

you, this country can't possibly move through the next 10 years in a period of relative strength."

Since that speech, more than 200,000 Americans have spent 2 years of their lives in parts of the world that many of us have never heard of. And right now, dozens of Peace Corp volunteers from the Seattle area alone are serving in countries as far as Mali, Turkmenistan and Cambodia. Participants have worked on everything from helping farmers produce more food to stave off hunger to teaching computer skills and helping governments bolster their technology infrastructure. While I've heard from many Peace Corp volunteers that their years of service are far from easy, they also tell me about the tremendous impact those years have on their education and how their time abroad helps build their character and self-esteem.

But the program does far more than just provide services to communities in other countries and enrich the lives of its volunteers. It helps participants come back with a far better understanding of other cultures. I have long believed that America's ability to operate in the world depends on how well we understand what's going on in other nations. President Kennedy understood that our nation's strength depended on our level of engagement in the global community, and the Peace Corp each year provides thousands of emissaries to places that the U.S. might not otherwise touch. In many ways, the Peace Corp is like community-based diplomacy.

And when participants return, many continue their service. Some, like my colleagues Senator CHRIS DODD, and Representatives HONDA, GARAMENDI, FARR, DRIEHAUS and PETRI, go on to serve in Congress. Other alums go on to serve in Foreign Service, including stints in USAID, the Organization of American States and the Department of State. Others serve in the non-profit sector in organizations like the Sierra Club and Catholic Relief Services. And many others join the National Peace Corp Association, an organization of some 30,000 former Peace Corp participants that helps keep them engaged in service and advocacy.

The Peace Corp has done enormous good around the world, so let us recognize the thousands of Americans who sacrificed and served. Let us reaffirm this week as National Peace Corp Week.

A TRIBUTE TO MIKAWAYA ON THE
OCCASION OF THE BAKERY'S 100
YEAR ANNIVERSARY

HON. LUCILE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 4, 2010

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mikawaya on the occasion of its 100 year anniversary. This historic Los Angeles-based family-owned bakery has been a fixture in Little Tokyo in the heart of my congressional district since its founding in 1910.

Under the current dedicated leadership of Frances Hashimoto—the grand niece of the bakery's original founder—this successful enterprise continues to satisfy the sweet-tooths of Angelenos and dessert lovers throughout

the country with its wide assortment of delicious and original bakery items.

Mikawaya manufactures and sells traditional Japanese pastry and confectionary (wagashi), mochi ice cream, and gelato. In addition to its traditional "mochi-gashi" and "manju" that have been the foundation of the family business, Mikawaya has obtained nationwide popularity and success as the creator of Mochi Ice Cream along with its gelato offerings.

Madam Speaker, as Mikawaya celebrates its 100-year anniversary at the Kyoto Grand Hotel on March 8, I ask my colleagues to please join me in congratulating the entire Hashimoto family and their dedicated employees for bringing smiles to the faces of generations of customers who have enjoyed the unique and delicious Japanese-inspired ice cream and pastries that this one-of-a-kind bakery has to offer.

I extend to them my best wishes for many more innovative, productive and profitable years ahead.

To fully capture the remarkable story of the Hashimoto family and the 100 year history of their bakery, I would also like to submit the following historical overview:

"Just after the turn of the 20th century, two Japanese entrepreneurs decided to open a manju bakery. One of them was from Mikawa, an old Japan province in the area that today forms the eastern half of Aichi Prefecture. The "ya," or store in Japanese, was added to the end of the name to create the name "Mikawaya."

In 1910 Ryuzaburo Hashimoto purchased the company, which was located at 365 East First Street in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo district. His nephew, Koroku Hashimoto and his wife Haru, took over the operations 15 years later and reopened at the newly built Olympic Hotel on North San Pedro Street, also in Little Tokyo. Five years later, they moved the company back to First Street where they remained until 1942, when the U.S. entered World War II.

From 1942 to December 1945, Mikawaya closed its doors as Executive Order 9066 forced more than 110,000 Japanese Americans, including the Hashimoto family, into U.S. internment camps for the duration of the war. On December 23, 1945, the Hashimoto family proudly reopened Mikawaya at 244 East First Street, next door to their pre-war location.

In 1970 Frances Hashimoto, their youngest daughter, took over the family business. Having the foresight that the surrounding First Street area would become prime redevelopment property, she planned and built a new bakery on 4th Street, which was completed in 1974.

With the new location on 4th Street, Mikawaya was able to expand its operations and product offerings. Hashimoto's husband and Mikawaya's Chief Financial Officer, Joel Friedman, happened on an idea when he visited Japan in 1984. In 1994, after spending 10 years of research and testing, his brainchild—mochi ice cream—became a reality.

Mochi ice cream, which is a serving of ice cream surrounded by a thin layer of mochi (pounded sweet rice), has become a recognized addition to American pop culture like sushi and sake. Today, it is Mikawaya's signature product with mass appeal that has reached beyond Asian American tastes. Currently there are seven flavors of mochi ice cream, including: chocolate, coffee, green tea,

mango, red bean (azuki), strawberry, and vanilla.

Mikawaya's traditional Japanese confections and pastries are still available and made daily at its Los Angeles factory and are still a favorite in the Asian American community.

Always innovators, Mikawaya now manufactures and sells gelato—Italian-style ice cream made from milk, sugar, real fruit and other ingredients.

Along with Mikawaya's centennial anniversary, the company opened a new 100,000-square-foot facility in Vernon, California. This facility is designed to meet the increasing demand for Mikawaya's products and will be the headquarters for new product research and development of frozen desserts. All of Mikawaya's desserts are manufactured in Southern California and are still held to Mikawaya's standards of high quality and taste.

The bakery presently operates retail stores in Japanese Village Plaza, Little Tokyo Square, Pacific Square Shopping Center in Torrance, Mitsuwa Marketplace in Gardena and Shirokiya Department Store in Honolulu, Hawaii."

FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER TAX
CREDIT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION ACT

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 4, 2010

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the First-Time Homebuyer Tax Credit Eligibility Verification Act.

The purpose of this bill is simple: to prevent those who are here illegally from claiming the refundable first-time homebuyer tax credit, which is worth up to \$8,000. According to a January 25, 2010 Dallas Morning News article by Steve McGonigle entitled "Feds find dubious home tax credit claims from Texas," close to 1,000 claims from Texas have come from individuals "employing a special taxpayer identification number primarily used by illegal immigrants, who are not entitled to the credit." This is just plain wrong.

Currently, the IRS does not require an individual to provide a Social Security number in order to claim the first-time homebuyer tax credit. Rather, if the individual does not have a Social Security number, the individual can still apply for the credit so long as they are able to get an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) from the IRS. The problem here is that illegal immigrants are getting these numbers from the IRS. According to the previously mentioned article, "the IRS has acknowledged that more than half of ITINs are filed by illegal immigrants." In an effort to prevent illegal immigrants from claiming the credit, my bill proposes that a taxpayer must provide a Social Security number rather than an ITIN. Doing so will help to prevent fraud and in turn protect the American taxpayer. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.