

boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of the amendment being offered by my colleague, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, to prohibit any funds from being used to implement the veterans equity resource allocation system.

VERA was created to correct a perceived inequity in the manner in which veterans health care dollars were being distributed across the country.

While a noble effort, VERA was fundamentally flawed in that it did not look at the type of care being delivered to veterans in a given region. Furthermore, it also failed to consider the effect of regional costs of providing health care in its calculations.

Under VERA, the watchword was efficiency. Deliver the most care at the least cost. While ideal for outpatient care, VERA has unfairly penalized those VISNs that provide vital services such as substance abuse treatment, services for homeless veterans, mental health services, and spinal cord injury treatments. Under VERA, these services are all deemed too expensive and "inefficient."

VERA was also implemented at a time when the VA budget was essentially flat-lined. Thus, VISN directors were not provided additional funds to offset the costs of annual pay raises for VA staff, and annual medical inflation costs. This was not a problem for those directors of VISNs that received money under VERA. However, for those directors in VISNs, that were losing money under VERA, it was a double hit that crowded out additional funds needed for other vital services.

It is commendable that the subcommittee was able to find an additional \$1.2 billion for veterans medical care. Yet, thanks to VERA, very little of that money will find its way to the Northeast, where it is vitally needed. Instead, it will be sent to those VISNs that have already seen increases in funding due to VERA.

Mr. Chairman, this is simply wrong. The veterans of the Northeast, who are older, sicker and less mobile than their counterparts in the sun belt should not be unfairly penalized for where they choose to live. This amendment starts to correct this problem by terminating VERA, a well-intentioned, but poorly executed system that blatantly discriminates against those veterans who reside in the Northeast.

HONORING THE GRAND OPENING  
OF THE EMERY-WEINER SCHOOL

**HON. KEN BENTSEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 31, 2001*

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of the new Emery-Weiner School in southwest Houston. This \$14 million educational facility combines the 23-year-old I. Weiner Jewish Secondary School and the brand new Emery High School to form the Emery-Weiner School. This expansion combines the quality education offered at the I. Weiner Jewish Secondary School with the cutting edge facility of the new campus.

This fall as classrooms fill for the first time at the Emery-Weiner School students will benefit from the formation of these two institutions. The state-of-the-art facilities at the new campus will include art and music rooms, as well as a theater, emphasizing the important role the arts play in education. The campus also houses a multi-court gymnasium, cultural arts facility, computer and science labs. The twelve acres in southwest Houston on which the campus sits is surrounded by several more acres of accessible playing fields. The campus will provide tremendous opportunities to students.

On Thursday, September 20, 2001, the Emery-Weiner School will celebrate the opening of this new campus with a special event honoring two of its many benefactors, Mr. Joe Kaplan and Mr. Joe Kornfeld. The proceeds from this celebration will benefit the "Joe Fund," a fund appropriately named for these two founding fathers. Mr. Kaplan and Mr. Kornfeld contributed countless hours to seeing this project come to fruition. Their selfless offerings make them role models for the students who will benefit from their efforts.

The "Joe Fund" was created to bolster teacher enhancement programs and projects. It will be used to purchase materials to provide teachers the necessary means to incorporate creativity and ingenuity into their everyday classroom. I applaud the leadership of the countless teachers and volunteers who contributed to the erection of this new campus and recognize the commitment of these individuals to providing opportunities through education to our young people.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the many people who contributed to the construction of the Emery-Weiner School, and I look forward to seeing the many ways in which the innovative voice of this institution will help to educate and shape the minds of Houstonians. There is no doubt, this school will soon serve as a model for other schools across the nation.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE  
THAT WORLD CONFERENCE  
AGAINST RACISM PRESENTS  
UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO AD-  
DRESS GLOBAL DISCRIMINATION

SPEECH OF

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 30, 2001*

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 212, sponsored by myself and my good friend from California, the Ranking Member of the House International Relations Committee, Mr. LANTOS.

It is easy to believe that in the twenty-first century, racism, like a rabbit under a magician's hat, has simply disappeared with the abracadabra of superficial legislation and the convenience of turning a blind eye. But for those of us who prefer to see the truth rather than a prefabricated illusion, we must recognize the need for international cooperation to address racism at the U.N. World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa.

Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." It is wrong, however, to combat racism with provisions that are racist themselves. Without a doubt, it is unacceptable for anti-Semitic language to be used in the conference's Program of Action to address the Arab-Israeli conflict. The notion of equating Zionism with racism is one that we rejected over twenty years ago when we spoke out vehemently against a U.N. resolution that made such an insidious claim. Thus, it is critical that we carefully consider the consequences of attending a conference that promotes a tenet we simply cannot accept. At the same time, we must reaffirm our commitment to working together with the international community to eradicate global discrimination and establish ourselves as a leader in this cause. We cannot let our silence speak for us now.

This legislation, Mr. Speaker, promotes U.S. support of the World Conference Against Racism and encourages us to take action in a manner consistent with our American values of racial and religious tolerance. It is essential that we support such legislation and not allow our global fight against racism to vanish into thin air or be diminished by language that exacerbates the problem rather than fixing it. I urge my colleagues to support this unique opportunity to address global discrimination and to support House Resolution 212.

IN HONOR OF GARY KRUPP OF  
LONG BEACH, NEW YORK

**HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 31, 2001*

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Mr. Gary Krupp of Long Beach, New York.

On July 29, 2000, Pope John Paul II named Gary a Knight Commander of the Order of Saint Gregory the Great, in recognition of his work with Casa Solievo della Sofferenza, a health care facility in Italy. Through Mr. Krupp's generosity and commitment, the hospital acquired highly advanced medical equipment, benefitting countless men, women and children.

The Order of Saint Gregory was founded by Pope Gregory XVI in 1831, who named it after his predecessor, Pope Saint Gregory the Great. The Order frequently honors those who have distinguished themselves through service to the Catholic Church and accomplishments benefitting society. Gary is the seventh Jewish person since 1831 to be awarded this honor.

It is not every day that an honor such as this is given to one of our neighbors. I congratulate Gary for receiving this outstanding and unique honor. I believe he is an exemplary Long Islander and American, and I have no doubt Gary will continue his work on behalf of Long Island, the Catholic Church, and Casa Solievo della Sofferenza.

August 1, 2001

MAGEE RIETER HONORED

**HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 31, 2001*

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call the attention of the House of Representatives to the outstanding achievement of the employees of Magee Rieter Automotive Systems of Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, which has won General Motors' prestigious "Supplier of the Year Award" for the ninth consecutive year. Of GM's 30,000 suppliers, Magee Rieter Automotive Systems is the only nine-time winner in North America and one of only six suppliers globally to be honored every year since the award was established.

Magee Rieter, the leading supplier of carpets to General Motors in America, will celebrate this accomplishment on August 28, 2001. The company has been in business in Bloomsburg since 1889 and has been supplying General Motors for more than 90 years, first with hand-draped tapestries or Fisher Body carriages, through today's production of fully molded carpet floors and integrated acoustical systems.

Through the past 112 years, the company has endured and overcome numerous challenges, including floods, fires and the rapidly changing business environment. The company received the Army/Navy "E" Award for Excellence after World War II in recognition of its production of high-quality materials for the war effort. As demonstrated by the more recent awards, the current employees have carried on the tradition of pride and success handed down by their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents who worked at Magee Rieter. Under the leadership of President and Chief Executive Officer Mike Katerman, Magee Rieter continues to be a cornerstone of the Bloomsburg community.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to call to the attention of the House of Representatives the hard work and impressive achievement of the people of Magee Rieter, and I wish them all the best.

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

SPEECH OF

**HON. FELIX J. GRUCCI, JR.**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 30, 2001*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2620) making appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes:

Mr. GRUCCI. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of Weldon Amendment which would

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

increase the Fire Assistance Grant Program by \$50 million.

This past Monday, it was my honor to announce the awarding of a Federal grant to the Davis Park Fire Department in my district. This grant was one of only 108 that were awarded to fire departments across this country under the FEMA's Fire Assistance Grant Program.

The Davis Park Fire Department along with nearly 20,000 other fire companies applied for grants—that is almost two-thirds of all fire companies in America. In the coming months, more than \$100 million in grants will be rewarded to fire companies for vehicles, fire prevention programs, equipment and training.

The Davis Park Fire Department will use its \$30,000 in funds to train its firefighters in the most recent firefighting and rescue techniques. When I spoke with the department's chief he expressed his excitement over how the grant would help to strengthen the safety of not just the citizens of Davis Park but also the brave men and women who serve them.

By supporting the Weldon Amendment we can guarantee that Fire Departments like the Davis Park will be able to benefit from this vital program next year. In doing so we can increase the safety of countless communities throughout our nation.

I call upon all of my colleagues to join me in providing our nation's local fire departments with the opportunity to improve the quality of both services they offer and safety standards under which they serve.

IN RECOGNITION OF RICARDO MONTERO DUQUE

**HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 31, 2001*

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Major Ricardo Montero Duque for his efforts to fight the communist threat, and later communist dictatorship, in Cuba, and his commitment to Cuban immigrants throughout America.

Ricardo Montero Duque was born in Matanzas, Cuba on July 4, 1925. In 1950, he graduated from the Military Academy of the Cuban Army with the rank of Second Lieutenant. As a result of his hard work and dedication, he quickly climbed through the ranks of the military hierarchy, eventually assuming the rank of Major.

Major Duque's extensive military career can be traced to battles against the guerrilla forces of Fidel Castro. In 1956, Major Duque was instrumental in leading the Cuban Army against Fidel Castro and his rebel forces in the province of Oriente. During the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, he commanded the No. 5 Infantry Battalion of the 2506 Brigade, was captured by Castro's forces, and later imprisoned for 25 years. On June 8, 1986, Major Duque was released from prison in Cuba and reunited with his family in Union City, New Jersey.

Over the past two decades, Major Duque has remained actively involved in the Cuban American community. Former New Jersey Governor Christie Todd Whitman appointed

Major Duque to serve as a member of the "Cuban Task Force" of New Jersey. He has served as Director and Editor of the newspapers "El Cuba Libre" and "La Semana." In addition, he has twice been elected to serve as President of the Union of Former Cuban Political Prisoners.

Beyond his services to the community, Major Duque has been a real estate agent since 1987. He is happily married to Esther, his wife of fifty years.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ricardo Montero Duque for his unflinching commitment to fighting the terror and repression of communism in Cuba, and for his outstanding contributions to the Cuban American community.

PROCUREMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER IMPROVEMENT ACT

**HON. DONALD A. MANZULLO**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 31, 2001*

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, small business participation in government procurement is dropping. While the dollar value of procurement opportunities is relatively constant, the absolute number of small businesses winning government contracts has dramatically decreased over the past four years.

One possible solution to this problem can be to enhance the role of Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs). During the 1980's, Congress created local PTACs around the country to increase small business participation in defense procurement. Modeled after Small Business Development Centers (SDBCs) run by the Small Business Administration (SBA), these centers offer free advice and help to small businesses both in educating them about how to get involved in government procurement and also how to obtain contracts. Most of the PTACs are co-located in a local higher education institution or a Chamber of Commerce. About half of the funding for most of the PTACs comes from the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA). The remainder comes from the state government and/or the local host (i.e., the community college). States currently have a choice: they can either ask for up to \$300,000 to run a state-wide program or regional centers can ask for up to \$150,000 to run a program locally.

Some states have decided to run a state-wide program in order to have continuity of service throughout the state. However, some states do not care and have allowed regional or city PTACs to operate. Currently, 15 states have regional or city PTACs that receive an excess of \$300,000. This penalizes states like my home state of Illinois who have opted for a "good government" solution—a seamless delivery of procurement assistance services throughout the state.

I have introduced the Procurement Technical Assistance Improvement Act to increase the DLA grant match to states that run a state-wide PTAC program so that they would be able to receive up to \$600,000 in funding, double the current level of \$300,000. This

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