

Damon, a Vietnam War Veteran, also sought to share his knowledge with future generations through his service as an adjunct professor of landscape architecture, at the School of Architecture, University of Nevada—Las Vegas (UNLV).

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor Damon Ohlerking. He was a man of vision who greatly enhanced the lives of the residents of Boulder City, and he will be greatly missed by the entire community.

RECOGNIZING THE HERNANDO
COUNTY PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN
ASSOCIATION

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, this evening is the celebration of the Hernando County Philippine-American Association Incorporated's year-long efforts to promote the 2006 theme of "Unity for a Better Tomorrow."

Through both social and cultural outreach, the Association has proven to be a positive resource for the entire Filipino-American community. Its activities foster goodwill, friendship and camaraderie among the entire Filipino-American community. The support of HCPAA in socio-political activities has helped secure rights for Filipinos both here and abroad.

As a Member of Congress, I have the opportunity to work on many pieces of legislation that affect millions of Americans. Earlier this month, I was proud to support H. Res. 622, a resolution that recognized and honored the Filipino World War II veterans for their defense of democratic ideals and their important contribution to the outcome of World War II.

Members of the Hernando County Filipino community know that their family members played a vital role defeating the Axis powers during World War II. Like Vietnam veterans after them, Filipino veterans often went decades without a pat on the back or a note of congratulations from the United States government. I am proud to stand here this evening and tell you that I supported this legislation and recognize the important work that Filipino men and women performed in World War II.

I encourage all HCPAA members and constituents to get involved with this great non-profit organization. I once again congratulate your organization and its leadership for their past efforts and wish its new officers and members a productive and influential year.

COMMEMORATING SEA OTTER
AWARENESS WEEK (SOAW)

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the 4th Annual Sea Otter Awareness Week, September 24–30, 2006, sponsored by Defenders of Wildlife. This week-long event provides the opportunity to broadly educate the public about sea otters, their natural history, the integral role that sea otters play in

the near-shore marine ecosystem and the conservation issues they are facing. The work done by such groups as Defenders of Wildlife, Friends of the Sea Otter, The Otter Project, and The Ocean Conservancy to recover the southern or California sea otter has raised public awareness and helped protect this important species under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act. Greatly due to their efforts, Governor Schwarzenegger recently signed California Assembly Bill 2485 into law to codify the protections for this important species.

The southern sea otter population has increased considerably from less than 100 otters in the 1930's to more than 2,500 today, though still significantly less than what is necessary to consider the population stable. Since otters continue to face many direct and indirect threats to their full recovery, I introduced H.R. 2323, the Southern Sea Otter Recovery and Research Act. I am also working with my colleagues to secure funding to support a continued and complete recovery of the population.

In the past, one of the main threats to the species was the killing of the animals for their fur. However, the decrease in their population that we have seen in recent years is increasingly due to indirect hazards (e.g., non-point pollution, pathogens, entrapment in fisheries gear) that are being identified. Such realizations support the need for continued research and preventive measures to respond to these issues, while continuing to ward against the direct killings/takings that still occur.

The decline of southern sea otter populations not only has impacts on the species itself, but also affects other marine populations and the surrounding ecosystem. For instance, the demise of sea otters allows their prey sea urchins to proliferate unchecked, which leads to the alarming overgrazing of kelp beds—one of the oceans nursery grounds for many marine animals. In particular, research shows that the absence of sea otters has a direct link to the sharp decline of kelp along portions of California's coast. Sea otter research also has proven to be an effective method of monitoring toxins and diseases in the marine environment, both of which can affect the health of humans and other wildlife.

The presence of the California sea otter has become an icon of the state's coastal environment and culture, and these charismatic animals bring significant tourism revenue to Californian coastal communities. Protecting them is not only directly advantageous to the otter population, but also fosters indirect benefits on a greater scale.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the many accomplishments of Defenders of Wildlife and other non-profit environmental organizations, working with the Monterey Bay Aquarium, researchers, fishermen, state and federal agencies, schools, and many other institutions and individuals, who devote tremendous effort to protect and recover the southern/California sea otter. Sea Otter Awareness Week is just one of their many activities geared towards honoring and saving this species, and I am proud to be associated with this vital work.

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS
IMPLEMENTATION ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 25, 2006

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support for H.R. 4772, the Private Property Rights Implementation Act of 2006. I want to thank my colleague from Ohio, Mr. CHABOT, for agreeing to take the leadership on this legislation.

When I first introduced this legislation in 1997, it was to ensure that property owners in this country have the ability to protect their basic civil and constitutional rights. The fifth amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees that no private property shall be taken for a public use without the payment of just compensation. Unfortunately, we have seen an increasing disregard by various levels of government for this fundamental civil right. H.R. 4772 seeks to restore balance to land use decisions by ensuring that Americans have reasonable access to the Federal courts to enforce their Federal constitutional rights.

As a former mayor, I know that local governments must have control over land use decisions. But this bill does not empower Federal judges to decide whether a certain piece of land should be used for a grocery store or for a hair salon. In fact this bill ensures that local governments will continue to have their traditional powers to make and enforce zoning regulations.

However, this bill also ensures that land owners have some certainty in a process that can sometimes be very open-ended. By establishing procedures that both the property owner and the locality must follow, this bill ensures fair and timely land use decisions.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4772 and provide legal protections for land owners that are both rational and effective.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO JENNIFER
RITZ

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 26, 2006

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Jennifer Ritz for her outstanding work as a Clark County school teacher.

Jennifer currently holds three different certifications as a Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) at the elementary and middle school levels in elementary education, math and science. She also holds a Bachelor's Degree in elementary education and is a National Board Certified Teacher.

This fall, Jennifer is working as an educational computing strategist at Lied Middle School in Las Vegas, Nevada. She gained a computer application endorsement, giving her a total of five different education certifications in addition to her BA.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I honor Ms. Jennifer Ritz. Her dedication and enthusiasm has greatly enriched the lives of her students. I thank her for her continued commitment to enhancing the educational experiences of her students and wish her luck in all of her future endeavors.