

The duty Sergeant Rice has performed, as well as his outstanding tenure in the military, is a reflection of the dedication and valor he possesses. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to honor Sergeant Thomas Savage Rice for his enduring allegiance to our great Nation and the State of Florida.

**ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN GAZA
MUST BE IMPROVED**

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 14, 2008

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, since late January 2008, the 1.5 million people in Gaza have been enduring an Israeli-imposed blockade. The blockade effectively restricts the entry of food, clean water, fuel, and medical supplies. The lack of basic goods has severely deteriorated Gaza's health, social fabric, and economy.

The World Bank reports that since Hamas ousted Fatah from Gaza last June, 90 percent of businesses have shut down, costing workers more than 100,000 jobs. Due to the closure of Gaza's borders and its inability to import raw materials, farmers and businesses are unable to produce and export their goods leaving nearly half a million people without an income.

I encourage the Bush Administration to do everything it possibly can to improve the economic livelihood of Gaza's population so that they do not become the tragic victims of Israel's national security policies. In particular, the Bush Administration should consider:

Expanding the list of food items permissible for import into Gaza. Presently only twelve basic food items are allowed entry into Gaza and this does not include salt or cattle;

Allowing entry of seed, seedlings, fertilizers, and chemicals necessary for farmers to continue growing basic goods for humanitarian needs and consumption;

Permitting the entry of raw materials intended for use by private sector Gaza-based factories. More than 800 factories have been shut down in Gaza since the blockade, exacerbating its unemployment conditions;

Extending, on an urgent basis, the reach of recently launched West Bank initiatives of the small loans and mortgage funding in order to provide micro-lending to small businesses and to stimulate peaceful economic activities;

Encouraging, and allowing entry of, European and other foreign technical staff to enter Gaza and engage in assisting the private sector as well as non-governmental organizations in Gaza; and

Permitting entry of construction materials into Gaza necessary for the completion of \$300 million dollars worth of projects which have been suspended due to material shortages. These projects fall under the umbrella of international organizations including the United Nations Relief Works Agency, the United Nations Development Program, and the World Bank. The necessary materials can be earmarked for specific projects and their implementation can be supervised by these international organizations thereby avoiding improper usage.

I urge the U.S. Administration to help end the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and ensure

the health, safety, and security for Palestinians and Israelis.

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res 1134, supporting the goals and ideals of Mental Health Month.

Mental Health Month helps to educate our communities that mental health is a fundamental and humane priority for America's well-being.

The quiet suffering of the afflicted, the familial pain shared by their loved ones, and the societal stigma associated with mental illness all make mental health very important to all Americans.

We must realize the toll mental illness has taken on the young. One in five children has a mental disorder. Furthermore, suicide is the third leading cause of death among teenagers, and every one in four Latina teens report seriously contemplating suicide, a rate higher than any other demographic.

Mental illness continues to be a silent illness for our veterans and soldiers returning from serving overseas. More than one in five of our troops suffer from major depression or post traumatic stress disorder. No longer should these conditions be swept under the rug, these are difficult situations that a lot of military families are facing every day.

Today senior citizens compose 12 percent of the population, but account for 16 percent of all suicides, higher than for any other age group. Our seniors are the foundation of this country and their mental health needs are underserved.

These are alarming and concerning statistics. Yet, many of us still don't know the extent of the mental health problems America is suffering from. Untreated mental illness costs the American economy over \$150 billion annually.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this resolution and educate our communities that mental health is a fundamental and humane priority for America.

**STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE
FILL SUSPENSION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT OF 2008**

SPEECH OF

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6022, at a time when oil prices are reaching record highs, suspending the Federal Government's oil purchases is a win for consumers and for the Federal budget.

Regular gas now costs over \$3.73 a gallon, compared to only \$1.47 in 2001 before the President began implementing his disastrous policies. Families and businesses on eastern Long Island and across the country are calling on Congress to take action to lower these

soaring gas prices and reduce our Nation's unsustainable addiction to oil.

In response, I am pleased to cosponsor this bill, which takes a good, first step. Economists and government agencies agree that suspending the filling of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve would directly impact gas prices this summer by making more oil available. In contrast, it would take at least a decade for consumers to benefit from Republican plans to hand over America's wilderness areas to big oil.

Moreover, it is not fiscally prudent for the Federal Government to continue to pay such high premiums to stockpile oil when we currently have sufficient reserves.

In the 108th and 109th Congresses, as Bush administration policies drove the price of gas to record highs, I introduced similar legislation to halt the filling of the Petroleum Reserve.

Today the need for such action is even greater, Mr. Speaker. Therefore I call on my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 6022.

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of H. Res. 1134, a bill which supports the goals and ideals of Mental Health Month. I support this legislation because I believe that Congress should seek to raise awareness about mental health conditions and the importance of mental wellness for all.

The plight of families suffering from mental illness is immense and can often be linked to an absence of adequate social services available coupled with the unwarranted stigma surrounding mental health issues. Due to the unwarranted social stigma associated with mental illness and a systemic failure to provide health care coverage, over two-thirds of the people who suffer from mental illness go untreated according to the Department of Health and Human Services.

According to the National Institute on Mental Health, 20 percent of our children and 26.2 percent of American adults suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year. As the leading cause of disability in the U.S., many people suffer from more than one mental disorder at a given time. According to the Centers for Disease Control, one in two Americans has a diagnosable mental disorder each year.

Within minority communities, there is an increased need for mental health services. For example, according to the Centers for Disease Control, African Americans are more likely to experience a mental disorder and less likely to seek treatment than Caucasian Americans. When African Americans do seek treatment, they are more likely to use the emergency room for mental health care, and they are also more likely than whites to receive inpatient care.

In 2004, the House Government Reform Committee estimated \$100 million of taxpayers' money was spent on detention of