

has followed through on his promise to make the solution of the Cyprus problem his top priority. The day of his election, he extended his hand in friendship to Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Talat, calling for face-to-face meetings. As a result, President Christofias and Mr. Talat will meet for the fourth time on July 25th. Over the past six months, working groups and technical committees have been preparing the ground for direct fully-fledged negotiations, with the aim of reaching a settlement of the Cyprus problem. On July 13th, in Paris, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon assured President Christofias of the U.N.'s continuing interest to achieve a Cyprus settlement through negotiations by Cypriots for Cypriots.

These are all promising measures, Madam Speaker. So I can only hope that before next year's anniversary, the world will finally see a negotiated resolution that heals the wounds of the 1974 invasion, reunites the Cypriot people once more, and provides a genuine and lasting peace to Cyprus.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL S. FINEGAN

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 2008

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and thank Mr. Michael S. Finegan for his service as the Director of Veteran Affairs Western New York Healthcare System. Mr. Finegan has truly made great strides for the veterans in the Western New York area.

Mr. Finegan gained his Bachelor's Degree from Allegheny College, and later earned his Master's Degree in Public Administration from the State University of New York Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy. Mr. Finegan has since achieved great things in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. Finegan has taken on a variety of different roles throughout his tenure with the Department of Veterans Affairs. From 1997 to 2000, Mr. Finegan served as Chief Financial and Operations Officer for VA Healthcare Network Upstate New York, where he was personally responsible for the development, coordination and monitoring of the Network's financial management and operations. For the following three years, Mr. Finegan took the position of Director of the VA Medical Center in Butler, Pennsylvania, as well as lead director for Veterans Integrated Service Network 4.

Since late 2003, Mr. Finegan has successfully served as Director of VA Western New York Healthcare System, during which time he served as Acting Director of the VA Healthcare Network for Upstate New York for a brief period in 2006. At the VA Western New York Healthcare System, Mr. Finegan led a staff of 1,750 employees who have provided the finest health care to more than 40,000 veterans of military service during the past year alone. He has also carried on the highly regarded clinical research and training programs for America's future health care contributors.

Mr. Finegan is currently a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives, the Healthcare Financial Managers Association and the American Society of Public Administration. Mr. Michael S. Finegan is an innovative leader for veterans around the country, especially in the Western New York area.

Madam Speaker, I ask you to join me in recognizing the many achievements of Mr. Finegan and wishing him luck in all future endeavors.

SUPPORTING NATIONAL CYSTIC FIBROSIS AWARENESS MONTH

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 2008

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, on Tuesday July 15th, the House of Representatives passed unanimously by voice vote H. Con. Res. 299, a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Cystic Fibrosis Awareness Month. As a proud cosponsor of this resolution, I am grateful that the House of Representatives took the time to show our support for those who are fighting for better treatment and a cure for cystic fibrosis.

Our ability to help families and the medical community make headway against this disease is vital. With approximately 30,000 Americans living with this disease—a large percentage of which are children—raising funding and awareness for research will bring hope and real results.

In an effort to raise money and awareness for cystic fibrosis research, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation has held an annual Celebrity Tennis Gala for the past 23 years. Since the beginning of these annual events, the life-expectancy of a child born with cystic fibrosis has more than doubled. This is in no small part due to the money raised at this event and others. Last year alone, the Foundation raised more than \$350,000 which is a substantial part of the \$2.5 million raised over the years through the gala. I had the privilege of being a part of the 2008 event, where my Chief of Staff Dino Teppara was a key player, and I was encouraged by the dedication of the families I met and the hard-working individuals at the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

America has remained a leader in medical research and our scientists continue to lead the way in inching closer to a cure for many diseases. I look forward to working with my colleagues and the American people as we battle together to find a cure for cystic fibrosis and other diseases.

HONORING ALFREDO FLORES SR.

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 2008

Mr. GONZALES. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Alfredo Flores Senior, a constituent of mine who on August 10th will celebrate his 100th birthday.

Mr. Flores was born in Muzquiz, a city in the Mexican state of Coahuila. Caught in the crossfire of the Mexican Revolution, Flores immigrated to the United States when he was just 15 years old. Then a young man, he found himself in a strange country with an absent father and a mother and sister who relied on him to put food on the table. And while the Great Depression greeted him on his 18th birthday, he built a business that thrived despite the difficult odds that he faced.

Today, Alamo Music Center is San Antonio's largest music store and has served people across South Central Texas for decades. It has not only become an important part of our economy but our community as well.

Notably, Mr. Flores has always lived up to the responsibility that came with his success and stature in the community. He co-founded the Westside State Bank that specialized in delivering financial services to low-income minorities and has played an integral role in various community interest groups across San Antonio.

Mr. Flores life is a true personification of the American dream. He came to this country to realize a better life for him and his family, and through hard work he achieved this noble goal and put himself in a position where he could give back to his community. For these reasons, I'm honored to celebrate his achievements as we approach this milestone in his life, and ask my colleagues to join me in wishing Mr. Flores a Happy 100th Birthday.

FUTURE OF CYPRUS

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 2008

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, many of my colleagues have supported a settlement of the Cyprus issue for decades. They have come to the floor and urged Turkish and Greek Cypriots to overcome the difficulties and reach an agreement regarding the future of the island.

On July 1, 2008, Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat met in a positive and cooperative atmosphere. At this meeting, the two leaders reviewed the progress of the Working Groups and Technical Committees, and, momentarily, agreed in principle on the issue of a single sovereignty and citizenship. The Cypriot leaders will meet again on July 25 to undertake a final review of preparations for full-fledged negotiations.

This is not the first time there has been cause for hope. After four and a half years of negotiations and numerous failed attempts, a United Nations Comprehensive Settlement Plan was completed on March 31, 2004. The final hurdle was two separate, simultaneous referenda to be held on both sides of the island on April 24, 2004.

Turkish Cypriots approved the plan by 65 percent, while their Greek Cypriot counterparts rejected it by 76 percent.

The ironic outcome was that the Greek Cypriots, having turned down a peaceful settlement, became full member of the European Union, while the Turkish Cypriots were excluded, further isolating the North.

Congress should evenhandedly support these developments, and refrain from taking any actions which would disrupt the process. I congratulate both leaders on this important breakthrough and urge them to continue the process which will provide a bright future for the peoples of Cyprus.