Currently the Veterans Alzheimer's/Dementia Program includes both inpatient and outpatient clinics. Ranging from short-term behavioral stabilization to long-term comfort and supportive care, these clinics are designed to treat patients while research is conducted on their condition and treatment. However, with an aging population and corresponding rise in dementia cases, the resources of our veterans nursing homes are being strained. Currently there are a very small number of facilities dedicated to treating patients with Alzheimer's. In addition, the traditional nursing home model does not provide the most effective method of treatment.

While Alzheimer's remains incurable, progress is being made. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) researchers have discovered a genetic association to the development of Alzheimer's and they continue to pioneer dementia research. However, there are still only three FDA-approved drugs that may temporarily relieve some symptoms of the disease. Clearly, more dedicated research should be encouraged.

Research and treatment provided through dementia-specific nursing homes will enhance the development of appropriate care options. To encourage such homes to be leased and constructed, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has urged the VA to establish a demonstration project for this purpose. I am pleased to support the VFW's Resolution 639 by offering this resolution today. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this effort.

TRIBUTE TO RETIRING MAYOR OF  
CROCKER, MO, THE HONORABLE  
NORMA LEA MIHALEVICH

**HON. IKE SKELTON**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 6, 2001*

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that a remarkable public servant, the Honorable Norma Lea Mihalevich, Mayor of Crocker, MO, will retire from her post on April 7, 2001.

*February 6, 2001*

A graduate of Waynesville High School and the Missouri State Teachers College, Norma Lea Mihalevich has dedicated her life to public service. For the past 23 years, she has diligently served the citizens of Crocker, MO, as their mayor. During her tenure in office, she has always unselfishly devoted her time and energy to the betterment of her community.

In addition to her service as mayor, Mrs. Mihalevich has been a member of the Crocker R-2 Board of Education, first being elected in 1952. During her time on the School Board, she served on the Board of Directors of the Missouri School Boards Association, receiving their 1998 "Recognition of Commitment" award. Additionally, in 1986, she was recognized as a "Pioneer in Education" by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Mrs. Mihalevich, a member of the Crocker Baptist Church for 59 years, has also worked for community betterment by serving as a member of the Pulaski County Hospital Board, the Pulaski County Health Department Home Health Agency, and the Pulaski Board for the Handicapped.

Norma Lea Mihalevich is truly a role model for young public servants. As she prepares for quieter times with her husband, Dr. John Mihalevich, I am certain that all Members of the House will join me in paying tribute to Mrs. Mihalevich's outstanding commitment to public service.

PRIME RECRUITING GROUND FOR  
ACADEMIES

**HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 6, 2001*

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, every year, more high school seniors from the 11th Congressional District trade in varsity jackets for Navy peacoats, Air Force flight suits, and Army brass buckles than any other district in the county. But this is nothing new—our area has repeatedly sent an above-average proportion of its sons and daughters to the Nation's military academies for decades.

This shouldn't come as a surprise. The educational excellence of our area is well known and has long been a magnet for families looking for the best environment in which to raise their children. Our graduates are skilled not only in mathematics, science, and social studies, but also have solid backgrounds in sports, debate teams, and other extracurricular activities. This diverse upbringing makes military academy recruiters sit up and take note—indeed, many recruiters know our towns and schools by name.

Since the 1830's, Members of Congress have enjoyed meeting, talking with, and nominating these superb young people to our military academies. But how did this process evolve?

In 1843, when West Point was the sole academy, Congress ratified the nominating process and became directly involved in the makeup of our military's leadership. This was not an act of an imperial Congress bent on controlling every aspect of the Government.

Rather, the procedure still used today was, and is, one further check and balance in our democracy. It was originally designed to weaken and divide political coloration in the officer corps, provide geographical balance to our armed services, and to make the officer corps more resilient to unfettered nepotism that handicapped European armies.

In 1854, Representative Gerritt Smith of New York added a new component to the academy nomination process—the academy review board. This was the first time a Member of Congress appointed prominent citizens from his district to screen applicants and assist with the serious duty of nominating candidates for academy admission. Today, I am honored to continue this wise tradition in my service to the 11th Congressional District.

The Academy Review Board is composed of nine local citizens who have shown exemplary service to New Jersey, to their communities, and to the continued excellence of education in our area—many are veterans. Though from diverse backgrounds and professions, they all share a common dedication to seeing that the best qualified and motivated graduates attend our academies. And, as is true for most volunteer panels, their service goes largely unnoticed.

I would like to take a moment to recognize these men and women and to thank them publicly for participating in this important panel. Being on the board requires hard work and an objective mind. Members have the responsibility of interviewing upwards of 50 outstanding high school seniors every year in the academy review process.

The nomination process follows a general timetable. High school seniors mail personal information directly to the Military Academy, the Naval Academy, the Air Force Academy, and the Merchant Marine Academy once they become interested in attending. Information includes academic achievement, college entry test scores, and other activities. At this time, they also inform their Representative of their desire to be nominated.

The academies then assess the applicants, rank them based on the data supplied, and return the files to my office with their notations. In mid-December, our Academy Review Board interviews all of the applicants over the course of 2 days. They assess a student's qualifications and analyze character, desire to serve, and other talents that may be hidden on paper.

Last year, the board interviewed over 30 applicants. Nominations included 10 to the Naval Academy, 7 to the Military Academy, 4 to the Air Force Academy, and 5 to the Merchant Marine Academy—the Coast Guard Academy does not use the Congressional nomination process. The Board then forwards their recommendations to the academies by January 31, where recruiters review files and notify applicants and my office of their final decisions on admission.

It is both reassuring and rewarding to know that many of our military officers hail from our hometowns or close by. When we consider the role of these officers in peace or war, we can rest easier knowing that the best and brightest are in command. Wherever they are sent, be that Bosnia, Somalia, Haiti or the Persian Gulf, many of these officers have academy training.

And while a few people may question the motivations and ambitions of some young people, the academy review process shows that the large majority of our graduates are just as highly motivated as the guidance from loving parents, dedicated teachers and schools, and from trusted clergy and rabbis. Indeed, every time I visit a school, speak at a college, or meet a young academy nominee, I am constantly reminded that we as a nation are blessed with fine young men and women.

Their willingness and desire to serve their country is perhaps the most persuasive evidence of all.

ACADEMY NOMINEES FOR 2001, 11TH  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY  
AIR FORCE ACADEMY

Christopher Hill, Pompton Plains, Pequanock H.S.; Tin T. Nguyen, Denville, Morris Knolls H.S.; Michael Raphael, Jr., Bridgewater, Bridgewater-Raritan; and Alexander T. Wong, Montville, Montville H.S.

MERCHANT MARINE

Joseph M. Crowley, Randolph, Randolph H.S.; Michael Frediani, Morris Plains, Parsippany H.S.; James J. Maye, IV, Bridgewater, Bridgewater-Raritan; Bradley W. Schmidt, Mine Hill, Dover H.S.; and Patrick H. Uhles, Montville, Montville H.S.

MILITARY ACADEMY

Lee W. Barnes, Mendham, West Morris Mendham; Robert J. Brougham, Randolph, Randolph H.S.; Paul P. Crooke, Long Valley, West Morris Central; Bethanne N. Laggy, Flanders, Pope John XXIII H.S.; David M. Marshall, Jr., Pompton Plains, Pequannock; Andrew G. Schmidt, Chester, West Morris Mendham; and William Wu, Morris Plains, Parsippany Hills H.S.

NAVAL ACADEMY

Andrew R. Bradley, Chester, West Morris Mendham; John J. Donnelly, III, Randolph, Delbarton School; Patrick M. Falvey, Randolph, Randolph H.S.; Thomas J. Kelly, Liberty Corner, Ridge H.S.; Jerimiah D. Lancaster, Lake Hopatcong, Jefferson H.S.; Ralph P. Lufkin, Basking Ridge, Ridge H.S.; Amy Swiatecki-McCabe, Chatham, Chatham H.S.; Adam R. Mueller, Bridgewater, Bridgewater-Raritan; Amanda M. Orson, Towaco, Montville H.S./The Citadel; and Grant M. Thompson, Livingston, Livingston H.S.

HONORING LANNA WALSH OF SAN  
DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

HON. SUSAN DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 6, 2001

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate and honor a California student from my district who has achieved national recognition for exemplary volunteer service in our community. Lanna Walsh of San Diego has just been named one of California's top honorees in the 2001 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program, an annual honor conferred on the most impressive student volunteers in the United States.

Lanna Walsh is being recognized for founding a tutoring and mentoring program that pairs high school students with elementary and middle school students through the county

public library system. She is a senior at Patrick Henry High School.

In light of numerous statistics that indicate Americans today are less involved in their communities than they once were, it's vital that we encourage and support the kind of selfless contributions this young citizen is making. As a former director of a youth leadership program myself, I know what an incredible difference these programs make in our community. Volunteers like Lanna are inspiring examples to all of us, and are among our brightest hopes for a better tomorrow.

I heartily applaud Lanna Walsh for making San Diego a better place to live, and for the positive impact she is making on the lives of others. She has demonstrated a level of commitment and accomplishment that is truly extraordinary in today's world, and deserves our sincere admiration and respect. Her actions show that young Americans can, and do, play important roles in our communities, and that America's community spirit continues to hold tremendous promise for the future.

INTRODUCED LEGISLATION THAT  
WILL IMPROVE VETERAN'S  
HEALTHCARE

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 6, 2001

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced a bill that will improve veterans healthcare.

I speak with veterans in the Second District of Tennessee on a regular basis, and I have heard time and time again of their frustration with scheduling an appointment at a Veterans Administration Clinic. Many times, people have to wait weeks and months just to see a doctor.

Mr. Speaker, this is not fair, and it is not right. Those who have laid their lives on the line for America deserve the utmost respect and assistance. They should not have to wait weeks and even months to be treated for a health problem.

When our Nation's veterans signed up to serve in the military, they were promised that they would be taken care of when they retired. We have a responsibility to live up to that promise, and to provide veterans with good healthcare.

Under this legislation, if a veteran tried to get a doctor's appointment at a Veterans' Clinic and had to wait longer than six months, the VA would be required to provide healthcare outside of the VA Clinics.

I am sure all veterans would agree that something needs to be done to improve their access to healthcare at Veterans' Clinics, and I am hopeful that this bill will be a step in the right direction.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and improve healthcare for the loyal and committed veterans of our Nation.