

City. The State further noted that the area's escalating commerce in the farm industry also attributed to the cause for incorporation. Agriculture, still today, remains the area's largest economic resource.

Through the years, the community has dramatically evolved. In the 1930s and 40s West Branch grew its recreational attractions by establishing Trout Festivals and Alpine Ski facilities as well as promoting its suitability for hunting, fishing and agriculture. In the 1950s and 60s the City focused on highway and land development that brought the most famous highway in the state, I-75, directly through their emerging community. During the 70s, 80s and 90s the city experienced an economic boom and acquired two industrial parks. One of the parks was bestowed a "smiley-face" water tower, which is now the trademark of the City. The other, eventually became home to Tolfree Memorial Hospital, West Branch Regional Medical Center and the state-of-the-art Seaton Cancer Center.

The West Branch of today, with a population of 1,924, serves as the County seat for Ogemaw County. This fast growing community's expanding commerce, with its own Community Airport and bustling outdoor shopping mall contrasts the Victorian downtown that embraced its rich history during their recent streetscape enhancement.

Mr. Speaker, I can personally attest to the broadly shared opinion that West Branch is a warm and welcoming community. When the city was added to my new district after the 2000 census I held an open house for my district office there in order to get to know my new constituents. I was impressed by the thoughtful questions of the people who attended and was touched by their welcome to me as their new Representative.

Since then, I've held a healthcare forum in West Branch, visited with the West Branch Area Business and Professional Women's Club and even had the honor of throwing the first pitch at the West Branch Little League games. I continue to be very proud to represent the fine community of West Branch in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the United States House of Representatives to join me in congratulating the City of West Branch and its residents on their first 100 years and in wishing them well through the next century.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. LEE TERRY**

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 8, 2005*

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, March 3, 2005, I missed the vote on final passage of H.R. 841, the Continuity in Representation Act, rollcall 52. Because it was announced earlier that this vote would be conducted as a voice vote, I immediately left the House floor following the vote on the motion to recommit, so that I could make a flight to my District. Later in the day, I learned Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD demanded a recorded vote on the question of passage of the bill.

Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on the final passage of H.R. 841.

EXPRESSING CONCERN ABOUT CHINA'S PROPOSED ANTI-SECESSION LAW

**HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN**

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 8, 2005*

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concern about reports of China's intention to pass an anti-secession law, which appears to permit China to punish Taiwan for what it perceives to be movements toward independence or separatist sentiments. At a time when we should be encouraging greater cross-strait cooperation, this effort by the Chinese could further heighten tensions and possibly move the region toward armed conflict.

When I traveled to Taiwan last year, I saw a vibrant democracy, a strong economy, and citizens appreciative of their high standard of living and ability to enjoy basic human rights. Most importantly, I met people who want to engage in the world community. Yet, the anti-secession law would permit China to decide for itself what constitutes an independence movement in Taiwan. Such carte blanche authority would be chilling in Taiwan, which has supported civil liberties and free speech rights.

I hope that Chinese leaders will use their better judgment and abandon this ill-conceived plan. We, as Americans, must do what we can to promote peace and cooperation across the Taiwan Strait. Despite our commitments in Iraq and elsewhere, we must remain engaged in this matter. Our silence could be interpreted as tacit permission for China to escalate its rhetoric and possibly initiate action against Taiwan, with whom the U.S. has a strong relationship. We must encourage our friends in Beijing to build on their history of cooperative efforts with Taiwan, economically and culturally, to enhance their relationship. I know the people of Taiwan look forward to greater engagement with the mainland and a peaceful coexistence with their Chinese brothers and sisters.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL PEACE CORPS WEEK

**HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 8, 2005*

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 44th anniversary of the Peace Corps and to celebrate National Peace Corps Week, which ran from February 28 to March 6, 2005.

Last week, we honored Peace Corps Volunteers for their dedicated work in promoting world peace and friendship across the globe. In an era where global interdependence and camaraderie has become increasingly important, the Peace Corps plays an integral role in connecting individuals from different countries, races, and creeds.

Since the inception of the Peace Corps on March 1, 1961, over 178,000 volunteers have served in 138 countries. Currently, there are more than 7,700 Peace Corps volunteers

serving in 72 countries around the world—the highest number of volunteers in the field in the past 29 years. Peace Corps volunteers are quite a diverse group, serving as teachers, information technology consultants, youth and agriculture workers, health and HIV/AIDS educators, and business advisors.

I am proud to say that the 5th Congressional District of New York currently has 12 of its own as Peace Corps volunteers. They are, in alphabetical order and followed by the countries in which they serve: Kimberly A. Beers, Dominican Republic; Ling-Yun Chen, Turkmenistan; Michael E. Garris, Armenia; Seth B. Gazes, El Salvador; Melissa Gonzalez, Costa Rica; Orlando Gonzalez, Costa Rica; Amy Y. Han, Uzbekistan; Grace E. Lee, Madagascar; Pei-Zei Lin, Burkina Faso; Erin C. McNally, Turkmenistan; Richard Z. Mo, Paraguay; Debbie Nip, Moldova.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to please join me in honoring all of the past and present Peace Corps volunteers who selflessly serve abroad, empowering individuals in developing countries and spreading their message of world peace and friendship. These fine men and women have committed years of their lives to helping total strangers and to making our world a better and friendlier place. We salute your unselfish acts.

RECOGNITION OF DR. DONALD F. AVERILL FOR THE HARRY BUTTIMER DISTINGUISHED ADMINISTRATOR AWARD

**HON. JOE BACA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 8, 2005*

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to give recognition to Dr. Donald F. Averill, Chancellor of the San Bernardino Community College District for receiving the Harry Buttmer Distinguished Administrative Award. It is my honor to recognize Dr. Averill's leadership, dedication, extensive educational background, and his academic and administrative merits to the faculty and students of the State of California.

Dr. Averill earned his doctoral degree in Educational Management from the University of La Verne. He has contributed great efforts to vocational education and educational development through teaching and administration. In addition to his 40 years of experience as professor and administrator, Dr. Averill has also served his tenure of service as Superintendent and President of Palo Verde College, President of the California Association of Occupational Administrators, Chair of the Occupational Education Coalition, Chair of a Legislative Oversight Committee on Contract Education, Chair of the Southern 30's Human Resources Exchange, and Chair of the Association of California Community College Administrators (ACCCA) Human Resources Commission.