

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

Tennessee with a total of 5,600 members. The Murfreesboro Pacers and the Murfreesboro Half Marathon are among them.

In the late 1950s, jogging for health and fitness was practically unheard of and there were very few distance racing events in the United States. The Long Distance Log, publication with a circulation of 126 readers, was the chief means of communication with distance runners. In the August 1957 issue of the Long Distance Log an editorial by Olympian Browning Ross proposed developing an organization for American distance runners. The concept was modeled after the Road Runners Club of the UK, which was founded in 1952. He suggested that membership include not only runners, but also officials, race sponsors, coaches and more. Ross envisioned the group would encourage running, meet regularly, raise funds, coordinate schedules, recruit sponsors and promote competition in long-distance races.

Response to the concept was positive; meetings were held in December 1957 and shortly thereafter, the Middle Atlantic Road Runners Club was established. And on February 22, 1958, the Road Runners Club of America was born.

Meeting at the Paramount Hotel in New York City, Ross and nine others discussed the general direction for the organization and developed the basic operating structure. Ross was named acting provisional president. The first RRCA National Championship races were awarded, and events were held in Chicago, New Jersey and Philadelphia.

Interest in the RRCA increased and by April 1958, the New York Road Runners Club, now the New York Road Runners, was established with 29 members. In February 1959, the Michigan Road Runners Club was established in Detroit by Hugh Jascourt and Frank McBride. Several months later, the RRCA held an annual meeting at the Paramount Hotel in New York City. The group elected president Dick Donohue, treasurer Steve Thomas, and co-secretaries Tom Osler and Browning Ross. They served as the first officially elected officers of the RRCA.

At the 1960 annual meeting Ted Corbitt was elected president. "Those were tough days, days of survival [for the RRCA]", Corbitt wrote. "Instead of recognizing the good work the RRCA was doing to promote distance running, the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) refused to admit the RRCA as a member club and took the position that the RRCA was illegal." In those days, the AAU was the ruling body of sport; they advised the RRCA to function solely as a social or fraternal group and not conduct races.

The early 1960s saw the development of new running clubs around the country. By the end of the RRCA's third year, its members had hosted over 600 races around the country compared to the previous handful of races.

Over the years, the RRCA has been credited with developing course certification programs, establishing the first events for recreational joggers, removing age requirements for racing, encouraging competitive opportunities for women, creating a Hall of Fame for distance runners, and obtaining insurance and IRS tax-exempt status for member clubs.

Many important publications have been developed by the RRCA including fact sheets on cold and hot weather running, safety for runners, guidelines for buying a pair of running

shoes, tips for helping children start running and many more.

By the 1980s, RRCA membership included 400 clubs and elected its first woman president, Henley "Gibble" Gabeau. The first edition of the RRCA Children's Running Booklet and the Parent & Teacher's Curriculum authored by Don Kardong, an Olympic marathoner and future RRCA president, and Jim Ferstle were circulated to thousands for clubs, teachers, schools and more.

More recently the RRCA has developed a coaching certification program, as well as the Roads Scholar Program to support aspiring international caliber American distance runners. In 1997, the RRCA gave a grant through the new Roads Scholar Program to Deena Drossin (Kastor), a young distance runner who went on to win the bronze medal in the 2004 Athens Olympic marathon.

Over the last 50 years, the RRCA has stayed true to its mission. The future of long-distance running and the RRCA's impact on the sport will continue to be written for years to come.

CONGRATULATING THE YMCA OF  
MICHIANA ON ITS 125TH ANNI-  
VERSARY

HON. JOE DONNELLY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 13, 2008

Mr. DONNELLY. Madam Speaker, today I wish to congratulate the YMCA of Michiana. On March 19, 2008 the Michiana YMCA will celebrate 125 years of steadfast dedication to building strong individuals, families and communities.

The YMCA was launched in 1882 back when Clement Studebaker was president of the Studebaker Company and local resident Schuyler Colfax was the Vice-President of the United States. In order to celebrate Studebaker's 50 years of success in the community and in business, the Studebaker Company established the YMCA, beginning a proud tradition of service. Sports programs flourished over the coming decades. Famed Notre Dame coach Knute Rockne even taught football during the summer at the Michiana YMCA affiliate Camp Eberhart.

Michiana was blessed with an especially successful YMCA. During the 1950s it developed the nation's largest Indian Guide program and started the Indian Maiden program. An impressive tennis program was also developed that rivaled the nation's best. During the 1960s, two newer facilities were built, a more family oriented approach was pursued to encourage both girls and boys to participate and the Urban Youth Services Program was started. Today the YMCA offers physical fitness activities, aquatics, youth and adult sports leagues and many other programs that improve the lives of people of all ages.

These are exciting times for the YMCA as a new three-year Strategic Plan is being implemented. The Michiana community has benefited from the positive influence of the YMCA on the community for over a century. Today I salute the Michiana YMCA and wish them continued success.

DR. VIDA DAVOUDI—CHANGING  
THE WORLD ONE STUDENT AT A  
TIME

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 13, 2008

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, today I have the privilege to recognize Dr. Vida Davoudi of Kingwood, TX. Her life as an Iranian immigrant turned proud American citizen is an inspirational tale of not only living the American Dream but of someone who diligently works daily to improve it for others.

Her journey to success in America began early. With encouragement from her parents, they told her to dream big and that the key to great achievement was to obtain an education. While in high school, Davoudi became a foreign exchange student to the United States through the American Field Service Program as well as a sponsorship from a Rotary Club. For one year, she lived with an American family and fell in love with the democratic political system of the United States.

After returning to Iran to graduate from high school, Dr. Davoudi participated in a competitive exam conducted by American International Development and was awarded a four-year, full scholarship to attend American University of Beirut. Continuing her journey of academic excellence, she returned to the United States to attend graduate school at Southern Illinois University.

After Dr. Davoudi earned her masters and doctorate degrees in political science, she returned to her country and ran for a seat in the Iranian Parliament. Davoudi won and become the youngest member ever elected. She served for three years in the national assembly representing the city of Tehran and championed issues such as the abolition of polygamy and divorce law reform. She left Iran for the United States shortly before the Shah of Iran was overthrown in 1979.

When Dr. Davoudi arrived in the United States, the only things she brought with her were a suitcase, her nine-year-old son and her education. Davoudi credits her education as the key ingredient to her success.

"Education was the only thing that enabled us to survive," she said. "I have no doubt that education is the key to opening doors and improving lives financially and intellectually."

She was hired as a government professor at Kingwood College in 1989 and has used the opportunity to impact the lives of numerous young people.

For example, a recently divorced student approached Davoudi one day in tears. The young woman told her that she was having great difficulty coping with her divorce and wanted to drop her class. Davoudi told the woman that she would not let her withdraw, but instead would provide her with flexibility and whatever she needed in order to complete the course. The young lady successfully finished Davoudi's class and eventually became a practicing nurse. Years later, she was very thankful to Davoudi for not letting her quit during a difficult time in her life.

Davoudi is also the faculty sponsor for the college's Student Government Association. She fosters leadership development in her students by actively encouraging them every year to seek state-level positions in the organization. Through her diligent efforts and advice,