

on-stream reservoirs. Additionally, they are more acceptable from an environmental perspective, because they are off-stream and do not block streams or disturb riverine habitats.

In addition to protecting our Nation's farmers from the costly effects of drought, enhancing their irrigation capacity will allow our farmers to expand production to more acres and increase the productivity of existing acres. Cost-share assistance to construct small, environmentally-friendly, reservoirs located on the farm will provide us with the tools necessary to grow additional bio-fuel crops; which will allow us to wean ourselves from foreign oil. This will reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions by increasing the availability of the cleaner burning fuels these crops produce.

GENETIC INFORMATION  
NONDISCRIMINATION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

**HON. JOE BARTON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 25, 2007*

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I want to commend the work of the Energy and Commerce Committee in making certain improvements to H.R. 493. In particular, I note the inclusion of information on embryos, fetuses, and adopted children. I further note a clear statement that nothing affects claims processing and quality improvement activities and related items. Finally, I am happy that there is a provision for covered entities already subject to regulations governing personally identifiable health information.

The primary author of the House bill, Ms. SLAGHTER, has stated:

"GINA prohibits group health plans and health insurers from denying coverage to a healthy individual or charging that person higher premiums based solely on a genetic predisposition to develop a disease in the future. Furthermore, it bars employers from using an individual's genetic information when making hiring, firing, job placement or promotion decisions."

That is the focus of this legislation. I expect the relevant Federal agencies will interpret this bill in light of the primary focus. GINA is a very complicated bill with a number of definitions capable of counterproductive readings. We have tried to improve the bill to reduce these problems. In the spirit of these efforts to improve the legislation I support its passage from the House and look forward to work in Conference.

SPOKANE NAMED 2006 ABILENE  
TROPHY WINNER

**HON. CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 1, 2007*

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the Spokane community for their work in supporting Fairchild Air Force Base in Washington State. On April 12, 2007, Spokane was selected as the 2006 Abilene Trophy winner during the Phoenix Rally at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida.

The Abilene Trophy, sponsored by the Abilene, Texas, Chamber of Commerce, recognizes the community that provides the most outstanding support to an Air Mobility Command unit. The 92nd Air Refueling Wing at Fairchild is one of 11 Air Mobility Command bases eligible to compete for the Abilene Trophy in the United States.

The Abilene Chamber of Commerce noted Spokane's standout support for our troops at Fairchild, particularly through programs such as Operation Spokane Heroes and the Honorary Commanders program.

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I am committed to keeping our Nation and communities safe by ensuring we have a trained and equipped military. Since taking office, one of my top priorities has been to protect and expand the mission of Fairchild Air Force Base. The people of Spokane share that priority and recognize the importance of supporting our men and women in uniform and their families.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Spokane and the members of this community for their outstanding support of Fairchild Air Force Base. I invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Spokane community on this great achievement.

ACCEPT TAIWAN INTO THE WHO

**HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON**

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 1, 2007*

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my support for Taiwan's efforts to participate in the World Health Organization. Taiwan's participation in the WHO is a health issue rather than a political issue. Taiwan has been directly impacted by many of the new, global health threats that have swept Asia since 2002. During the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS, Taiwan saw one of the highest incident rates of infection. More recently, Taiwan has reported incidences of avian flu outbreak, a disease which presents a global threat.

For many years, in my district, Idaho State University hosted a unique program providing a language and cultural education program for junior diplomatic officers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I spent time discussing the American political system and current events in Taiwan with the junior diplomats, and they taught me a great deal about Taiwan's political system and the challenges it faces. As Taiwan deals with new arising health threats, the lessons that I learned from the young diplomats reminded me of the importance of ensuring that all people throughout the world can access resources to fight potential pandemics.

Madam Speaker, global health pandemics recognize no borders. Taiwan has been seeking observer status at the WHO since 1997. Other non-sovereign entities, such as the Holy See, maintain observer status. Protecting people's health is not a political issue, and gaining access to global health organizations should not be a political issue either. Safeguarding world health requires the participation of everyone in the international community. Madam Speaker, I urge the international community to accept Taiwan into the WHO community this year.

HONORING MICHAEL D. THOMAS

**HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 1, 2007*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Michael D. Thomas, who was killed on April 27, 2007 in Hirat Province, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Michael was a sniper, a weapons sergeant and a combat medic assigned to the 1st Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and was killed when his unit came under rocket-propelled grenades and small-arms fire.

I did not have the privilege of knowing Staff Sergeant Thomas personally but by all accounts he was a dedicated family man who was devoted to serving his country. He grew up in Seffner, Florida and joined the military police in 1991, serving in Somalia and in Korea. After already having served in the military police for 13 years and with only 3½ years until he could retire, he volunteered to be a Green Beret. At 34, Michael was one of the oldest in his unit which earned him the nickname "Gramps."

Michael was a highly decorated soldier. His awards and commendations include the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Korean Defense Medal, the Parachutist Badge and the Special Forces Tab.

Michael was an avid Tampa Bay Buccaneer fan who visited the team's training camp whenever he could. I've been told that he decorated his Fort Bragg room with Buccaneer memorabilia, including signed footballs and helmets. He was also an accomplished guitarist who liked watching movies and going for long walks with his wife, Teresa.

Madam Speaker, my heart aches for Michael's family. He leaves behind his wife, Teresa, his children, Diana and Craig, his sisters, Krista and Cassie, and his parents, Debbie and Robert Kirpatrick. May God bless the Thomas family and continue to watch over the country that Staff Sgt. Thomas so loved. We shall never forget him.

EXPRESSING SORROW OF THE  
HOUSE AT THE DEATH OF THE  
HONORABLE JUANITA  
MILLENDER-McDONALD, MEMBER  
OF CONGRESS FROM THE STATE  
OF CALIFORNIA

SPEECH OF

**HON. NITA M. LOWEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 23, 2007*

Mrs. LOWEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the legacy and accomplishments of our recently-passed colleague and dear friend JUANITA MILLENDER-McDONALD.

JUANITA MILLENDER-McDONALD's life epitomized one of a true leader. Her deep commitment to those she served led her to be the first African American woman to chair a committee in Congress.

JUANITA MILLENDER-McDONALD's vision and leadership since 1996 will have a lasting impact on the House of Representatives. Her