

Iran pressures Azerbaijan to abolish visas between the two countries, which would lead to less control and more Iranians infiltration into Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is resisting this effort.

Occupied Azerbaijan (NK Region) is on the Iranian border, where alleged terrorist camps, narcotic trafficking and weapons trading goes on. Since Armenia has occupied this region of Azerbaijan, almost 16 percent of the total country, this activity has existed with the support of Iran. Azerbaijan is defenseless in trying to stop this activity, as long as Armenia occupies this region.

RECOGNIZING THE EAST TEXANS  
AGAINST LAWSUIT ABUSE

**HON. LOUIE GOHMERT**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 7, 2005*

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Texas' 1st Congressional District, I would like to recognize the efforts of the 3,000 members of the East Texans Against Lawsuit Abuse organization and the Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse in promoting Texas' fourth Lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week from October 3–7, 2005.

East Texans Against Lawsuit Abuse (ETALA) is a respected and effective organization that works to educate consumers about the human and financial costs associated with frivolous lawsuits. This organization has led successful efforts to reform our states medical malpractice system, reduce the number of frivolous lawsuits in Texas, ensure that Texans who are truly injured have access to our court system and educate Texans about how to become wise legal consumers.

ETALA is recognized locally for their efforts to encourage personal responsibility among local school children. For the second year, they are sponsoring a personal responsibility essay-writing contest among local sixth and seventh graders. What is most interesting and encouraging is that our children seem to understand this basic concept that has escaped so many adults.

We support ETALA in their efforts in support of civil justice reform and wish to thank their many supporters, board members and staff in their efforts. Through the courage and dedication of these individuals, what was once only a nice idea, has now become a reality. It has been my pleasure to work with ETALA in the past, and I look forward to working with them in the future.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HURRICANE  
DISASTER MORTGAGE  
MORATORIUM ACT OF 2005

**HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 7, 2005*

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce The Hurricane Disaster Mortgage Moratorium Act of 2005, which would provide a 6-month moratorium on mortgage payments owed by residential and commercial property owners who reside in the disaster areas of

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This bill would provide a temporary refuge from payment for those individuals and entities who are unable to make their mortgage payment obligations.

Mr. Speaker, as we know, the devastation wreaked by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita was of colossal proportion. The ensuing fallout of lost jobs, destroyed homes and shattered lives is equally devastating.

Needless to say, the figures that have begun to be compiled in the aftermath of the storm are staggering. Analysts with the National Association of Realtors are projecting that at least 200,000 homes in the Gulf Coast region have been destroyed or will have to be demolished. The U.S. Department of Commerce has estimated that uninsured losses could easily exceed \$100 billion. Sadly, up to a million Americans were displaced by the storms and many are still living in temporary shelters.

The Department of Labor job figures released today show that unemployment is up to 5.1 percent for September, up from a 4.9 percent pre-Katrina and Rita level and much higher than the 4.0 percent level we experienced during the 1990s. According to the Joint Economic Committee Democratic staff, the unemployment rate would in fact be 9.0 percent if the figure included those who are marginally attached to the labor force and those who are forced to work part-time because of the weak economy. The Houston Chronicle on October 6, 2005 reported that as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, at least 363,000 people have lost their jobs. These dismal numbers are likely to remain constant in the short-term as our nation rebuilds this region.

In fact, most of those unemployed as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita are expected to be out of work at least 6–9 months and we should only anticipate the indicators to increase. As we know, just this week we heard Mayor Ray Nagin of New Orleans inform that he has to let go of 3,000 municipal employees because the City cannot afford to pay them. This unfortunate scenario will surely be repeated to some extent throughout the region as municipal and state coffers dwindle from depleted revenue bases.

Whereas the number of job losses for the month of September is surprisingly only 35,000, the Department of Labor reported that last week, it received an additional 74,000 hurricane-related unemployment claims. In fact, nearly one in every five unemployed people—1.5 million Americans have been jobless for more than 26 weeks, the maximum number of weeks for receiving regular unemployment insurance benefits and the Hurricanes will only exacerbate these passive numbers.

The CBO predicts that the Hurricanes could actually cut job growth by between 280,000 and 400,000 jobs. Although it may sound obvious, Americans who have lost everything in a hurricane, who are not working and have little prospects of working in the near future cannot afford to pay their mortgages. This bill would provide them with a reprieve from their mortgage payments. Also, as it does not mandate forgiveness of this debt, this bill reflects the shared burden that our Nation will have to shoulder temporarily during this time of rebuilding.

Mr. Speaker, behind these figures are thousands of home and business owners whose entire livelihoods have been destroyed and who now face the prospect that the properties

they have worked a lifetime to purchase could be taken from them when they fall behind in their mortgages. This bill provides a temporary sanctuary from payment and stops the clock for any default or foreclosure proceedings and negative credit reporting.

Needless to say the economic effects of the Hurricanes are being felt in painful increments nationwide. However, for the Americans forced out of their homes by the Hurricanes, the economic effects are not coming in the form of a trickle, but a deluge.

The Hurricane Disaster Mortgage Moratorium Act of 2005 will ensure that during the moratorium, those Gulf Coast residents who cannot afford to pay their mortgages will not lose their homes or suffer the negative attendant consequences from non-payment. Let's not make these Americans suffer needlessly by facing the prospect of losing their homes twice. I urge my colleagues to support this effort.

ON THE 2ND PLACE FINISH OF  
THE EL PASO HIGH-Q  
TEAM AT THE NATIONAL ACADEMIC  
CHAMPIONSHIP

**HON. SILVESTRE REYES**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 7, 2005*

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, on June 13, 2005 a group of students from historic El Paso High School in my district of El Paso, Texas, after months of grueling preparation and a hard-fought season, finished second at the National Academic Championship in Chicago.

I congratulate the following El Paso High Tigers for their hard work and dedication: Blain Baurngard, Trevor Vargas, Alex Neuman, Robert Heyman, Emil Michal, and their coach, named Coach of the Year by the National Academic Championship, Gerard Neuman.

The El Paso High School High-Q Team made it to the final round with a combination of intelligence, teamwork and self-discipline. The team demonstrated the ability to come from behind and showed maturity beyond their years.

Mr. Speaker, on June 13, 2005 the El Paso High Tigers gave us a preview of the excellence we can expect from our city's young generations and showed El Paso is home to some of the best and brightest our Nation has to offer. I invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating the El Paso High-Q team on their second place finish at the National Academic Championship.

HONORING VICTOR AND MAE  
LOBUE

**HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 7, 2005*

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor two very special people, Victor and Mae LoBue, who are celebrating seventy-five years of marriage on September 10, 2005.

Victor LoBue and Mae DiSalvo were both born in 1910 in San Jose, in a neighborhood of Italian-American immigrants called "Little

Orchard" near the Sacred Heart Church. Both of their families were in the ranching and canning business. Vic and Mae each have three siblings, who all reside in San Jose, and Mae survives her late sister, Dolly.

Vic and Mae have been close since childhood when they met in elementary school. The nuns at school were constantly busy trying to interfere in the couple's endless chase, but to no avail! Vic would chase Mae, and when stopped, Mae would in turn chase Vic.

The couple married on September 10, 1930, at Sacred Heart Church in San Jose when Vic was twenty and Mae was nineteen. They settled into a home on Willow Street, near their cherry orchards, where Vic worked in the family business.

In 1966, when Vic became a partner in the Indian Wells Country Club, home of the "Bob Hope Classic Golf Tournament", Vic and Mae moved to Southern California. The couple has homes in Carmel Valley Ranch Country Club and Indian Wells Country Club. They have also maintained a long-time membership to The Thunderbird Club in Rancho Mirage.

Vic and Mae have one child, Victor, Jr. Victor, Jr. and his wife, Jeannie, lived in Gilroy for many years but moved to Indian Wells, California in 1990.

Vic has generously contributed to the Boys and Girls Clubs of San Jose throughout his life. He, along with his brother, Salvador, donated a room at Santa Clara University. Vic was an active member of the Jaycees, the San Jose Chamber of Commerce and the Santa Clara County Horseman's Association. He was also a member of the Sheriff's Posse.

Today, Vic and Mae divide their time between San Jose and Southern California. They have lived a long, healthy and happy life.

Congratulations to Vic and Mae LoBue on the occasion of their seventy-fifth wedding anniversary. Their marriage is a testament to happiness, commitment and fulfillment: What began as a childhood game of chase has become a lifetime of love.

HONORING JERRY L. REPPERT ON BEING NAMED THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

**HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 7, 2005*

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Jerry L. Reppert, who recently was appointed as president of the National Newspaper Association.

The National Newspaper Association, created in 1885, represents owners, publishers and editors of America's community newspapers and is the largest newspaper association in the United States, currently having more than 3,200 members. As President of the NNA, Mr. Reppert will be responsible for protecting, promoting and enhancing America's community newspapers.

Prior to election as President, Mr. Reppert held several other positions within NNA, including Vice President, State Chairman, Regional Director and Government Affairs Director. In addition, Mr. Reppert has made important contributions to the newspaper publishing business in Southern Illinois, having served as

president of the Southern Illinois Editorial Association and the Illinois Press Association, where he played a pivotal role in establishing the Illinois Press Foundation, the fund-raising arm of the Illinois Press Association. He continues to serve as the foundation's President to this day.

Jerry L. Reppert first began his career in managing newspapers by becoming editor of the Gazette-Democrat, a community newspaper run by his family, based in Anna, Illinois. Mr. Reppert greatly expanded the small, weekly newspaper into Reppert Publications, which published weekly newspapers throughout Southern Illinois, including the Cairo Citizen in Cairo, the Navigator-Journal and Prairie Post in Grayville and Albion, the Tri-County Record in Dongola. Reppert Publications also published numerous specialty publications, several of which have received honors from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Illinois Governor's Conference on Tourism.

In addition to his pursuits in publishing, Mr. Reppert has also been successful in many other enterprises. He is a founder of Anna-Jonesboro Cable TV and constructed a cable television system for it. In 1971 he opened his own furniture company: Reppert Office Furniture. He also served 20 years in the United States Navy Reserve and attained the rank of lieutenant commander.

Mr. Reppert and his wife, Dianne, have two daughters and two grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in an expression of congratulations to Mr. Jerry Reppert for his election to lead the National Newspaper Association and offer our best wishes during his tenure as President.

CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL FOR RABBI ARTHUR SCHNEIER

**HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 7, 2005*

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, together with my colleagues Rep. TOM LANTOS and MICHAEL BILIRAKIS, I am introducing a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Rabbi Arthur Schneier, in recognition of his pioneering role in promoting religious freedom and human rights throughout the world, for close to half a century.

A holocaust survivor, and the Founder and President of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, Rabbi Schneier has devoted his life to overcoming the forces of hatred and intolerance.

He has been a pioneer in bringing together religious leaders to address ethnic or religious conflicts. For example, in Bosnia in 1997, he convened government and religious leaders to promote healing and conciliation between Orthodox, Muslim and Jewish communities. In the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia he worked with the Orthodox Patriarch and the Turkish Government to hold the Peace and Tolerance Conference in 1994 and address religious and ethnic tensions in that area. In the former Yugoslavia, he mobilized religious leaders to halt the bloodshed of the early 1990s, holding the Religious Summit on the Former Yugoslavia and the Conflict Resolution Conference to build support and consensus among religious leaders of different faiths.

Since the early 1980s, he has led delegations of religious leaders to China to open a dialogue on religious freedom.

Born in Vienna, Austria, in 1930, Rabbi Schneier lived under Nazi occupation in Budapest during World War II and came to the United States in 1947. He has been the Spiritual Leader of the Park East Synagogue in New York City since 1962.

I hope my colleagues will join us in honoring this distinguished pioneer of religious freedom with a Congressional Gold Medal.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES RECOVERY ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

**HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 29, 2005*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3824) to amend and reauthorize the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to provide greater results conserving and recovering listed species, and for other purposes:

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 3824. This legislation seeks to undermine one of the most successful and visionary environmental policies, the Endangered Species Act. For 32 years, the Endangered Species Act has been a safety net for wildlife, plants, and fish that are on the brink of extinction.

Since its enactment in 1973, the Endangered Species Act has prevented the extinction of hundreds of species. In fact, 99 percent of the species listed are still with us today, and more than two-thirds of all currently listed species are improving.

Minnesotans have witnessed the success of this Act first hand. In Minnesota, the bald eagle population grew from a dwindling 380 eagles in 1981 to more than 1,400 eagles today. This is more than double the recovery goal of 600 eagles. We have seen the gray wolf population grow from 300 in 1975 to 3,020 in 2004. Again, that is more than double the recovery goal of 1,400 wolves. Minnesota is also home to the dwarf trout lily, which is found nowhere else in the world.

In April 2005, many of my constituents showed their support for endangered species during Aveda Corporation's Earth Month. In Aveda salons and stores across the country, more than 170,000 people signed petitions asking for a strong, fully funded Endangered Species Act. These petitions were delivered to the steps of the Capitol in July. The message is clear. Americans want to protect endangered species for future generations.

Unfortunately, H.R. 3824 makes it harder to protect threatened and endangered species. It repeals one of the most important parts of the act—critical habitat protection. Habitat destruction is the primary reason many animals end up on the Endangered Species List. Species with designated critical habitats recover at twice the rate of endangered species without critical habitat. Yet, this bill provides no alternative to protect the places where vulnerable species live.

This bill also creates a new corporate welfare entitlement for developers. Under this bill,