Sandia, and has two children and three grandchildren.

Through his initiative, energy, and audacity, Mr. Blackstone Dilworth has contributed enormously to Texas' economic health and vitality. He is a pillar of the business community, and a model for entrepreneurs everywhere, and I am pleased to have the chance to honor him here today.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 26, 2005

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I missed nine votes on April 20th, 2005 because I was attending an important family event with my 12-year-old daughter. The votes were on amendments to the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (H.R. 6). Had I been present I would have voted yea on rollcall Nos. 115, 116, 117, 118, 120, 121, 122, 123. I would have voted "nay" on rollcall No. 119.

LOOSEN THE GAS PRICE NOOSE!

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 26, 2005

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, a gallon of regular gas in San Diego or Imperial Valley has been hovering around the outrageous price of $2.50, often reaching even higher. Even as the price per barrel of oil declines, the price at our local gas stations stays sky-high.

Every time one of my constituents drives to work, drops a child off at school or drives away on vacation, hard-earned dollars go up in smoke. When our grocery stores have to pay more to get their groceries shipped in, they pass the extra cost on to their shoppers. What's the result? The whopping price of gas is choking our middle and working class—essentially levying a new tax when we can least afford it and boosting the profits of the oil companies!

This is simply unacceptable. We must continue to fight to lower the price of gas and protect consumers. One year ago I called on the Bush Administration to take several steps to loosen the gas price noose, including suspending deliveries to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve; requesting an investigation of market failures and lack of competition; blocking mergers that allow oil companies to manipulate supplies; and implementing strong fuel economy standards to put more efficient and environmentally friendly cars on the road and lower consumption.

An investigation by the Federal Trade Commission in August was inconclusive, and the White House has failed to take any steps to rein in oil companies or reduce gas prices. The energy bill we are considering this week also fails to responsibly tackle this problem, instead offering the same favors to oil companies. In the absence of effective leadership, consumers remain at the mercy of the price-gougers.

That's why I have now appealed directly to the Federal Trade Commission and the Attorney General to launch a broader investigation to determine whether the oil companies have engaged in illegal or anti-competitive practices that contribute to the high gas prices.

Additionally, I am fighting for passage of legislation known as the Gas Price Spike Act, that would implement a windfall tax when oil companies collect excessive profits, provide a tax credit for fuel efficient vehicles, and offer federal grants to reduce mass transit fares.

I call on Congress and the Administration to support me in these efforts to inject fairness and competition into the market and end price gouging at the gas pump!

FLEXIBILITY FOR CHAMPION SCHOOLS ACT

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 26, 2005

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer the Flexibility for Champion Schools Act (H.R. 1821).

Mr. Speaker, on January 8, 2002, the President signed the No Child Left Behind Act, commonly referred to as N-C-L-B. I was fortunate enough to have served on the House Education and the Workforce Committee, which considered the details of this domestic policy proposal put forth by the President.

The goals of N-C-L-B were and are laudable. According to the Department of Education, the No Child Left Behind Act gives our schools historic education reform based on stronger accountability for results, more freedom for states and communities, encourages proven educational methods, and creates more choices for parents.

However, one of the major tenants of N-C-L-B, its FLEXIBILITY to treat different states fairly while maintaining the goals of the underlying legislation; has not been a priority for the Department. A law that was originally intended to react like a rubber-band, to bend but not break, has unfortunately been implemented rigidly and is intolerant of states like Virginia, who had previously administered high testing and accountability standards.

Mr. Speaker, with any new law, especially one as sweeping as N-C-L-B, some hurdles will have to be overcome. To jump through these hurdles, my colleagues and I have attempted to work with the Department to resolve some of these problems. After meeting with some superintendents in my district, we began a dialogue to work through issues that were specific to states like Virginia, which already had high standards in place.

We recently learned of the Secretary's intent to "take into account each state's unique situation" to implement the law. Earlier this year, the Virginia Department of Education proposed a series of waivers that would allow N-C-L-B's goals to mesh with the state's already high standards. Unfortunately, not less than a week after the Secretary's promises of flexibility, the Department rejected the first request for flexibility—one to waive certain assessments of limited English proficiency students in grades K–1 in reading and writing. Mr. Speaker, these are non-English speakers who are 5 years old. I do not believe this demonstrates the flexibility intended by members who supported N-C-L-B.

Without this flexibility, I believe the law is inefficient and duplicative for parents, teachers, students, and state education officers. So we have reached this point where N-C-L-B needs to have a mechanism to recognize the role of certain states in providing accountability. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, we have stood by too long waiting for this flexibility. Our bill does not "water down" N-L-C-B provisions, or its intent. If certain states do not have strong accountability standards, then N-L-C-B is directed at them. But when we have schools in Virginia passing one standard but failing another, sometimes based solely on the results of one student from one particular subgroup, we need to act.

To address these problems, I offer with my colleagues, Representatives JOANN DAVIS, VIRGIL GOODE, JIM MORAN, THELMA DRAKE and RICK BOUCHER, the Flexibility for Champion Schools Act.

The legislation provides that a State which meets certain requirements shall be granted a waiver from the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) provisions of No Child Left Behind.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF DIANA DAY OF BILL BROWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 26, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the exemplary work of Diana Day, Bill Brown Elementary School Teacher of the Year.

Diana Day earned her bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies from Texas A&I in Corpus Christi. Currently serving as a special education teacher in Comal Independent School District, she has over 9 years of experience.

She teaches Behavior Life Skills to students in grades kindergarten through four, and believes in teaching her students how to solve problems. Each child is an individual, and Ms. Day believes that the best way to teach each of them is through a unique approach. She wants to help teach each of her students the joys of reading and learning on their own. Diana Day works hard empowering young minds and teaching them the skills that they need to be successful in school.

I am honored to have the chance to recognize the accomplishments of Diana Day, the Bill Brown Elementary School Teacher of the Year. Her passion for education has helped to ensure that our children are on the right track.

TRIBUTE TO ROELAND PARK, KANSAS, MAYOR LORI HIRONS

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 26, 2005

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Roeland Park, Kansas, Mayor Lori Hirons, who recently left elective office after 4 years of service as mayor, 8 as a city councilmember and 1 year of service on the Roeland Park zoning appeals board.