

TRIBUTE TO HOUSTON'S  
ENTERPRISE CATERING SERVICE

**HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
*Wednesday, September 5, 2007*

Mr. CLYBURN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding minority-owned business in my hometown of Columbia, SC, that has earned a reputation for excellence. Houston's Enterprise Catering Service is deservedly being honored by the Southeast Minority Business Development Agency with the Southeastern Regional Director's Award. This is the highest honor bestowed by the regional MBDA organization in recognition of a minority business's outstanding achievements.

Chef Frank Houston and his wife, Millie, are the power behind Houston's Enterprise Catering Service. Frank began cooking when he was a young boy growing up in Charleston, SC. His mother believed in the African-American tradition of teaching all children to cook. Young Frank soon became adept at preparing family favorites like shrimp and grits, homemade butter pound cake, fruitcake, and lima beans with rice.

Cooking was a passion that he learned early in life and was a skill he parlayed into a career. At age 16, he became a bus boy at the Francis Marion Hotel but quickly rose to become a waiter. Frank Houston's ambition and desire to learn everything about the restaurant business precipitated his climb through management and he ultimately became the dining room manager for the hotel.

Yet Frank knew his first love was in preparing food, and left his food service work to study culinary arts at Cornell University. After completing his studies, Frank used his background to launch a restaurant with partner Bob Funderburk. The two men successfully ran Funderburk Restaurant, but Frank knew he ultimately wanted to venture out on his own.

Starting his own catering company proved to be a challenge even for the successful entrepreneur. Frank moved to Columbia, and opened his own catering business in 1987. However, as the sole employee of the business, banks were wary of lending him start-up capital and he had to rely on his own financing. The first year was difficult. Houston's Catering sales reached only \$50,000, but he didn't give up.

Fate intervened when Frank met his wife, Millie, in 1994. She was completing her degree in hotel, restaurant and tourism management at the University of South Carolina. The combination of their talents led to the creation of Houston's Enterprise Catering Service with Frank serving as chef and Millie managing the operations. The Houstons still received no financial backing and struggled to build their business on word of mouth. Their attention to detail and exquisite execution of upscale menus drew a new customer base solely founded on the company's reputation. By 2001, sales reached nearly \$280,000, and Houston's counted among its clientele major corporations, community-based organizations, State agencies as well as private clients.

With the company's growing success, the Houstons believed they should continue to

build their business while giving back to the community that had supported them. As they began to hire new employees, they made a commitment to hire those who were disadvantaged and in need of work. They created a secretarial position for single mothers, hired disabled workers and mentored youth during the summer.

The business has been challenged by the opening of the Columbia Convention Center in 2004, which provides special event services for clients who are required to use their food service vendor. Today, Houston's Enterprise Catering Service has a new contract to provide service for the convention center that once was his competition. This new contract in partnership with the Ovations Company is projected to double the Houston's sales figures to exceed \$500,000 this fiscal year.

The company still remains committed to the community and giving back. Each year, Houston's contributes to AIDS benefits, the Oliver Gospel Mission, Harvest Hope Food Bank, and various women's shelters. They also participate in youth development programs like DARE, Buffalo Soldiers, and continue to mentor young people. The Houstons were instrumental in creating the "Chef & Child Program," an initiative of Midlands Chef Association. They have received numerous commendations for their community service including awards from the American Culinary Federation.

The Houstons are grounded by their faith, and Frank currently serves as an associate minister at St. Peter Baptist Church in Irmo, SC. The couple has received citations for their outstanding support of their church.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me today in commending Houston's Enterprise Catering Service for its extraordinary accomplishments and its recognition as the recipient of the MBDA's Southeastern Regional Director's Award. I know firsthand of the wonderful food and service the Houstons provide, and I cannot think of another couple more deserving of the rewards they are reaping after years of hard work and community service. They are truly an example of the American dream, and I applaud their tremendous accomplishments.

IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 3062—SOUTH  
PACIFIC ECONOMIC AND EDU-  
CATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACT  
OF 2007

**HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO**

OF GUAM  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
*Wednesday, September 5, 2007*

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3062, the South Pacific Economic and Educational Development Act of 2007, and take this opportunity to highlight its value for the strengthening of United States diplomacy in Oceania.

I have the distinct privilege and honor of representing the people of Guam in this House. My constituents remain keenly aware and are especially appreciative of the United States foreign policy programs most relevant

and important to our neighboring islands in the greater Pacific Basin. Indeed, the provision of United States technical and financial assistance to Pacific Island states is cause for associated growth and development in, and international recognition of, the neighboring Pacific Island territories of the United States.

Our island territories, including Guam, the Northern Marianas, an American Samoa, together with the State of Hawaii, serve as logical bridges and links to our friends and allies in the greater Pacific Basin. Commerce, trade, communication, and transportation flow between and through our Pacific Island territories and the Pacific Island nation-states. Heads of state and government officials frequently convene in the Pacific Island territories for meetings and summits on issues of relevance and interest to the region and to the United States. H.R. 3062 is predicated in the historic relationship and responsibility the United States has developed with the Pacific Island nation-states.

The introduction and consideration of H.R. 3062 is timely in that it follows the eighth meeting of the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders, an organization that was founded in 1980 with the support of the East-West Center. The eighth meeting convened in Washington, D.C., this past May, and marked the first high-level gathering of Pacific Island political leaders in the Nation's capital in the Conference's history. Twenty separate heads of states and leaders from Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia, participated in that meeting, at which partnerships between the islands and the United States were renewed. A commitment to re-engage in the shared needs and interests of our countries was forged at this recent meeting.

H.R. 3062 would help fulfill a part of the United States commitment to re-engage in the Pacific Region. The bill would authorize the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide technical and other assistance to Pacific Island nation-states. The bill would also require the Department of State to take certain steps to ensure the participation of students from the Pacific Island nation-states in the distinguished and highly-recognized J. Fulbright Educational Exchange Program.

I am confident that the provision of such assistance and the participation of Pacific Island students in the Fulbright Program will serve to strengthen United States-Pacific Island relations. H.R. 3062 would also serve to support the advancement of efforts to strengthen regional cooperation, especially in the areas of trade, tourism, the environment, education, and defense and security.

I commend our colleague from American Samoa, Congressman ENI FALEOMAVAEGA, a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Chairman of its Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment, for sponsoring this legislation and for his leadership in buttressing United States assistance in the greater Pacific Basin. I urge my colleagues' support for H.R. 3062.