

Like many Irish women who grew up in South Boston, Sister Mary Burns is strong and resilient, a person with deep faith and a wicked sense of humor. She is generous of heart and giving to her core. And her work on behalf of disadvantaged women is as impassioned as it is pioneering.

Bushwick was devastated during the riots of the late 1970s, and severe poverty and unemployment continues to plague the neighborhood. MCIF offers residents literacy classes, GED instruction, and job training. Recognizing the desperate need for entry level jobs in the Bushwick area, MCIF initiated an innovative program to create a small clothing factory in the neighborhood to offer low income women employment earning a livable wage, day care services, and the opportunity to attain business development and leadership skills.

MCIF also has a kitchen incubator to help new entrepreneurs develop the skills and experience necessary to launch successful small businesses in the food industry. Similarly, the center is home to a bakery program where local women put their skills to work baking cookies. Sales from these cookies, which on their own are well worth a trip to Bushwick, are used to support the program and compensate the bakers for their hard work—providing a path to economic independence.

These programs serve as an important model on how to strengthen communities one person and one family at a time. And its through the dedication and drive of Sister Mary Burns that the women who enter the doors of MCIF leave believing in themselves, envisioning promising futures, and chartering successful lives for their families.

I am honored to have worked with Sister Mary Burns over the years in advancing the mission of MCIF. Under her guidance, the center has become a critical resource for some, a sanctuary for others, and a source of inspiration for all who witness its extraordinary work. I, along with so many residents of the community, will miss her dearly. But her principles of loving acceptance, unwavering encouragement, and enduring faith are now firmly embedded in the spirit of the community—and families from Bushwick will benefit from her work for generations to come. It is in this light Mr. Speaker, that I ask my House colleagues to join me in honoring the remarkable contributions of Sister Mary Burns and wishing her the best of luck in her future endeavors.

INTRODUCING H.R. 240, WELFARE REFORM REAUTHORIZATION BILL

HON. WALLY HERGER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues in introducing H.R. 240, the Personal Responsibility, Work and Family Promotion Act of 2005. This legislation reauthorizes and strengthens the successful welfare reforms begun in the 1996 welfare reform law (P.L. 104–193). Joining me introducing this legislation are Representatives PRYCE, THOMAS, BOEHNER, BARTON, GOODLATTE, MCKEON, BILIRAKIS, DELAY, SHAW, CANTOR, ENGLISH,

CAMP, NANCY JOHNSON, WELLER, NORWOOD, JOE WILSON and KLINE.

Welfare reform has been a great success in promoting work, ending dependence, and reducing poverty. Millions more low-income parents are working today instead of depending on welfare, offering brighter prospects for their family's future. Since the implementation of welfare reform in 1996, welfare caseloads dropped by more than 50 percent nationwide—leading more than two million families and seven million former recipients to rely on themselves, rather than depend on a check from the government. More than 1 million children have been lifted out of poverty since reform, and poverty rates for black children and children living with single mothers reached—and despite the 2001 recession still remain near—all time lows. Recent reports linked work-based welfare reforms with reduced parental substance abuse (<http://www.affiliatedsystems.com/newest.htm>) and child poverty (http://www.manhattaninstitute.org/html/cr_44.htm).

Still, despite this success nearly 2 million families remain dependent on welfare for support, and relatively few of those parents are working or getting training in skills needed to lift their families out of poverty. That needs to improve. Plus too many families break up or never form, leaving millions of children and parents at risk of welfare dependence in the future.

H.R. 240 as introduced today will help even more low-income parents and families support themselves, including through stepped up efforts to strengthen families and support healthy marriages that are the best environment for raising children. H.R. 240 would extend TANF and related programs through fiscal year 2010, and makes selected changes to promote more work and stronger families, including healthy marriages.

In 2002 and 2003, the U.S. House passed earlier versions of this legislation. However, since the U.S. Senate failed to pass companion legislation, comprehensive welfare reauthorization legislation was not signed into law. Instead, the President signed eight short extensions of current law, the most recent of which expires on March 31, 2005. H.R. 240 as introduced today is an updated version of legislation the House passed in 2002 and 2003, which will serve as the basis for hearings and other consideration during the early days of the 109th Congress.

I look forward to working together with my Republican and Democrat colleagues to craft the best possible welfare reauthorization policy, building on the foundation of the current system and the proposals the House passed in recent years. We will hold hearings to examine features of today's welfare policy that are working, and those that are in need of improvement. In tight budget times, it will take all of our efforts to ensure that welfare reform continues to be successful. As the 1996 reforms have proven, however, we can help more parents work, reduce dependence on government benefits, cut poverty, and still protect taxpayers' interests at the same time. Before 1996, hardly anyone thought we could do all that, and now we have a track record of getting it done. We need to build on that successful record, which H.R. 240 would do.

I encourage all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this important legislation.

TRIBUTE TO BEA WEISBROD

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor and a privilege for me to pay tribute today to one of the most respected community leaders in Dallas, Texas: Bea Weisbrod.

The name Bea Weisbrod has long been associated with excellence and one of our highest standards of civic pride. Bea Weisbrod, on December 5, 2004 received the Bnai Zion's Lifetime service award. Bea is founding member of Bnai Zion-Texas Region and a long-time member of Congregation Shearith Israel. Her many years of community service and dedication to making a difference in the lives of people in our community, as well, as in Israel are truly deserving of our appreciation and praise.

In addition to her professional associations, Bea Weisbrod selflessly devotes her personal time to numerous organizations including the Hadassah where she serves on the regional board.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the Bnai Zion Foundation on its excellent selection of Bea Weisbrod for its lifetime service award, and I wish her sons Les, Carl, and their loving family continued success in all of their endeavors.

I know that Bea Weisbrod will continue to play an important role in our community for decades to come, and that America will continue to benefit from her dedication, service and hard work.

HONORING HOMER CADDELL "CAL" HENDERSON, JR.

HON. JIM DAVIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. DAVIS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Homer Caddell "Cal" Henderson, Jr., who is retiring today after 12 years of loyal service as Sheriff of Hillsborough County, Florida.

Cal dedicated his life to keeping our community safe. At 21, Cal began his law enforcement career in the Tampa Police Department, and he went on to serve the U.S. Border Patrol and the CIA as a national police trainer in Vietnam. In 1969, when Cal returned home to Tampa, he joined the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office.

During his 35 years in the Sheriff's Office, Cal Henderson experienced a period of enormous growth and development in Hillsborough County. The year Cal joined the force, the Sheriff's Office employed 157 deputies serving a mostly rural area. In fact, at that time, Cal was the only deputy working in his region of eastern Hillsborough. Today, as Sheriff Henderson retires, his office employs 1,200 deputies, 950 sworn detention officers and 1,000