MY COMMITMENT TO AMERICA'S FUTURE

As I helped my grandma pack my grandpa's belongings, I spotted an old, familiar shirt that Grandpa had loved to wear. I picked up the shirt, pressed my face into its folds, and breathed deeply. It smelled of mothballs, coffee beans, and Grandpa. Suddenly, all the emotions I had been fighting to contain all day welled up inside of me and threatened to seep out in the form of tears. I pressed the shirt tighter against my face. How I missed this wonderful man. I could hardly walk a step through my grandparent's house without being reminded of some memory. I remembered Grandpa cheering me on enthusiastically as I played baseball in the backyard. I remembered my excitement when Grandpa taught me how to build sand tunnels on the beach. But of all the memories, my fondest were those spent sitting next to Grandpa in his big chair, listening to his stories. For some reason, the stories that most captivated me were of my grandpa's escapades fighting in the Korean War. It astounded me that, not only had my grandpa wanted to fight, he even lied about his eye problem so that he could join the conflict. I asked him once why he didn't just stay home where it was safe. His answer was profound and has never left me. He stated simply, ''Honey, I owe such a great debt to this country for the freedom and opportunities she has given me. My father was born in Norway and my mother was born in Ireland. They came here to provide a better life for me. I wanted to do my part to make sure that those same freedoms and opportunities I have been blessed with, were available for my children and grandchildren to enjoy.''

My grandpa, as well as so many other dedicated men and women who fought for our country, completely embody to me the quote by Thomas Paine which states, ''If there be trouble, let it be in my day, that my child may have peace.'' My generation would not have been able to enjoy so many of the opportunities, privileges, and peaceful times in our day had our forefathers not made a commitment to preserve them in theirs. Just as so many battles have been fought in the past to preserve America's future, today we are still fighting for the same reason. However, the battles we fight on a daily basis are of a different kind. Sometimes they've even so subtle that we don't eves recognize our foes.

The youth of today are under constant bombardment from many such disguised enemies. From the many harmful images portrayed by the media, to the dangerous substances readily available from our peers, it is evident that daily life for the average teenager has become a battleground. Yet the youth of today are destined to become the leaders of tomorrow. If we are to successfully carry on the bright torch of freedom, then we must prepare ourselves today. We need to be an active member of our community by becoming involved in community service, activities, or programs. We need to be aware of the world around us, so that we will be able to make educated decisions when we enter the voting pool. It is also very important to pursue a quality education, so that we will be able to find success and have A stronger voice in the decisions we make. We must ready ourselves to step forth and overcome the challenges that will inevitably face us. For after all, as Wycleaf Jean stated, ''We must be the change that we wish to see in the world.''

I am like my grandpa in that I too owe such a great debt to my country. My grandpa was given opportunities that his parents never had, and he used every opportunity to its utmost and then gave back by serving his country and improving the lives of his fellowmen. I have even more privileges, freedoms, and opportunities because of the path previously paved by my grandpa. I enjoy luxuries he never did. I have time and resources he never had. By following my grandpa's example and by using my opportunities to be the best I can be, I will be prepared to serve my country in various capacities, to have a greater influence for good on those around me, and to show my commitment to America's future. I will not let the sacrifices of our forefathers be in vain.

I will show my gratitude for the sacrifices made by my grandpa, along with so many other great men and women, by taking advantage of the many privileges given to me. These privileges came at a very dear price, paid for with pain, blood, and even human lives. By taking advantage of the many opportunities I have been given, just as my Grandpa, I too will be able to preserve the many freedoms and opportunities that I have been blessed with for my children and all future generations to enjoy.

DR. DOROTHY I. HEIGHT—A SALUTE ON HER 92ND BIRTHDAY

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 29, 2004

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute one of the major leaders of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's, Dr. Dorothy I. Height, as she celebrates her 92nd birthday. As an African-American teacher and social activist, Dr. Height has secured her place in American society as a true liberator of black America.

Born on March 24, 1912, in Richmond, Virginia, she was educated in the public school system in Rankin, Pennsylvania. Dr. Height established herself at a very early age as a student with exceptional oratorical skills. Those skills earned her a scholarship to New York University where she received her bachelor's and master's in 4 years.

Dr. Height began her career working as a caseworker with the New York City Welfare Department. At the age of 25 she became a volunteer with the National Council of Negro Women while working simultaneously with the National Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). Dr. Height developed leadership-training activities for volunteers and staff, and developed programs to promote interracial education.

In 1957 Dr. Height was named President of the Council of Negro Women, a position she held until 1997. While serving as President she worked closely with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Roy Wilkins, Whitney Young, and A. Philip Randolph. She encouraged President Dwight D. Eisenhower to desegregate schools and President Lyndon B. Johnson to appoint African American women to positions in government.

As one of the major leaders of the Civil Rights Movement Dr. Height held many important positions such as being appointed as a consultant on African affairs to the secretary of state, and serving on the President's Committee on the Employment of the Handicapped.

Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan recently appointed Dr. Height to the Advisory Council of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and by President Bush to the National Advisory Council on Aging.

Dr. Height received a number of awards for her outstanding contributions, including: Woman of the Year from Ladies Home Journal (1974), induction into The National Women's Hall of Fame (1993), Springarn Medal from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (1993), William L. Dawson Award for ''decades of public service to people of color and particularly women'' from the Congressional Black Caucus, Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Clinton, and holds honorary degrees from more than 20 universities, including Harvard, Howard, Princeton, and Tuskegee Institute.

At the height of nearly 70 years of service Dr. Height is the author of a new book: ''Open Wide The Freedom Gates: A Memoir.'' She continues to promote the importance of unity in black family life by organizing the Black Family Reunion Celebration, which continues to preserve the traditional values of the African-American family. Dr. Height is still active socially and professionally and serves as President Emeritus of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW).

IN TRIBUTE OF GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 29, 2004

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 183rd anniversary of Greek Independence Day.

On March 25, 1821, the people of Greece rose up against the oppressive rule of the Ottoman Turks. For 8 years, the Greeks struggled for freedom and democratic self-governance until their independence was secured in 1829. The success of this struggle—after almost 400 years of Turkish domination—demonstrates the remarkable ability of human beings to overcome enormous obstacles in the path to freedom.

The United States and Greece share a deep commitment to democracy and rule of law. American political thought was influenced just as much by Greek philosophy as the Greek revolution of 1821 was inspired by the American fight for freedom in 1776. In fact, Greek intellectuals used the U.S. Constitution as the basis for the constitution they drafted in the 1820s.

The common struggles of our countries have forged a bond that spans the generations. The friendship between the United States and Greece is based on a common heritage and shared values. Greece has stood by the United States as a steadfast ally during World War II, the Korean War, the Cold War, the Persian Gulf War, and now, the war on terrorism.

The citizens of Greece are preparing to host the 2004 Olympic Games, an honor that holds particular historical significance. Beginning in 776 B.C., the Olympic Games were held in the valley of Olympia in Greece every four years for almost 1200 years.

The modern Olympic Games were created by Baron Pierre de Coubertin and inspired by

the ancient games. First staged in 1896 in Athens, the games attracted about 245 athletes to participate in 43 events. At the Sydney 2000 Games, more than 10,000 athletes took part in 300 events.

The Olympic Movement has survived wars, boycotts and terrorism to become a symbol of the ability of the people of all nations to come together in peace and friendship. And in 2004, the games return to their birthplace.

The Greek Government has made tremendous progress in recent months to improve the security infrastructure for the upcoming games and wish them the best as they prepare for the challenge of hosting the world's premiere athletic event.

I represent a large and active Greek-American community, and I have been proud to support U.S. participation in negotiations over Cyprus, the fight for freedom and human rights for all Cypriots, the inclusion of Greece in the Visa Waiver Pilot Program, and the presentation of the Congressional Gold Medal to His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew.

I congratulate the people of Greece on the anniversary of their independence, and I look forward to working together with Greek-Americans and the Greek Government on issues of mutual interest in the years ahead.

HONORING KASEY MILLISKI

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 29, 2004

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to honor and pay tribute to Kasey Milliski upon her nomination as a Jefferson Award finalist. Ms. Milliski is a volunteer at the Ronald McDonald House Charities. The Ronald McDonald House provides a ''home-away-from-home'' for families of children being treated at nearby hospitals, and she has dedicated herself to helping many Delaware families in need.

Ms. Milliski's passion for volunteer work was born out of her own personal hardhships. In turn, she continues to reach out to sick children and their families with kindness and compassion. Ms. Milliski's simple approach to helping others is genuine and has a profound impact on many.

Mr. Speaker, I commend and congratulate Ms. Milliski upon her nomination as a finalist for the Jefferson Award. She is truly worthy of this honor.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. NEIL ABERCROMBIE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 29, 2004

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, on March 25, 2004, because of my leave of absence, I was unable to vote on legislation. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

Rollcall 84, Previous Question on H. Con. Res. 393, ''no'';

Rollcall 85, H.R. 3786, allowing the Treasury to print documents for foreign governments, ''yes'';

Rollcall 86, H.R. 2993, Extend the Commemorative Coin Act, ''yes'';

Rollcall 87, H.R. 254, North American Development Bank, ''yes'';

Rollcall 88, H. Con. Res. 393, Budget Resolution, Congressional Black Caucus Substitute, ''no'';

Rollcall 89, H. Con. Res. 393, Stenholm/Blue Dog Substitute, ''yes'';

Rollcall 90, H. Con. Res. 393, Spratt/Democratic Substitute, ''yes'';

Rollcall 91, H. Con. Res. 393, H. Con. Res. 393, Final Passage, ''no'';

Rollcall 92, H.R. 3095, Allowing Local Officials to Order the Lowering of the U.S. Flag to Honor Deaths of Current or Past Local Government Employees, ''yes''.

HONORING MRS. NANCY O'CONNOR OF BUENA VISTA, COLORADO

HON. BOB BEAUPREZ

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 29, 2004

Mr. BEAUPREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a woman of great spirit and integrity.

Mrs. Nancy O'Connor has been a friend of mine for many years. She has utilized her passion for our democratic system to assist many Republicans like myself by serving on various campaigns. Nancy is one of the most sincere and generous individuals I have had the pleasure of knowing.

In addition to her 20 years of hard work for the good of the Republican Party, Nancy is the wife of Mr. Richard O'Connor and a wonderful mother to Mrs. Roxanne Hansen and Ms. Amber O'Connor. Nancy and Richard moved to Chaffee County, Colorado in 1971 to establish Hummingbird Hill Ranch and have been active community members ever since.

Nancy has also been a respected real estate broker for over 30 years. She has been the recipient of many awards for her dedication, including the recognition as fifth in the nation for sales under United County Real Estate in 2003 and fourth in the nation for 2002. She is also a respected Rotarian, member of the Chaffee County Republican Women and has been the Chairwoman of the Chaffee County Republican Party for 16 years.

Nancy has been a leader for many community service efforts in her community. For 12 years she has given her time and her wonderful talents as a cook to raising money for the Buena Vista High School Presidential Classroom project. She has helped many young men and women in her community to participate in this extraordinary experience by sponsoring the annual lasagna dinner with the Chaffee County Republican Women, and making enough homemade lasagna every year to feed an average of 250 people.

During her two-year term as President of the Buena Vista Rotary Club, in addition to winning the Humanitarian Service to Mankind Award, Nancy also led an effort to restructure the playground at Columbine Park for the kids of Buena Vista. Her efforts raised enough money to buy new equipment and not only add fun for local youth, but improved the community atmosphere as well.

To say the least, Nancy is an extraordinary woman with a very kind heart. She brightens the day of anyone she encounters and is always willing to offer a helping hand to those in need. To this day, she continues to send homemade cookies to myself and the other Colorado Republican delegation to say thank you for what we do.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to take this opportunity to say thank you to Nancy for all that she does.

HONORING JIM ELLISON

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 29, 2004

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to honor and pay tribute to Jim Ellison upon his nomination as a Jefferson Award finalist. For over 25 years, Mr. Ellison has aided Delawareans who are confronting personal crises. As a volunteer for CONTACT, Delaware's crisis line, Mr. Ellison has logged a state record of 8,553 hours, many of which he accumulated during the 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. shift.

Mr. Ellison's lifetime of service has had no limit. Prior to becoming a volunteer, he worked 29 years as a revenue officer for the Internal Revenue Service. Mr. Ellison also served in the Army Air Corps and from January 1944 until August 1945, Mr. Ellison cleaned machine guns for B–24 bombers.

Jim Ellison's tireless dedication to the well-being of others should serve as an inspiration to us all. He is a most worthy candidate for the Jefferson Award and a truly outstanding Delawarean and American.

Mr. Speaker, I commend and congratulate Mr. Ellison upon his nomination as a finalist for the Jefferson Award. May we all learn from, and exemplify, his selflessness.

IN RECOGNITION OF RICHIE PEREZ

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 29, 2004

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives to pay tribute to the life of Richie Perez—a longtime community activist who lived in Brooklyn.

Richie Perez was a fighter. He fought for the rights of all people, and he fought against the devastating inequities that plague our society. He fought for the poor, the disenfranchised, the downtrodden—and gave them a voice.

His passion for activism began in the 1960s as a former member of the community-based organization for Puerto Rican empowerment called the Young Lords Party. He most recently founded the National Congress for Puerto Rican rights, acting as the co-chair of its Justice Committee, which works with families of victims of racial discrimination and police brutality.

He was a mentor to many and a hero to even more. He imparted his ideas and philosophies onto others by teaching classes on the Puerto Rican experience in New York, mass media and social policy at New York City's Hunter College. Not only was he an activist and a teacher, but he was an author as