

newly created National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, within the Department of Commerce. Currently, there are over 30 Sea Grant College programs that represent a network of researchers, educators, and marine extension agents at some of the Nation's top academic institutions. Sea Grant Colleges sponsor a wide range of applied and basic marine science research, education, and training and technical assistance programs promoting the understanding, assessment, development, utilization and conservation of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources. Sea Grant Colleges also provide yearlong fellowships to graduate students in marine-related disciplines for placement in congressional offices and Federal agencies.

The bill introduced today would refine the act to modestly expand and clarify the scope and purposes of the National Sea Grant College Program. The bill would provide the national program with the ability to promote, encourage, plan, and implement collaboration among groups of Sea Grant programs, strategic partners, and stakeholders. The bill includes amendments to the act that would describe in more detail the role of Sea Grant in addressing important issues of regional and national concern as identified in the National Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy.

The bill would invigorate oversight and accountability by expanding the responsibilities of the National Sea Grant Review Panel, established by an earlier reauthorization of the National Sea Grant College Act. The bill renames this panel as the "National Sea Grant Advisory Board" to more appropriately and accurately describe its purpose and function. The bill would further authorize the Board to extend participation to non-panel members, principally through the establishment of subcommittees for the purpose of receiving advice and guidance. The revised title and afforded level of new participation reflects a broader and ongoing responsibility on behalf of the National Sea Grant College Program. The Board would be also charged with providing advice to the Secretary of Commerce as to how the National Sea Grant College Program can be best strengthened to ensure the activities of Sea Grant Colleges are consistent with and supportive of national objectives.

The bill would amend Sea Grant program performance review standards. Adopted as part of the 2002 amendments, the review requirements have had the unintended consequence of creating a disincentive for programs to work cooperatively or form partnerships. Implementation of new measures for program review combined with policies aimed at advancing "continuous program improvement" should ensure effective program assessments.

In addition, the bill would increase the percentage of funds exempt from the non-Federal match requirement from the current 1 percent to 5 percent. Many Sea Grant programs address issues of local as well as national concern. In the case of local Sea Grant projects within States, the general match requirement is appropriate. However, the match requirement makes it difficult for Sea Grant to participate in joint competitive programs with other NOAA offices or other Federal agencies because incoming proposals for Sea Grant funding require a match, while proposals from the other agencies often do not.

The bill would also exempt the Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship Program

from having to match grant awards in order to achieve parity between fellows placed in congressional offices with those fellows placed in Federal agencies.

Finally, the bill also supports reasonable and justifiable increases in authorized appropriations for Sea Grant. Authorized funding levels would increase from \$66 million to \$100 million for the period between Fiscal Year 2009 through Fiscal Year 2014.

The National Sea Grant College Program has established an impressive record over the course of its 38-year history. The reauthorization bill introduced today builds on the sensible recommendations of the Sea Grant Association, the Sea Grant Review Panel, other stakeholders, and consultations with personnel assigned to NOAA's Sea Grant Program Office. Sea Grant provides countless benefits to the American public, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to reauthorize and strengthen this important extramural marine conservation program.

HONORING MR. PEDRO JOHNSON  
FOR HIS YEARS OF SERVICE IN  
CONNECTICUT

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 13, 2008*

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to pay tribute to my dear friend, Pedro Johnson, who has recently decided to retire from his service for his tribe, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation.

I have known Pedro Johnson for many years and have seen firsthand how he has dedicated himself to improving the lives of others and this Nation. Pedro honorably served in the United States Air Force prior to joining the University of Connecticut Police Department in 1966. He dedicated over 20 years of service to the UCONN police, holding the positions of department liaison, martial arts instructor, and police photographer, before retiring in 1992 at the rank of sergeant.

Retirement would be short-lived for Pedro, and it would not be long before he continued his life passion of public service. As a member of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe, Pedro was elected to three terms on the Tribal Council including one term in the prestigious position of treasurer. During his time on Tribal Council, Pedro worked with his fellow council members on an incredible transformation that has made the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe into one of the most respected Tribes in the Nation.

Under Pedro's leadership, the Tribe has become a major economic and cultural focal point in the region. They have become one of the largest employers in the State of Connecticut and opened the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center, which contains one of the largest collections of indigenous artifacts in North America. The dedication and commitment of Pedro Johnson has been instrumental in shaping the Tribe's vision for the future.

Pedro has always been involved in public service. Over the years he has sat on the board of directors of the Foxwoods Development Company, Natchaug Hospital, Eastern Connecticut State University, Bushnell Theater, Old State House, and the Savings Institute Bank. He was also a member of the Ma-

sons Fraternal Order and held the position as worshipful master of his lodge for several years.

We could not pay proper respects to Pedro without mentioning his lifelong partner, his wife Linda. Pedro and Linda recently celebrated their 44th wedding anniversary, and I know they have been a source of strength and love for each other for nearly five decades. They have two children, Michael and David, who have brought them great joy over the years.

Madam Speaker, it is a great honor to pay tribute to a man who has done so much to improve the quality of life for his Tribe and indeed, the people of Connecticut. I know that Pedro is retiring from his position at the Tribe, but I know he will continue to be an active member of our community and I look forward to working with him in the future.

RECOGNIZING THE 2007 NATIONAL  
PRINCESS OF THE AMERICAN  
MINIATURE HORSE REGISTRY,  
ALYSSA PALAS OF STORY CITY,  
IOWA

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 13, 2008*

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the 2007 National Princess of the American Miniature Horse Registry, Alyssa Palas of Story City, Iowa.

In September 2007, Alyssa was crowned at the National Miniature Horse show in Tulsa, Oklahoma. As princess, Alyssa presented all the awards during the show, including presenting her mother with Reserve National Champion honors for their two-year-old gelding. She will reign until the 2008 national show.

Alyssa and her family have been involved in the miniature horse business for six years. The Palas family competes across the country under the farm name Royal Palas Miniatures. They received 31 National Top Ten placings at the 2007 national show.

I know that my colleagues in the United States Congress join me in commending and congratulating Alyssa Palas. I consider it an honor to represent Alyssa and her family in Congress and I wish them the best in their future endeavors.

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE ROAD RUNNERS  
CLUB OF AMERICA

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 13, 2008*

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize the 50th Anniversary of the Road Runners Club of America. The initial organizational meeting took place on February 22, 1958, in a small hotel room in New York City. Five running clubs emerged from that meeting. Today, the RRCA has more than 700 member clubs, representing 180,000 distance runners nationwide. Included among these are 18 clubs from