

Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvements Act of 2001. This critical legislation makes important improvements in the benefit structure for retired railroad workers, especially for widows and widowers.

In the early 1900's, the rail industry was the nation's largest employer. With record levels of unemployment, the Federal Government decided to provide economic incentives to encourage the retirement of older employees, thereby creating more jobs for younger workers.

"Railroad Retirement" was created to provide retirement benefits beginning in 1936 creating retirement incentive for many older railroad employees who otherwise would not have received Social Security benefits until 1942. This program replaced the private railroad pension plans and began to pay benefits in 1936, based on up to 30 years of past untaxed rail service.

The system is now \$40 billion short of what would be required to pay benefits to all the workers who have yet to retire and their survivors.

Congress has a responsibility to provide railroad retirees and their survivors with increased benefits, as well as making necessary changes to update and modernize the railroad employee benefit system.

To that end, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 10. More than 670,000 retirees and dependents and 245,000 active rail employees will benefit from the improvements made by the Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2001. Please support our nation's railroad workers, rail retirees and spouses by supporting this critical reform package. Vote yes on H.R. 10.

HONORING THE SACRIFICE MADE
BY JOHNNY MICHAEL SPANN

SPEECH OF

HON. TERRY EVERETT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2001

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues in the House and with the residents of my home state of Alabama in paying tribute to an American who gave his life in service to freedom.

Johnny Micheal Spann, a native of Winfield, Alabama and graduate of Auburn University, was the first American killed in the ongoing war against terrorism in Afghanistan.

Spann, who served his country for eight years in the U.S. Marine Corps before working as an intelligence officer in the Central Intelligence Agency, gave his life on November 25 at the young age of 32, leaving behind a wife and three children.

On Monday, he was laid to rest among our country's heroes in Arlington National Cemetery in a service that touched the hearts of all gathered along those hallowed hills overlooking our nation's capital.

"Mike is a hero not because of the way he died, but rather the way he lived," his widow noted. "Mike was prepared to give his life in Afghanistan because he was prepared to give his life every day at home."

I was pleased to join my colleagues in support of H. Con. Res. 281, which passed the House Tuesday, honoring Johnny Micheal Spann. I would like to extend my personal condolences to his wife, Shannon, and his family. America shares both the personal sorrow of your loss and the sense of pride for Mike's courageous and dutiful service to the nation he so loved. May God bless you all.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO SHARON
BANKS

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 12, 2001

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Sharon Banks, Superintendent of the Lansing School District, for being named Michigan's Superintendent of the Year. She was selected by the Michigan Association of School Administration from our state's 600 superintendents for her energy and dedication to the district.

Hired only sixteen months ago to improve the District's substandard test scores and declining enrollment, Ms. Banks has spearheaded significant progress throughout the District. The District lost more than 3,300 students in the 1990's and has struggled to raise their Michigan Educational Assessment Program test scores.

Since arriving, Ms. Banks has launched sweeping initiatives ranging from bolstering literacy programs to keeping kids in school. Enrollment has declined much less than expected with only 30 students leaving the district between 2000-01 and 2001-02, the smallest decrease in more than a decade.

As a result of earning this distinguished award, which will be formally presented at a ceremony in January, Ms. Banks is nominated for the National Superintendent of the Year Award.

Therefore Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Sharon Banks for earning Michigan's Superintendent of the Year.

IN HONOR OF MARGARET FELDER

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 12, 2001

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Margaret Felder in recognition of her commitment to her church and women's leadership activities.

Margaret Felder was born in Lexington County, South Carolina. She is the oldest of six children. At the age of 12, her family moved to Brooklyn. Margaret is a product of the New York City Public School System. She graduated from Clara Barton Vocational High School with a major in nursing. After a short period in the nursing profession, Margaret decided to give up nursing and turn to a career in business. She has worked at Sullivan, Papain, Block, McGarath, and Cannavo P.C.

for the past thirty-three years as an Administrative Assistant.

Margaret is a devoted mother to Stephanie, Claude, Monique, Ebony, her late son, Eliot, daughter-in-law Grace and grandchildren Jean-Pierre and Rayquan. She gives her loving mother, Elaine, a great deal of credit for helping her in this regard. She gives leadership to her family and is aware of the support and love from each of them.

Margaret has been a devoted member of the Berean Baptist Missionary Baptist Church. She is currently active in the Ladies Usher Board, Sunday School secretary, Youth Church Leader, Sisterhood, Summer Day Camp, American Baptist Women ministry, the Bible Institute and the Drama Ministry.

One of her favorite scriptures is Psalm 37:7 "be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him".

Mr. Speaker, Margaret Felder is a loving mother, grandmother and devoted member of the Berean Baptist Missionary Church. As such, she is more than worthy of receiving our recognition today and I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring this truly remarkable spiritual woman.

STATEMENT ON BASIC PILOT
EXTENSION ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2001

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member rises in strong support of H.R. 3030, the Basic Pilot Extension Act of 2001. This Member would like to thank the distinguished gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LATHAM) for introducing the measure and the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER), the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, for his efforts in bringing this measure to the Floor. Additionally, this Member would note that he agreed to co-sponsor H.R. 3030 but was unable to do so under House Rules as the bill had been reported out of the Committee very expeditiously.

Under H.R. 3030, the Basic Pilot Program, which is an employment verification program, would be extended through 2003, as the original authorization expired on November 30, 2001.

Mr. Speaker, the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 correctly prohibited employers from knowingly hiring illegal aliens or people with non-immigrant visas. Unfortunately, at that time, Congress did not give employers the corresponding tools with which to comply with this Act. For example, due to concerns regarding discrimination, employers are limited in the questions they may ask of potential employees to verify if those individuals are authorized to work in the U.S. If the employment verification documents that potential employees produce appear to be legitimate, then employers must accept the documents as legitimate without further inquiry of the potential employee.

During Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) enforcement raids, certain employers