

moderately worded text and noting past willingness of U.S. delegates to consider and support as warranted resolutions critical of U.S. policies. Recent Russian action in the Caucasus was of sufficient concern to a majority of the delegates present that the resolution was ultimately adopted.

U.S. delegates were also instrumental in garnering support for Supplementary items by others, including a Canadian resolution on Afghanistan, a Ukrainian resolution on Holodomor (Ukrainian Famine-Genocide), and a Belgian resolution on Combating the Sexual Exploitation of Children. In addition, the U.S. Delegation introduced 20 amendments to various resolutions, covering issues from pollinator decline to religious freedom. Virtually all of them were adopted, and by dividing our work almost every member of the U.S. Delegation managed at least one resolution or amendment in committee. I would like to particularly note the exceptionally strong effort made by Rep. Moore, who had her own supplementary item and numerous amendments, including those calling for international action to reduce maternal mortality which were agreed to be a basis for a resolution at next year's Annual Session.

Belgian Senator Anne-Marie Lizin presented a report in committee on her latest activity as the OSCE PA Special Representative on Guantanamo Bay. Rep. Butterfield responded for the U.S. Delegation, expressing appreciation for her work and describing the latest Supreme Court, congressional and non-governmental efforts dealing with this stain on the U.S. human rights record.

Rep. Solis served as Acting Chair of the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions during the Annual Session, and she was subsequently elected to be the committee chair for the coming year. Rep. Solis is the first female Member of the U.S. Congress to hold a leadership position in the OSCE PA.

The OSCE PA Special Representative on Gender Issues, Tone Tingsgaard (Sweden), hosted a working lunch to discuss gender issues during which she presented her thoughts for future action in the OSCE PA on these issues. The U.S. Delegation was well represented at this event.

The final Astana Declaration, attached, was adopted by the participants at the Assembly's closing plenary and reflects the initiatives and input of the U.S. Delegation. In line with the theme for the session, it calls for greater transparency in numerous fields, such as political or historical archives and the use of private military contractors, as well as within the OSCE itself. The declaration also calls for concrete steps to address global climate change, improve waste management and prepare for potential nuclear accidents and natural disasters.

Mr. Joao Soares, a parliamentarian from Portugal, was elected to serve as OSCE PA President for the coming year. Soares brings to the office extensive experience, having been a member of the Portuguese parliament from 1987 to 1990 and again since 2002, formerly a member of the European Parliament and of the Bureau of the European Parliament, and the mayor of Lisbon from 1995 to 2002. The delegates at the Annual Session also re-elected Pia Christmas-Moeller of Denmark, as a Vice president of the Assembly along with three new Vice Presidents: Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan; Wolfgang Grossruck of Austria and Oleh Bilorus of Ukraine.

The OSCE Chair-in-Office, Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb, addressed the delegates during the closing plenary. He urged movement from managing unresolved conflicts in Georgia and Moldova to solving them. He also asked for continued support

for OSCE border-management training in Central Asia as well as for bolstering cooperative security in the Euro-Atlantic region.

While the Delegation's work focused heavily on OSCE PA matters, the venue presented an opportunity to advance U.S. interests and express U.S. concerns with our Kazakhstani hosts. The U.S. Delegation had meetings with President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Prime Minister Karim Masimov and Secretary of State Kanat Saudabayev as well as with prominent Kazakh human rights activists and opposition leaders. Members of the delegation also visited Beit Rachel, the largest synagogue in Central Asia, and met with the chief rabbi and the deputy imam from the Islamic community to discuss inter-faith tolerance and protection of religious freedom in Kazakhstan, especially for religious minorities.

The U.S. delegation held a press conference in Astana, during which we conveyed our willingness to work with Kazakhstan throughout its OSCE chairmanship in 2010. We strongly urged, however, greater progress regarding human rights and political reforms in keeping with the commitments Kazakhstan made at the Madrid OSCE Ministerial in November 2007, where the decision on the 2010 chairmanship was made.

Senator Cardin also used the visit to Kazakhstan as an opportunity to visit nearby Pakistan. He was joined by fellow Commissioners McIntyre and Aderholt as well as Representatives Wamp and Sanchez. The delegation met with President Pervez Musharraf, Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani, and U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Anne W. Patterson. During the meetings, the delegation focused on U.S.-Pakistan relations, regional security, as well as human rights and democratic development.

I hope this summary of the U.S. Delegation's activity is useful to you, and let me thank you and your staff again for making this trip possible. The Eighteenth Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly will be held early next July in Vilnius, Lithuania, and I hope we can count on your continued support in ensuring that U.S. interests abroad are advanced through active congressional participation in the OSCE PA.

Sincerely,

ALCEE L. HASTINGS,
Chairman.

ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE
WHALING CONVENTION AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2008

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2008

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing, along with Alaska's Senators, legislation to authorize the Secretary of Commerce to set the bowhead whale quota for the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission in the event the International Whaling Commission does not set an Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling quota for the bowhead whale.

Madam Speaker, the International Whaling Commission (IWC) is at a crossroads. Many observers of the IWC have raised concerns that the Commission will either fall apart in the next few years or it will turn into a whale protection organization that will allow no take of whales—even for subsistence purposes. In either case, without an alternative mechanism for authorizing the Alaska subsistence harvest of bowhead whales, the Alaska Eskimo Whal-

ing Commission could find itself with no quota authorized by the IWC. In the event that this were to occur and the Alaskan hunters tried to fulfill the communities needs for whale meat, they could find themselves in violation of the Whaling Convention Act of 1949 for attempting to feed their people.

And even if the IWC remains a viable management entity, the Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling quotas have been rejected by the IWC several times in recent memory due to political fights between the whaling nations and those nations that are opposed to any whaling. These fights have used the Alaskan Natives as political footballs and left the Native people of Alaska without a quota of whales. This happened most recently in 2002 when the IWC rejected the Alaskan quota for no other reason than politics. And at this year's IWC meeting, the Greenland Natives submitted a request to substitute humpback whales for the current quota of fin whales—something the IWC's Scientific Committee had already considered and determined that the harvest of 10 humpback whales would not endanger the stock. Despite the Scientific Committee's determination, the IWC did not have enough votes to allow this quota. In both of these cases, the IWC did not act on Native quotas despite recommendations or determinations by the Scientific Committee that the quota was sustainable and would not endanger the stocks. In both cases, the Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling quotas were rejected because of politics and not science.

Madam Speaker, it is clear that in the fight to outlaw scientific whaling and commercial whaling, many IWC member countries are being pressured by animal rights groups to stop all whaling. These animal rights groups do not understand the subsistence needs of Native people—or they don't care.

Alaskan Native whalers have already been held hostage during these fights over scientific and commercial whaling and that is not right.

Today, the Alaska delegation is introducing legislation to regulate domestic Native subsistence whaling under domestic law in the event that the IWC cannot authorize a quota for the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission's bowhead whale harvest.

The legislation will allow the Secretary of Commerce to set the annual quota for the bowhead harvest in the event that the IWC is unable to set the quota. Under the legislation, the Secretary must set the quota based on science and the needs of the Alaska Natives.

The Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission's harvest has always been sustainable, based on science, based on harvest levels approved by the IWC's Scientific Committee, and set at a level that has allowed the bowhead whale population to increase to the point where some scientists are now calling for the downlisting of the stock.

The Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission has continually had to justify their harvest—both their cultural need and their nutritional need. They have done this and have also responded to every hurdle that anti-whaling nations have put in their way. In addition, they probably have provided more scientific information to the IWC on the bowhead whale than the IWC has on any other whale species. All of this was done to justify a harvest that has gone on for centuries.

The Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission has continued to respect the IWC, continued

to respect the scientific recommendations of the Secretary of Commerce and the IWC's Scientific Committee, and continued to respect the bowhead whale. But they cannot be used as political footballs by the IWC and they cannot have their need for the bowhead whale delayed if the IWC fails to renew their quota in a timely manner.

This legislation will ensure that the AEWC will have their cultural and nutritional needs met in the event that the IWC fails to act to renew their quota or if the IWC decided to hold their quota hostage for political reasons, but does so in a manner that is based on science and the needs of the Alaskan Native people as determined by the Secretary of Commerce.

RECOGNIZING MRS. ELYSE
JOHNSTON

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2008

Mr. HALL of Texas. Madam Speaker, next Wednesday, July 30th, will mark the 100th birthday of Mrs. Elyse Johnston of DeKalb, Texas. I am honored to join Congressman KEVIN BRADY in recognizing her today and sharing a small part of her life's story.

Born in Quitman, Texas, to Samuel Jackson Benton and Margaret Florence Jones Benton, Mrs. Johnston has witnessed a tremendous amount of change in her 100 years. When she entered the world, the Wright Brothers had only recently made history in North Carolina, and Henry Ford was still a few months away from introducing the world to the Model T. One hundred years later, the world is a much different place. Most of my colleagues will shortly get on a plane holding hundreds of people to get home for the weekend and will be delivered to the airport through considerable traffic congestion by cars that can hardly be compared to Ford's cutting edge invention.

Through her early years of education in Quitman, the one thing that made Elyse happy was music and playing the piano. This would become her lifelong passion. Starting with the First Baptist Church, Elyse played in too many revivals to count. Her reputation as a pianist spread and soon she was being asked to play for all the Methodist church revivals as well. Because she always loved to dance, she claimed to be a "Baptist with Methodist feet." She was elected a Burleson Beauty while she completed her college studies at Burleson College and prepared to enter the working world as a teacher.

After 2 years of teaching in Pleasant Ridge, she scraped together enough money to purchase a Ford Roadster and move back to Quitman. It was here that she would meet her future husband, Bentley Johnston, and where they would have their first date on Easter Sunday. It was clear to Bentley that he had met his bride to be, and he was so distracted that he skipped on his responsibility of watching the holiday dinner and the family ended up eating a burned roast for Easter.

After getting married, they moved to DeKalb and began farming cotton and soy beans and raising cattle. Times were hard during the Depression, but they managed in part due to the large garden and fruit trees that Elyse was

able to maintain and use to help make ends meet by supplying groceries to the area families. The family sacrificed to keep the farm going through the Depression and 5 straight years of crop failure; that old Roadster Elyse saved to buy lost its engine to keep a tractor in the fields. After several years on the farm, the family moved back to town in 1951.

Her love of the piano has never ended and as a church pianist, she has played in revivals and choirs for 42 years and made a name for herself through her showy offertories, leading one pastor to encourage her with, "Well, swing it sister!"

Elyse helped raise two daughters who still live in DeKalb. She celebrated her 50th wedding anniversary with Bentley shortly before he passed away in 1980. Her "Methodist Feet" haven't left her yet, and she still enjoys community shows, working in the garden and playing cards. "Nanny" to her six grandchildren and five great grandchildren, she is still very much independent and shows no signs of slowing down.

Madam Speaker, Congressman BRADY and I ask those in the chamber and our colleagues to join us in wishing a very happy 100th birthday to Mrs. Elyse Johnston.

TURKISH MILITARY OCCUPATION
IN CYPRUS

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2008

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker. I rise today to recognize the unconscionable 34 years of Turkish military occupation in Cyprus.

On July 20, 1974, Turkey invaded Cyprus, in blatant violation of international law. Nearly 200,000 Greek Cypriots were forcibly expelled from their homes and approximately 5,000 Cypriots were killed. Today, Turkey has 43,000 troops occupying northern Cyprus, and the European Court of Human Rights has condemned Turkey in multiple decisions for violating the basic rights of Cypriots such as the right to life, the right to liberty and security, the right to respect for family life, the right to the protection of property and the prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment.

Cypriots want a unified island and continue to demonstrate their commitment toward a genuine reunification of Cyprus. However, no solution can realistically happen until the Turkish troops are withdrawn.

I strongly urge Turkey to show a commitment to international law and basic human rights by ending its military occupation and withdrawing its 43,000 troops so that Cyprus can begin to heal these wounds, peacefully integrate its people and economy and grow together as a nation.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "ANIMAL
CRUELTY STATISTICS ACT OF
2008"

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 2008

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the bipartisan "Animal

Cruelty Statistics Act of 2008" along with Representatives GALLEGLY, NADLER, VAN HOLLEN and MORAN. This bill will direct the Attorney General to make changes to existing crime data bases so that data on animal cruelty crimes will be collected and made publicly available. I thank the bipartisan coalition of Representatives who have joined me in introducing this important legislation.

Animal cruelty crimes exist on the books in the vast majority of states and in the federal system. Yet there is no established system to meaningfully collect data on these crimes. The collection of data is important in order to assess the effectiveness of the animal cruelty laws, identify trends and problem areas, and allocate resources efficiently. Social Service studies also have shown a relationship between animal cruelty crimes and family violence. Many domestic violence organizations support this bill because they believe data collection on animal cruelty crimes will also help address the critical problem of domestic violence. This bill will serve these important purposes.

Again, I thank the bipartisan coalition of Representatives who have joined me in introducing this important legislation.

HOUSING AND ECONOMIC
RECOVERY ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 2008

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008 (H.R. 3221). This measure will provide a helping hand for those reeling from the mortgage crisis. Just as importantly, it will restore confidence in our largest mortgage backers, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

We have all seen how unscrupulous lending practices and skyrocketing interest rates associated with nontraditional mortgages have devastated families nationwide. Sadly, these families are often left with few options other than to see their homes foreclosed upon. In Rhode Island, foreclosures have increased by 20 percent in the last six months, and it is our most vulnerable communities that have been disproportionately affected.

Fortunately, today we are considering a package that will stem the tide of foreclosures by authorizing \$300 billion in loan guarantees to establish HOPE for homeowners, a voluntary program administered by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to help at-risk borrowers refinance into viable mortgages. I want to emphasize that this assistance is not a bail-out. On the contrary, the program will require lenders and mortgage investors to take significant losses in the form of a reduced loan principal, and borrowers must agree to share any profit from the resale of a refinanced home with the federal government. Furthermore, only primary residences will be eligible, not investment properties, vacation homes or speculators' purchases.

In addition, this package will provide \$3.92 billion in Community Development Block Grants for local governments to purchase abandoned and foreclosed properties—a provision that is fully paid for. I am glad the President has finally lifted his misguided veto threat