

reefs have an immeasurable environmental value. They provide awe and inspiration to divers and snorkelers from all over the world, and are a driving force for our tourism and fishing industries. In Broward County alone, coral reefs contribute over \$2 billion annually to our local economy.

Coral reefs, however, are in nothing short of a crisis. Faced with dangers both man-made and natural, including global warming, over-fishing, coastal pollution, and bleaching, coral reefs are dying in alarming numbers. In fact, scientists estimate that 60 percent of coral reefs may disappear before 2050.

That's why I'm proud to support the legislation before us today. H.R. 860 will reauthorize the landmark Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, which created the Coral Reef Conservation Program to directly issue grants to States, territories, and other partners for coral reef conservation projects. The act also requires the development of a Coral Reef Action Strategy and authorizes NOAA to undertake research, mapping, management, and education and outreach activities to protect coral reef ecosystems.

In addition to reauthorizing these important provisions, H.R. 860 will make important changes to the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000. One will be to take advantage of the vast resources and expertise at our prestigious universities and research institutes. For example, the three U.S. Coral Reef Institutes at Florida, Puerto Rico, and Hawaii conduct outstanding scientific research, and support State and local coral reef resource managers and local action strategies.

I personally can attest to their great work because the National Coral Reef Institute, NCRI, is located in my backyard, in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. NCRI and the other institutes serve as a ready source of knowledge, research, monitoring, and management support for corals and coral reefs via partnerships between academia, NOAA, and other Federal, State, and local managers.

Another important aspect of this legislation will be to authorize NOAA to respond to vessel groundings. Since 1994, we've seen 12 large ships run aground on sensitive coral reefs near Ft. Lauderdale. The last one, occurring almost 2 years ago, involved a freighter that left a 20-foot swath of destruction about 100 feet long. Whatever coral that once lived there sadly is now gone.

Part of the solution to vessel groundings is adopting better prevention strategies, such as closing anchorage sites in shallow waters that are close to coral reefs. But we also need to respond faster when a vessel runs aground because the sooner the corals can be restored, the better chances it has for survival. Expanding NOAA's authority to act will allow NOAA to utilize their experience and resources to both assess the damage and restore the reefs.

Mr. Speaker, we, in this distinguished body, frequently debate contentious issues that divide America. But not with this bill and not with this issue. Protecting a national treasure such as coral reefs brings people together because everyone understands their vital importance—Democrats and Republicans alike. That's why I am confident that we'll have broad bipartisan support to pass H.R. 860. I thank my colleagues in advance.

IN CELEBRATION OF SAINTS REST  
BAPTIST CHURCH'S 65TH ANNI-  
VERSARY

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 23, 2009*

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Saints Rest Baptist Church of Fresno, California, on this ceremonious day, in celebration of their 65th anniversary.

The Saints Rest Baptist Church was organized by the late Rev. A.W. White and their motto of "Spreading Hope in the Midst of Hopelessness" remains inspirational today. Their mission statement rightfully explains the reason for their long-standing and continuing service to the community of Fresno: "The mission of Saints Rest Baptist Church is to become a Christ Centered Community within the community that transforms the community by providing relevant ministries that speaks to the mind, body, and soul of humankind."

The community of West Fresno grew rapidly during the early years of the Second World War. Noticing the growth of California Avenue and knowing no church existed to accommodate residents of that area, a prolonged and dedicated fundraising venture began for the purpose of building a church.

In 1945, groundbreaking ceremonies were conducted and the church was officially named Saints Rest Baptist Church. Only 1 year later, the church was able to add four deacons to serve the Saints Rest family. The church continued to grow and the faithful congregation endured worship services in a metal building located just north of the foundation with the knowledge and belief that this sacrifice would promote growth and allow them to continue their mission.

Former Pastor Chester Riggins, who served the church as pastor for 44 years from 1965 to 2009, helped to erect and then dismantle the metal building. It was in 1950 that the permanent building was officially erected and, poignantly, its first funeral service was for that of the founding father, Rev. A.W. White.

Under the leadership of Pastor Chester Riggins, many programs were instituted at the church, including the House-to-House Revival, Community New Life and Big Brothers and Sisters. Additionally, the community stewardship expanded to include Marriage Workshops, the Food and Clothing Ministry, and the support of the Poverello House and the Fresno Rescue Mission. Senior Pastor Shane Scott has now assumed the leadership at Saints Rest and continues to expand upon the outstanding community service the church provides to the community. As a first course of business, Pastor Scott immediately undertook the project of renaming East Florence Avenue to East Chester Riggins Avenue, in memoriam for the outstanding dedication and service of Pastor Riggins. The Planning Commission accepted the renaming and a dedication ceremony was held in June 2007 and the address for Saints Rest is now 1550 E. Rev. Chester Riggins Avenue.

Today, 65 years after its inception, the Saints Rest Baptist Church continues to be a shining light for the community of Fresno and its worshippers. Please join me in recognizing Senior Pastor Shane Scott and the Saints Rest family on the occasion of their 65th anni-

versary and wish them well as they continue to provide a meaningful place of worship for their congregation and the community. I am proud of the spiritual substance Saints Rest provides to our valley; the church's many efforts inspire and bring support to all of us.

CHINN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL,  
PARKVILLE, MISSOURI

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 23, 2009*

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Chinn Elementary School in Parkville, MO. The school opened in 1959, and was officially named Thomas B. Chinn Elementary School in honor of Thomas B. Chinn, in gratitude for his long service and as a tribute to his profession.

Mr. Conyers was the first principal of the school in 1959. Chinn started as a 13 room structure and contained 1st through 6th grade. Since 1959, there have been 2 additions to the building, increasing grade level classrooms to 24, as well as several additional small rooms and a new gymnasium. Over the past 50 years, Chinn has had thousands of students pass through the halls.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Chinn Elementary for the learning foundation it has provided to so many students for so many years.

A TRIBUTE TO RICK WAGNER

**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS-**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, September 23, 2009*

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remember Rick Wagner, Director of Litigation for the Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A "Brooklyn A" in East New York, who suddenly passed away in his home on September 20, 2009. Mr. Wagner was well known as a champion on behalf of Brooklyn's poorest tenants and homeowners.

Mr. Wagner was one of the leading foreclosure defense lawyers in the United States, single handedly leading the effort to educate and enlighten the legal community on the availability of a wide range of homeowner defenses to foreclosure actions. He fought daily against rampant predatory lending and deed thefts, often spearheading innovative new legal strategies. In the early 1990s, he pioneered the use of civil racketeering laws against landlords in East New York, winning a major victory when they were ordered to return deeds to their tenants.

His most recent focus was advocating for consistency, simplification and ease of access to loan modifications—in his words, "basic rules of the road to help homeowners keep their homes". Mr. Wagner's lasting legacy will be his passion and commitment to social justice, and the application of his legal acumen for the needy. Under his leadership, Brooklyn A has cemented its sterling reputation as a model community-based law practice embedded in and responsive to the neighborhoods it serves. He worked tirelessly and will be remembered dearly by the many lives he touched.