

RECOGNIZING THE PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS FROM OREGON'S 3RD DISTRICT

**HON. EARL BLUMENAUER**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 2, 2006*

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, President Kennedy once stated that "Peace is a daily, a weekly, a monthly process, gradually changing opinions, slowly eroding old barriers, quietly building new structures." As we celebrate the 45th anniversary of the establishment of the Peace Corps, the truth of that statement is confirmed every day by the outstanding group of men and women promoting international understanding and progress across the globe.

During this National Peace Corps Week, I want to honor the service and commitment of the Peace Corps Volunteers from Oregon's 3rd Congressional district and express my pride in my fellow Oregonians who have chosen to devote years of their lives in service to others.

In particular, I want to recognize the current Peace Corps Volunteers whose service began in the past year: Ethan Choi (Bulgaria), Katie Conlon (Mali), Nancy Davis (Mexico), Rebecca Inman (Madagascar), Michael Lemmo (Ecuador), Cara McCarthy (Madagascar), Chris Pexton (Namibia), Jonathan Ruff (Costa Rica), Patrick Schmidt (Namibia), Candace Watson (Swaziland), Delores Watts (Malawi), Kimberly Wells (Malawi), and Malia Wetcher (Mozambique).

Their work to empower people and communities in developing countries is a crucial contribution to creating a safe and prosperous world, building bridges between America and the world, and establishing a better future for people everywhere.

CONGRATULATING MR. JIMMY FAULKNER, SR. ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 90TH BIRTHDAY

**HON. JO BONNER**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 2, 2006*

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, it is with both pride and pleasure that I rise this week to honor a great man, as well as a true friend, Mr. Jimmy Faulkner, on the occasion of his 90th birthday.

Few people have enjoyed a more wonderful life than "Mr. Jimmy."

As an Air Force pilot, young Jimmy Faulkner answered his nation's call to serve and serve he did, always with distinction, valor and honor.

Upon completing his service in the Air Force, Jimmy Faulkner set out to blaze a trail of success in the world of business, spanning 42 years as the owner and publisher of a chain of south Alabama newspapers, as well as serving as president of seven radio stations. At the same time, he continued to find a way to serve his community, state and nation, first by being elected the youngest mayor in America in 1941, when he was elected mayor of his beloved Bay Minette.

Years later, Mr. Jimmy would go on to serve Baldwin, Monroe and Escambia Counties by

becoming one of Alabama's most respected and influential state senators. Twice he also ran for governor of Alabama.

Still later, Mr. Jimmy's entrepreneurial talents would give him the confidence to start Loyal American Life Insurance Company. And during most of the past 50 years, he has also been associated with Volkert & Associates, one of the top engineering, architectural, planning and environmental firms in the United States.

One of Jimmy Faulkner's passions has been his lifelong dedication to improving education. He has served as a member of the Board of Directors for the Alabama Christian College in Montgomery, which was renamed Faulkner University in his honor, and Chairman of the Advisory Board for James H. Faulkner State Community College in Bay Minette. Mr. Jimmy holds seven honorary doctorate degrees in law and humane letters, and he has served on several commissions that worked to improve Alabama's secondary education system.

Jimmy Faulkner was named the North Baldwin Chamber of Commerce "Person of the Century" in 2000. In 2003, he was awarded the Alabama Press Association's "Lifetime Achievement Award" and received the Volkert Chairman's Award in 1994.

Mr. Speaker, there has been no other individual more important to south Alabama or to the life of his local community than James H. "Jimmy" Faulkner, Sr. He is an outstanding example of the quality individuals who have devoted their lives to public service, and I ask my colleagues to join with me in congratulating him on reaching this milestone. I know Mr. Jimmy's colleagues, his family and his many friends join with me in praising his significant accomplishments and extending thanks for his many efforts over the years on behalf of the First Congressional District and the entire state of Alabama.

TRIBUTE TO THE 415TH CIVIL AFFAIRS BATTALION FROM KALAMAZOO, MI.

**HON. FRED UPTON**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 2, 2006*

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the members of the 415th Civil Affairs Battalion from Kalamazoo, MI who have bravely served our Nation overseas in Iraq. This Sunday, March 5th, the entire Battalion will be honored for its distinguished service in Iraq, receiving the prestigious Meritorious Unit Commendation that is bestowed upon battalions that are particularly meritorious and exceptional in their services against an armed enemy during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In addition to the Battalion's group recognition, 100 members of the unit will also be personally awarded the Combat Action Badge, which provides special recognition to Soldiers who personally engage the enemy, or are engaged by the enemy during combat operations.

I am so proud of the 415th Battalion because they represent all of the many and diverse jobs that our troops have set out to accomplish in Iraq. For example, this Battalion has administered over 1000 reconstruction

projects, implemented and managed 43 separate school reconstruction projects, provided medical screening to Iraqi citizens, even helped forge a relationship between Harvard University's medical school and Iraq's Tikrit University of Medicine.

The work of these men and women represents the positive progress that is actually going on in Iraq. The stories and accomplishments of the 415th Battalion are the ones that should truly be grabbing the headlines back home. Once again, I would like to congratulate the 415th Battalion for their much-deserved recognition and thank them on behalf of all the folks in Southwest Michigan for their great service. We are safer as a nation for your service—you make us all proud.

PUERTO RICO DEMOCRACY ACT OF 2006

**HON. LUIS FORTUÑO**

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 2, 2006*

Mr. FORTUÑO. Mr. Speaker, today, Puerto Ricans celebrate the 89th Anniversary of being granted United States citizenship by an Act of Congress. It is on this historic occasion that I, as Puerto Rico's sole representative in Congress, am proudly introducing on their behalf the Puerto Rico Democracy Act of 2006.

Since 1917, we have cherished that citizenship, and the principles of freedom and democracy for which our Nation stands. Hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans have fought valiantly in all wars since then to defend those principles that we so strongly value, with 50 of our own making the ultimate sacrifice in our Nation's current War on Terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan. The bill I am introducing today honors the life and sacrifice of these heroes . . . heroes who have left their loved ones behind to defend our democratic values even as they themselves are unable to vote for their Commander in Chief.

After 108 years of being a territory of the United States, Puerto Rico's status dilemma remains unresolved. Over the years, many in Congress have expressed their willingness to respect the right of self-determination for the U.S. citizens residing in Puerto Rico yet, during that time, there has never been a federally sanctioned self-determination process.

On December 22, 2005 the President's Task Force on Puerto Rico's Status issued a comprehensive and balanced report providing options for the Island's future status and relationship with the United States. This Task Force, created by Executive Orders from President Clinton and President Bush, clearly outlines in its report a process to address Puerto Rico's century old status dilemma.

The bill that I am introducing today simply implements the recommendations of the Task Force Report in order to preserve the guiding principles found in that report, which avoid prejudice towards a particular status option, and develops alternatives that are compatible with the U.S. Constitution and basic policies of the United States.

Some will argue that Puerto Rico's status should be determined by a select few, however, I sustain that, after 108 years of waiting, the four million U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico deserve nothing less than a direct and meaningful vote. The Puerto Rico Democracy Act of

2006 guarantees that the terms and conditions of Puerto Rico's future be developed jointly and democratically by the people of Puerto Rico and the Congress and not by the whims of an elite few.

In supporting this legislation, Congress would finally sanction a real opportunity for the people of Puerto Rico to exercise their right of self-determination with a process that would allow for a direct vote from the people. The first plebiscite, which would be held during the 110th Congress, but no later than December 31, 2007, would allow the people of Puerto Rico to elect whether to remain a U.S. territory, or to pursue a path toward a constitutionally viable permanent non-territorial status. It would not be until a second plebiscite during the 111th Congress that specific non-territorial status options would be defined, should the voters decide they want to opt for a permanent, non-territorial status.

Congress has a date with history. As a territory, Puerto Rico is subject to Congressional authority under the Constitution's Territorial Clause. After 89 years as U.S. citizens, we deserve the opportunity to provide the people of Puerto Rico with a process where, through their direct vote, they can choose the status of their choice. Congress must assume its constitutional responsibility and act now; otherwise the efforts of the Presidential Task Force on Puerto Rico's Status, established by President Clinton and President Bush, would have been in vain.

I wish to thank my many colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, who have agreed to become original co-sponsors of this bill, validating the recommendations made by the President's Task Force on Puerto Rico's Status to commence a democratic process under which the people of Puerto Rico will be able to exercise their inherent right to self-determination. The four million U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico deserve no less.

#### TRIBUTE TO RUSSELL GWATNEY

### HON. HAROLD E. FORD, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 2, 2006*

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, it is with honor I rise today to recognize the great achievement of Russell Gwatney, a noted and respected business leader in the great state of Tennessee and the nation at-large. Russell Gwatney, president for Gwatney Chevrolet, Chevrolet-Isuzu was recently named a finalist for the 2006 Time Magazine Quality Dealer Award.

The Time Magazine Quality Dealer Award is the automobile industry's most prestigious and highly coveted award for car dealers. The award recipients are among the nation's most successful auto dealers. Criteria for the award include recipients' demonstration of a long-standing commitment to effective community service. As a finalist, Mr. Gwatney is one of 66 automobile dealers from more than 19,500 nominees nationwide nominated for the annual award—now in its 37th year.

An Arkansas native, Mr. Gwatney grew up in the car business. His father became a Chevrolet dealer when Russell Gwatney was just 6 years old. Mr. Gwatney started selling cars in 1973 after an illness caused him to

leave the University of Arkansas during his junior year. After completing undergraduate studies in 1976, Mr. Gwatney returned to the dealership in sales management, where he later became general manager in 1979 and co-dealer in 1984.

In addition to his business successes, Mr. Gwatney and his dealership have supported a wide range of organizations and philanthropic efforts in the community. As well, he has served as chairman for the St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank and also member to the executive committee of the Memphis Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Gwatney was nominated for the annual Time Magazine Quality Dealer Award by Robert V. Weaver, president of Tennessee Automotive Association. Mr. Gwatney lives in Germantown, Tennessee with his wife Elizabeth. They have three children, including their two sons John and David who have joined the family business.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to join me in recognizing and commending Russell Gwatney and for this great achievement.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 2, 2006*

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I was absent on Tuesday, February 28, 2006, due to unavoidable circumstances in my Congressional District. Had I been present, I would have voted: "yea" to H.R. 1096—Act Commemorating the LITE, or Lifetime Innovations of Thomas Edison; "yea" to H. Res. 668—Celebrating the 40th anniversary of Texas Western's 1966 NCAA Basketball Championship and recognizing the groundbreaking impact of the title game victory on diversity in sports and civil rights in America and "yea" to H.R. 1259, to authorize the President to award a gold medal on behalf of the Congress, collectively, to the Tuskegee Airmen in recognition of their unique military record, which inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF DR. WILLIAM L. LESTER

### HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 2, 2006*

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember and pay tribute to Dr. William L. Lester, the longtime Provost at Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, Alabama, who passed away on February 6, 2006.

Dr. Lester was dedicated to academics. He first arrived in Tuskegee University in 1968 to work as a mathematics instructor, and later left in 1970 to pursue his doctorate at Southern Methodist University. He returned to Tuskegee in 1974 to head the Mathematics Department, and later served as Assistant Provost in the Academic Affairs office. He became Tuskegee's Provost in 1984.

Dr. Lester was truly a model citizen, both for the university community and his family. His

tireless work on behalf of Tuskegee helped make the institution the world-renowned university it is today. He will be sorely missed. His memory lives on through his wife, Virda, and their children.

I am privileged to have the opportunity to honor the late Dr. William L. Lester today, and appreciate the House's attention to the life and legacy of this important Alabamian.

#### TRIBUTE TO DEREK PARRA, CHAMPION SPEEDSKATER FOLLOWING THE CONCLUSION OF HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE WINTER OLYMPICS AND IN ADVANCE OF HIS RETIREMENT

### HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 2, 2006*

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, Americans have watched with great pride as our athletes have taken part in the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino. The greatness of the Olympics comes from the spirit of friendly international competition, and we are inspired by our athletes as they strive for excellence and represent our country with honor. During the Games, not only have we seen amazing athletic accomplishments—but also we have learned about the lives of the athletes away from the arena, as they dedicated themselves to their training and preparation, made sacrifices, overcame challenges, celebrated victories, and sometimes suffered through defeat.

Among the many stars of America's Olympic team, one shines particularly bright to the people of my District and to me personally: speedskater Derek Parra.

Derek grew up on the west side of San Bernardino, California with his father Gilbert and his brother. He attended Roosevelt Elementary and Eisenhower High School in Rialto. In fact my son, Joe Baca, Jr., went to school with him, and I attended church with Derek's father, Gilbert Parra, at St. Catherine's in Rialto.

Southern California's Inland Empire is wonderful place for children to grow up and to get involved in sports, but with the sunny climate, it is hardly a winter sports haven. So not surprisingly, Derek grew up roller skating not ice skating. He first learned to skate at the Stardust Roller Rink in Highland, where he was an inline skater. Derek first set foot on ice when he was 17 years old and was 26 when he switched from inline skating to ice skating in 1996 to pursue his Olympic dreams.

Derek was determined, focused and relentless in this pursuit. Even among his fellow athletes in a demanding sport, he was respected for the work ethic that made him an Olympic hero.

Four years ago, I rose to honor Derek after his amazing performance at the 2002 Games in Salt Lake City. At those Games, he won a gold medal in the 1,500-meter race and a silver medal in the 5,000-meter race, breaking the previous world records for both distances.

Derek Parra was the first Mexican American to ever participate in the Winter Olympics, let alone win a medal. Derek also carried proudly the flag of the United States in the opening ceremonies at Salt Lake.

Since those exciting days four years ago, a lot has changed in Derek's life. He made great