

against the continued conditions of slavery that millions still face across the globe.

Indeed, as America continues to mourn and regret its involvement in the human rights violations of that time, we must not forget the wonderful legacy of African-American abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and many others. It was through their courage and determination that slavery ended in the United States.

We must continue to meet the challenge of repairing the harm done to black Americans by the legacy of slavery in this Nation. By so doing, let us remember the connection between policymaking and the need for a more equitable society. Congress must continue to pass legislation which allows for broader access to education, health care, and jobs for minority groups across the country. Much like the fight against slavery, we must strengthen our resolve to fight poverty, crime, and other conditions that many face in the U.S.

This is also a time for us to show a renewed commitment to the African continent, recognizing it as the ancestral home to the Diaspora across the globe. We must remember that millions of people were ripped from their homes, taken on a perilous journey across the Atlantic, and stripped of their culture and language. As a result, the loss of life and potential that Africa endured was a contributing factor to the under-development the continent faces today. We must show our commitment through trade, education, the fight against HIV/AIDS, and poverty in general.

It is my hope that this 200th anniversary will be a way of bringing education and awareness about the rich heritage and culture of Africa embedded in America and the Caribbean through the Diaspora. I look forward to next year's anniversary. It is my hope that in remembering slavery we are reminded that we must never allow that dark history to repeat itself.

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COMMISSION TO STUDY THE POTENTIAL CREATION OF A NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN LATINO HERITAGE ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

**HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 27, 2006*

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support tonight of H.R. 2134—the Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of the American Latino Community Act.

I would like to commend Chairman POMBO for his leadership in bringing this important legislation to the floor, as well as the bill's author Congressman XAVIER BECERRA for his support.

As the Republican lead of this legislation, I am pleased that this bill would take the next step toward ensuring that our premier institutions for the arts and humanities include a greater representation of Hispanic-American cultural contributions.

The commission created by this bill would have the responsibility of examining and re-

porting to Congress and the President a plan to establish a new museum dedicated to the art, history, and culture of the Hispanic-American community.

There are nearly 40 million United States residents who share a cultural heritage which is not fully represented by any of the permanent exhibits in Washington museums.

It is only fitting that this bill is brought to the floor of this body during Hispanic Heritage Month.

As the first Hispanic-American woman to be elected to the U.S. Congress, I have been proud to represent my diverse South Florida constituency for over 16 years.

Americans of Hispanic heritage are a youthful population and are projected to play an increasing role in the Nation's economy and workforce.

As Hispanic-Americans, we have come a long way.

We are contributing in record numbers in the fields of business, education, healthcare, and at all levels of government service.

As a legislative body, Congress is committed to continue to propel thousands of Hispanic-Americans across the nation into the realization of the American dream.

A stronger, healthier, and more educated Hispanic American population contributes to the greatness of this wonderful nation making us competitive in the global market.

The Hispanic-American community is one of America's largest growing populations. Congress should continue to provide opportunities for the Hispanic-American community to continue succeeding and to showcase the wealth of talent that abounds.

A museum for the Hispanic-American community would honor all Americans.

The great diversity of ethnicities and nationalities of the people in the United States is a testament to the power of America's great tradition as a Nation that embraces all walks of life.

This National Museum will symbolize our country's commitment to proudly display America's rich cultural diversity.

Therefore, I ask my colleagues to join me in support of this important legislation to ensure that visitors to our nation's capital gain a more complete understanding of who we are as Americans.

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FURTHER THANKS TO SUBHASRI RAMANATHAN

**HON. ZOE LOFGREN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 28, 2006*

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, years before Sue Ramanathan became Democratic Chief Counsel and Deputy Staff Director on the Committee on Homeland Security, I had the pleasure of having due on my personal staff for 5 years as Counsel and Senior Policy Advisor on immigration, trade, tax, and many other issues.

On my staff, Sue was always ready and willing to use her keen understanding of immigration policy to work with me on several pieces of immigration related legislation, knowledge

and experience she used so well in her tenure on the Homeland Security Committee. In fact, Sue became known as one of a select few staff members in the House of Representatives with a deep knowledge of immigration policy. In other words, Sue was the "go-to" staff member on immigration.

While Sue demonstrated a strong expertise in immigration policy both on my staff and as Chief Counsel on Homeland Security, Sue also had a passion and interest in other policy areas. From technology and trade to tax and foreign policy, Sue always had a powerful grasp of the issues.

After almost 10 years as a staff member in the House of Representatives, Sue has now moved onto the General Accountability Office. Congress has lost a valuable staff member, but the GAO has gained a tremendous asset. I am proud that Sue was once a member of my staff, and grateful that she served the Congress as a whole on the staff of the Homeland Security Committee. I wish her the best in her new position at the GAO.

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RECOGNIZING THE 80TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY OF DONALD AND MARGARET MERGLER

**HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 28, 2006*

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to recognize a very significant occasion. I am proud to represent two people who have lived a full life of love and happiness. Donald and Margaret Mergler celebrated their 80th wedding anniversary on September 4, 2006.

The Merglers are believed to be the oldest living married couple in the United States. In the world we live in today, marriages sometimes don't last more than a year let alone 80. This couple is truly worthy of recognition for such a joyous occasion.

The 98-year-olds have known each other since grade school. They were both born and raised in Havre de Grace, Maryland. As children in grade school the couple knew each other, but it wasn't until Donald offered Margaret a ride home from their church's Christmas pageant, the two became a couple.

After the Merglers were married, Mr. Mergler's career took them on a tour of Maryland's neighboring states. Mr. Mergler was a jockey at the race tracks for many years. After he hung up his reins, Mr. Mergler relocated the family back to the Havre de Grace area where he worked as an assemblyman for the company now referred to as Lockheed Martin. The couple remained here for the rest of their working years. While Mr. Mergler put together helicopters for Boeing, Mrs. Mergler chauffeured military persons and supervised mail distribution at Aberdeen Proving Ground.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join with me to commemorate the union of Donald and Margaret Mergler. Much can be learned from the 98-year-old couple about love, life, and happiness. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to them for reaching their 80th wedding anniversary.