

not yet part of the euro zone, which currently consists of 16 EU nations.) As a dynamic member of NATO, Bulgaria is a valued partner of America.

Bulgaria is on track to be the only EU nation to balance its 2010 budget. The country was able to manage its budget by instituting key fiscal strategies. The most basic example was the capital city's ability to freeze wages and pensions for those in the government, re-evaluate costly state investment projects, and slash government spending by 15 percent. Such efforts resulted in a "full-year deficit of less than 500 million lev (\$370 million), or 0.8 percent of gross domestic product. The closest country to do so was Germany with 3.4 percent.

Given the international attention to Bulgaria's fiscal strategy, European leaders will now understand Bulgaria has arrived on the world stage. Continuing economic progress could help Bulgaria leapfrog other euro desiring countries, like Romania and Hungary who had to be given bailouts from the International Monetary Fund, IMF, due to the downturn, whereas Bulgaria has not and does not intend to ask the IMF for assistance. Even Poland, who has been rethinking their entering the euro currency nations club, may be outpaced by Bulgaria as a currency member nation.

Bulgaria's decision to tackle the difficult issue of spending and budget deficits, which plagued their country in the past, is now a model for other Baltic states where deficits are rising. Further evidence of their success is the credit-rating agency Standard & Poor's has upgraded Bulgaria's status as stable.

I commend Prime Minister Borisov and Finance Minister Simeon Djankov for their visionary work elevating Bulgaria as a major player in the EU and world. Entry into the euro zone should be given serious consideration by the EU as a result of these major achievements.

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND CHARLES
ALLEN

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, Reverend Charles L. Allen, Sr., Pastor of the Greater Mount Nebo Missionary Baptist Church, is retiring after thirty-two years of dedicated service. I am pleased to join his parishioners in thanking Reverend Allen for his devoted service to his church and community.

Reverend Allen has served in many capacities throughout his years in the ministry. Among the many positions Reverend Allen has held are President of the Puritan District Congress of Texas and advisor to the City-wide Ushers Association. Reverend Allen also taught Moody Bible College courses to his parishioners and other interested members of the community. Reverend Allen served in the United States Army from 1952 until 1954.

Under Reverend Allen's leadership, Greater Mount Nebo experienced a tremendous increase in membership. Reverend Allen helped ensure Greater Mount Nebo had sufficient re-

sources to construct a new edifice and retire the church's mortgage. Reverend Allen also helped his congregation, and the entire community, by organizing a variety of education courses.

Reverend Allen's parishioners benefited not just from his teachings, but from his personal example. Reverend Allen treats everyone who crosses his path with integrity and compassion. The vitality and warmth exhibited by this spiritual and dedicated leader has earned him the respect and admiration of those individuals who have been privileged to know and work with him.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join the congregation of Greater Mount Nebo Missionary Baptist Church in thanking Reverend Charles L. Allen, Sr., for all he has done to better the lives of his parishioners.

A RESOLUTION "CELEBRATING
THE LIFE AND WORK OF DR.
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DUR-
ING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE STEVIE WONDER SONG
TRIBUTE TO DR. KING, 'HAPPY
BIRTHDAY,' AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES"

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, today I rise to introduce a resolution celebrating the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the 30th anniversary of the Stevie Wonder song tribute to Dr. King, "Happy Birthday." Joining me in this effort is the gentleman from Georgia, JOHN LEWIS, and I would like to acknowledge him at this time.

For over 40 years, we have commemorated the life and work of our nation's greatest civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Since 1986, we have recognized Dr. King with a Federal holiday in his honor—a holiday that I worked hard to achieve. As we approach this year's King Holiday, which coincides with the 30th anniversary of Stevie Wonder's song tribute to Dr. King, "Happy Birthday," I am honored to introduce this resolution for a few reasons.

First, we celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. for pursuing a dream of equality that made our nation a more free and just society. In his short life, Dr. King laid the foundation for a society that could live up to the ideal that "all men are created equal." It is on the shoulders of Dr. King and others at the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement, that we are here today, able to acknowledge that much of Dr. King's dream has been realized.

Our 44th President, President Barack Obama, is a testament to Dr. King's pursuit and struggle for equality. At his Inauguration, President Obama acknowledged that he was a product of Dr. King's legacy, when he expressed that the historic day be explained by "why men and women and children of every race and every faith can join in celebration across this magnificent Mall, and why a man whose father less than sixty years ago might

not have been served at a local restaurant can now stand before you to take a most sacred oath."

Second, we are able to commemorate the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the third Monday in January every year because of the commitment to continue Dr. King's legacy by people like Stevie Wonder. Stevie Wonder's 1980 song tribute to Dr. King, "Happy Birthday," became a rallying cry for those supporting the campaign to honor Dr. King with a Federal holiday. It was that song that led to the collection of 6 million signatures in support of a Federal holiday that Stevie Wonder and Coretta Scott King presented to Congressional Leadership in 1982.

After legislation providing for a Federal holiday in honor of Dr. King had been enacted in 1983, and was first observed in 1986, it was Stevie Wonder that headlined a concert during that first official commemoration of Dr. King. Significantly, Stevie Wonder's work to advance the legacy of Dr. King did not end here. Mr. Wonder went on to address such racial and social ills as apartheid in South Africa, famine in Africa, and the AIDS epidemic.

Finally, I introduce this resolution commemorating the life and work of Dr. King during this 30th anniversary of "Happy Birthday" because, while the legacy of Dr. King lives on in Stevie Wonder and so many of us, we must realize that we still have work to do to live up to the ideal that "all men are created equal." Advancing Dr. King's mission of equality means eliminating the disparities that exist in so many aspects of our society, like healthcare, housing, employment, and education. Advancing Dr. King's mission of peace means encouraging our nation to be a peaceful democracy.

Therefore, it is with this resolution that I ask the people of the United States to renew pledges to advance those principles and actions that are consistent with Dr. King's dream, those principles of equality, freedom, peace, courage, and compassion. Let us allow Dr. King to live on in each of us, not just on the third Monday in January, but every day.

INTRODUCTION OF THE LIFELONG
IMPROVEMENTS IN FOOD AND
EXERCISE ACT (LIFE)

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today, as we come close to the enactment of historic health care legislation, I introduce the Lifelong Improvements in Food and Exercise Act (LIFE), authorizing a national initiative to attack a major health problem in the United States that cannot be remedied through the health care system alone. Growing problems of overweight and obesity are now found in Americans of every age, race, and major demographic group, and threaten the health of Americans like no other single disease or condition does. In fact, the key to eliminating many of the most serious health conditions is reducing overweight and obesity. The LIFE bill would provide \$25 million in funding to the