

return, and to the families of those who will not.

That said, we should find a way to express our condolences for the large number of Iraqis incarcerated, tortured, incapacitated, or killed in recent years. This may seem a difficult gesture to many Americans. It may strike them as weak, or as a slur on our patriotism. Americans do not like to admit that they have done wrong. We take comfort in the notion that whatever the mistakes of the war and occupation, we have done Iraq a great service by ridding it of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship. Perhaps we have, but in the process many people's lives have been disrupted, damaged, or senselessly ended. A simple gesture of conciliation would go a long way toward shifting our relationship with Iraq from one of occupation to one of friendship. It would be a gesture without cost but of immense and everlasting value—and would do more to assuage the sense of hurt in the world than all of the actions above.

HONORING HOWARD HANFT

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 29, 2006

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a constituent of mine who has dedicated significant personal time towards helping mentor and lead young people in his community. Howard Hanft, or "Howie" as he is known locally, has led the West Branch Little League for 21 years.

As President of the West Branch Little League, Howie has helped grow the league tremendously. Today, the league serves 588 Ogemaw County youngsters who play on 46 teams. Under his leadership, the league has built five new fields, bringing the total number of fields to seven. Five of those fields are under lights and groomed with irrigation, which speaks to the sophisticated care the league puts into its fields for the players.

Howie's efforts to build a world class little league program have yielded big results for the West Branch Little League. In 2005, West Branch sent four teams to the state championship finals—two teams of girls and two teams of boys. The boys' senior league clinched the state title and finished second in the national regional playoffs, one game away from the Little League World Series. This year, the same team won the state championship and the regional playoffs qualifying them to play in the Big League World Series in Easley, South Carolina. At the end of the World Series, Howie's team was ranked 11th in the world, truly an astounding accomplishment. What is equally impressive is that this group of young men won the state championship in a division that generally has 17–18-year-olds. Howie's team is comprised of 16–17-year-olds.

I congratulate Howie and his players: Pete Jackson, Troy Lambert, Rickie Dodridge, Curtis Lyons, Kyle Wangler, Matt Faiman, Calvin Page, Aaron Kihn, Ryan Bragg, Robbie Goulette, Kyle Weber, Anthony Betancourt and Mike Noffsinger. I also salute the team's manager Mark Weber and coaches Mark Dodridge, Sr., Mark Dodridge, Jr. and Mike Noffsinger, Sr.

However, Howie's record of success goes beyond wins and losses. Thanks to the superior facilities that were built under Howie's leadership, West Branch had the honor of hosting the minor-league state tournament for 9- and 10-year-old boys last year. In hosting the tournament, West Branch organized major parties and giant picnics for teams visiting across the state. Some have described the celebrations that Howie organizes in conjunction with tournaments as a "carnival." As several local residents in West Branch have noted, Howie's hard work benefits not only the local little league players, but also the West Branch area economy.

Howie's deep connection to the sport of baseball goes back to his childhood. When he was only 8 years old, Howie began playing little league baseball. During high school, Howie umpired younger kids while also working as a game announcer. Howie took a break during his freshman year of college from coaching and umpiring. However, every year after that, he returned to coach and assist whenever he was needed.

In 1988, Howie became President of the West Branch Little League. The West Branch community has benefited from his leadership, commitment and passion for baseball ever since. Running a baseball program with nearly 600 participants is both labor-intensive and expensive. Howie has therefore had to spend a great deal of time raising money and recruiting volunteers. All of the money and manpower that Howie is able to marshal comes from the local community. In many ways, Howie's efforts have helped rally the West Branch community together, engaging local citizens and local businesses to support the town's baseball tradition.

Mr. Speaker, little league baseball is a uniquely American tradition. For over 100 years, American towns, villages and communities have come together during the summer to watch young people partake in America's pastime. Howard Hanft has helped continue and strengthen that great tradition in part of my district. I ask the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in congratulating and thanking him for these accomplishments.

THE KIKA DE LA GARZA
COURTHOUSE

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 29, 2006

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleague from Texas, Mr. DOGGETT, for his work in getting the McAllen courthouse named for my dear friend, our former colleague, Kika de la Garza.

It is fitting that after a long and distinguished career as a lawmaker, the McAllen courthouse, which dispenses justice in the Rio Grande Valley, will bear the name of the former Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee. Kika de la Garza was instrumental in passing many of the laws under which many people will be judged.

The former Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee is a son of South Texas

and a man who understood completely the unique culture of the Rio Grande Valley and the culture of Capitol Hill.

While his expertise was in agriculture, Chairman de la Garza made a legendary lesson of how food was integral to our military warfighters. He famously asked the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee so long ago, "How long can a submarine stay under water?"

After listening to a long and detailed discourse on the capabilities of submarines from the Armed Services Committee Chairman, Chairman de la Garza responded, "That's not right, sir. A sub can only stay under water as long as the food supply lasts."

Kika de la Garza is a giant in the history of the United States Congress, of South Texas and in the hearts of all of those of us who know and love him. It is a fitting tribute that this courthouse will bear the name of Kika de la Garza.

BATTLE AGAINST ILLEGAL DRUG
TRADE

HON. GREG WALDEN

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 29, 2006

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with you my pride and deep gratitude for a group of people who have truly made a difference in our battle against the illegal drug trade that threatens the very fabric of American society.

As you know, Mexican drug cartels have recently been operating large scale marijuana growing and processing operations in our National Forests, National Parks, and Bureau of Land Management lands. Growing marijuana and conducting illegal drug activities on our public lands is nothing new. What is new is the extremely large scale of the operations, the heavily armed growers, and the aggressive resistance toward law enforcement. With assault rifles and booby traps, these criminals, the majority of whom are in this country illegally, are fearlessly intent on protecting a collective enterprise that grosses billions of dollars each year. They have made parts of our public lands, traditionally used for recreation and hunting, unsafe to visit.

Because of sophisticated growing techniques which employ drip irrigation, chemical fertilizers, and lethal pesticide compounds, these operations inflict serious damage on the environment. Furthermore, these operations are intertwined with the trade and manufacture of other illegal drugs such as meth, heroin, cocaine, and ecstasy.

Mr. Speaker, these criminal operations are attracted to public lands not only because of their remote locations, but also because our federal land agencies have very small law enforcement forces. They were never designed to combat crime on such a massive scale. Who then can draw a powerful line in the sand and both force the invading cartels away from our public lands and protect the public from them and the scourge of drugs they produce?

In my district, this challenge has been taken up by a coalition of local law enforcement professionals who have voluntarily formed task

forces large enough to disrupt these enormous operations and send a message that such criminal activity will not be tolerated. They have let the cartels know with certainty that they will pay dearly if they operate in our back yard.

To challenge such a formidable criminal enterprise, it takes intelligence, bravery, and an unselfish sense of purpose. I have witnessed all of those characteristics displayed in exemplary fashion in southern Oregon and northern California. In the past few weeks, a task force of over 175 people and 19 agencies, led by Jackson County Sheriff Mike Winters and Siskiyou County Sheriff Rick Riggins, dealt a telling blow on the cartels' illicit activities on our public lands.

In a series of well-timed and meticulously executed raids on both sides of the Oregon/California border, this amazing group of dedicated individuals eradicated 27.6 tons of marijuana from our public lands in a matter of a few days! They removed well over \$320,000,000 from the drug trade and forcefully sent the message to the cartels that they will not be able to do business as usual in southern Oregon and northern California.

Mr. Speaker, it is not hard to imagine the work and commitment involved in assembling so many able and dedicated people from municipal, county, state, and federal agencies. With no single law enforcement agency large enough to handle the task, these dedicated law enforcement professionals and volunteers formed to combat a common enemy that was dealing massive amounts of drugs and creating mayhem on our forest landscape. Driven by sense of duty, respect for the law, and a commitment to protect the public, they got the job done.

Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, I am very proud and appreciative of what these outstanding people have done for us. I know that all of my colleagues join me today in saluting their stellar performance. We are honored to extend to them the gratitude of our entire nation.

Please join me in congratulating these agencies and individuals for a job well done. We owe them so much for their sacrifice and dedication.

Jackson County Sheriffs Office, Jackson County Search and Rescue, Jackson County Narcotics Enforcement Team (JACNET), Siskiyou County Sheriffs Office S.W.A.T., Douglas County Sheriffs Office D.I.N.T., Klamath Falls Police Department S.W.A.T., Josephine County Sheriffs Office, Shady Cove Police Department, Bureau of Land Management, Law Enforcement Section, United States Forest Service, Law Enforcement Section, Oregon State Police, SWAT and MRT Units, US Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.), Drug Enforcement Agency, Medford Office, Federal Bureau of Investigation, S.W.A.T., Portland Police Bureau, S.W.A.T., Jackson County Fire District #3, and Oregon Department of Forestry.

PERRY PARKS

HON. DIANE E. WATSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 29, 2006

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, it is with much sadness that I rise today to announce the passing of my very good friend and colleague, Perry Conrade Parks, Jr.

Perry Parks was born in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1908, to Professors Perry C. Parks, Sr. and Sophia Parker Parks on the campus of Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia. The family moved to East Chicago, Indiana, where Perry attended school.

Perry Parks later attended Tennessee State College and transferred to Wiley College in Marshall, Texas where he lettered in four sports (football, basketball, track, and tennis) and graduated in 1934.

After graduation he joined his family in Los Angeles and took a job as a social worker for the California State Relief Administration. Soon after establishing himself in California, he married his college sweetheart, Artemisia Stilwell.

Perry Parks later worked for the Federal Postal Service, from 1936 to 1971. He was a founding member of the United Public Workers CIO, as well as an organizer of the National Alliance of Postal Workers. He was in the forefront of the struggle to implement a merit system in employee evaluations and promotions. He was also a champion of equal opportunity for women.

He filed the first successful anti-discrimination claim against the Los Angeles Post Master for failure to promote him to Supervisor. His discrimination claim paved the way for equal employment opportunities for people of color, leading to the appointment of the first African-American Post Master in Los Angeles.

Perry was an ardent warrior in the pursuit of fairness, inclusion, and representation in the civic process. He stood on the front line of the civil rights movement in the 1960s as an early organizer of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Southern California. Mr. Parks served as Vice President of the Barrio Defense Committee, President of the South Central Welfare Planning Council, and a board member of the Los Angeles Urban League and United Civil Rights Committee. He was a founding member of the Brotherhood Crusade.

After his retirement, Perry Parks continued to serve his community as Field Representative for Congresswoman Yvonne B. Burke and Assemblywoman Teresa Hughes.

Perry Parks was a proud army veteran of World War II and a devoted member of Holman United Methodist Church. He is survived by his two sons, Perry C. Parks III and Henry Stilwell Parks; his two sisters, Lucy Hamilton and Carrie Jones, all of Los Angeles; his grandsons, Perry C. Parks IV of Atlanta, Georgia, and Oren Callan Jeffries of Los Angeles; nieces Patricia Parks White, Frances Jones Taylor, Muriel Jones Parker of Los Angeles and a host of other devoted relatives and friends.

HONORING MR. GERALD (JERRY) BELANGER

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 29, 2006

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an educator in my district who has done laudable work to ignite a new sense of patriotism among his students.

Mr. Gerald (Jerry) Belanger serves as the principal of Gaylord Middle School. He has led a distinguished career in education. Mr. Belanger's first job in the field was as a school teacher in a preschool classroom. While his stint as a preschool teacher was short lived—lasting only 3 weeks—he was at least admired by his students for his guitar-playing ability.

Mr. Belanger then moved into a direction better suited to his abilities. He taught 6th grade for 5 years at Pearson Elementary School in inner city Flint before becoming the assistant principal and ultimately the principal of Gaylord Middle School.

It was at Gaylord Middle School that he began the current middle school Veteran's Day program. For the past 10 years, on every Veteran's Day, the Gaylord Middle School and its student council have organized a tribute to America's veterans. The day begins with a morning reception in the school cafeteria, followed by a program in the school gymnasium where students and faculty honor the sacrifices of America's veterans. Mr. Belanger has worked hard to ensure that veterans in the community attend the event so that his students have an in person opportunity to demonstrate their appreciation for veterans' sacrifice. When the tribute began 10 years ago, 20 veterans participated. Today, as many as 200 veterans attend the Veteran's Day event. By encouraging his students to host this tribute, Mr. Belanger has helped draw the Gaylord community together, while also helping to inspire patriotism in each class of students that passes through Gaylord Middle School.

Mr. Belanger also makes patriotism a daily priority at Gaylord Middle School. Through the daily Pledge of Allegiance, playing of the national anthem and events throughout the year, Mr. Belanger has worked to instill respect, love and loyalty to our country among the young people attending his school.

Mr. Belanger is a fine example of how ordinary citizens can demonstrate exceptional patriotism in their community. Although Jerry never served in the armed forces, his father, Frank, served in the National Guard during the Cuban Missile Crisis and two of his uncles were in the Army Reserve during that difficult part of our Nation's history. Another of Mr. Belanger's uncles served with U.S. Marine Corps for 4 years. These family members instilled in him a deep love of history and government and a profound sense of pride and respect for all of our nation's military men and women.

Now that he is married with a 3-year-old son, you will often see Jerry with his son Patrick at local Memorial Day and Veterans Day celebrations, seeking to pass on to his own son the same pride and deep respect for the armed forces and the same love of country.