HONORING OLIVE BEASLEY

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 1999

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I come before you today with a heavy heart, as I stand here to recognize the lifetime achievements of a woman who gave much to her family and her community, in the name of equal rights for all. On May 21, the Beasley family, local officials, civic leaders, and members of the Flint, Michigan, community will gather to honor the memory of Ms. Olive Beasley of Flint, who died May 13.

Olive Beasley was born in Chicago, and upon moving to Michigan, worked for the NAACP, where she was an integral part in the campaign in favor of Michigan's Fair Employment Act. She was later transferred to Flint, in the 1960's, and began a tenure with the Michigan Civil Rights Commission. Olive rose through the ranks, and for 16 years, headed the Civil Rights Commission's Flint office. During that time, she also began a long lasting partnership with the Flint Civil Service Commission. In fact, Olive was the Civil Service Commisison's longest serving member. Her tireless and selfless efforts to ensure that each and every person received the same opportunities for success made her known as one of the area's most staunch advocates, and in many eyes, Olive was indeed the mother of Flint's civil rights movement.

Olive was a steadfast member of the Flint community, and constantly served as a role model and counselor for people throughout the city, including many city officials, who turned to her for advice and insight. Many of Flint's most prominent public servants credit their involvement in politics and activism to Olive's influence. Her dedication to civil rights extended beyond the Civil Rights Commission, as she became a member and served on the boards of such groups as the Urban League of Flint, the Urban Coalition of Greater Flint, the Legal Aid Society, and the advisory board of WFUM, the public television station of the University of Michigan-Flint.

Mr. Speaker, the Flint area, as well as the entire state of Michigan has lost one of its strongest advocates for civil rights. Olive Beasley will always be remembered as a giant person in the community. The respect she commanded from everyone she came into contact with was tremendous. My sincerest condolences go out to her family. She will be sorely missed.

CONGRATULATING THE SUMMIT SCHOOL ON BEING NAMED A BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 1999

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize The Summit School of Edgewater, Maryland on being named a 1998–1999 Blue Ribbon School by the United States Department of Education.

This is a special honor because The Summit School is a special institution. They strive for excellence and they have achieved that goal. The non-profit private school was created ten years ago to promote literacy among children ages 6 to 15 with unique educational needs. They opened their doors in 1989 with 25 students and now have 104 students representing six Maryland counties and the District of Columbia.

The Summit School's mission is to leave no room for failure. The teachers foster an environment where success is an attainable personal goal for each and every student. The School houses a media center, an extensive collection of books, films, tapes and computers with Internet access. In addition to their classrooms, the school has transformed a barn into intimate reading rooms. Their record of achievement thus far is reflective of their dedication to the needs of their students; since The Summit School's creation, seventy percent of the students increased their reading scores by three or more grade levels in 4 years or less. Seventy-five percent of all eighth grade graduates go on to attend public and private schools with only limited support but great success.

Mr. Speaker, The Summit School is one of those great success stories which are often overlooked. the hard working teachers and students of The Summit School have earned the right to be called ''A Blue Ribbon School.'' The Blue Ribbon Award is given to schools which display qualities of excellence, high quality teaching and up-to-date curriculum. The Summit school embodies all of these qualities and more.

The school motto, ''Teachers of Excellence'' guides the educators in this institution as they work hard to bring out the best in their students. Teachers conduct lengthy staff meetings on a regular basis to address individual student's needs. They also undergo year-round training to constantly enhance their teaching skills.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have The Summit School in my Congressional District. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the teachers, parents, students and community members who have made this school an institution that should serve as a model for schools around the state and throughout the country.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MSPA CLARIFICATION ACT OF 1999

HON. CHARLES T. CANADY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 1999

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, America's farming community plays a vital role in the prosperity of the nation. Our growers are facing tremendous challenges as the world economy changes—changes in international competition, environmental stewardship, and providing for the nutritional needs of the planet's growing population. Given these pressures, farmers should not have to contend with government agencies that overstep regulatory boundaries set by Congress. Unfortunately, this is precisely what is happening.

Agriculture is a labor-intensive industry, particularly during the planting and harvesting seasons. This is especially true for specialty crops such as citrus, vegetables, apples, and peaches, which are grown in many different regions of the country. Temporary and migrant workers are critical to meeting the need for farm labor. Congress, through the Migrant and Seasonal Workers Protection Act (MSPA) and other initiatives, created a national standard to ensure safe working conditions for these workers and entrusted enforcement of these laws and regulations, primarily with the Department of Labor.

The need for effective migrant worker protections is well recognized; however, current federal policies are placing an unfair burden upon agricultural employers. In 1997, the Department of Labor issued a new interpretation of the joint employer rule found in MSPA that holds farmers to a stricter standard than other employers. The new regulation is written so broadly that virtually any grower can be classified as a joint employer for liability purposes. This is in spite of several court rulings that struck down the Department's attempts to interpret the joint employer rule in such a fashion. Because the new guidelines would apply to MSPA alone, only agriculture employers are subject to them. This action, combined with overlapping housing regulations, Department of Labor initiatives to classify year-round employees as seasonal workers, onerous federal transportation insurance requirements, and other policies are selectively punitive and unfair to agriculture.

The MSPA Clarification Act, which I am introducing today, seeks to ease the inequitable burden on farmers. The bill would restore the original definition of joint employer and make other common sense changes in the regulatory structure governing agricultural labor. It would clarify that farm workers who enter into voluntary carpool arrangements should not be classified by the Department of Labor as licensed farm labor contractors in violation of MSPA; grant farmers a 10-day grace period in which they may correct MSPA violations; streamline worker housing regulations; and require federal investigators to confer with growers prior to entering the farm operation.

The MSPA Clarification Act does not weaken or do away with the basic protections afforded to migrant workers under MSPA. It merely seeks to provide for a reasonable relationship between growers and the government by returning to the original intent of Congress for MSPA. The legislation is supported by the American Farm Bureau Federation and other agricultural groups from around the country. It has the bipartisan support of many in Congress. I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure a safe and productive farm workplace through this important piece of legislation.

CAPTAIN DONALD E. PETERS, USN

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 1999

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great American warrior, Captain Donald E. Peters, of the United States Navy.

Captain Peters will end his 30 year career with the Navy on May 28, 1999, a career that has included a host of commands. Most notably for South Texas, one of those commands included the Mine Warfare Center of Excellence at Naval Station Ingleside (NSI) on the Bay of Corpus Christi.