

La Grange Park, especially with sixth grade art classes in developing an annual Art Legacy Project. She believes that "Young women today—and young men, for that matter—need to value themselves and be aware of their self-worth. They need to respect themselves and have the courage to walk away from wrong choices."

Ms. Schey represents the highest level of community service. She has lent her time and talents to several organizations including: the American Legion Robert E. Coulter Post Ladies Auxiliary; the Girl Scouts; the Countryside Women's Club; the Parent and Community Network; and she coordinated a drive to supply American troops in Iraq with a few comfort items, like sun block. Ms. Schey also finds time to serve as a part-time director of the St. Cletus School After Care Program. She tells young women that "You need to have faith, confidence and trust in yourself. Keep yourself informed by reading, use of the Internet and staying aware of what is going on around you."

Mr. Speaker, I salute these three Women of Distinction, and give them my best wishes for continued success as role models for our young people.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 10, 2005

Ms. HERSETH. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I was unable to participate in votes on the floor of the House of Representatives on March 8 and 9, 2005. I was absent to attend the funeral of a relative back in South Dakota. I submit this statement today to establish for the record how I would have voted had I been present for these votes.

On March 8, 2005, the House of Representatives held three votes.

The first vote held was on approval of House Journal. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on that question.

The second vote was on a motion to suspend the rules and agree to the H.R. 133, a resolution providing funds for continuing expenses of standing and select committees of the House of Representatives during the month of April, 2005. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on that question.

The final vote was on motion to suspend the rules and agree to the H.R. 122, a resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the study of languages and supporting the designation of a Year of Languages. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on that question.

On March 9, 2005, the House of Representatives held five votes.

The first vote held was roll No. 56 on an amendment by Mr. CONAWAY which would have exempted commercial motor vehicle operators working in field operations for the natural gas and oil industry from Federal hours-of-service rules. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on that question.

The second vote held was roll No. 57, on an amendment by Mr. MORAN of Kansas to ex-

pand the types of agricultural commodities covered by the bill's exemption from the 2003 hours-of-service regulations to include livestock, food, feed, fiber and other farm products. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on that question.

The third vote held was roll No. 58, on an amendment by Mr. OSBORNE of Nebraska that would grant the State of Nebraska the authority to harmonize its vehicle length limits with those of surrounding states during the grain harvest season. I strongly support this amendment and, had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on that question.

The fourth vote was roll No. 59, on an amendment by Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota that would have prevented States and localities from collecting tolls on exiting highways. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on that question.

The fifth vote was roll No. 60, on an amendment by Mr. GRAVES that would have eliminated "vicarious liability" language under certain State laws for motor vehicle rental and leasing companies. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on that question.

COMMEMORATING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WOMEN'S CENTER OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA AND WASHINGTON, DC—ANNUAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 10, 2005

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate The Women's Center of Northern Virginia and Washington DC on the 20th anniversary of its Annual Leadership Conference.

The Women's Center, which celebrated its 30th anniversary last year, has been a resource for women in the workplace from its beginnings. The Center's first conference in 1985 was titled "On the Job Issues for Working Women." Held at the Vienna Community Center, the conference addressed four related areas of professional development: career strategy; development of management skills; networking and mentoring; and work relationships. It was at this event that the Center's hallmark program, The Information and Career Advisory Network (ICAN) was introduced. ICAN makes a customized network of professionals available to each of its participants. As the number of women in management positions grew, so, too, did the scope of the Annual Conference. Recent titles included "The Global Community of Women," "The Economic Equity of Women," "Caregiving in a Time of Change," and "Women Leaders, Changing the Dynamic." With this year's Conference, "Women in Leadership: Your Success Portfolio," the Women's Center continues its legacy of relevance and diversity by addressing the multiple definitions of and opportunities for leadership now available to women.

As the scope and size of the Annual Leadership Conference grew, so did the services of The Women's Center. Founded as a coun-

seling and educational organization in 1974, the Center now offers a wide range of services and programs addressing the psychological, career, financial and legal issues of women and families. Counseling services, including group therapy and support groups, are now offered to women, couples, families and children. The Center's Information and Referral Service, which acts as a resource gateway for local human service issues, handles about 25,000 calls a year. The Center provides over 50,000 hours of direct client services annually, with approximately 75% at reduced or no fee.

In 2004 The Women's Center was named Non-profit Organization of the Year by the Vienna-Tyson Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Also in 2004 The Women's Center opened an appropriations-funded, Washington, DC location. This location focuses on psychotherapy/counseling and career-related services. Bilingual, reduced and no-fee services are provided to clients through partnerships with 12 social and human service agencies located throughout the District. The Women's Center is currently serving as the central support organization of the DC Cash Campaign, an initiative providing free tax preparation and asset-building services to the residents of Wards 5, 7 and 8 in the District.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I congratulate The Women's Center on its comprehensive range of services and unique contribution to the community. On the occasion of this 20th Annual Leadership Conference, I ask my colleagues to join me in acknowledging this outstanding and distinguished organization.

BLACK HISTORY TRIBUTE TO AURELIA JONES-TAYLOR

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 10, 2005

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize outstanding African Americans of the 2nd Congressional District of Mississippi, and their contribution to Black History. The 23 counties of the 2nd District are well represented from both a local and national perspective.

Americans have recognized Black History annually since 1926, first as "Negro History Week" and later as "Black History Month." In fact, Black History had barely begun to be studied—or even documented—when the tradition originated. Although blacks have been in America as far back as colonial times, it was not until the 20th century that they gained a presence in our history books.

Though scarcely documented in history books, if at all, the crucial role African Americans have played in the development of our Nation must not be overlooked.

I would like to recognize Aurelia Jones-Taylor of Coahoma County. In 1989, Ms. Taylor met the challenge to journey to Clarksdale, Coahoma County, MS to assume the position of Executive Director for the Aaron E. Henry Community Health Services Center, Inc. after completion of her training for a community health center director at John-Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland.

Upon her arrival, the center, founded in 1979, was operating on a \$190,000 grant. It had lost several Federal grants, the books were in bad shape, many of the staff had left and there were numbers of other administrative problems. The Clarksdale office had closed, only leaving the Tunica office functioning with limited services on limited funding. Ms. Taylor's first task was to build a strong, cooperative management team with good skills. Secondly, she had to develop proposals and write grants to fund the diverse programs needed to serve the community.

Today, the Aaron E. Henry Community Health Services Center, Inc., operates clinically in six counties from 10 sites (to include school-based clinics and a mobile medical unit) with over 150 employees on a \$10M budget. Among those facilities are two new structures—one erected in 1995 in Tunica, MS—approximately 5,900 square feet and the newest facility in Clarksdale, MS—approximately 12,000 square feet.

In addition, Aurelia has built a rural general public transportation program under the name Delta Area Rural Transit System in seven rural Northwest MS Delta counties generating over 207,000 trips per year. These services include employee work routes, TANF eligible work-activity services, elderly and disabled human needs services, healthcare non-emergency transit, mental health work activity, shopping and other social services needs.

I take great pride in recognizing and paying tribute to this outstanding African American of the 2nd Congressional District of Mississippi who deserves mention, not only in the month of February but year round.

#### BILLS TO ASSIST ABANDONED HARDROCK MINES RECLAMATION

**HON. MARK UDALL**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 10, 2005*

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today I am again introducing legislation designed to help promote the cleanup of abandoned and inactive hardrock mines that are a menace to the environment and public health throughout the country, but especially in the west. I introduced a bill aimed at that result in the 107th Congress, and in the 108th introduced a revised version that incorporated a number of changes developed in consultation with interested parties, including representatives of the Western Governors' Association, the hardrock mining industry, and environmental groups.

Today, I am introducing two separate but complementary bills that together include the provisions of the bill I introduced in the 108th Congress. This two-bill approach reflects the fact that while the Resources Committee has jurisdiction over the proposed funding legislation, the provisions dealing with liability fall within the responsibility of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. In other words, while the one-bill approach had the virtue of being comprehensive, the two-bill approach may facilitate Congressional action. But it remains the fact that both bills are equally necessary for a complete response to the problem.

The background: For over one hundred years, miners and prospectors have searched for and developed valuable "hardrock" minerals—gold, silver, copper, molybdenum, and others. Hardrock mining has played a key role in the history of Colorado and other states, and the resulting mineral wealth has been an important aspect of our economy and the development of essential products. However, as all westerners know, this history has too often been marked by a series of "boom" times followed by a "bust" when mines were no longer profitable. When these busts came, too often the miners would abandon their workings and move on, seeking riches over the next mountain. The resulting legacy of unsafe open mine shafts and acid mine drainages can be seen throughout the country and especially on the western public lands where mineral development was encouraged to help settle our region.

The problems: The problems caused by abandoned and inactive mines are very real and very large—including acidic water draining from old tunnels, heavy metals leaching into streams killing fish and tainting water supplies, open vertical mine shafts, dangerous highwalls, large open pits, waste rock piles that are unsightly and dangerous, and hazardous dilapidated structures.

And, unfortunately, many of our current environmental laws, designed to mitigate the impact from operating hardrock mines, are of limited effectiveness when applied to abandoned and inactive mines. As a result, many of these old mines go on polluting streams and rivers and potentially risking the health of people who live nearby or downstream.

Obstacles to cleanups: Right now there are two serious obstacles to progress. One is a serious lack of funds for cleaning up sites for which no private person or entity can be held liable. The other obstacle is legal. While the Clean Water Act is one of the most effective and important of our environmental laws, as applied it can mean that someone undertaking to clean up an abandoned or inactive mine will be exposed to the same liability that would apply to a party responsible for creating the site's problems in the first place. As a result, would-be "good Samaritans" understandably have been unwilling to volunteer their services to clean up abandoned and inactive mines.

Unless these fiscal and legal obstacles are overcome, often the only route to clean up abandoned mines will be to place them on the nation's Superfund list. Colorado has experience with that approach, so Coloradans know that while it can be effective it also has shortcomings. For one thing, just being placed on the Superfund list does not guarantee prompt cleanup. The site will have to get in line behind other listed sites and await the availability of financial resources. In addition, as many communities within or near Superfund sites know, listing an area on the Superfund list can create concerns about stigmatizing an area and potentially harming nearby property values.

We need to develop an alternative approach that will mean we are not left only with the options of doing nothing or creating additional Superfund sites—because while in some cases the Superfund approach may make the most sense, in many others there could be a

more direct and effective way to remedy the problem.

Western Governors want action: The Governors of our western States have recognized the need for action to address this serious problem. The Western Governors' Association has several times adopted resolutions on the subject, such as the one of June, 2004 entitled "Cleaning Up Abandoned Mines" sponsored by Governor Bill Owens of Colorado along with Governor Bill Richardson of New Mexico and Governor Kenny Guinn of Nevada.

Outline of the two bills: My two bills are based directly on those recommendations by the Western Governors. One addresses the lack of resources, while the other deals with the liability risks to those doing cleanups.

Bill to provide funds for cleanups: To help fund cleanup projects, one bill—entitled the "Abandoned Hardrock Mines Reclamation Funding Act"—would create a reclamation fund paid for by a modest fee applied to existing hardrock mining operations. The fund would be used by the Secretary of the Interior to assist projects to reclaim and restore lands and waters adversely affected by abandoned or inactive hardrock mines.

A similar method already exists to fund cleanup of abandoned coal mines. The Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA) provides for fees on coal production. Those fees are deposited into the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund and used to fund reclamation of sites that had been mined for coal and then abandoned before enactment of SMCRA. Similarly, my bill provides for fees on mineral production from producing hardrock mines.

In developing this bill, I have followed the lead of a 1999 resolution of the Western Governors Association. That resolution notes that "While society has benefited broadly from the metal mining industry, problems created by some abandoned mine lands [are] a significant national concern. . . [and] industry can play an important role in the resolution of these problems through funding mechanisms" as well as in other ways.

In accord with that suggestion, the bill provides for fees on producing hardrock mines on federal lands or lands that were federal before issuance of a mining-law patent. Fees would be paid to the Secretary of the Interior and would be deposited in a new Abandoned Minerals Mine Reclamation Fund in the U.S. Treasury. Money in that fund would earn interest and would be available for reclamation of abandoned hardrock mines and associated sites.

In developing the bill, I decided that a one-fee-fits-all approach would not be fair. Instead, the bill provides for only modest fees and a sliding scale based on the ability of mines to pay.

Mines Exempt From Fees—To begin with, the bill would entirely exempt mines with gross proceeds of less than \$500,000 per year. That means many—probably most—small operations, such as Alaskan prospectors working individual placer claims, will not be liable for any fees.

Calculation of Fees—For more lucrative mines, fees would be based on the ratio of net proceeds to gross proceeds. If a mine's net