

Unfortunately, we are continuing to see disturbing trends in American student performance on basic math and science tests. The recent Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) highlight the shortcomings of current K–12 science and math students in the United States when compared to other developed countries.

We have also seen that fewer students are pursuing degrees in math and science. This should be of particular concern when we consider the large educational and workforce development investments made by emerging economies with huge populations, such as China, India and Russia.

We must encourage girls in grades K–12 to become interested in math and science and urge young women to pursue degrees in math and science. While the percentages of women holding baccalaureate degrees in biological and physical sciences closely mirrors that of their male counterparts, recent statistics from the National Center for Education Statistics show that women are underrepresented in engineering and computer science baccalaureate degrees.

The Math and Science Incentive Act of 2005 is a direct response to the needs I have outlined. The bill will help recruit and retain direly needed science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) teachers and workforce professionals. It allows the Secretary of Education to pay up to \$10,000 in interest on undergraduate loans for those who qualify and agree to enter into a five-year service agreement with the Secretary.

Clearly, we must recommit ourselves to leadership in science, technology, mathematics and engineering. This legislation puts us on the path toward ensuring that we will have STEM teachers and workforce professionals in place.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MRS.  
BELVA TEAFORD

HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 12, 2005

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate, thank, and recognize my constituent Mrs. Belva Teaford. Belva is a testament to the innate goodness of human nature and the overwhelming positive effect one individual may have on the community.

As a wife, mother, and tireless volunteer in Ohio's Eighth Congressional District Mrs. Teaford has quietly given much more than she has taken. Her work, throughout Darke County over so many decades is a constant source of pride and unconditional praise. As a volunteer for the Darke County Republican Party Belva's friendship and reassuring demeanor have helped guide countless candidates, myself included, to success. Yet, Belva's efforts stretch far beyond politics. She is, in the truest sense of the word, a humanitarian whose unyielding belief in the goodness of her neighbors has helped make Darke County a truly remarkable community.

Belva's attitude, fierce determination, and community spirit are a constant source of energy for all those around her. So much of Belva's work is done quietly and without re-

ward and it is my honor to take this moment and say thank you and it is with a great deal of personal joy that I congratulate Belva and wish her a very happy 90th birthday.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS  
OF JUDGE DANNY VALDEZ

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 12, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the important contribution of Judge Danny Valdez of Laredo, TX.

In May 1982, Danny Valdez was elected as Justice of the Peace, and is currently serving his sixth four-year term.

Judge Valdez has also received numerous awards. Some include: the 2000 Martin High School Tiger Legend, the Liberty Bell Award from the Laredo Bar Association, and the Community Service Award from Lulac Council #12.

Aside from presiding over one of the state's busiest courts, he makes time for many community activities. He has worked with at-risk students for the past 23 years, addressing issues such as truancy, gang violence, drug abuse, teen pregnancy and juvenile delinquency. He has been working with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Education Program to bring male and female inmates to our local middle and high schools to tell their life stories in an effort to educate, warn, and inform students about the dangers and consequences involved in making the wrong choices.

Judge Valdez has worked with the Lamar Bruni Vergara Trust in the development of the Lamar Bruni Vergara Boy Scout Camp Huisahche and was also instrumental in the development of the Lamar Bruni Vergara Inner City Recreation Center.

Judge Valdez chairs the Annual Toys for Tejanitos Drive and the Angel Wish Program that benefits needy families in our community. He also chairs the Annual Fishing Derby for physically challenged students. This event has received Texas state wide recognition. He has also awarded over \$60,000.00 in scholarships to deserving students from L.I.S.D. in Laredo, TX.

Judge Valdez is married to Isabel Valdez and has a son, Danny, Jr. and daughter, Maribel.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have had this opportunity to recognize the contributions of Judge Danny Valdez.

CONGRATULATING MARTIN  
FLAHERTY ON THE OCCASION OF  
HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE  
WILKES-BARRE VETERANS AF-  
FAIRS MEDICAL CENTER

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 12, 2005

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Martin Flaherty on the occasion of his retirement from the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Wilkes-

Barre, Pennsylvania after more than 30 years of dedicated service. Martin, or "Marty," as he is known by friends, co-workers, veterans, and volunteers at the VA, will be greatly missed and I wish him luck in the next phase of his life.

Martin's service to the government began on April 4, 1966 when he joined the Army. He spent two years on a tour of duty in Germany and was honorably discharged on March 17, 1968 at the rank of Spec 5. After the Army, Marty worked for the Domestic Intelligence Division in Washington, D.C., and in September of 1970 he joined the Metropolitan Police Force in Washington.

In the evenings, he attended Georgetown University. Marty was off to a promising start in life. His career in Washington was cut short when he left in 1973 to move back home to the Wyoming Valley to care of his father, who had taken ill.

In that same year, Marty started to work for the VA Medical Center as a housekeeping aide. Marty worked his way up through the ranks with hard work and landed a job in the warehouse. From there, Marty's career took off.

Now Marty is the supervisor of the Inventory Management Department, where he oversees the warehouse, inventory personnel, and SPD. He possesses great motivational skills to rally staff to accomplish tasks where others would say: "it can't be done." And at the start of each day, you'll hear Marty coming down the hallway, thanking his employees for coming to work that day. In return, he receives a "thank you" back.

Marty has received superior performance awards over his career at the VA and possesses the respect of managers above him. G. Michael Miller, the VISN 4 Chief Logistics Officer, states that: "Marty is one of the people that makes the VA Wilkes-Barre a special place to work." Jackie Malhoyt, the former Facilities Management Director, stated that: "Marty looks at change as a challenge and opportunity, never as a threat or bother. He is an example of the heart of this medical center."

But this is not the whole story of Marty. Walk around the VA and you will hear other stories of Marty's selflessness and dedication, whether it's assisting patients to their next appointment or being a sounding board for a co-worker in need. You may find him purchasing the balance of chances for a drawing from veteran volunteers in order to help them meet their goal. Still, what you will probably hear most about Marty is how people were moved by his singing voice.

You see, Marty has been blessed with a beautiful voice and has been singing since he was nine years old, when he received his first lessons from Mrs. Helen Schivell of Wilkes-Barre. Over and over again, Marty is asked to share his singing voice at various hospital events, whether it's a Veterans Day ceremony or an employee awards program. You may also find him belting out songs in patient rooms or in the VA's nursing home on other occasions.

George Bath, the VA's Network Contracting Manager and Marty's former supervisor, notes one instance where there was an unusually large turnout at an employees' recognition program. George recalls: "I walked into Liberty Hall and nearly every seat was taken. I turned and there at the head of the room, with a mike