Independent Insurance Agents (MWAIIA), and her colleagues across the country.

Bebe was elected to IIABA's Executive Committee in October 1998 and was honored by her peers when they named her President-elect last fall in New Orleans.

Bebe's service to her peers began with her involvement with the Metropolitan Washington Association. She served as MWAIIA's president and as the organization's representative to IIABA's National Board of State Directors. In recognition of her outstanding service, MWAIIA named her its 1991 Agent of the Year.

In addition to her position on the IIABA Executive Committee, Bebe also serves as a member of the Association's Large Agents & Brokers Roundtable.

Her other industry volunteer work includes service as a member of the D.C. Society of CPCU's Board of Directors and the Standard & Poor's Agent Advisory Council, and chairman of the CNA Branch PACER Agent Panel and the Southern Agents Conference.

Among Bebe's community involvement is service as a member of Howard University's Scholarship Committee.

I am proud of Bebe's professional and community service accomplishments and know she will serve her fellow agents with distinction and strong leadership to further the worthy and noble cause of independent insurance agents and brokers. I bid her a successful year as president of the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America. I wish her all the best as IIABA President. Congratulations Bebe!

THE NATIONAL MINORITY MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES ACT

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 5, 2003

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be joined by my colleague, JOHN CONYERS, Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee, to introduce The National Minority Media Opportunities Act. And I want to thank Senator KENNEDY for his leadership on this issue and for introducing the companion bill in the Senate.

This bill would require the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to hold public hearings, with notice and opportunity to comment, before approving the transfer of a license for a station serving a minority-language audience. It also requires the FCC to report to Congress on issues involving the concentration of ownership and control of minority-language broadcast media and the effects of excessive concentration on competition and diversity in these minority-language markets.

The need for this bill has become crystal clear as Chairman Powell continues to try to ram through a huge Spanish-language media merger between Univision and HBC, with no opportunity for public input, with no public deliberation, and with no regard for the impact this mega-merger will have on Hispanic consumers or the Spanish-language media market.

The Third Circuit Court of Appeals has stayed the FCC's new Media Ownership rules, which Chairman Powell has espoused as providing more protection for minority consumers. So why is it that he is now ramming through a decision on the Univision/HBC merger under the old rules, with no public hearings, and without even a public vote? The only obvious explanation seems to lie in an analysis of political contributions filed with the Federal Election Commission (FEC). Otherwise, there is simply no reason to rush this controversial merger through without adequate public review and without a public vote by the FCC.

The Congress has spoken on the Media Ownership rules, voting to repeal portions of the rule. And now the Congress has spoken on the process by which this ill-advised merger is being considered.

Chairman Powell and the Republican Commissioners owe us some explanations. They owe Congress an explanation of why they have disregarded our requests for openness and public accountability in their decision-making process. They owe the Hispanic community an explanation of why they insist on approving a mega-merger that could have serious consequences for the diversity of information they receive. And they owe the general public an explanation of why they have made the decisions they have made, without any opportunity for meaningful public input and without even a public vote on the issue.

Chairman Powell, you owe it to the Hispanic community to protect our interests. If you're not going to do that, then—at the very least—you owe us an explanation of why you've deserted us.

IN MEMORY OF MR. PAUL SHEPARD

HON. MARY BONO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 5, 2003

Mrs. BONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of a beloved member of the Palm Springs community and a dear friend, Mr. Paul Shepard.

This tragic, untimely and unexpected loss will impact not only those who knew and loved Paul, but also, the entire desert community. Paul was one of those rare and precious individuals who truly made a difference in the lives of those who were fortunate enough to meet him, and even some who never had that pleasure. He was a leader in the fight against AIDS, an accomplished real estate professional, a dedicated athlete and an active supporter of numerous charitable causes and service organizations.

Of course, words alone cannot describe the joy that one felt when sharing time with Paul. His warmth and encouraging nature were instantly conveyed when he would greet you with a smile and hug. A remarkably thoughtful person, Paul always seemed to make everyone feel that he was completely focused on their interests, whether in personal or business relationships.

As one of the Coachella Valley's most respected and successful Realtors, Paul Shepard achieved the kind of professional stature that many aspire to but few attain. During his career, he was selected by his peers to serve several times as Director and President of the Palm Springs Board of Realtors. In addition, he was named ''Realtor of the Year'' and served also as the Director for the California Association of Realtors and the National Association of Realtors.

However, his business success was only one facet of this talented man. Paul used his abilities to help those in our community who were truly in need. He was an active member of the Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce for more than 25 years, served as a member of the City's Parks and Recreation Committee, and on the Steve Chase Humanitarian Awards Gala Committee, and was an integral part of the Steve Chase Program Committee's yearly success.

But, perhaps the one organization that was closest to his heart was the Desert AIDS Project in Palm Springs. Paul was a tireless and passionate advocate for this worthy organization that daily makes lives better for those afflicted with this most challenging disease. As a testament to his commitment to this organization, the Desert AIDS Project has established a special fund in his name. I can think of few tributes that would be more fitting.

I also want to express my condolences and recognize those that Paul loved; his life partner of 25 years, Daniel C. Hall, his mother, Jane Andrews, and sister, Jackie Cadell, and two brothers, Thom and Steve Shepard, along with his stepfather, Gordon Andrews.

Mr. Speaker, today I stand in honor of my friend Paul Shepard. The sadness I feel when I reflect on his passing is softened only by the great respect I have for the legacy he leaves after a life fully lived. I yield back the balance of my time.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 5, 2003

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained during rollcall vote 475. Had I been present, I would have voted ''aye.''

PERSONEL EXPLANATION

HON. WILLIAM J. JEFFERSON

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 5, 2003

Mr. JEFFERSON. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, July 25, 2003, I was unavoidably detained and missed Rollcall vote No. 445, final passage vote on H.R. 2427, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to promulgate regulations for the reimportation of prescription drugs, and for other purposes. If I had voted, I would have voted ''no.''

AUTOMOBILE LEASE PROTECTIONS UNDER THE SOLDIERS AND SAILORS CIVIL RELIEF ACT

HON. STEVE BUYER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 5, 2003

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker. Today I am introducing legislation that will add automobile