

schools or ending the racist Jim Crow segregation of buses, restaurants and public facilities, and their lobbying efforts which ultimately led to the passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, and 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the reauthorization of the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act of 2006, must be commended.

And Mr. Speaker, the NAACP took the helm to organize the national boycott against American companies doing business with the former apartheid regime in South Africa. The NAACP also protested, most recently in 2000, the flying of the confederate flag over state buildings in South Carolina, which to date was, the largest civil rights demonstration (50,000 people) ever held in the South. The importance of this organization whose impact has been demonstrated in almost every part of the country and in many parts of the world cannot be overstated.

But the critical work of the NAACP is needed now more than ever. The slow systematic dismantling of Affirmative Action; the declining homeownership rates of African American families; the growing poverty rate of African American families and the growing achievement gap between white and black children; the disproportionate incarceration rates of black male youth, and the growing illiteracy rate of black children are all important causes for the NAACP.

Add to that fact that the NAACP was a leading champion of the Hurricanes' Katrina and Rita survivors. They are still pushing for justice for all in the Gulf Coast region and you can see why the NAACP is still so necessary today.

We must continue to beat the drum and join the NAACP in their efforts to bring their mission for economic and social justice for all to reality.

Mr. Speaker, we have come a long way since the founding days of the NAACP, Brown vs. Board of Education, the Voting Rights Act. In the words of former NAACP president Bruce Gordon, "There is still a lot of civil rights work to be done. Many people believe the passing of Rosa Parks, Coretta Scott-King and other icons of the movement signals that the task is over." He added, "Nothing could be further from the truth."

ON THE INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 1194, THE TELEPHONE EXCISE TAX REPEAL ACT OF 2007

HON. GARY G. MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Telephone Excise Tax Repeal Act of 2007. As the sponsor of this legislation in previous sessions of Congress, I thank my colleagues in the majority and members of the Ways and Means Committee for recognizing the value of this important issue. Congress must continue to work together in a bipartisan fashion, building on momentum from last year's cosponsorship by 220 members, to abolish this tax. I am proud to join with my colleagues today to introduce the Telephone Excise Tax Repeal Act in the 110th Congress, which will eliminate the

three percent tax on all telecommunications services.

The federal excise tax on telecommunications services was used to pay for the Spanish-American War in 1898. This tax was intended to tap only the wealthiest 1,400 telephone owners. However, with more telephones than people in the United States today, this excise tax represents the polar opposite of a luxury tax, and merely serves to raise prices for consumers.

Telephone tax revenues once used to pay for the Spanish-American War are deposited in the General Fund. Unlike the gas tax, which directs revenues to the Highway Trust Fund, no specific account exists to redirect money collected from the telephone "luxury" tax. Other items subject to a "luxury" tax include airplane tickets, beer and liquor, firearms and cigarettes. Obviously, a telephone is a necessity, and thus does not fit with this list of "luxury" items.

Last year, the U.S. Treasury Department conceded the legal dispute over the federal excise tax on long-distance telephone service. After 11 consecutive courtroom losses by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury Secretary John Snow announced that collection of the three percent excise tax on long-distance and bundled services would end on July 31, 2006. In fact, the IRS is issuing refunds of tax on long-distance service for the past 3 years. This year, taxpayers may apply for refunds on their 2006 tax forms. The Treasury's action is a step in the right direction, and it is finally time for Congress to put an end to this hidden tax on local telecommunication services.

The telephone tax burdens our communication abilities and is destructive to technological innovation. It must be repealed immediately. I urge my colleagues to build upon the successes we have had in the past and to help American taxpayers win the war on their wallets once and for all.

IN HONOR OF RICHARD DEL BOCCIO

HON. ALBIO SIRES

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. SIRES. Madam Speaker, I rise here today to honor an outstanding resident of the City of Hoboken. Richard Del Boccio is retiring after 40 years of dedicated service as an educator and public official.

Mr. Del Boccio, who was born and raised in Hoboken, began his career in education in the early 1960s, and for 15 years made his mark in the lives of thousands of students as Principal of the Salvatore Calabro School. Later, as Interim Superintendent, Adjunct Professor at St. Peter's College and State Appointed Principal Mentor, he continued to mold and oversee the Hoboken School System, inspiring students and faculty alike, and setting and example for young minds to follow.

Richard Del Boccio's teaching and mentoring led him to fight for the improvement of his community as a public official. Elected Hoboken Councilman at Large, he became involved in the betterment of his native city and the lives of his constituents. Mr. Del Boccio became City Council President and retires as Councilman of the Second Ward of the City of Hoboken.

Mr. Del Boccio cemented his commitment to public service by being a member of various community organizations, including the Hoboken Memorial September 11th and Pier C Park Waterfront Steering Committees, and taking active rolls as Co-Chairman of the Youth Advisory Committee and Co-Founder of the Neighborhood Block Watch Committee. His dedication won him the Christopher Columbus Award for Community Service in 2005.

It is my privilege and honor to recognize Richard Del Boccio for his dedication to Hoboken and the people of New Jersey. I ask that my colleagues join me in wishing him, his wife, children, and grandchildren continued health and happiness in the future.

COMMEMORATING 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE "228 INCIDENT" IN TAIWAN

HON. THOMAS G. TANCREDO

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. TANCREDO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the "228 Incident" in Taiwan.

On February 28, 1947, the arrest of a cigarette vendor in Taipei triggered large-scale protests there against military repression of Taiwan's residents.

Madam Speaker, while the protests the event sparked were quashed in the days and weeks following the initial incident, the event had far reaching implications.

Over the next half-century, the movement that grew out of the event helped to pave the way for Taiwan's momentous transformation from a dictatorship to thriving and pluralistic democracy.

In some ways, the 228 incident was Taiwan's "Boston Massacre."

Madam Speaker, I hope Members will join me in commemorating this important historical event, and I look forward to the day that we can welcome Taiwan's elected President to Washington, DC.

HONORING MR. LEVI LEE SMITH

HON. JAMES T. WALSH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. WALSH of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today in tribute to the late Mr. Levi "Lee" Smith who served his central New York community in a number of unique ways.

He founded the Onondaga Citizens League, OCL, which promotes civic education and involvement in public affairs. Organized in 1978, the OCL has offered the community studies on local government consolidation, voter participation, area health services, the quality of local arts, and community housing assessments among others.

Lee's Institute for Retired Professionals offers local retirees the opportunity to remain intellectually active in community affairs after retirement.

Perhaps most notable is Lee's work to found the Thursday Morning Roundtable,

TMR, 41 years ago. The organization is a public service speaker series that was created to provide an environment where people who were interested in political and civic issues could discuss their ideas and opinions. Lee's foresight in founding TMR as a forum for thoughtful study and exchange laid the groundwork for other civic involvement initiatives in our community, like FOCUS Greater Syracuse and Syracuse University's Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today, TNT.

Mr. Lee Smith passed on February 6 of this year at the age of 88, and his life will be celebrated at a memorial service on February 18. Lee's commitment and dedication to serving the community and educating others has been, and will continue to be, an important asset to our community. I thank his wife Alice and the entire Smith family for sharing Lee with our community all these years.

FREEDOM FOR RAMÓN
VELÁZQUEZ TORANZO

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about Ramón Velázquez Toranzo, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Velázquez is a pro-democracy activist and independent journalist for Libertad, a small independent news agency founded by José Luis García Paneque, a political prisoner jailed during the condemnable March 2003 "Black Spring" crackdown. His peaceful activities and truthful articles have helped expose the nightmarish reality that is the Castro regime. Unfortunately, for this very reason he has been targeted by the tyrant's machinery of repression, as part of its effort to silence the brave men and women of Cuba's pro-democracy movement.

On December 10, 2006, International Human Rights Day, Mr. Velázquez Toranzo, began a march for Cuban Dignity in Eastern Cuba at the shrine of Our Lady of Charity, Cuba's patron saint, demanding freedom for all Cuban political prisoners, respect for human rights, and the cessation of repression against peaceful pro-democracy activists. Mr. Velázquez Toranzo, who was marching with his wife, Barbara González Cruz, and his daughter, Rufina Velázquez González, intended to travel 950 kilometers by foot in hope of ending their march for freedom in Havana.

On their journey, Mr. Velázquez Toranzo, his family and other marchers were detained twice in Ciego de Ávila and Camaguey, Cuba, for peacefully advocating for the most basic freedoms for the Cuban people. Despite being detained, nearly being run over twice by State Security Thugs, and knowing full well the brutal consequences that await those who speak the truth under the nightmare that is the Castro tyranny, they continued their peaceful march for human rights and dignity.

On January 23, 2007, 18 days after beginning his peaceful march for dignity, Mr. Velázquez Toranzo and his family were arrested for a third time in the city of Ciego de Ávila. His wife and daughter were released but Mr. Velázquez Toranzo was held at a police station and then transferred to the "El Típico"

provincial prison. And there, after months of harassment by State Security thugs, Mr. Velázquez Toranzo was "sentenced" to suffer 3 years of horror in the squalor of a subhuman gulag for his supposed crime, "anti-social conduct."

Madam Speaker, Mr. Velázquez Toranzo is languishing in an infernal gulag just 90 miles from our shores. It is as inconceivable as it is unacceptable that, while the world stands by in silence and acquiescence, independent journalists who write the truth about totalitarianism are jailed and tortured simply for exposing truth. We must demand immediate freedom for Ramón Velázquez Toranzo and all political prisoners in totalitarian Cuba.

RECOGNIZING REV. RICHARD
DRANKWALTER ON THE OCCA-
SION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Rev. Richard Drankwalter, the outgoing Pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in Brooksville, Florida. For nearly 37 years, Pastor Drankwalter has served the Lutheran Church with honor and distinction, all in the name of Jesus Christ.

Born on July 4, 1944, in Queens, New York, Pastor Drankwalter has dedicated his life to serving the Church. Earning his Bachelor of Divinity and Master of Divinity from Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield, Illinois in 1970, he spent an early part of his career as Pastor of the Peace Lutheran Church in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Pastor Drankwalter then moved on to serve the Church in Illinois and New York, eventually moving to Brooksville, Florida in 1986. Pastor Drankwalter has been a minister at Christ Lutheran in Brooksville for nearly 20 years.

Pastor Drankwalter joined Christ Lutheran following service as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Silver Creek, New York. At the time of his appointment there were 168 members of Christ Lutheran; today there are over 600. A sure sign of his family's commitment to the area, both his wife Paula and his daughter Jennifer have served as teachers in Hernando County. The Pastor himself ran for Hernando County School Board and that is where I first met him.

In addition to this service, Pastor Drankwalter and his wife Paula have been very involved in local church and civic organizations, including the Brooksville Ministerial Association, the Hernando County Youth Association, the Brooksville Kiwanis Club, and served on the Board of Directors of the Committee Against Assaults on Law Enforcement Officers.

For nearly 37 years, Pastor Drankwalter has tended to the needs of his congregation. As a part of his ministry, he has gone above and beyond the call of duty to help families seeking guidance and support. On one occasion the Pastor dropped everything and drove to an area hospital to pray with a family following their father's stroke, even though they were not members of his congregation. His career has been built on working for Christ, not blindly following denominations and labels.

Madam Speaker, Pastor Drankwalter's dedication to the Lord and to the Lutheran Church has served as an inspiration to thousands throughout Hernando County. His ministry has touched the hearts of many, and the Church has continued to grow under his leadership. Pastor Drankwalter is to be commended for his years of service, his commitment to the Lord, and for serving the men and women who rely on his counsel and wisdom. Pastor Drankwalter is a shining example of the good that serving Jesus Christ can bring to our friends and families, and he will be sorely missed by the entire community.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND
IDEALS OF WORLD WATER DAY

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of World Water Day, along with Congresswoman EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, the Chair of the Transportation & Infrastructure Subcommittee Water Resources and the Environment.

Every 15 seconds, a child dies from lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation. This resolution is intended to help us raise awareness of this leading cause of preventable death.

For the last 15 years, March 22nd has been designated as World Water Day in order to draw attention to the global water crisis and inspire action to alleviate this unnecessary tragedy. While over the past 20 years, two billion people have gained access to safe drinking water, approximately one in six people in the world are still without this most basic building block of life.

Last Congress, the House and Senate both passed the "Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act," which made safe drinking water and sanitation key priorities in U.S. foreign assistance. However, much more needs to be done both at home and abroad to ensure safe, affordable, and sustainable access to water for people everywhere.

I invite my colleagues to cosponsor this important resolution.

HONORING JOSÉ ARREDONDO

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2007

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary career of José Arredondo. José has served as the Executive Director of the Spanish Speaking Citizen's Foundation (SSCF) in Oakland since 1986. Throughout his career, José has been known for his tireless work on behalf of the Latino community and the community at large. This year José celebrates his retirement after 20 years of unparalleled service to the SSCF, and many more to the entire Bay Area community.

José holds a B.A. in sociology and an M.S. in counseling from California State University,