

50 percent of the population already lives in coastal counties, and the numbers are rising. To support NOAA in their task, Congress must provide it with a full organic act. With an organic act, the offices that run the core programs that Americans nation-wide depend on would be provided with an established mission. A clear mission would help NOAA prioritize and justify itself during appropriations, perhaps heading off the crippling cuts that are leveled against it each year. Guidance from Congress would also help NOAA reorganize and enhance inter-office and inter-agency communication, thus making NOAA operations more efficient and streamlined.

While I support H.R. 5450 for taking us toward the goal of authorizing NOAA, we must remember it only takes us halfway. By authorizing only the atmospheric and educational components of NOAA, we fail half of this vital agency, and I urge Congress to make a full organic act for NOAA a priority.

INTERNATIONAL DISASTER RISK
REDUCTION ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 21, 2006

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, from hurricanes and floods in Latin America to earthquakes in Asia, natural disasters are increasingly becoming a regular feature of life for large numbers of people around the globe. By 2050, two billion people are expected to be especially vulnerable to floods due to growing populations, indiscriminate logging on hillsides, rapid urbanization, and increasing development along coasts and in other hazardous regions.

Thankfully, as I have seen on trips to disaster-affected area, the devastating impacts of natural disasters can be mitigated by building in safer locations, constructing sturdier dwellings, enforcing sound building practices, and protecting natural ecosystems. For example, communities in Indonesia that had intact mangrove stands along their coastlines were protected from the full force of the December 2004 tsunami and faced less damage and fewer lives lost. In many Indonesian towns, the only buildings left standing were the mosques, having been built to a higher standard.

In 2004, the United States spent \$529 million responding to disasters in foreign countries, making us the largest donor for disaster relief, recovery, and rehabilitation. However, according to a study by the World Bank and the United States Geological Survey, during the 1990s, \$40 billion invested globally in preventive measures could have saved \$280 billion in disaster relief funds and saved countless lives.

To address these issues, Mr. BURTON and I are introducing the International Disaster Risk Reduction Act. This bill promotes the use of disaster mitigation efforts in foreign countries, authorizes assistance to help in those efforts, and requires that U.S. disaster relief efforts help make communities less vulnerable to future disasters.

IN HONOR OF PLANTRONICS

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 21, 2006

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Plantronics of Santa Cruz, California on being recognized as one of the "Top 25 medium companies places to work for in America" by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). This honor is bestowed only upon the most deserving companies in the country who meet high standards of employment.

Plantronics is a hardware company from Santa Cruz that specializes in lightweight headsets and is the market leader worldwide. The company was founded in 1961, and was the first to introduce the lightweight communication headset in 1962, and in 1969 a Plantronics headset carried Neil Armstrong's first words from the moon. Plantronics have remained on the cutting edge of headset technology ever since it's founding and continue to raise the bar in the field.

Each of the companies recognized by SHRM is dedicated to communicating clearly with their employees and encouraging their workers to voice their opinions. In addition, these companies provide generous salaries and benefit packages. In return, their employees are motivated and invested in the organization, making these companies some of the most successful medium-sized businesses in their industries.

Plantronics is known to have flexible hours for its employees, allowing them to take time to participate in exciting activities that Santa Cruz has to offer such as surfing, cycling, and hiking. They have a subsidized on-site cafeteria which serves locally grown, organic fruits and vegetables. Importantly, Plantronics is active in the community, and contributes to local service organizations.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to acknowledge Plantronics for their recognition as one of the best places to work in the country and I wish them continued success.

CELEBRATING THE CAREER OF
UNION REPRESENTATIVE GERI
OCHOCINSKA

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 21, 2006

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to recognize the career of Union Organizer and Negotiator Geri Ochocinska, who is retiring after a distinguished career as Director of UAW Region 9.

Ms. Ochocinska has been a leader of Buffalo's Labor movement since 1965 when she helped organize Rich Ice Cream Co. Following this success, she joined UAW Local 55 as a Technical, Office and Professional unit Chair. She was then promoted up the ranks of Local 55, serving at various times as Office Manager, Administrative Assistant to retirement and welfare funds, Business Representative, Vice President and Financial Secretary.

In 1976, Ms. Ochocinska was appointed International Representative, servicing 60

companies in the Western New York area for her local UAW. She held this post until her election as UAW Regional Director.

Elected in 1998, Ms. Ochocinska became the first woman to hold the post of Regional Director of the UAW. As Regional Director of UAW Region 9, Ms. Ochocinska represented the 91,898 active and retired members of the UAW from Western and Central New York, New Jersey, and most of Pennsylvania. She was re-elected to her post in 2002.

A recent article printed in Western New York's Business Newspaper, Business First, pointed out that Geri Ochocinska has risen higher than any woman in the history of organized labor in Western New York. Geri receives recognition as a great negotiator. She is a woman who takes firm stands in negotiations. She also is known for her compassion and for the nurturing ways she cared for and fought for UAW workers.

Ms. Ochocinska's retirement is a loss to the Labor Community of Western New York, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank her and congratulate her for a lifetime of service to the working men and women of Western New York.

HONORING THE HONORABLE
MARY DENNY

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 21, 2006

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Representative Mary Denny for her service in the Texas House of Representatives.

Representative Denny has played an intricate part in the development of the Republican Party in Denton and the North Texas region over the past 20 years. She has helped in over 300 State, Local and National elections in her career and has represented Denton County in both State and National Republican conventions.

As a local businesswoman and former teacher, she graduated from the University of North Texas with a bachelor's degree in Education. She is presently serving her 6th term as State Representative for the 63rd district in Texas. Currently Mrs. Denny is assigned to several House Committees including; Chairman of Elections, House Criminal Jurisprudence, House Administration committee, and the Select Committee on Ethics.

Throughout her amazing career Mrs. Denny has received several awards recognizing her achievements as both a businesswoman and a legislator. She has been recognized for the past four consecutive terms as a Leader of Excellence by the Free Enterprise Committee, a special honor given to the top ten percent of conservative legislators. She has also been recognized as a Friend to the Taxpayer and honored as an Outstanding Legislator by the American Family Association of Texas.

Mr. Speaker, it has been my distinguished honor to work alongside Mrs. Mary Denny for the improvement and development of Denton, Texas. Her leadership and commitment to the citizens of Denton County is remarkable and it has been a privilege to know such a dedicated individual.

IN TRIBUTE TO LEONARD SYKES

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 21, 2006

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the life and work of Mr. Leonard Sykes, Jr., a highly respected, deeply principled and thoroughly knowledgeable Milwaukee journalist. Mr. Sykes died September 17, after suffering a stroke earlier this summer.

Mr. Sykes dedicated his professional life to ensuring that the practice of journalism in Milwaukee and across the country should grow to reflect the full range of life in communities of color. He came to Milwaukee in 1986, having already established a strong journalism career with stints at Jet Magazine and the Waukegan, IL, News-Sun. During his tenure at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, he covered issues that were at the heart of the urban, African American experience, including civil rights, poverty, job training, and anti-violence efforts. He was dedicated to highlighting community efforts that helped hold families and neighborhoods together. A one-time city editor at the Journal Sentinel, he was working as urban affairs reporter at the time of his death.

An award-winning journalist and consummate professional, Mr. Sykes was known throughout the Milwaukee area for bringing dignity and passion to his work. His writing never failed to highlight a keen understanding of the issues. His unique insights derived from skillful research and encyclopedic knowledge of Milwaukee and its people. His no-nonsense approach to the issues sometimes touched a nerve with policymakers, power brokers, and the community at large. Perhaps because of his commitment to seeking truth and airing out the assumptions that underlay conventional wisdom, his work was well respected among the powerful and disenfranchised alike.

As chair of the Journal Sentinel's Minority Caucus, and through his work with the Wisconsin Association of Black Journalists, Mr. Sykes endeavored to expand coverage of communities of color across the state and throughout the country. Notwithstanding this effort—and the glimpse it afforded into the African American community—his reach, focus and scope transcended race. I will miss his powerful intellect and his commitment to using his position to speak truth to power. His death leaves a void not only in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel newsroom, but in the Milwaukee community as a whole.

HONORING THE PLAINVILLE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ON
ITS 125TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. NANCY L. JOHNSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 21, 2006

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the leadership and congregates of the Plainville United Methodist Church on the occasion of its 125th anniversary.

Every day, the members of the Plainville United Methodist Church give testament to the

church's mission to faithfully participate in the ministries of the church through their prayers, presence, gifts and service.

This mission began in the late 1870s when "The People called Methodist" began their witness in Plainville. A tent was used as their place of worship while the church was constructed. On December 26, 1881, the cornerstone was laid for the old building on Canal and Broad Streets, and the edifice was made ready for occupancy on November 15 of the following year.

For many families and communities, the beliefs held and shared in places of worship play an important role in their daily lives. The congregation of the United Methodist Church has proven through the years that its faith is as firm and unshakeable as the foundation of the building in which it worships today. I hope that the 125th anniversary celebration represents the beginning of many more years of worship and community for the Plainville United Methodist Church and the many individuals and families who comprise its congregation.

HONORING ERIKSON INSTITUTE'S
40TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 21, 2006

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Erikson Institute of Chicago on its 40th anniversary. The Erikson Institute is an innovative institution dedicated to cultivating superior early childhood educators of minority and low-income children. The Erikson Institute was founded as a response to increased government programs for early childhood education. With the inception of the Head Start program in 1965, three esteemed child advocates—Maria Peirs, Lorraine Wallach, and Barbara Taylor Bowman—recognized the need for quality early child educators, especially those trained to teach minority and low-income children. Erikson Institute, with financial help from Irving B. Harris, opened its doors in 1966 and has upheld its commitment to excellence throughout the past four decades.

Erikson's mission of ensuring that every adult who works with young children is knowledgeable, aware, and skilled is more important now than ever. Early childhood education is especially important to low-income children. Therefore we know that prekindergarten programs have a positive impact on the cognitive performance of children living in poverty. A critical component in the process of educating young children is having well-trained teachers. In 2001, 72 percent of all urban public school elementary students in prekindergarten programs came from families classified as low-income by the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study. This study also found that roughly half, 51 percent, were minority students. In Chicago there are 19,053 pre-school students, 2,659 of which are special needs children. The 7th District of Illinois, my congressional district, is home to 11,966 pre-school students. Clearly, there is a need for quality early childhood educators. The Erikson Institute fulfills an important role in training these instructors.

Graduates of the Erikson Institute have learned every aspect of childhood develop-

ment. Not only does the Erikson Institute provide a superior education, they also conduct important research on the needs of young children. Professors and researchers at Erikson are committed to sharing their knowledge with both the academic community and the general public. The Erikson Institute is dedicated to outcomes—understanding what works and how—as well as the repetition of successful models. The Erikson Institute's formula for success has greatly benefited numerous programs in the Chicago area, including: Early Head Start; Chicago Public Schools; Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Early Childhood Unit; and Children's Place Project to name a few. Their impact is felt nationwide with over 2,500 graduates a year working in various regions of the country.

Mr. Speaker, as W.E.B. DuBois once said, "We must insist upon this, to give our children the fairness of a start which will equip them with such an array of facts and such an attitude toward truth that they can have a real chance to judge what the world and what its greater minds have thought it might be." It is my great honor to commend the Erikson Institute on four decades of excellence in training those who educate our youngest children.

NATIONAL PSORIASIS
FOUNDATION

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 21, 2006

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the National Psoriasis Foundation and of August as Psoriasis Awareness Month to bring much-needed attention to an often overlooked and serious disease that affects constituents in each of our districts. According to the National Institutes of Health, NIH, as many as 7.5 million Americans are affected by psoriasis—a chronic, inflammatory, painful, disfiguring and disabling disease for which there are limited treatments and no cure. Ten to thirty percent of people with psoriasis also develop psoriatic arthritis, which causes pain, stiffness and swelling in and around the joints. Psoriasis is widely misunderstood, minimized and undertreated. In addition to the pain, itching and bleeding caused by psoriasis, many affected individuals also experience social discrimination and stigma. Many people also mistakenly believe psoriasis to be contagious. Psoriasis typically first strikes between the ages of 15 and 25 and lasts a lifetime. As such, psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis impose significant burden on individuals and society; together they cost the Nation 56 million hours of lost work and between \$2 billion and \$3 billion in treatments each year.

Despite the serious adverse effects that psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis have on individuals, families and society, psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis are underrecognized and underfunded by our Nation's research institutions. The NIH has spent less than \$1 per person with psoriasis on average each of the last 10 years. At the historical and current rate of psoriasis funding, NIH funding is not keeping pace with research needs. The scientific advisors of the National Psoriasis Foundation believe that between 5 and 10 additional psoriasis-specific investigator-initiated research