

In the 10 years since its inception, the Central Valley Health Network has provided families throughout the region with health care that is cost-effective, accessible, comprehensive, coordinated, compassionate, and culturally competent. Serving more than 530,000 patients, the Central Valley Health Network facilitates 2.1 million patient visits annually, providing care for low-income individuals, of which 75 percent are at or below the Federal poverty level, 50 percent of whom are enrolled in Medi-Cal, and 35 percent who are uninsured. Combined, it is the chief health care system for low-income families throughout the Central Valley, and in many communities the Central Valley Health Network's clinics are the only primary health care option available.

The Central Valley of California consistently experiences far greater physician shortages and dramatically increased rates of chronic diseases than other regions in the State. To address these imbalances, the Central Valley Health Network's mission is to support their member community health center systems in the effective delivery of high quality accessible health care with a special focus on advocacy for attaining optimal health for the medically underserved. Furthermore, the Central Valley Health Network's presence in the region has made a significant impact in local economies, generating over \$200 million in Federal funds and creating over 2,000 jobs.

The Central Valley Health Network contributes greatly to the improvement of the overall quality of life for families throughout the Central Valley of California. Madame Speaker, I respectfully ask my colleagues to rise and join me in thanking everyone involved with the Central Valley Health Network for the work they do each and every day to provide the people and families of our communities with essential health care services. There is no more important or rewarding work than helping a fellow citizen in need, and through their dedicated and compassionate efforts, thousands of lives have been touched. We all owe them a great debt of gratitude, and I am proud to represent their efforts in Congress.

HONORING KAREN BASS

**HON. LAURA RICHARDSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 13, 2008*

Ms. RICHARDSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the newly elected speaker of the California State Assembly, the Honorable Karen Bass. It is with great pride and pleasure that I applaud her accomplishments and wish her much future success.

At the end of this legislative year, Karen Bass will break glass ceilings in California and across the Nation by becoming the first African-American woman speaker of a State legislative body. Speaker-elect Karen Bass, who is respected on both sides of the aisle, received unanimous vote of the members to become the first Democratic woman elected to this position in California's history.

Throughout her career, public service and social justice have been the common threads around which her life revolved. Understanding the importance of education, Speaker-elect

Bass taught as an adjunct instructor at her alma mater, California State University, Dominguez Hills. She also served as the clinical instructor at the Southern California School of Medicine and as the project director for the health careers opportunity program. A graduate of the University of Southern California's, USC, School of Medicine-Physician Assistant Program, Speaker-elect Bass worked in our country's largest trauma center, Los Angeles/USC Medical Center. It was here that she witnessed firsthand the havoc wreaked upon the community by the crack cocaine epidemic.

In 1990, Speaker-elect Bass took action by leaving the medical profession and founding the Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment. She served as its executive director for 14 years. After the 1992 civil unrest in Los Angeles, the coalition united and succeeded in transforming the social and economic conditions in south Los Angeles.

Speaker-elect Bass turned to politics when she concluded that the best way to implement change was to become an elected official herself. At the time of her election, there were no other African-American women in the California legislature, but her leadership potential was recognized immediately. During her first term, she was appointed majority whip during the 2005–2006 legislative session. During her second term, she became the first woman and first African-American appointed to the position of majority leader.

As vice chair of California's Legislative Black Caucus, Speaker-elect Bass pressed for the creation of the State of Black California Report, which measured economic and social conditions of California's African-American population. The Speaker-elect also created the People's Council to engage citizens in the debate on public policy and the political process. The Council was composed of four commissions, which examined education, environment, small business, and health issues in the State.

Always reaching for the highest goals, I am certain that Speaker-elect Bass will lead the California State Assembly with the same commitment and dedication that she has demonstrated throughout her entire career. In closing, Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring the achievements of Speaker-elect Karen Bass and wishing her continuing success.

HONORING ERMA ROLLE

**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 13, 2008*

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Erma Jean Rolle, a passionate effective advocate for the needs of minorities, women and children. Moreover, we note her strong commitment to God, her family, her church and her community.

Erma Jean Rolle was born in Little Rock, Arkansas moving to Milwaukee Wisconsin where she graduated from North Division High School. After graduation, she moved to New York with big dreams and goals to be accom-

plished. Erma joined the New Lots Community Church where she served as: an Elder; Clerk of the Consistory; President of the Women's Ministry; Youth Ministry Leader; member of the Women of Faith choir; Confirmation teacher; Vice-President of the Women's Brooklyn Classical Union; Music and Worship Committee; and a member of the Racial Justice Task Force.

As a community activist, Erma has served on Community Board #5, Vice-President of the Meadow Wood at Gateway Condominiums and Treasurer for the Jamaica Armory Gun Club. Moreover, she helped to organize and start the East New York Drum & Bugle Corps for sixty boys and girls. In addition, she was part of a committee that marched to stop domestic violence against women in the sixties and seventies.

In 2001, Erma retired from the New York City Board of Education as a bus driver. In that same year, she celebrated another milestone—graduating from the College of New Rochelle with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology.

Erma Jean Rolle is a role model for African-American families, especially hers. She has four children; Marshall, Cheryl, Fernanda, and Cassandra. She is also the proud grandmother of James, Kadrian, Brandon, and Kyran. In her leisure time, Erma enjoys going to the rifle range, shopping, bowling and traveling.

Ms. Rolle lives a full and productive life gathering comfort from one of her favorite Biblical passages (Isaiah 40:31): "But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

Madam Speaker, I am proud to cite Erma Jean Rolle for her invaluable contributions to the New Lots Community Church, her service to the community and her open-heartedness. Even today, she volunteers especially for causes that involve children, at the Johnny Ray Youngblood Academy.

CARRIE HOTTEL

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 13, 2008*

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Carrie Hottel of Liberty, Missouri. Carrie is a very special young woman who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Girl Scouts of America, and earning the most prestigious award of Girl Scout Gold Award.

Carrie has been very active with her troop, participating in many scout activities. In order to receive the prestigious Gold Award, Carrie has completed all seven requirements that promote community service, personal and spiritual growth, positive values and leadership skills.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Carrie Hottel for her accomplishments with the Girl Scouts of America and for her efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Girl Scout Gold Award.