

now, those alternatives are often far more economical than using fossil fuels.

Whether it is methane power, wind power, solar power, geothermal power, or the use of hydrogen fuel cells as an alternative to gasoline in cars, we must cut out dependence on foreign oil now. We will be better off environmentally, our national security will be enhanced, and—as the Washington co-op has so boldly demonstrated—we may well be better off economically as well.

In short, we need an energy revolution by breaking our dependence on fossil fuels. I am very, very confident our small State of Vermont will lead this. We will be noticed by not only the country but the world.

My congratulations to the Washington Electric Co-Op for showing America, with its new facility in Coventry, what can and should be done to make our energy sources secure and sustainable.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MARILYN N. MUSGRAVE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 20, 2005

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Mr. Speaker, due to meetings during the series of votes on Thursday, September 15, I did not make it back to the House floor in time for the last vote (roll-call vote No. 475).

H. Res. 473 was to establish the Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina.

Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted “yes” to establish the hurricane commission.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 889, COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 2005

HON. JUANITA MILLENDER-McDONALD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 20, 2005

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Chairman, as a Member on the Coast Guard Subcommittee, I want to thank you and Ranking Member FILNER for your continued leadership in bringing this bill to the House floor today.

Year after year a select group of Members come to the Floor and sing the praises of the Coast Guard on how this agency continues to do more with less.

Recently, our Nation has witnessed what we have been addressing each year.

This month we witnessed just how vital the Coast Guard is to the safety and security of our country.

The Coast Guard was the only Federal agency that responded in the Gulf Coast States in a timely and efficient manner.

Here are the Search and Rescue numbers for the Coast Guard in response to Katrina: 24,132 lives saved to date; 33,537 lives saved or evacuated to date; 12,534 Cumulative lives saved by air resources; 11,598 Cumulative lives saved by surface resources; 9,405 Cumulative hospital evacuations.

Where would we be without the Coast Guard during the devastation of Hurricane Katrina?

As we speak here today—the Coast Guard continues to save lives. We must support them! We need more agencies like the Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2005 authorizes \$8.7 billion for the Coast Guard and authorizes \$1.6 billion for the Coast Guard’s Deepwater program to replace aging ships and aircraft, and requires a new implementation plan.

This bill before us today is important—now more than ever. It is our obligation to provide the Coast Guard with the tools to heighten their service.

I will argue that we need to go further as a Congress and increase the appropriated funding for the Deepwater program. I hope that with the Coast Guard’s strong showing in the gulf States during Katrina validates why the appropriations committee and the Administration should make a greater commitment to the Coast Guard and the Deepwater program this year by increasing funding for the program.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to reiterate a request for a joint port security hearing with the Coast Guard subcommittee and the Full Homeland Security Committee.

In the aftermath of Katrina, we are reminded just how much work needs to be done in coordinating with Federal and local agencies and emergency responders.

Our approach to port security is no different. The Coast Guard is responsible for securing the 95,000 coast lines that includes Great Lakes and inland waterways. This is our longest border. Given the miscommunication surrounding FEMA, the Department of Homeland Security and local and State emergency responders, a joint port security hearing is an excellent opportunity to make sure we are all on the same page—if there were to be a catastrophe at one of our ports—terrorist or natural—we will be able to respond and save lives.

In closing, I urge my colleagues to vote for this important bill that provides for the Coast Guard to continue to do its extraordinary job.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to continuing to work with you on these and other vital issues that face our country.

RECOGNIZING RITA BALIAN

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 20, 2005

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the exceptional contributions of Rita Balian, a humanitarian activist and community leader who has worked tirelessly on behalf of women and children in the United States and Armenia.

Ever since the earthquake in Armenia in 1988, Ms. Balian has dedicated her time, talent and expertise to help the people of Armenia. She has realized many projects in support of women, schools, and universities. Since 1996, she has concentrated her efforts on women’s health, taking American technology, management skills and medical expertise to Armenia.

She is the founder, president and chief executive officer of the Armenian American Cultural Association (AACA), a non-profit charitable organization incorporated in 1995 in Ar-

lington, Virginia. Through AACA, Ms. Balian established the Armenian American Wellness Center in Yerevan, a humanitarian project dedicated to saving, prolonging, and improving the lives of women through the early and accurate detection of breast and cervical cancer and to providing primary health care services to ensure the good health and well-being of families in Armenia. To facilitate the Wellness Center’s work, Ms. Balian partnered the Center with seven major U.S. medical institutions. Since the Wellness Center’s establishment in 1997, it has screened over 60,000 women and saved the lives of over 1,500 through the early detection of life-threatening illnesses.

Ms. Balian has dedicated herself to expanding the services offered at the Wellness Center and providing increased access to those services. The Center has added protocols in gynecology, family medicine, and pathology and reaches out to Armenians living in rural areas through monthly outreach missions and the establishment of two satellite clinics.

Along with her work on behalf of the Wellness Center, Ms. Balian’s accomplishments also include the establishment of a sister-city program between the cities of Gyumri, Armenia and Alexandria, Virginia. She co-chaired the Alexandria/Gyumri Sister City Committee for six years, organized several municipal, cultural and educational exchanges and established the Alexandria Armenian Day Festival, which is now an annual celebration.

Through her work with the Armenian General Benevolence Union (AGBU), the largest and oldest Armenian philanthropic organization in the world, Mrs. Balian and her husband cofounded the AGBU New York Summer Intern Program for Armenian college students from around the world. She continues to manage the intern program, which is now in its nineteenth year.

She has received many awards in recognition of her work with the Wellness Center; most notably the “Spirit of Life Cancer Advocacy Award” in September 2003 from the International Spirit of Life Foundation and the Washington Cancer Institute, the “Outstanding Citizen Achievement Award” from the United States Agency for International Development in January 2003, and the Armenian Church’s highest medal of honor, the St. Nersess Shnorhali Medal, bestowed upon her through a Pontifical Encyclical by His Holiness, the Catholicos Karekin II, in October 2001.

The Armenian people have acknowledged Ms. Balian’s humanitarian work as well. She has received honorary doctoral degrees from three different universities in Armenia, and in April 1996, Rita and her husband, Vartkess Balian, became honorary citizens of the Republic of Armenia through a special presidential decree presented to them at the Armenian Embassy in Washington, DC.

She has also been honored by the United Nations for her advocacy on behalf of women’s and children’s rights and by the American Red Cross for her leadership in obtaining humanitarian assistance for the victims of the 1988 earthquake in Armenia.

Since March of 2004, Ms. Balian has served as a member of Governor Warner’s Virginia/Armenia Advisory Commission.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize the numerous accomplishments of Rita Balian. Her dedication to the people of Armenia and her efforts to increase international understanding reflect a deep sense of purpose and

remarkable ability to achieve difficult and worthy goals. Her work serves as an inspiration to us all.

ON THE PASSING OF SIMON
WIESENTHAL

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 20, 2005

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Simon Wiesenthal, a man who survived the atrocities of the Holocaust and dedicated his life to ensuring that the world never forgets the more than six million Jews who perished during one of the darkest periods in human history.

Mr. Wiesenthal brought to justice more than 1,000 Nazi war criminals. He will be remembered for his fight against ignorance and anti-Semitism through a dedication to teaching others about the origins and realities of the Holocaust. He spent his life working to ensure that the unfathomable savagery of the Holocaust would not be repeated.

Today as we mourn the loss of Mr. Wiesenthal, we celebrate his spirit and honor his life and work by vowing to carry on his mission of eradicating intolerance and injustice.

A TRIBUTE TO BLM DESERT DISTRICT
MANAGER LINDA HANSEN

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 20, 2005

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Bureau of Land Management California Desert District Manager Linda Hansen, a dedicated public servant who has been a leader in balancing the protection of our vast public lands in the California desert with the needs of our public to use those lands in the most beneficial way.

Throughout my years here in the House of Representatives, I have had the honor and pleasure of representing much of the Southern California desert lands, which range from the Sierra Nevada on the north to the Mexican border. The land itself is some of our nation's most unique and unspoiled, and the people who live, work and recreate there are very unique in their own ways. Many desert peaks provide vistas of hundreds of miles in every direction with no sign of civilization. But often a short drive down a canyon road can reveal a group of homes, a working ranch or rare mineral mine that are every bit as vital to the desert experience.

It takes a special leader to balance the needs of the desert lands and their users. For the past 3½ years those needs have been very well balanced by the capable hands of Linda Hansen, the manager of the 10.5 million-acre California Desert District of the BLM. She has found ways to protect desert dunes and grant access to off-road vehicle riders. She has helped preserve desert wildlife like the Bighorn Sheep and met the needs of the thousands of hunters who know those arid lands so well.

Linda Hansen joined the BLM by chance 28 years ago, taking a job as a receptionist in the Carson City office after her family moved there. She worked her way up through the ranks over the years, serving in both the state and national offices, and was finally named in 2002 to be the first female director of the Desert District.

During her three years, the BLM has completed regional land use plans to guide management of public lands in the Northern and Eastern Mojave Desert, Coachella Valley, and the Imperial Sand Dunes. She also oversaw the final stages of development of the largest Habitat Conservation Plan in the United States in the West Mojave Desert, slated for completion by the end of 2005.

She has improved the working relationship with her federal management partners, including the Forest Service, National Park Service, Department of Defense, and Fish and Wildlife Service. An Imperial Valley native, she has helped forge a compromise that allowed off-road enthusiasts to use the Imperial Dunes, while at the same time protecting much of the Dunes' fragile eco-system. At the same time, she has forged the United Desert Gateway, helping communities like El Centro and Brawley reap the benefits of the increased visitation there. Along the way, she has gained a reputation for being fair and patient in dealing with everyone who is dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the desert.

Mr. Speaker, after 31 years of federal service and 28 years with the BLM, Linda Hansen will soon be retiring. Please join me in thanking her for her dedication, patience and perseverance, and wishing her well in her future endeavors.

IMPLEMENTING THE MICROENTERPRISE
RESULTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2004

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 20, 2005

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, today I chaired a hearing examining the implementation of PL 108-484, the Microenterprise Results and Accountability Act of 2004.

Earlier this year, I traveled to coastal areas of Indonesia, Thailand, and Sri Lanka which had been devastated by the tsunami. The destruction from those 50-foot-high waves was almost total, and the vast majority of individuals affected were fisherman and other working poor whose boats and nets and livelihoods had been completely swept away. While they gratefully received the emergency food, aid and shelter which our military and our USAID disaster relief teams so efficiently provided, in the medium term, what these folks really needed and wanted was a small loan to enable them to rebuild their businesses and become self-sufficient again.

The same could be said of areas in our own country which have been devastated by Hurricane Katrina. While I am not aware of any microloan programs operating in New Orleans, having read Dr. Morduch's testimony which he will give later today, I do know that a micro-credit group, Accion New York, serves over 6,000 customers in the New York metropolitan area.

Whether here or abroad, I have long been a fan of microcredit programs because I have seen them work. The term "foreign aid" often has a bad connotation—and there are some good reasons why, too. Many times in the past, foreign aid was delivered in a topdown manner to corrupt governments and organizations, where it never really reached the intended recipients.

Microenterprise, on the other hand, takes a totally different approach. It's a "trickle-up" approach that focuses on helping the poorest people on the planet build themselves up, little by little, into self-sufficiency by giving them access to financing. The success of microenterprise lending programs to empower entrepreneurs and borrowers in the developing world cannot be overstated.

Over two million clients are currently benefiting from USAID-assisted programs that provide the necessary capital through small loans, usually of a few hundred dollars or less, for entrepreneurs to start and expand their own small businesses. It is estimated that 97 percent of microenterprise loans are successfully repaid and 70 percent go to women, who are often very vulnerable, subjected to abuse, and in need of economic opportunities in the developing world. Microenterprise is a key vehicle to assist victims of trafficking and to raise the social and economic status of women around the world.

Microenterprise also complements the principles President Bush has outlined for more effective foreign aid through the Millennium Challenge Account, and is a key component for fulfilling the UN's Millennium Development Goals to eradicate world poverty by the year 2015. Business owners assisted by micro-lending are not only able to increase their own incomes, but through their own efforts, they create jobs and help economies grow.

Success stories from the beneficiaries of microenterprise are quite numerous. Take for example, Dorothy Eyiah from Ghana. Dorothy was resourceful, but she had no idea how she was going to support her AIDS-stricken sister and family when she brought them into her home in Ghana. She used to support herself selling ice, but that wasn't going to pay for the food and medicines she now needed. She started praying. All doors seemed shut until Dorothy met some women within her village who were part of an Opportunity International Trust Bank. The Trust Bank could help her grow a small business—providing her with financing, training, support. Five loans later, Dorothy is the secretary of her Trust Bank and runs three businesses, employing nine people from her village. She is content. Her sister is comfortable, all the children are in school, and their needs are being met. "God has been so good to me," she says.

Success stories such as this are what microfinance and the Microenterprise Results and Accountability Act of 2004 are all about. By building the best possible microenterprise program, we will be able to reach the greatest possible number of poor people with services that truly have an impact on their lives. As we compare the effectiveness of various methods of implementing microcredit programs, success will be measured by the ability to reach very poor people and other underserved populations, including women, and by the kind of impact these programs have on poor families. We are concerned not only with the efficient delivery of financial services, but also with the