

While unsettling, this experience did not deter these young Dominican Americans from their commitment to highlight the issues of importance to them. It is a shame, Mr. Speaker, when students cannot come to their House and freely, comfortably, debate the issues of the day. This should be a place for open debate, a free exchange of ideas, and a respect for different and diverse opinions. I am glad these young men and women were not deterred by this instance; this is another example of their considerable maturity, comprehension of the issues, and respect for their fellow Americans.

I am grateful to have had such an opportunity to exchange views with such young outstanding Americans. I encourage them to continue in their diligence, dedication, and search for the truth. I look forward to seeing them in the future and to knowing of their success and the great contributions they will make in their professional careers to this Nation. I urge my colleagues to find ways to reach out to the Dominican American National Roundtable and obtain information on how you can recruit members of this group for internships in your congressional office. These students are bright, motivated, and promising. All they need to reach their great potential is opportunities for exposure to the policymaking and legislative process. And you will find that your exposure to this fine group of Americans will be thoroughly rewarding and insightful.

I submit to the RECORD a copy of the statement that this group presented to me on their policy recommendations for this Congress. It is important that we carefully consider the thoughts of our young people.

We represent the Dominican community as members of the Dominican American National Roundtable (DANR), and we are before you today to discuss issues that affect our community and to propose a number of solutions.

EDUCATION

In order to allow the United States' economy to prosper, we propose that Congress pass the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act due to its potential to increase the country's economy by the work of those future taxpayers.

In order to decrease the poverty level, we propose that Congress pass the DREAM Act so that it may increase the quality of life for those who are young and undocumented in the United States.

In addition, we support the Equal and High Quality Educational Amendment to the Constitution because the law would create and sustain high standards in all the schools within the Nation.

HEALTH CARE

We propose that Congress provide programs and services that may educate people on obtaining healthcare and create reasonable qualifications for those who are underprivileged.

We recommend that Congress provide free, complete, and quality healthcare for children under the age of eighteen (18). Furthermore, we request that adequate health information be provided by local clinics and health professionals regarding issues of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases to their communities.

We propose that Congress internally restructure and organize Medicaid and Medicare so that private specialists will accept public healthcare.

QUALITY OF LIFE

We propose that Congress counter the inevitable effects of gentrification (i.e., displace-

ment due to the higher priced housing in our neighborhoods) by establishing Community Land Trusts, where the residents would own the buildings they live in and a non-profit neighborhood membership organization would own the land under the buildings. These Trusts would uphold living and maintenance standards and, more importantly, would safeguard low-income communities.

We propose that Congress provide ample funding to Community Centers within these neighborhoods in order to educate the residents as to this new protection, and to provide educational and extracurricular opportunities.

DR-CAFTA

We propose that Congress vote against the DR-CAFTA, because both countries' economies cannot collectively prosper under the current agreement and only big corporations will benefit.

DR-CAFTA will eliminate tariffs on imported goods forcing out local competition and increase prices on basic commodities, which will increase the percentage of poverty-stricken households.

DR-CAFTA was modeled after NAFTA, which did not accomplish its goals of decreasing poverty and immigration to the United States. Furthermore, like NAFTA, DR-CAFTA allows foreign companies to sue national governments, therefore having a negative financial impact on developing countries' economies.

We thank you on behalf of our community for giving us the opportunity to speak with you regarding these issues and our proposed solutions affecting its development. Please send a written response.

15TH ANNIVERSARY THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 28, 2005

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 378, and to acknowledge the positive impact and historical importance of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Signed into law 15 years ago today by President George Herbert Walker Bush, this Act has become recognized as a landmark law for civil rights and represents one of the crowning achievements of Congress over the past two decades. Its impact is felt every day in every community across America. Wheelchair ramps, signs in Braille, and curb cuts are now common place in every corner of our lives. The law has truly forever changed the landscape of America.

Over these 15 years, the law has been challenged and debated, yet it has endured as a testament to those who desire to create an inclusive society where living with a disability does not mean disappearing into isolation. The law embodies everything that we in America should strive for; protecting the rights of all men and all women regardless of ability, mental capacity, or physicality. By removing barriers for peoples with disability, we also removed another barrier that prevented America from being a society where justice and equality prevail.

I remain committed to the Americans with Disabilities Act and supportive of efforts to improve our infrastructure and policies to enable equal access for all people. In Guam, our community has made great strides in uphold-

ing the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and we will be celebrating its anniversary this week.

Our work in this area is not yet done, and we will strive to build upon the legacy that the Americans with Disabilities Act has created. I urge support for H. Res. 378.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. ALBERT CHARLES SMITH

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 28, 2005

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Albert Charles Smith of Denver, Colorado. Mr. Smith is retiring from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) after over 42 years of exemplary federal service.

Often in our deliberations in the United States Congress over budget and policy issues of the Federal Government we neglect to recognize the contributions of the thousands of hard working federal employees who serve our Nation. In particular, I would like to highlight the contributions of the employees of the Environmental Protection Agency. Charged with protecting our environment and human health, the EPA is charged with protecting the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the land and food we need for sustenance and our livelihoods. While it is easy and important to get caught up in human events, it is also vital that we revere our planet and its fragile environment. It is not often enough that we take the time to stop to thank and recognize the employees of the EPA for their unselfish and committed contribution to our nation and our environment.

Mr. Alfred Charles Smith is one such federal public servant deserving of our attention. In the early 1950's, Mr. Smith served honorably as a corporal with the United States Army in Korea and Japan. He then went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Bacteriology from Ohio State University, a Masters of Science in Chemistry from John Carrol University in Ohio, and a Juris Doctor degree from the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. His first federal agency position was with the U.S. Department of Interior from 1966 to 1970.

When President Richard M. Nixon established the EPA, Mr. Smith was one of its original employees—first as a chemist in EPA's Chicago regional office, and later as a supervisory attorney and Regional Judicial Officer in EPA's Denver regional office. Most notable of his many awards and recognitions were the Agency's Gold Medal in 1975 for work in EPA's oil and hazardous materials spill response program; and in 1988, he was awarded EPA's Silver Medal for innovative use of Alternative Dispute Resolution in resolving a public water system's supply and health problems.

Mr. Speaker it is my honor to recognize Mr. Smith and his commitment to our Nation and its natural resources. Mr. Smith's personal and professional contributions to the Environmental Protection Agency, to the Federal Government and to the people of the United States over the course of his varied and meritorious career have earned him great respect and appreciation from his friends and colleagues.

We will all miss his knowledge, expertise and commitment to public service.