

HONORING STAFF SERGEANT
JASON MONTEFERING

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 29, 2005

Ms. HERSETH. Mr. Speaker, I am saddened to report the passing of Staff Sergeant Jason Montefering of Parkston, South Dakota. He was killed, while serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The lives of countless people were enormously enhanced by Jason's goodwill and service. He inspired all those who knew him. Our Nation is a far better place because of his life. All Americans owe Jason, and the other soldiers who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of freedom, a tremendous debt of gratitude for their service.

Every member of the House of Representatives has taken a solemn oath to defend the constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic. While we certainly understand the gravity of the issues facing this legislative body, Staff Sergeant Jason Montefering lived that commitment to our country. Today, we remember and honor his noble service to the United States and the ultimate sacrifice he has paid with his life to defend our freedoms and foster liberty for others.

Mr. Speaker, I express my sympathies to the family and friends of Staff Sergeant Jason Montefering. I believe the best way to honor him is to emulate his commitment to our country. I know he will always be missed, but his service to our Nation will never be forgotten.

TRIBUTE TO COMMISSIONER
DEVON BROWN—2005 BEST IN
THE BUSINESS

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 29, 2005

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to honor an extraordinary public servant, Commissioner Devon Brown, as he receives the "2005 Best in the Business" from the American Correctional Association. Mr. Brown has held the position of Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Corrections since January 2002. His accomplishments in the field have not only shown his dedication but also have proven revolutionary.

He once stated that, "... criminal justice is in my blood." Hailing from a family replete of judges, lawyers and police and correctional officers, Commissioner Brown was, to some extent, destined to follow in his family's legacy. After obtaining a bachelor's degree from Morgan State University, he went on to earn two master's degrees in psychology and public administration. As another testament to his commitment, Mr. Brown earned his Juris Doctorate from the University of Maryland.

Sometimes considered a maverick in the New Jersey Department of Corrections, Commissioner Brown has led in the implementation of programming that focused on educational enrichment and social responsibility. For example, he instituted the "Stock Market Game", which introduces inmates to the world of Wall Street and its role in the U.S. economy. By

learning about financial markets and the management of one's investments, prisoners discover new methods of analysis and decision-making. In addition, inmates have had the opportunity to further their deductive reasoning by becoming champion chess players. In fact, many prisoners have competed and won against top collegiate teams. He has also introduced "Shakespeare Behind Bars" to the New Jersey Department of Corrections. This program, also used throughout the Nation's prison systems, allows the inmates to delve into relevant personal and social issues through art.

Richard Stalder, President of the Association of State Correctional Administrators stated that, "Despite highly formidable and oftentimes less than ideal circumstances, Commissioner Brown has remained focused, showing integrity, resourceful ingenuity and uncompromising commitment to excellence no matter how daunting the presenting challenge. Though his inspiration and unwavering resolve, he has advanced the profession and earned the New Jersey Department of Corrections a place among the most improved, progressively oriented, penal systems in the land." Therefore it is no surprise that Mr. Brown has also garnered many other awards besides the "2005 Best in the Business. In 2004, the College of New Jersey honored him with the "Gene Carte Memorial Award" for his exemplary correctional leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues here in the House of Representatives to join me in honoring Commissioner Devon Brown, for being the recipient of the "2005 Best in the Business" as well as for his overall excellence and dedication to the field of corrections. A man who is not afraid to make the hard decisions or to stand up for the truth, Commissioner Brown exemplifies vision, professionalism and integrity. I am proud to have him as a dear friend and wish him never-ending success in his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LANDMARK EL MONTE GARMENT SLAVERY CASE

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 29, 2005

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 10th Anniversary of the landmark El Monte garment worker slavery case.

In 1995, I was shocked to learn one of the worst sweatshops in recent U.S. history was operating in the city of El Monte, California—in my congressional district. Seventy-two Thai workers lived and worked in substandard conditions. Sixty-seven of them were women. Most of these workers had been held in slavery for up to 17 years at an apartment complex and were made to sew clothes for some of the Nation's top manufacturers and retailers. The workers labored over 18 hours a day in a compound enclosed by barbed wire and armed guards. They had left their homes in Thailand in search of a better life and wound up enslaved just outside Los Angeles.

While the El Monte sweatshop is a terrible example of substandard working conditions and human trafficking, it is not uncommon. Ap-

proximately 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders each year for forced labor, domestic servitude, or sexual exploitation. When including the number of victims who are trafficked within borders, the total number rises to between 2 and 4 million.

Approximately 50,000 people are trafficked to the United States each year. Los Angeles is one of three major ports of entry for human trafficking. Most come from Southeast Asia and the former Soviet Union. About half of those are forced into sweatshop labor and domestic servitude similar to the El Monte sweatshop. The rest are forced into prostitution and the sex industry, or in the case of young children, kidnapped and sold for adoption. While many victims come willingly, they are not aware of the untenable terms and inhumane conditions they will face.

I have worked very hard—in the California state legislature and now in Congress—to support efforts to eliminate this inhumane and criminal activity. Beginning with the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act passed in 2000, the United States began a concerted effort to combat human trafficking into the United States and around the world.

Established under this law, the "T" visa has been critical to combating trafficking in the U.S. These visas allow victims of trafficking, who would face retribution if they were sent back to their home country, to remain in the U.S. for 3 years, and then apply for permanent residency. The "T" visa has allowed many victims of trafficking realize their dream of living in the U.S.

In 2003, Congress renewed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act and increased funding for anti-trafficking programs by more than \$100 million for each fiscal year. The act also refined and expanded on the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking that governments must meet. The legislation created a yearly "special watch list" of countries that the Secretary of State determined were not taking action to combat human trafficking.

In 2005, Congress will again renew the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this important legislation, which will close loopholes and increase assistance to victims of trafficking. The bill also addresses the needs of child victims of trafficking and directs relevant government agencies to develop anti-trafficking strategies for post-conflict situations and humanitarian emergencies abroad.

We have made progress since 1995 when the El Monte slavery case thrust the issue of human trafficking into the national spotlight. We must continue our work to eliminate trafficking within the United States. We must also work with foreign governments and non-governmental organizations abroad to end human trafficking and eliminate the conditions that foster trafficking, such as widespread poverty, crisis and warfare.

I am proud to join the Thai Community Development Center to recognize the 10th Anniversary of the Landmark El Monte Garment Slavery Case. This organization has been an amazing force working to raise awareness and efforts in eliminating slavery and trafficking. It is my privilege to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Thai community and to honor the Thai workers.