

academic career to her future accomplishments.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MATTHEW SCHNIREL

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 30, 2009

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Matthew Schnirel, a lifelong member of the Buffalo, NY community. He died tragically when the single engine plane he was riding in crashed just east of Cleveland, OH the afternoon of April 28, 2009. Schnirel was helping Michael Doran, his associate at the Doran and Murphy Law firm and pilot of the plane, with his ongoing fight for the railroad workers of Ohio. The two were on their way back to Buffalo.

Making Matthew's death all the more heart-rending was the fact that the 26 year old was just starting his life and career. He returned from earning an undergraduate degree in history at the University at Albany to graduate from the University at Buffalo Law School in 2008. Matthew passed the Bar Exam in January 2009 when he began work as an attorney at Doran & Murphy. He and his longtime girlfriend, Lauren, recently purchased a home in a Buffalo suburb, where he is missed by parents, brother and two sisters.

Matthew's parents, a salesman and an emergency room nurse, taught him the values of hard work and helping others and he hoped to put those values to use as a civil litigator to help those injured or wronged by the carelessness of others. An avid competitor in nationwide trial competitions Schnirel was described as a "superstar in the making" by Christopher Murphy, a partner at the law firm where he worked. His life and spirit will be remembered by his family and friends for his hard work ethic and contribution to his community.

Madam Speaker, I offer my deepest condolences to Matthew's family, his girlfriend, Lauren, and all those whose lives he touched. Our community grieves the loss of this young and promising life.

HONORING SONIA LEROIA RUSSELL

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 30, 2009

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise in honor of Sonia LeRoia Russell for her contributions to both society and the arts. Through her poetry, Ms. Russell has impacted the lives of many, both locally in New York and throughout our nation. Her recent work commemorating the election of President Obama has been widely cited and read. For these reasons and many others, I believe that Ms. Russell is deserving of recognition.

An esteemed author, poet and publisher, Ms. Russell has enriched the community within which she lives through her sustained contributions to society. Through these numerous contributions, Ms. Russell is proud to both represent and actively participate in the large, influential and diverse African American community in New York and beyond. In addition to

her successful poetic, publishing and writing ventures, Ms. Russell gives back to her community in various other fashions. Formerly, Ms. Russell held the presidency of the first poetry ministry with the Holy Unity Baptist Church located in Queens, NY. In keeping with that trend, Ms. Russell is currently ministering poetry at the Living Water Church in Harlem, NY. Writing and orating for special events, Ms. Russell lends her strong, poetic voice to her community. In addition, Ms. Russell is also a member of the Music & Fine Arts Ministry where she writes and sings songs for the choir. Further, Ms. Russell also writes poetry for important community events, such as weddings and anniversaries. Ms. Russell's recent work commemorating the Presidency of Barack Obama and the African American struggle for civil rights and equality has been well received and further exemplifies her continued efforts at serving her community in lending her important voice to contemporary issues.

Our country, built on the premises of equality, freedom of speech, and a vocal citizenry, needs talented individuals like Ms. Russell in order to fulfill these founding principles. In addition, the arts, in general, play a vital role in our society, enriching our communities and inspiring our youth to confront their future circumstances in creative and innovation ways. For her efforts in both vocalizing the experiences of her community and county and in stimulating the arts, I am thankful to Ms. Russell.

The work of Ms. Russell is inspiring, and I am grateful to her for all that she has accomplished. I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing the gratitude of the U.S. Congress for her contributions to society.

The following is the aforementioned poem authored by Ms. Russell entitled "Inauguration Poem for President Barack Obama":

INAUGURATION POEM FOR PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

I laid my head down and sleep stole my thoughts
And I drifted like a disembodied soul
I began to see figures moving slowly in my haze
And I heard a familiar refrain remind me of my role

softly—"It's been a long time coming"
So many before me who paved the way to today

Many lives who unknowingly touched mine
So many died before their work saw fruition
Many who stood on that freedom, faith, line
softly—"And I know change is gonna come"

"Not in vain," I hear them shouting, "hold on fast."

"It's not for skin that we are striving, but for equal eyes,

Equal tongue, equal ears, equal image, equal time!"

Now there's no more lamenting that we can't rise

softly—"There's been times that I thought I couldn't last for long"

I watched with suspicion many take up the cause

As we were beaten down, lifted up, then given our cross

I watched behind the fine lines of others sacrifice

As we were being defined by the way we handled loss

softly—"But now I think I'm able to carry on."

Frederick Douglass was the first black man to aspire

He was on the ticket as vice President to Victoria Woodhull

Their 1872 Equal Rights Party did not make it to the top

But the ink was spilled and all felt the inevitable pull

softly—"It's been a long time coming"

And the people sang, "Run Jesse run, keep hope alive,

Don't let Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. have died in vain!"

There are spiritually, mentally, and physically scarred folks

Who don't believe this country can look upon them without disdain

softly—"It's been a long time coming"

America watched a people stand tall against oppression

Strong men holding signs reminding doubters "I am a man"

Then time convinced some that this was not the case

Until a new sign was held up that insisted, "Yes we can!"

So as I rose up from my dream and allowed reality to sink in

I saw a man of African, and white American descent

Representing all people of America as a spiritual, patriot

On the values and principles that this country was meant

softly—"It's been a long time coming"

And I cried as I remembered the ghosts of my dream

Those who believed and had faith that change would occur

Those ghosts spanned the ages of time before Christ

And had more to do with prejudices and fear than mere color

softly—"It's been a long time coming"

Now let us pray that God lights and directs the path

Of the one whom we the people chose to lead us

Let us pray that the ghosts of the past will always remind him

And that Jesus will strengthen his resolve and his purpose

softly—"And I knew change was gonna come"

And it did, yes it did
God bless you and keep you President Barack Obama!

—Sonia "LeRoia" Russell.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "AFGHAN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT ACT OF 2009"

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 30, 2009

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, today, along with Representative TAMMY BALDWIN (D-WI), I am reintroducing the "Afghan Women Empowerment Act of 2009." This legislation would authorize \$115 million each year from FY2010 through FY2012 for programs in Afghanistan that benefit women and girls as well as the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs. The funding would be directed toward important needs including medical care, education, vocational training, legal assistance, protection against trafficking, and civil

participation. Senator BOXER has introduced similar legislation, S. 229, in the Senate.

Although women are guaranteed equal rights in the Afghan constitution, they continue to face challenges including intimidation, discrimination, targeted violence, and efforts to restrict their legal rights. In March the parliament of Afghanistan approved the Shi'ite Personal Status Law which was signed by President Karzai. According to the United Nations, one provision of the law would have the effect of legalizing marital rape by mandating that a wife cannot refuse sex to her husband unless she is ill. In addition, the law would forbid women from working or receiving education without their husbands' permission; restrict their ability to leave the house without a male relative; and aims to strip women of their rights as mothers by granting child custody only to men. President Karzai has ordered that the law be reviewed, and has said that changes will be made to any articles which contradict Afghanistan's Constitution and Islamic Sharia. I believe that the United States has an obligation to ensure that women and girls have the opportunities that they were denied under the Taliban. It is imperative that we provide the support needed to ensure that the rights of women are protected in the new Afghanistan.

PUGET SOUND ENERGY

HON. DAVID G. REICHERT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 30, 2009

Mr. REICHERT. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the wonderful work being done by Puget Sound Energy. Located in Bellevue, Washington, they continue to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote energy efficiency through investment and smart ideas. I'm proud to represent this company in Congress.

In late March, the Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, named Puget Sound Energy one of 89 "Energy Star" organizations across the country. Through its Residential New Construction "Energy Star" Lighting Program, Puget Sound Energy is working to increase demand for qualified lighting products in new, single-family homes. Beginning in 2008, they doubled investment in partner outreach as part of an ongoing regional fixture program. Serving as the facilitator, 16,000 Energy Star fixtures and 39,000 Energy Star CFLs were installed in new homes, representing a 100 percent increase in energy savings from 2007.

The work Puget Sound Energy is doing in Washington State is not only beneficial to our environment; it is also beneficial to the economy. Customers can take advantage of energy rebates for improving efficiency in their homes through the installation of new windows, doors and improved insulation, among other many other things. In 2008 alone, Puget Sound Energy customers collectively saved \$30 million on energy bills and helped support more than 450 new "green" jobs.

Utilizing green technology and improvements positively impacts our environment, our communities and—especially important during these tough days—our economy. The work Puget Sound Energy is doing in Washington is exactly the type of forward-thinking, reason-

able work that businesses and individual Americans should strive for, and I congratulate them on their new classification as a leader in energy-efficient technologies.

HONORING AND CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF MICHAEL H. DORAN

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 30, 2009

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor an outstanding citizen of Buffalo and Western New York and a dear friend who will be deeply missed, Michael H. Doran. Mike Doran, a well-known attorney in Buffalo and the devoted father of two children, was tragically killed in a plane accident on Tuesday, April 30, 2009. This is a devastating loss to his family and friends, and to our community.

A Buffalo native and alum of the University at Buffalo and the University of Buffalo School of Law, Mike would have celebrated his fifteen year anniversary with his law practice, Doran & Murphy, with his law partner, Christopher Murphy, this Saturday. Mike was on his way home from working on a case in Cleveland to attend his daughter's school function when his single-engine plane crashed. Those who witnessed the crash say Mike steered the failing plane away from a nearby neighborhood and are calling him a hero.

For over 25 years, Mike has represented those afflicted with serious injury and occupational disease, as well as wrongful death cases. He was most recently working with Roswell Park Cancer Institute in promoting a program designed to help detect lung cancer in high risk patients. The early detection program was proven effective in prolonging life and curing lung cancers.

Mike was deeply loved by his family, friends and the community. He was very involved in numerous organizations including the board of directors of the Western New York Leukemia Society, the University of Buffalo Center for Children and Families, and was an active volunteer with the University of Buffalo Law School Alumni Association. Michael was an FAA certified pilot, an avid extreme skier, and was the 2008 champion of the Buffalo Croquet and Debating Club.

Madam Speaker, I offer my deepest condolences to Mike's family. My thoughts are with them, and I share their grief of this wonderful man I am honored to have called a dear friend. His loss is felt by the many lives he touched in this community.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE 34TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FALL OF SAIGON

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 30, 2009

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in remembrance and recognition of the 34th anniversary of the fall of Saigon. This historical date commemorates the end of the Vietnam War, and represents the beginning of a new life for tens of thousands of Vietnamese

people, as they began their hopeful journey to America. Thirty-four years later, I rise to honor the memory and the sacrifice of the hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese soldiers, American soldiers and civilians who lost their lives during this time.

After the fall of Saigon, thousands of Vietnamese began a treacherous exodus out of Vietnam, determined to rebuild their lives. Their daring escape was by boat and on foot, through thick jungles, over jagged mountains, through snake-infested rivers and across turbulent seas. They became refugees in many nations, including America, with nothing more than the clothes on their backs and the hope for freedom in their hearts.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor and remembrance of the hundreds of thousands of men and women who struggled for peace and freedom. I also rise in honor of local agencies and churches such as The Vietnamese Community of Greater Cleveland and the St. Helena Catholic Church, which offer havens of support, services and hope to immigrants from all over the world. The Vietnamese culture, through the care and commitment of its people, has flourished in Cleveland and across America, while remaining connected to its ancient cultural and historical traditions.

JACKSON CAMERON OTTO MAKES HIS MARK ON THE WORLD

HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 30, 2009

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my daughter Catherine and her husband Tim Otto on the birth of their third child and my sixth grandchild, Jackson Cameron Otto. Jackson was born on Sunday, April 26, 2009, at 2:42 a.m. and weighed 7 pounds and 14 ounces, and was 21.25 inches long. My wife Faye and I are delighted to welcome Jackson as he joins our five other grandchildren, William, Virginia, Cameron, Walker, and Andrew. Faye and I wish Catherine and Tim and big brothers William and Andrew great happiness upon this new addition to our family.

Faye and I are truly blessed by the arrival of little Jackson Cameron Otto. The birth of a new child is a joyous occasion that reminds us of the promise of a new life. Children remind us of the incredible miracle of life, and they keep us young-at-heart. Every day they show us a new way to view the world.

My family and I are looking forward to spending a lot of time with our new bundle of joy and introducing him to all of our friends and neighbors in North Carolina's Second Congressional District.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT HATE CRIMES PREVENTION ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 29, 2009

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to declare my strong support for H.R. 1913, the