their democratically elected leaders, would legally constitute secession. Many of these activities, such as Constitutional reform and popular referenda, are the mainstay of any democracy. Yet the Chinese would use them as a legal excuse for a military attack.

Mr. Speaker, this proposed ''anti-secession'' legislation which the National People's Congress plans to take up in March, is a significant and dangerous development. It goes far beyond the usual bellicose verbal threats of Chinese leaders. It would use Chinese national law as a rationale for military aggression against its democratic neighbor.

The United States, for more than 25 years since the passage of the Taiwan Relations Act, has made clear its determination that the future of Taiwan must be decided only by peaceful means, not by force of arms, and that any final determination must be in accord with the wishes of the people of Taiwan.

These are the fundamental building blocks upon which the future of the Taiwan Strait must rest: peace, and mutual consent between both sides. I urge the leadership of the PRC to put aside this ill-considered law as inimical to both peace and goodwill.

ADMINISTRATION'S BUDGET CUTS TO AMTRAK

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2005

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I wish to discuss the Administration's proposed budget cuts to Amtrak.

I want to be clear from the very beginning: if the Administration's proposed cuts go into effect, Amtrak will not survive. And, in many cases, the millions of people who depend on Amtrak's services will be left with no reliable means of rail transportation. This would result in a serious problem for rail passengers, and represents a tremendous misjudgment by this Administration.

The Administration has made clear its position on Amtrak. The result of their cuts to Amtrak would ''lead to the elimination of operations.'' I am concerned that the ''elimination of operations'' would result in a significant hardship for the people of southern West Virginia, and Amtrak riders everywhere.

Practically speaking, the millions of passengers who depend on Amtrak's services would be stranded. Those who can afford a car or plane ticket would descend on our already heavily congested roads and airports. Those without the means to purchase an airline ticket or pay for the ever-increasing price of gasoline—and those in rural communities without direct access to airline or highway travel—would be left twisting in the wind.

In West Virginia alone, Amtrak served nearly 51,000 passengers in 2004. Two of the largest cities in the 3rd Congressional District, Huntington and Hinton, represent nearly half that total with nearly 24,000 riders. In addition, Amtrak pumped $3.7 million into the state's economy—which helped foster job creation and economic development opportunities for West Virginians. The economic impact of Amtrak on my state, and states throughout the country, cannot be overlooked.

Importantly, Amtrak is making great strides to improve itself from within. Capital investment is up substantially; a new and detailed five-year plan has been developed; unprofitable services have been eliminated; and significant overhauls and needed maintenance operations have been undertaken. And Amtrak's ridership has, and continues to, increase.

I urge this House, this Congress and this Administration to recognize the improvements Amtrak is making, the need Amtrak fills for millions of Americans and the importance of Amtrak on America's transportation infrastructure.

IN MEMORY OF MAGDALENO DUENAS

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2005

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the life of Magdaleno Duenas, a World War II military hero who passed away on February 27 at the age of 90.

We honor and thank him for his courageous military service and the sacrifices he made for our nation, as well as his lifelong struggle on behalf of Filipino veterans of World War II. His life is a symbol of the struggle for total recognition of Filipino veterans and a sad reminder of a shameful page in the history of our nation.

Born and raised in the Philippines, Mr. Duenas joined the 101st Infantry in 1941. In 1943, he joined the guerilla forces in the mountains and was captured by the Japanese while procuring food for American soldiers. Under questioning, Mr. Duenas denied any knowledge of the whereabouts of the American soldiers. He escaped, and helped 10 U.S. soldiers escape the Japanese POW camp.

Mr. Duenas came to the United States to claim his U.S. citizenship and military benefits, and fell into the hands of an abusive landlord in Richmond, Calif. He and 16 other veterans were held in captivity, beaten, chained and fed dog food, while their landlord kept their monthly government checks.

After being rescued, his experience received news coverage. It brought public attention to the plight of elderly Filipino veterans who came to America expecting to receive previously promised veterans' pensions for their honorable U.S. military service, but instead learned that Congress had stripped them of those benefits and recognition.

Thousands of Filipino veterans came to the U.S. seeking equity and have waited 60 years for the promise to be honored. After fighting for more than half a century for their right to U.S. citizenship, other issues related to their health and recognition remain to be addressed. Many live alone in poverty. It is a national tragedy to see our veterans suffer from neglect, despair and hopelessness.

Mr. Duenas moved to San Francisco's Tenderloin district in 1993, where he was vibrant member of our community. This diminutive, gentle man worked tirelessly to improve the experience of Filipino Veterans in the Bay Area.

All these years, he waited for the recognition of the U.S. Government for the services he rendered during WWII. He was featured in two documentaries: Tears of Old and Second Class Citizens. He died still waiting for the full equity bill to be passed by the U.S. Congress. We will not rest until the equity bill becomes law.

Mr. Speaker, we will never forget his struggle on the frontlines of the battlefield and on the frontlines of the fight for equity for Filipino veterans. Mr. Duenas' courage and resolve moves all of us to continue the fight for justice in our country for all people.

We will never forget the sacrifices Mr. Duenas and other Filipino veterans made for our freedom. We must dedicate ourselves as a nation to ensure that America fulfills its moral obligation to those who pay the high price for our freedom.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MUNICIPAL COURT JUDGE JESUS GARZA

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the important contributions of Judge Jesus Garza in Laredo, TX in my Congressional District.

Judge Jesus Garza was born and raised in Laredo. He is a product of LISD and graduated from J.W. Nixon High School in 1977. Upon graduation he enrolled at the University of Texas and earned a Bachelor of Journalism in 1981. In 1984 he received his Doctorate of Jurisprudence from the Thurgood Marshall School of Law in Houston and was licensed to practice law in the State of Texas in 1985.

Judge Garza was appointed Associate Municipal Court Judge in 1984 and served until 1985 at which time he decided to run for Justice of the Peace. He ran a successful campaign and took office in 1986 and served for 6 years.

In 1993 Judge Garza, ''Chuy'' as he is known to his friends, was voted into the newly created Webb County County Court at Law #2 and is presently presiding over his second term.

In 1994 Mayor Saul Ramirez appointed Judge Garza to the Economic Advisory Council and selected Co-Chairman by its members.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have this opportunity to recognize County Court of Law Judge Jesus Garza.

IN HONOR OF MARIA PLASENCIA

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2005

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Maria Plasencia, a

beloved San Diego activist. Maria passed away on February 1, 2005. She is survived by her parents, Alma and Jesse Plasencia of Crown Point, Indiana, and brother, Jesse Jr. of Schererville, Indiana.

If an issue involved equality and social justice, Maria was among the first to rally her fellow feminists. Last April, as an official and activist in the San Diego Democratic Club, she organized a 500–member San Diego delegation that joined the March for Women's Lives in Washington, DC. After organizing San Diego's effort in the March of Women's Lives—which drew about a million people to Washington—Maria was elected to NOW's national board.

To those who knew her, bringing hundreds of San Diegians for the march in Washington, D.C. exemplified her uncompromising beliefs and her ability to galvanize grass-roots support. Her colleagues describe Maria as energetic and passionate about her beliefs. A diabetic, Maria did not let her condition stand in the way of pursuing her interests or from leading an active life.

In her role as an activist and in her job as an auditor for General Electric Commercial Finance, Maria traveled extensively. She enjoyed meeting new people and seeing the country. Cities and small towns alike fascinated Maria, delighting in each one's population and character.

Maria grew up in Crown Point, Indiana. Her father, a steel mill worker, had come to the United States from Mexico as a young man. Maria became the first member of her family to attend college and graduated with a degree in accounting from the University of Dayton.

Her career brought her to San Diego more than a decade ago. A longtime feminist and supporter of NOW, she jumped wholeheartedly into local politics. Through her volunteering, Maria developed contacts that brought her into the San Diego Democratic Club. Called "a staple of the work crew," Maria quickly distinguished herself through her participation. She was elected Chairwoman of the Women's Caucus in 1999 and Executive Vice President in 2001.

Maria has left behind a legacy. The President of the San Diego Democratic Club had the following to say, "As we do things within our club—increasing its diversity, making it more woman-friendly—it will be in no small part due to the memory of Maria. "

Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my deepest sympathy to Maria Plasencia's family by celebrating her life and contributions to the San Diego community. Maria was admired by so many for her dedication to women's issues and the friendly and effective manner she brought to activities. She will be greatly missed.

IN SUPPORT OF PASSENGER RAIL

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2005

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to disagree with the President's proposal to eliminate federal funding for passenger rail. On February 7, President Bush presented a budget proposal to Congress that contained no funding for Amtrak. As explanation, the provision states: "With no subsidies, Amtrak would quickly enter bankruptcy, which would likely lead to the elimination of inefficient operations and the reorganization of the railroad through bankruptcy procedures. Ultimately, a more rational passenger rail system would emerge, with service on routes where there is real ridership demand and support from local governments—such as the Northeast Corridor."

Last year, Amtrak carried 25 million passengers on 22,000 miles of track with approximately 20,000 employees, including close to 2,000 employees based in my state of Delaware. In addition to operating 300 daily intercity trains, close to 850,000 daily rail commuters throughout the country also depend on operating agreements with Amtrak. While the Administration's goal is apparently to improve passenger rail by shutting it down, I surmise that eliminating federal funding for rail transportation would jeopardize the livelihood, and threaten the safety, of millions of riders and thousands of communities who depend on Amtrak.

No country in the world operates an effective passenger rail system without government subsidies. In fact, countries such as Germany and Japan, which have well-developed passenger rail networks but much smaller populations, invest $3–4 billion annually, over 20 percent of their total transportation spending. In contrast, Amtrak's appropriation of $1.217 billion last year equaled only two percent of the Department of Transportation's $59 billion budget.

Directly, or indirectly, the United States subsidizes all our forms of transportation, with rail receiving the least amount by far. Other modes of transportation operate on predominantly federally owned or federally assisted infrastructure, and rely on government-supported security, research, and traffic controllers. The U.S. Transportation Security Administration alone received $5.2 billion in federal funding for security this year, yet Amtrak sustains its own security force. Unlike aviation, highways, and transit, there is no dedicated fund for investing in passenger rail development.

For fiscal year 2005, the Administration proposed $900 million for Amtrak and budgeted $1.4 billion for each year thereafter. It is apparent that the current proposal to cut funding for passenger rail represents a drastic and dangerous turnaround in the President's policy. Seeking no funds for direct Amtrak expenses and ceding control of the railroad to a bankruptcy trustee, whose sole legal responsibility is to Amtrak's creditors, would put the future of rail travel on very uncertain footing.

Furthermore, the proposed budget provides $360 million to continue commuter rail traffic on the Northeast Corridor, but only after Amtrak ceases operations. As some of my colleagues have recognized, the Administration's proposal anticipates a period during which all Amtrak services, including those on the Northeast Corridor, would by stopped. With over 1,700 trains operating over some portion of the Washington-Boston route each day, states would be devastated if forced to handle the disruption and congestion that terminating Amtrak service would trigger.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, while the President's plan undoubtedly includes some recommendations worth considering, the facts are clear; Amtrak needs federal support to survive, just like highways, ports, and airlines. I am one of many Republicans in Congress eager to improve the safety, efficiency, and ridership of passenger rail. Putting Amtrak on the chopping block directly contradicts this goal. Dozens of reform proposals exist without jeopardizing the viability of Amtrak and they should be openly debated in Congress.

H.R. 1042, THE NET WORTH AMENDMENT FOR CREDIT UNION ACT

HON. SPENCER BACHUS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2005

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, earlier today, I, along with 15 of my colleagues introduced H.R. 1042, the Net Worth Amendment For Credit Unions Act. This amendment to Section 216 of the Federal Credit Union Act (12 USC 1790d(0)(2)(A)) redefines the term "net worth" for Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) purposes for credit unions. This legislation is needed in order to avoid an unintended consequence caused by an accounting change that the Financial Accounting Standards Board ("FASB") is about to promulgate, requiring credit unions to utilize the "purchase method" of accounting rather than the "pooling of interests" method of accounting to account for credit union mergers.

This amendment does not affect accounting practices; credit unions will be required to use the "purchase method" of accounting for mergers in order to receive a clean audit. It should be noted that FASB itself has stated that it sees no problem with the amendment from an accounting perspective. The legislation does not grant credit unions that currently lack the authority to offer alternative capital accounts the authority to do so, nor does it confer upon the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA) the regulatory authority or discretion to authorize such accounts now or in the future. This amendment is intended to address a narrow and technical accounting issue and in the process simply maintain the status quo so that, in the case of merging credit unions, 2 + 2 can continue to equal 4.

Currently, under the "pooling of interests" method of accounting, if a credit union with $2 million in retained earnings merges with another credit union with $2 million in retained earnings, the surviving credit union has $4 million in retained earnings: 2 + 2 = 4. In the absence of this amendment, when the "purchase method" of accounting becomes mandatory for credit union mergers, if a credit union with $2 million in retained earnings merges with another credit union with $2 million in retained earnings, the surviving credit union will only have $2 million in retained earnings: 2 + 2 = 2! That inequitable conclusion results from the fact that the Federal Credit Union Act defines the "net worth" of a federally-insured credit union as "GAAP retained earnings" and under Generally Accepted Accounting Principles when utilizing the "purchase method" of accounting only $2 million would be categorized