

and unconditional release of Victor Yunier Fernandez Martinez and every political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE VICTIMS OF THE VIRGINIA TECH TRAGEDY

HON. ERIC CANTOR

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 23, 2008

Mr. CANTOR. Madam Speaker, when an act of random cruelty bewilders us and pulls us down, exceptional displays of generosity, courage and heroism can serve as a potent counterforce. They comfort and replenish the bereaved, and they remind us of the extraordinary selflessness our people are capable of. Nowhere has this been truer than in the aftermath of the Virginia Tech tragedy.

Today, we are faced with the memory of the horrific events that occurred one year ago at Virginia Tech. It is no easier today, than it was then, to find the words to express the pain and sorrow that was felt across the Hokie nation.

Once again I stand here with a heavy heart and extend my deepest sympathies to the families and friends of all the victims; especially those of Emily Hilscher and Rachel Hill, two victims from the Seventh District of Virginia. We will always be left with their spirit, energy and enthusiasm that will never die, but rather will live on in our memories forever.

A TRIBUTE TO STAFF SERGEANT EMANUEL PICKETT

HON. MIKE MCINTYRE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 23, 2008

Mr. MCINTYRE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Staff Sergeant Emanuel Pickett of Wallace, North Carolina, who lost his life while defending our Nation on April 6 during a mortar attack in Baghdad. In addition to his service in the North Carolina National Guard, Emanuel served as a captain with the Wallace, North Carolina, Police Department. He shall be remembered by all those whose lives he touched as the finest example of bravery, honor, and public service.

Emanuel lived in Wallace his entire life, and throughout his 34 years, worked selflessly to make a positive difference in his community. Besides working as a captain with the Wallace Police Department, he also worked as a reserve deputy for the Duplin County Sheriff's office, where he led undercover drug investigations in several surrounding counties. Emanuel's giving spirit found many outlets. He also started a crime watch in his own neighborhood, helped to found a program to mentor kids without fathers, and coached youth basketball.

Emanuel will be missed by his family and friends. He was the son of Harry and Merlese Pickett, the youngest of six children. He was the loving father of three children—two daughters, ages 17 and 10, and a 14-year-old son. Over his lifetime, Emanuel earned countless friends. Because of his thirteen years of service with the police department and his stint of

more than 20 years employed at a local butcher shop, Emanuel owned one of the most recognizable faces in his community. He was so admired within his community, in fact, that his family has received condolences from thousands of people, including some that Emanuel helped send to prison.

Emanuel Pickett was serving his second tour of duty in Iraq when his life was taken. His courage will continue to be an inspiration to us all. His life is a strong representation of what can be accomplished through devotion to a community and its people. May God bless his family, and may we always remember the life of Staff Sergeant Emanuel Pickett.

HONORING MARIAN BOLTON

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 23, 2008

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Marian Bolton, of Albuquerque, New Mexico, upon her upcoming retirement from the YMCA. Marian has devoted 38 years of extraordinary service to the "Y."

Marian, a nationally-recognized leader among her peers, built her career on a foundation of high principles and character. Currently the President and CEO of the YMCA of Central New Mexico, Marian has always been committed to incorporating the virtues of Character Counts, a national organization, into all programs and activities of the "Y." Because of her commitment to instilling trustworthiness, respect, caring, fairness, responsibility and citizenship into her staff, youth and their families, Marian is credited to a large extent with the success—personally, academically and professionally—of countless New Mexicans.

Marian also has been involved on the international stage with many non-profit agencies. A true champion for equal opportunities for all, regardless of race, culture or background, she has volunteered her time and unwavering efforts to conducting workshops in such areas as agency management, financial development, volunteerism, values and balancing personal and professional lives, to name only a few. Marian has also traveled to many countries whose youth are affected by such tragic conditions as poverty, hunger, slavery and lack of education and medical care. She has labored tirelessly to help improve their lives through the vital resources of the YMCA.

Marian Bolton is the consummate successful executive, who passionately cares about the lives of others. She has devoted her life to bringing as much motivation, education, training, tools for success, a positive attitude and, perhaps most importantly, hope for those striving for a better and brighter future. Her wisdom, experience and expertise is known across the globe, and she is highly sought after for consultation and training for those seeking to follow in her successful footsteps.

I invite all my colleagues to join me in congratulating Marian Bolton for her enormous contributions and accomplishments. Her shoes will be difficult to fill. On behalf of all New Mexicans, I extend our very best wishes to Marian for much happiness, success and fulfillment during the next stage of her life.

RECOGNIZING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE MODERN STATE OF ISRAEL

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 322, a resolution celebrating Israel's 60th anniversary. I am proud to have been a co-sponsor of this resolution.

Israel proclaimed its statehood on May 14, 1948. On its first day of existence, the armies of five neighboring Arab countries declared war on Israel. The war for independence lasted about a year and resulted in armistice separate agreements, but not before 6,000 Israeli lives were lost.

Within 8 months of independence and before the war ended, Israel held its first national elections. Eighty-five percent of all eligible voters cast their ballots to create the first 120-seat Knesset or Parliament.

A state founded by refugees of and survivors of religious persecution, Israel has been and continues to be one of America's closest and most consistent allies.

This desert nation exists in a region that is, unfortunately, as steeped in violence as it is rich in history and tradition. We must do all that we can to ensure the security of the State of Israel and its people. Just as the United States is vital to the survival of Israel, I believe Israel is also vital to the survival of the United States. Our countries are linked together on so many levels.

Unfortunately, today, Israel has new and increasing threats to its security. Palestinian rockets have been fired from Gaza and hit Israeli communities on an almost daily basis. More than 200,000 Israeli citizens are within range of these Palestinian rockets. One of the saddest aspects of the terrorism situation in Israel is that it grabs the newspaper headlines and distracts the world from seeing the many advances made by Israel in democracy and human rights, science, agriculture, transportation, and so many other areas.

Despite nearly impossible odds, Israel's will to survive and her people's dogged determination have resulted in the development of a thriving democracy in one of the globe's least democratic regions. In fact, in only 60 years Israel has grown into a mature democracy that has produced some of the finest thinkers, scientists and entrepreneurs of the modern era.

We must never forget the conditions that, in many respects, laid the foundation for the creation of the State of Israel. After one of the most horrific atrocities in human history, the Holocaust, Israel was established as a home to a nearly decimated people. It is often said that we must "never forget" the horrors and the lessons of the Holocaust. And since April is Holocaust Remembrance month, this is an appropriate time to reaffirm our unyielding strong obligation to our friend and ally and vow to "never forget" our commitment to Israel.

The United States and the all of the nations of the world have a moral responsibility to ensure and support the existence of the State of Israel.

H. Con. Res. 322 recognizes the historical significance of Israel's 60th anniversary, supports Israel as it continues to pursue peace