

of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Drew has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Drew has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Drew Kelly for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. PETE G.  
MEHAS

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 25, 2006*

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Pete G. Mehas, Fresno County Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Mehas is retiring at the end of his current term and his unwavering commitment to students and education will be missed, but never forgotten.

Like many others, I consider myself fortunate to count Pete Mehas as a friend and advisor. His life's work embodies the very basic values—hard work, respect for people and family—that make it possible for a person to have a profound influence on others.

Pete Mehas was born, raised and educated in Fresno, California. Growing up he worked during the 40s and 50s for his father at the Fresno Malt Shop and the Athenian Restaurant. At age 19 Pete hitchhiked around the world on a personal odyssey of discovery and cultural exploration. Over the years, the call of family and his pride of heritage have drawn him back to his ancestral homeland, the magnificent Greek Islands. But Pete Mehas has always come back to the Central Valley where he spent his professional career advancing education on many fronts, in classrooms, boardrooms and the legislative halls of Sacramento and our nation's capitol.

During his career, Pete has been a teacher, a coach, a school principal, an associate district superintendent and a legislative advocate. His efforts on behalf of education have been driven by his often-stated belief that, "Children are the living message we send to a time we will not see." His personal objective has always been to serve as a model of high values, coupled with strong character and love of country and to hopefully pass those standards on to the next generation.

Pete has never let his success go to his head. In fact, to this day he continues to visit classrooms to read to young students and encourage them to succeed. His utter lack of pretense has been a hallmark of his career and made it possible for him to inspire others and bring people together.

Elected four times to the position of Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, Pete Mehas' well-documented career dedication to education has been recognized many times by others. He has participated in Presidential Education Summits on education, served as an education policy advisor to three California governors and held leadership positions in nu-

merous education organizations and associations. Pete's many honors include being the first recipient in 1990 of the Fresno Public Education Fund's Gold Star Alumni Award. And his leadership has been praised by organizations as varied as the California Farm Bureau Federation and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

Beyond the honors that have come his way as his professional success multiplied over the years, Pete Mehas has always been devoted to his family. His mother Sylvia, his wife Demi, sisters Tula and Georgia and his daughters Alethea and Andreaanna have enriched his life as only family can.

And though Pete Mehas has talked with world leaders, Presidents, Governors and business leaders, I know nothing compares to the loving sound he hears from his twin granddaughters, Andreaanna and Isabella, when they whisper "pappou", Greek for "grandpa", in his ear.

Though he will soon retire as Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, there can be no uncertainty that Pete Mehas will continue to make a valuable contribution to his community, state and nation. Pete's future efforts will, I am sure, be reflective of his personal philosophy which is summed up so well in the words of his favorite songwriter, Jimmy Buffet, when he sings, "Yesterdays are over my shoulder, so I can't look back for too long. There's just too much to see waiting in front of me, and I know that I just can't go wrong."

CONGRATULATING ISRAEL'S  
MAGEN DAVID ADOM SOCIETY

SPEECH OF

**HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 18, 2006*

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in congratulating Magen David Adom, Israel's national emergency medical service, as a fully admitted and recognized member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. This 60-year effort to win membership for Israel's humanitarian society solely on the basis the MDA uses the Star of David as its symbol.

Since its founding in 1930, MDA has been a leading participant in international humanitarian relief efforts and in training and instruction in emergency services techniques. Regrettably, the organization has been denied full membership in the International Committee for the Red Cross, ICRC, because of anti-Israel bias among countries that refuse to recognize the State of Israel or the symbol of the Star of David. This political discrimination is in direct violation of the ICRC principle of maintaining neutrality and impartiality in conflicts.

MDA has been a committed humanitarian society embodying all the goals and ideals of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. MDA has been an impartial force in the international community helping victims all over the world after the Southeast Asian tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, disastrous flooding of the River Danube in Romania, even helping those considered enemies of Israel. But for 60 years, Israel was denied membership. There was no good reason for MDA to be forced to wait this long to be a member of ICRC when their ef-

forts are solely humanitarian and separate from the decades-old political conflict existing in the Middle East.

The process of International recognition has been a long and arduous process tainted by discrimination allowing politics to outweigh the humanitarian objectives of the MDA. A diplomatic conference in Geneva in December 2005 was a significant step in the process of enabling MDA to finally become a full member in the International Committee of the Red Cross. On December 8, 2005 the signatory countries to the Geneva Conventions approved a Third Additional Protocol establishing a new neutral Red Crystal emblem by a vote of 98 in favor, 27 against, with 10 abstentions. After all these years, the Syrian delegation still tried to stall the vote, but in the end was unable to prevent the adoption of the Third Protocol.

I am pleased that this longstanding injustice has been rectified and MDA is permitted to conduct international humanitarian operations under a third neutral symbol. We should not allow decades old disputes and larger, unrelated political problems in the Middle East to impede the work of Israel's humanitarian aid society.

I also take this time to applaud the efforts of U.S. diplomats and American organizations for bringing the issue of MDA's exclusion from the ICRC to the focus of the international community. Without U.S. leadership on this important issue and the pressure that both our leaders and the American Red Cross put on the ICRC, this wrong that has existed since Israel's founding would not have been redressed. Our country understood that we should not allow politics to prevail over humanitarian efforts in any country no matter what the political climate or religious beliefs are. I also thank the American Red Cross for its continued support to help open the channels for MDA's acceptance in the ICRC. I fully support the decision of the American Red Cross, since 2000, to protest the exclusion of MDA by withholding \$42 million in annual dues from ICRC. Finally, I would like to thank Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, for its efforts lobbying Congress and working with the U.N. and the American Red Cross in support of MDA.

MDA should never have been linked to the fate of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and with the adoption of a third neutral symbol will be able to fulfill its humanitarian mission. The adoption of a neutral symbol is a celebration that humanitarian principles have triumphed above politics and bigotry.

HONORING TIM FRIEDMAN

SPEECH OF

**HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 24, 2006*

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, today I want to honor Tim Friedman, who will be retiring after 30 years of service in the Democratic Cloakroom. My staff and I rely on the Cloakroom on a daily basis. The Cloakroom staff is reliable and knowledgeable and serves as the voice of reason during often chaotic times on the floor. Tim Friedman was a big part of the Cloakroom operations and I know my colleagues and I will miss seeing him everyday.