

months, my father helped to broker a purchase and operating agreement between the YWCA, Pacific Grove, and the State. Those efforts culminated in the July 1, 1956 transfer of Asilomar to the State of California.

Asilomar has since grown into one of the most unique public interest conference grounds in the world. It hosts conference groups as diverse as the annual Eco Farm conference, the Nation's largest annual organic farming gathering and an annual national gathering of electronic intelligence specialists. Last year, Asilomar saw over 175,000 guests from 1,000 different groups who netted the State over \$3 million in fee revenues.

It is a legacy that my father remained supremely proud of throughout the remainder of his life. When he passed away in 1997, he had spent over 20 years on the park's official advisory commission and had spent countless hours offering formal and informal advice on the management and future of Asilomar. So while this anniversary is a celebration of a unique public park, it is also the celebration of one of my father's most cherished personal achievements.

HONORING JO MERRILL ON HER  
RETIREMENT

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 29, 2006*

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jo Merrill, a tireless public health advocate for healthy babies, on the occasion of her retirement from the March of Dimes after 22 years.

Today is a bittersweet day for all of us in Congress who have been involved in the effort to improve the health of babies in this country. For many Members, Jo Merrill has become the face of the March of Dimes. She educated us with the facts, challenged us to take action, and supported our efforts to improve the lives of infants through public health policy. The legacy that she leaves behind is one of healthier babies across this country, and we here in Washington will miss her wisdom and her dedication.

Jo joined the March of Dimes National Office of Government Affairs in 1984, after 10 years working for several members of Congress. The first twelve years of her tenure with the March of Dimes she focused on state based advocacy, working closely with their Chapters and Regional offices. In 1996 she moved to her current position as Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs.

Jo has played a key role in gaining enactment of a number of bills important to the March of Dimes and the health of babies. Jo made an important contribution to the creation of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), an effort that has resulted in the expansion of health insurance for countless uninsured children across our country. She also gave guidance for the Birth Defects Prevention Act of 1998, which authorized a comprehensive birth defects surveillance, research and prevention program at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). She was instrumental in the development and implementation of the Children's Health Act of 2000, which established the National Center on Birth Defects

and Developmental Disabilities at CDC, expanded the National Folic Acid Education Campaign, and authorized a Federal newborn screening program. And finally, Jo was a strong advocate for the reauthorization of the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities in 2003.

It has been my privilege to have worked with Jo to improve the health of infants through two of these major public health efforts. The first was policy aimed at increasing folic acid consumption by women in order to reduce the incidence of neural tube defects in babies. Jo was instrumental in helping my staff and I draft the Folic Acid Promotion and Birth Defects Prevention Act of 1999, which was successfully passed into law as part of the Children's Health Act of 2000. Since that time, Jo has been an effective advocate in pushing for increased funding for the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention to carry out a national folic acid education campaign, and we have been successful in making incremental progress each year in preventing these unnecessary birth defects.

My staff and I have also worked closely with Jo on the Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act. My bill will educate parents and health care providers about newborn screening, improve follow-up care for infants with an illness detected through newborn screening, and help states expand and improve their newborn screening programs, in order to help save thousands of babies each year from unnecessary disability and death. It is our hope that this legislation will pass the House and Senate in the very near future, and when it does, it will become yet another piece of the legacy that Jo leaves here in Washington.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to personally congratulate Jo Merrill on her retirement from the March of Dimes. I wish her the very best in her new life on the South Carolina coast. Charleston is inheriting a woman of great wisdom, charm and commitment, and I am sure that she will continue to make significant contributions in her efforts as a Public Affairs volunteer.

It is my hope that this accomplished and deserving woman will find much happiness and fulfillment in this new phase of her life. Godspeed, Jo.

COMMENDING ALFREDO GONZALEZ  
KAME

HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 29, 2006*

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Alfredo Gonzales Kame.

Mr. Kame was a great father, grandfather, and soldier. He served this country with honor, even though his family was the victim of discrimination. His father and brother were interned at the Poston Internment Camp in Poston, Arizona. He fought for his country and against the prejudice impacting his family and was courageous in both fights.

Mr. Kame, of Japanese and Hispanic heritage, was always proud of his heritage and his service to his country. A World War II veteran from Hayden, Arizona, he proudly served with Company C of the 100th Infantry Battalion.

Alfredo enlisted in June 1942 and eventually wound up in Camp Shelby with the 100th. He

was deployed to North Africa and was involved in a number of campaigns including Monte Cassino, Anzio-Rome, Belvedere, Rome-Amo, Bruyeres-Biffontaine, German Gothic Line, Po Valley, and Rhineland. He was wounded in battle in Vosges Mountains at Bruyeres, France on October 15, 1944.

He was awarded a Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Presidential Unit Citation with an Oak Leaf Cluster, Combat Infantryman Badge, American Campaign Medal, European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, Victory Medal, and Good Conduct Medal.

After his service in the Army, he returned to Hayden in 1948, where he lived until his death. He worked for 30 years as a mill foreman for Kennecott Copper Corporation and retired in 1983.

Mr. Kame leaves a great legacy for his family and his community. He lived his entire life with honor and courage. He fought valiantly in World War II while overcoming prejudice within his country. I rise today to thank Mr. Kame and his family for their sacrifice and to ask that this Congress recognize his selflessness and service to our country.

CELEBRATION OF INDEPENDENCE  
DAY

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 29, 2006*

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, 230 years ago today, a small and rebellious colony did an extraordinary, but simple thing. It stood up to its powerful and mighty oppressors, exploded the shackles of their tyranny and declared itself an independent nation. I rise on this Fourth of July to remember the people who gave us our present freedom, and honor them for their ability to recognize that there will always be more to unite us than divide us.

It seems obvious today that our country would be united, but in 1776, the thirteen colonies had less in common with each other than they did with their arch enemy. It is a tribute to the phenomenal leadership of our Founding Fathers that they had the vision to see past these differences, and to forge a common bond, founded on the principles that "all men are created equal," and that no government has the authority to restrict the rights of the people to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

These shared values are the essence of our Union. If the signers of the Declaration of Independence were the architects of the nation, the foundations they built for us were made of the strongest stone. Even during our darkest hours, we look back on the document that launched the ship of this Republic into the rough seas of the nations of the world, and we take solace in its good words.

Mr. Speaker, the celebration of our independence is a celebration of the beliefs we hold together as a nation; it is a celebration of why we are a nation; and it is, above all, a reminder to us all that our country was founded in hope, and in the desire by the good people of the thirteen colonies to build a new nation where freedom would reign forever.