

who have turned to the Patroness in times of distress to receive her comfort. This religious symbol has survived fires, earthquakes, and typhoons and inspires the faithful who seek her intercession for protection from famine, earthquakes, typhoons and tsunamis.

During the occupation of Guam in World War II, believers turned to Santa Marian Kamalen for help and some risked their own safety by saving the statue from confiscation and destruction by the occupiers. Today, Santa Marian Kamalen continues to inspire the Catholic faithful on Guam and throughout the Marianas. She holds an exalted position above the altar in the Dulce Nombre de Maria Cathedral-Basilica in Hagåtña, Guam. As the Patroness of Guam and the Mariana Islands, her feast day is celebrated each year on December 8th, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, with a procession of thousands of the faithful in Hagåtña.

On Sunday, September 17, 2006, a replica of the Santa Marian Kamalen will be enshrined at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC. Hundreds of followers from Guam, the Northern Marianas, and throughout the nation have converged in a pilgrimage to honor Our Lady of Camarin.

The enshrinement of Santa Marian Kamalen is recognition by the Church of the deep faith of the Chamorro people and a distinct honor for the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Agana. The ceremony will celebrate the love of the devotees of the Patroness of the Mariana Islands.

The enshrinement of Our Lady of Camarin would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of many people, most notably the Most Reverend Anthony Sablan Apuron, OFM Cap., DD, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Agana, the clergy and religious on Guam and the Mariana Islands, officers of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas in the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Agana, and all of the faithful. Biba Santa Marian Kamalen!

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF YOUTHBUILD TO THE NATION

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5837, a bill to amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to provide for a YouthBuild program and to recognize the many achievements and accomplishments attributed to YOUTHBUILD USA.

The YouthBuild program started in my Congressional District of East Harlem in 1978 as a response to the failed public school system, the lack of workforce development programs available to young adults and the growing number of youth who were being driven into the criminal justice system. YouthBuild's mission is to provide a pathway to successful productive careers. YouthBuild started in the interstices between these three systems as a community-based comprehensive program designed with and for youth. It became simultaneously an alternative school, a job and career training program, a point of re-entry for adjudicated youth, a way to serve one's com-

munity by building the highly valued commodity of affordable housing, and a way to gain leadership skills to improve the community in the long run and to become somebody who could make a difference.

This combination has been highly attractive to the disconnected youth, and has created a pathway to a productive future for tens of thousands of young adults across the country.

YouthBuild spread from East Harlem throughout New York City, and from there around the country. It became a federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program in 1992, and with HUD's help has spread to 226 of America's poorest urban and rural communities. It has been incubated as a federal program in HUD—still outside of the existing public education, workforce development, and criminal justice systems. At HUD, the emphasis has been on broad community development.

YouthBuild has shown itself to be highly attractive to communities seeking a solution for the fact that 32 percent of America's youth are dropping out of school, a hundred thousand are aging out of foster care each year and need a supportive transition, and tens of thousands are returning to their neighborhoods from incarceration needing a guiding hand.

Now YouthBuild is being moved as a response to its success. It is consistent with the priorities of the Department of Labor to engage the most disadvantaged youth in education and job training in high-demand careers through a cost effective community-based solution. While it is consistent with HUD's general community development goals, it is consistent with the Department of Labor's central priorities for young adults.

YouthBuild programs are also working well as re-entry programs under a special grant with the Department of Labor and with various state governments. They are working as AmeriCorps programs especially designed for low-income youth in partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service. They are also working with local public school systems and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation—40 YouthBuild programs have become diploma-granting public charter or alternative schools, expanding the reach of limited federal funds by attracting additional local public education funds and deepening YouthBuild's role as an alternative school. Since it has become simultaneously a school, a job-training program, a re-entry program, and a national service program, it is working now on the creative edge of all these systems.

Local YouthBuild programs are led by entrepreneurial and committed professionals rooted in local communities. They are knit together by a national non-profit organization, YouthBuild USA, that works in partnership with the federal government to hold local programs to high standards, to train them in best practices, and to recognize innovative promising practices. This public/private partnership has also proven itself to be a good delivery system which has been responsible for the effective implementation of a creative program design.

At a time when America is seeking solutions to the disconnection from school and work of over 5 million 16- to 24-year-olds, 2.4 million of whom are poor, at a time when we are realizing that some of our existing systems are not working for this sub-set of young adults, it is a good moment to highlight YouthBuild as a solution, and position it in the Department of

Labor for its next stage as a visible and viable pathway to success for tens of thousands of young Americans.

AZERBAIJAN—TIME TO FREE THE POLITICAL PRISONERS

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2006

Mrs. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, when Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice goes to New York for the opening of the 61st United Nations General Assembly she is expected to meet with Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov of Azerbaijan. His country is becoming an important geo-strategic player in the Caspian region and Central Asia. It has worked closely with the United States on the critical oil pipeline from the Caspian to the Mediterranean and other issues.

There are some important obstacles to realizing the full potential of our strategic relationship with Azerbaijan. Of particular concern is the deteriorating human rights situation and the growing number of political prisoners in that country's jails.

During her confirmation hearings before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations earlier this year, Ambassador Anne Derse stressed the importance the United States attaches to freedom, democracy and human rights as high priorities in our relationship with Azerbaijan. The Bush administration's emphasis on the critical importance for nurturing democracy, not only in bringing freedom to people but in helping make this a safer world at a time of growing threat from Islamofascism, is of particular concern in Central Asia. Azerbaijan is a secular Muslim state, thus making the development of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law ever more critical in such an unstable region of the world.

Azerbaijan is also an important American interest in energy and security cooperation. As our economic and political cooperation grow, our relations with Azerbaijan become more critical. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has spoken of his commitment to democracy but, unfortunately, the gap between promise and performance is widening, not shrinking.

I am particularly concerned about the need for an independent judiciary, commitment to the rule of law and a transparent justice system. An alarming number of political prisoners are held in Azeri jails, most notably former Minister of Economic Development Farhad Aliyev and his brother Rafiq Aliyev (The brothers are no relation to President Aliyev). Farad Aliyev was arrested on trumped-up political charges of planning a coup, and to that was later added a charge of murdering the editor of Monitor magazine, Elmar Huseynov. The actual confessed murderer, Haji Mammadov, a former official of the Interior Ministry's Criminal Investigation Department, reportedly accused Farhad Aliyev of ordering the killing. Independent media reports demonstrate that the accusation is not taken seriously and believed to have been pushed on the killer, perhaps in a deal for a lighter sentence, as part of the government's desire to strengthen its weak case against Aliyev and eliminate a potential rival for the president.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Secretary of State Rice to take up this matter at the United Nations

with Foreign Minister Mammadyarov and stress that the United States seeks assurances that all political prisoners are allowed free access to counsel of their choice, are safe and provided all necessary health care, receive humane treatment and, if it goes that far, receive a free, fair and public trial. More appropriately, they should be freed at once as a demonstration of Azerbaijan's commitment to democratic reform and respect for human rights and the rule of law.

The Azeri Democracy Initiative, a non-partisan, international non-profit organization headquartered in Washington and dedicated to strengthening U.S.-Azerbaijan ties on a basis of shared values, has joined in calling on the European Court of Human Rights to investigate the politically-motivated arrest of Farhad Aliyev, the reformist former Minister of Economic Development of Azerbaijan.

The case before the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg was filed by a group of British lawyers and alleges human rights abuses. They pointed out that Azerbaijan, as a member of the Council of Europe, is legally obligated to comply with the European Convention of Human Rights as a condition of membership of the Council of Europe.

Lord Lester QC, one of Europe's leading barristers on human rights issues, said the brothers were detained arbitrarily, put in solitary confinement and held "without justification". He has been denied access to the men.

"The Aliyev cases illustrate how far the Republic of Azerbaijan has to change before it can be regarded as a truly democratic state respecting the European rule of law and the fundamental human rights and freedoms of its citizens," Lord Lester added.

Many members of the brothers' families, business associates and acquaintances have been "harassed, arrested and persecuted following Farhad and Rafiq's arrests," according to Lucy James, one of the London attorneys. "Many have been detained on trumped up charges or without charge" and many have reportedly lost their jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the Secretary of State and Ambassador Derse in Baku to raise this critical human rights issue at the highest levels and call for the freedom of political prisoners.

CONGRATULATING DR. ROBERT JENNINGS ON HIS INAUGURATION AS PRESIDENT OF ALABAMA A&M UNIVERSITY

HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER, JR.

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2006

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the alumni, students, faculty, and friends of Alabama A&M University, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Robert Jennings on his inauguration as the University's tenth President.

Alabama A&M is a prestigious 131-year old land-grant university located in Normal, AL. Its faculty and students are nationally recognized for their work in and out of the classroom.

A&M selected Jennings as President in January of 2006. A graduate of Morehouse College and Clark Atlanta University, Dr. Jennings is a Fulbright-Hays Fellow and a highly respected and accomplished professor and administrator.

Prior to his appointment at A&M, Dr. Jennings served many years as a professor and administrator at Atlanta University Graduate School. Dr. Jennings has also held positions at Norfolk State University, Albany State University, and North Carolina A&T State University. Most recently, he served as the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Wake Forest University's Future Focus 2020, a program designed to encourage urban communities to more actively participate in discussions about the future of the country.

In addition to his impressive academic record, Dr. Jennings is a distinguished diplomat and civil servant. In 1999, he represented the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. State Department as a consultant and trainer at the University of Naimey in Niger, Africa. He also previously served as a Loaned Executive to the Office of the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, as well as an Equal Opportunity and Employee Development Specialist and Lead Trainer for the U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission.

Mr. Speaker, during the week of September 11th, the Alabama A&M community is celebrating Dr. Jennings' inauguration. I believe that his impressive resume and numerous academic accomplishments have more than prepared him to lead Alabama A&M University to new heights. I look forward to working with him and all of the faculty, students, alumni, and staff to build on the University's proud tradition of excellence.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 13, 2006

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I cannot vote for this bill, for several reasons.

To begin with, as the debate in the Resources Committee made clear, this is not the kind of measure that should be considered under a procedure that rigidly limits debate and prevents consideration of any amendments. Instead, it is a controversial proposal that can affect many parts of the country. All members whose districts could be affected—or who have concerns for other reasons—should have the opportunity to propose amendments that they think would improve the legislation.

But regardless of the procedures controlling debate today, I think the bill has such serious flaws that it should be rejected—which was why I voted against it in committee.

As others have noted, it would make a drastic change in current law regarding the regulation of Indian gaming, changes that do not properly reflect and respect the status of tribal governments and that have led the majority of tribes and tribal organizations to oppose the legislation.

I do not think such far-reaching changes are necessary to address the problems cited by the bill's supporters. On the contrary, I think the Interior Department already has ample authority to resolve those problems through regulation.

Finally, some have suggested that the legislation should be passed to resolve questions

raised in 2004 when two tribes now based in Oklahoma asserted a claim to lands in Colorado. However, I do not think that is accurate.

Nothing in this bill would prevent tribes from making such land claims in the future. And because no legislation can bind a future Congress, the bill would not prevent a legislative settlement of such claims—the professed goal of those asserting the Colorado claim—which could involve authorization of Indian gaming on some of the lands involved.

I urge the House to reject this bill.

“IRAQ WATCH”

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 14, 2006

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, back in June the Democratic Caucus began a series of weekly special orders and floor speeches as a part of our ongoing “Iraq Watch.” Midway through September, we’re still watching, and what we’re seeing is not encouraging. Other members will elaborate on the escalating death toll, the continued drain on our Treasury, and our inability to provide even the most basic services that might show the Iraqis that our invasion has improved their lives in some way. That there were no weapons of mass destruction, no link between Saddam and Al Qaeda, and no threat to America in Iraq continues to be demonstrated with each new report released and each study published. We know that we went in without a plan to manage the country after we toppled the government, contrary to military recommendations. Indeed, we now know that Secretary Rumsfeld actually threatened to fire staff who kept insisting on making some attempt at post-war planning. The generals in the field have told us, again, that their mission cannot be accomplished without tens of thousands, perhaps even a hundred thousand or more troops. Yet, according to an official army report referenced in the article I include, for the record, there are no more troops to send.

Mr. Speaker, we’ve been watching as this quagmire gets worse by the day. But I can’t help wondering if the Republicans are watching the same conflict I am. To listen to what the Administration and its backers in Congress are saying, one might think that the invasion happened just last month, rather than three and a half years ago. You might think we were greeted as liberators, or even that we helped the Iraqis form a functioning democracy. You might even draw the conclusion that fanning the flames in Iraq is somehow, in some way making the American people safer.

Operating on the same flawed assumptions they used to mislead us into this mess in the first place, the Administration still has not given us an exit plan out of this bloodbath. We’ve heard plenty of slogans. “As the Iraqis stand up, we’ll stand down.” “Stay the course.” But, Mr. Speaker, empty rhetoric is not a strategy. Hearing these slogans again and again, I’m reminded of one definition of insanity: to take the same action over and over and expect different results. Our continued occupation of Iraq without any kind of strategy or plan to resolve the conflict simply makes no sense.

Mr. Speaker, I was shocked and horrified when I heard that Vice President Cheney went