the Director for Military Construction and later Director for Revolving Funds. The quality of his work has been recognized by every Administration he has served, and he has received civil service awards too numerous to mention. Among the more significant, he has received the Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Service, the Secretary of Defense Medal for Meritorious Civilian Service, and the Vice President's National Performance Review Award.

Bill Coonce has served six Secretaries of Defense and six Department Comptrollers, as their key advisor on a range of budget issues. His recommendations on a wide range of vital issues were constantly sought and greatly helped the Department robustly defend the funding requirements that support U.S. forces and missions. He has a significant reputation as a budget-cutter across a wide range of national programs. Year in and year out, his wise counsel and sound advice produced the best possible, yet fiscally responsible, spending plans to satisfy the nation's national security needs.

Mr. Coonce brought exceptional insight and skill to the many diverse challenges presented to and undertaken by him. He displayed outstanding skills as a manager of budget analysts, inspiring work that was of the highest quality. He has been the Department of Defense's expert in budgeting for Military Construction, Base Realignment and Closure actions, Intelligence Community requirements, and the logistics infrastructure programs. On an extraordinary number of occasions, his sage advice assured the adoption of sound spending decisions that supported major Defense programs while remaining consistent with the President's priorities and prevailing perspectives in the Congress. His comprehensive knowledge and exceptional skills were immensely invaluable to a whole generation of Department of Defense leaders, to our Armed Forces, and to U.S. national security.

The senior U.S. leaders, both in the Congress and in the Defense Department, benefited enormously from his extensive knowledge, exceptional dedication, and wise judgment. His contributions and public service allowed the leaders of our nation to make the wisest possible allocation of declining defense resources while maintaining America's security. Mr. Coonce is retiring from a career of singular merit and has earned the profound gratitude of the American people.

A TRIBUTE TO MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER BETTY ANN KRAHNKE

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 6, 2000

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I pay tribute to an outstanding citizen and public servant of Montgomery County, MD. I praise the courage and determination of Montgomery County Councilmember Betty Ann Krahnke. She has served with distinction for many years, both in and out of public office. Betty Ann Krahnke is a role model for our community, and our Nation.

I am extremely proud of Betty Ann's integrity, commitment, and legislative contributions, particularly on behalf of domestic violence victims. She has spearheaded cell phone programs for domestic violence victims and convinced the State of Maryland to implement an automated victim notification program in Montgomery County. For her leadership on victims' rights issues, Betty Ann has received the 1998 Governor's Victim Assistance Award and the 1998 leadership award from the Montgomery County Against Domestic Abuse task force. In addition, the Montgomery County Civic Federation awarded its most prestigious award, the Distinguished Public Service Citation, to Betty Ann.

During her current battle with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Betty Ann has shown tremendous stamina and strength of character. She and her family have exhibited incredible bravery during this most difficult time. I have watched Betty Ann with inspiration as she continued her unfaltering commitment to Montgomery County. I praise her determination to keep making positive contributions to her community.

I have admired Betty Ann for many years as a leader and public servant, and most importantly, as a friend. I send my heartfelt appreciation for her hard work and dedicated service.

CELEBRATING THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA CONSULATE GENERAL IN LOS ANGELES

HON. JAMES E. ROGAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 6, 2000

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, representing the Republic of Armenia proudly in the western United States is the Consulate General, in Los Angeles—not far from my home district.

In honor of the consulate's fifth anniversary in Los Angeles, I ask my colleagues here today to join me in saluting not just this accomplishment, but the freedom this nation has cherished for nearly a decade.

There is indeed a freedom in Armenia to which I can attest. Not long ago, I spent nearly a week in Armenia. And I am proud to say that the spirit of democracy we hold so dear in the United States has taken an equally deep root in the Republic of Armenia.

Despite cultural and political annihilation at the hands of the Ottoman Turks, the Armenian people today thrive at home and abroad. Armenian-Americans have contributed greatly to our community while maintaining a strong cultural heritage. I am especially proud to claim the same home district as the largest population of Armenians in America.

Representing this community, and the Republic is the Consulate General in Los Angeles. The professional staff in this office is responsible for consular and diplomatic affairs—acting as liaison between the Republic and governments at the local, state, and national level. Their efforts guarantee that Armenia will continue to thrive: leading the region in the growth of industry, education, the arts and technology.

Mr. Speaker, five short years ago, the Republic of Armenia established a diplomatic foundation in Los Angeles, reaching out to the surrounding Armenian-American community and the public. This work was led by the Honorable Armen Baibourtian who is now serving as the Deputy Foreign Minister in Yerevan, the Armenian Capital. His successor, The Honorable Armen Melkonian is following in this tradition, proudly representing the Republic of Armenia in the United States. I am proud not just to call these two leaders colleagues, but to call them friends.

I ask my colleagues here today to join me along with the Armenian-American community in celebration of the Consulate General's fifth anniversary in Los Angeles, and in tribute to Armenia's decade of freedom. Let us work to keep the light of freedom lit in Armenia and around the globe.

SUPPORT OF H.R. 5, THE SENIOR CITIZENS' FREEDOM TO WORK ACT OF 1999

HON. MAX SANDLIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 6, 2000

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5, the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 1999. This legislation will finally repeal the outdated and unreasonable Social Security earnings limit that has penalized seniors for working beyond the age of 65 by reducing their monthly Social Security benefit. H.R. 5 is good for America's seniors and good for the economy.

The Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act is about basic fairness. There are numerous reasons seniors may choose to continue working past the age of 65. Many seniors would like to retire but have to continue working simply to make ends meet. It is outrageous that the government penalizes these individuals for trying to support their most basic needs. Other seniors may continue to work simply for the pleasure and pride they take in contributing a lifetime's worth of skills and knowledge to their chosen profession. The government should not deprive industry of this dedicated, skilled, and resourceful population of workers. Regardless of the reason, America's seniors deserve the benefits they earn whether or not they choose to continue working beyond the national retirement age.

I became a cosponsor of H.R. 5 last year because I feel so strongly about the merits of this legislation. According to the Social Security Administration, over 800,000 seniors lose part or all of their Social Security benefits because of the earnings limit. With the retirement of the massive baby boom generation fast-approaching, the number of seniors affected by this penalty will increase significantly over the next decade. Today, we have the opportunity to prevent that injustice.

Mr. Speaker, my district has the good fortune of holding a large population of hard-working senior citizens who stand to benefit from the repeal of the Social Security earnings limit. The communities and businesses in the First Congressional District of Texas stand to benefit as well. Retaining skilled retirees is important in meeting today's workforce needs, and Congress needs to eliminate the very real financial disincentive seniors face if they want to continue working beyond retirement age. This is a win-win situation and deserves the full support of this Congress. I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 5 to end the earnings penalty once and for all.