

Global Witness; Rev. Seamus P. Finn, Missionary Oblate Society; Roger Winter, Executive Director, U.S. Committee for Refugees; Rev. Leon Spencer, Washington Office on Africa; Tony Doyle, Mid-South Peace and Justice Center; Maureen Healy, Society of St. Ursula; Kevin George, Friends of Liberia; Thomas Tighe, President and CEO, Direct Relief International; Farshad Rastegar, CEO, Relief International; Barry LaForgia, Executive Director, International Relief Teams.

Keith Wright, Food for the Hungry; Richenda VanLeeuwen, Executive Director, Trickle Up Program; Peter Sage, Program Director, Ananda Marga Universal Relief Teams; Jeffrey Meer, Executive Director, U.S. Association for UNHCR; Ron Mitchell, Sierra Leone Emergency Network; Gay McDougall, Executive Director, International Human Rights Law Group; Lynn McMullen, Executive Director, RESULTS; Dr. Ritchard Mabayo, Chairman, Coalition for Democracy in Sierra Leone; Margaret Zeigler, Deputy Director, Congressional Hunger Center; Alfred L. Marder, President, The Amistad Committee, Inc.; Reverend Alan Thomson, International Liaison, U.S. Peace Council; Carol Fine, Chairman, NGO Committee on Southern Africa; Washington Office, Church of the Brethren; Rachel Crowger, Executive Director, African Law Initiative; American Bar Association.

Peter Vander Muelen, Coordinator for Social Justice and Hunger Action, Christian Reformed Church in North America; Phyllis S. Yingling, U.S. Section Chair, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; Rev. Mark B. Brown, Asst. Director, International Affairs and Human Rights, Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Rev. Phil Reed, Office of Justice and Peace, Missionaries of Africa; Robert Kushen, Executive Director, Doctors of the World; Joel R. Charny, Vice President for Policy, Refugees International; Brian Farenell, Advocacy Director, Friends of Guinea; Merle Bowen, Associate Professor, University of Illinois, William Martin, Professor, Binghamton University, Co-chairs, Association of Concerned Africa Scholars; Clifton Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk, Presbyterian Church (USA); Kathryn Wolford, President, Lutheran World Relief; Randall Robinson, TransAfrica; Daniel Vollman, Africa Research Project.

Mel Foote, President, Constituency for Africa; Pharis Harvey, Executive Director, International Labor Rights Fund; Bass Vanderzalm, President, Northwest Medical Teams, International; Rev. Richard Cizik, Vice President for Governmental Affairs, National Association of Evangelicals; Fr. Rick Ryscavage, S.J., Jesuit Refugee Service/USA; Kathy Thornton, RSM, Network: National Catholic Social Justice Lobby; Yael Martin, Director, Promoting Enduring Peace; Billie Day, Friends of Sierra Leone; Hasit Thanky, Project Officer, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative; Reynold Levy, President, International Rescue Committee; Gail R. Carson, Director, Relief and Food Security Programs, Counterpart International, Inc.;

Paul Montacute, Director, Baptist World Aid of Baptist World Alliance; Dr. Evelyn Mauss, Physicians for Social Responsibility/NYC; Save the Children; Stephen Rickard, Robert F. Kennedy Memorial; Lonnie Turner, Washington Office, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

#### HONORING TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 7, 2001*

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, as we in Texas celebrate Public Schools Week, March 5-9, I wish to recognize the many achievements made by public schools in Texas. At a time when Congress is debating the merits of reforming education in this country, it is important that we recognize the progress that has been made in meeting the goals of our education system and to applaud the dedicated public servants who educate our children. As an educator and a former school board member, I have witnessed first hand the tremendous effort our teachers pour into every class, every hour and every minute with their students, and it is fitting that Texas recognizes their dedication during this special week.

Public schools are the backbone of our education system. Ninety percent of the school age population nationwide attends public schools. A good, quality public education serves not only as a bridge to vast economic opportunities, but also as a foundation for our strong and prosperous democracy. Thanks to the hard work of teachers, counselors and administrators, Texas has made significant strides in its public education system, especially in student achievement.

To continue on this path of success, we must offer more to our students and families than block grants and vouchers, which serve only to redistribute resources inconsistently and damage the democratic foundation of public schools. We must capitalize on our success and increase our efforts to modernize Texas classrooms, maintain a teacher ratio that places students in a personal learning environment with well-trained teachers, and ensure security and safety. The sad events this week in California remind us of the dangers in ignoring students' needs. Therefore, it is important that public schools be given the resources to recruit and retain professional counselors and social workers who not only aid students in their academic planning but also provide support and consultation to those students who may suffer from depression or mental illness. Every child in Texas deserves this and nothing less.

As we chart our course in this new millennium, the education of all Texas children remains vital to our future. Texas Public Schools Week is the perfect opportunity to celebrate our past, our present, and our future.

TRIBUTE TO MS. JOAN KNISS

### HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 7, 2001*

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to Ms. Joan Kniss of Brighton, Colorado, the 2001 Colorado Teacher of the Year. This prestigious recognition is no small honor. This year brought 3,500 teachers throughout the State of Colorado into competition for this prestigious award. Ms. Kniss, I am proud to say, teaches English at Brighton High School which is located within the congressional district I represent.

The Colorado Teacher of the Year Program is Colorado's oldest and most prestigious honors program which recognizes the contributions of the classroom teacher. The nominee must be an exceptionally skilled, dedicated, and knowledgeable classroom teacher. The standards for the award are high. The Colorado Teacher of the Year must inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn, have the respect and admiration of students, parents, and colleagues, play an active and useful role in the community as well as in the school, and demonstrate high levels of academic achievement for their students.

Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt the best teacher in the Great State of Colorado won in 2001. Ms. Kniss began her teaching career in Colorado in 1973 at North Junior High in Brighton, Colorado. For eight years, she worked within the school district on special assignment. Since 1984, she has served as a language arts teacher at Brighton High School. Mr. Speaker, through her many years as an interested teacher, Ms. Kniss has exemplified true dedication to Colorado's children and parents.

Every applicant for Colorado Teacher of the Year must submit an essay. Mr. Speaker, in her essay, Ms. Kniss wrote, "[W]e must focus on partnerships: teachers must be learning partners with their students; teachers must be partners with parents, and teachers must form partnerships with community members." Mr. Speaker, interested parents and teachers produce successful students. Successful teachers, like Ms. Kniss, are those who look to the future knowing the basis for their students' success is a background of solid academics.

Again, today on the floor of the House of Representatives, I say congratulations thank you to Joan Kniss, the 2001 Colorado Teacher of the Year, for her many years of educating Colorado's students.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO PERMIT THE CONSOLIDATION OF LIFE INSURANCE COMPANIES

### HON. PHILIP M. CRANE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 7, 2001*

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing, along with Representatives MATSUI, ENGLISH, LEWIS, BECERRA, RANGEL, WELLER, SAM JOHNSON, COLLINS, RAMSTAD, McNULTY,