

has repeatedly said he seeks dialogues with China and put aside the disputes, in order to win peace and prosperity over the Taiwan Straits.

Taiwan is blessed. May blessings continue to favor Taiwan and its good people.

RECOGNIZING NASTIA LIUKIN 2008
OLYMPIC GYMNAST

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2008

Mr. HALL of Texas. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to honor Miss Nastia Liukin of Parker, Texas, in the Fourth Congressional District of Texas, as the most decorated U.S. gymnast from the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

Anastasia "Nastia" Liukin was born to Anna and Valeri Liukin on October 30, 1989 in Moscow, Russia. When she was two and a half years old, her parents decided to move from Russia to the USA. As the daughter of two gymnasts, it was only natural that Nastia found herself in the gym early on. Since the age of six, she has been coached by her father at the World Olympic Gymnastics Academy, her family's gymnastics club in Plano, Texas. Through hard work, diligence and dedication to the sport, Nastia has become a Senior International Elite Gymnast, is a four time World Champion, nine time World medalist, four time U.S. National Champion and has won multiple Pacific Rim and American Cup titles. In 2005 she was also named the Gymnast of the Year by the International Gymnastics Hall of Fame and was a nominee in both the World Top 10 Athletes Award and the U.S. Sport's Academy Athlete of the Year Award.

As a star member of the 2008 Olympic Team, Nastia became the 2008 Olympic All-Around Gold Medalist and received silver medals for her performances on the balance beam, uneven bars and in the overall team competition, as well as a bronze medal in floor exercise. With nine World Championship medals and five Olympic medals, Nastia joins the ranks of Mary Lou Retton and Shannon Miller as being the American gymnast having won the most World Championship medals, as well as the most medals in a single Olympic Games.

Nastia has not limited her successes to only the gym. In January of 2008, she was accepted to Southern Methodist University in Dallas in hopes of pursuing a career in international business or acting. However, after trying to juggle her training and academic commitments, Nastia decided to put college on hold until after the Beijing Summer Olympic Games.

Madam Speaker, Americans take pride in Nastia's athletic accomplishments and her commitment to academic enrichment. I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring this young golden girl, Miss Nastia Liukin.

IN CELEBRATION OF THE COMPLETION OF THE BRIDGES AT DEVIL'S SLIDE

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2008

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, this week marks a milestone in a half century long journey to provide safe and scenic passage along the beautiful San Mateo County coastline and honors the tireless dedication of my predecessor in Congress, Representative Tom Lantos.

On Friday, September 26, 2008, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), along with project contractors, citizens and elected officials, will officially unveil two newly-constructed bridges at Devil's Slide on State Route One.

These bridges are part of a larger project which will connect them to twin four thousand, two hundred foot tunnels. Together, the bridges and tunnels will bypass a historically-dangerous stretch of Route One that over the past twenty-five years has seen three closures and reconstructions due to erosion of the cliff upon which the road sits.

The existing roadway between the cities of Pacifica and Half Moon Bay was first opened in 1935. By 1958, local citizens were clamoring for a safer road, but environmental, financial, geological and land-use issues complicated the process until 1996, when San Mateo County voters passed Measure T by 76 percent, authorizing the bridge and tunnel construction. The project, though, would have been impossible were it not for the passionate work here in the House of Representatives by the late Congressman Lantos, who was present last year as crews broke ground for the tunnels' construction.

In honor of his invaluable efforts, the California State Legislature passed a resolution in July 2008 to name the tunnels the "Tom Lantos Tunnels at Devil's Slide."

Since breaking ground, significant progress has been made on this ambitious and environmentally sensitive project. Along with the completion of the two bridges, crews have excavated a combined two thousand six hundred feet in the northbound and southbound bores of the tunnels. With specialized equipment, leading edge technology and carefully designed and engineered plans, crews work twenty-four hours a day on the tunnels which will eventually connect with the newly-constructed bridges. The resulting road of just over a mile will realign Route One into a safer, more reliable passage around Devil's Slide.

Madam Speaker, Tom Lantos' legacy in this chamber is well-known. With the opening of this important north-south roadway along one of the most beautiful stretches of coastline in this or any country, his work will be memorialized for residents of our district and passing motorists for generations to come.

TRIBUTE TO COMMAND SERGEANT
MAJOR STEPHEN D. BLAKE

HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2008

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to extend congratulations to Command Sergeant Major Stephen D. Blake who became the second command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Sustainment Command on June 19th, 2008 at ASC headquarters at Rock Island IL. CSM Blake serves as primary advisor to the ASC Commanding General on all matters pertaining to enlisted personnel assigned to the Command, particularly in areas related to their training and development and to the quality of life and well-being of soldiers and their families. He also responds to the concerns of civilian and contractor employees of the Command.

During his career of 26 years of distinguished service in the United States Army Command Sergeant Major Blake has served in a number of key enlisted leadership positions. He has had tours of duty in Germany and Korea as well as combat tours in Southwest Asia during both Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom, and a tour in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

In 2003, Blake graduated from class 53 of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas. His military training included the Air Assault School, Primary Leadership Development Course, and First Sergeants Course. He was named the distinguished graduate from his class in both the Basic and Advanced Non-Commissioned Officers Courses. He also holds an Associates Degree in Business Management from Excelsior College.

Command Sergeant Major Stephen D. Blake developed SOP, using the Center for Army Lessons Learned Web site to gather the most recent tactics, techniques, and procedures used by units operating in Iraq. The SOP difficulty and intensity of the training was a confidence builder for Operation Iraqi Freedom for veterans and new soldiers alike.

Command Sergeant Major Stephen D. Blake's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star (three awards); the Legion of Merit; the Defense Meritorious Service Medal; the Meritorious Service Medal (five awards); the Army Commendation Medal (nine awards); the Army Achievement Medal (nine awards); the Good Conduct Medal (eight awards); the National Defense Service Medal with Star; the Southwest Asia Service Medal with three stars; the Iraq, Afghanistan, Global War on Terrorism and Korean Defense service Medals; the NCO Professional Development Ribbon with Numeral Four; the Army Service Ribbon; the Overseas Service Ribbon with Numeral Three; the NATO Medal; Kuwait Liberation Medals from the governments of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait; the Air Assault Badge; and three Meritorious Unit Commendations. He is also a recipient of the Ordnance Order of Samuel Sharpe.

Command Sergeant Major Stephen D. Blake is a native of Tyler Mountain, WV. Blake and his wife, Karen Marie Riley of Ohio, are the parents of two children, Amber and Joshua.