

RECOGNIZING THE BUILDING REDEDICATION AND RIBBON CUTTING OF VIENNA ELEMENTARY

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 18, 2010*

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the rededication of Vienna Elementary School. Founded in 1872, Vienna Elementary is the oldest continually operational school in Fairfax County. Today, we are celebrating the completion of upgrades that will improve the classroom experience for educators and children in our community.

Vienna Elementary School is one of the finest public schools in the country. Its mission is to challenge and support individual excellence by setting high academic standards and empowering students to become successful citizens. As a sign of its success, Virginia Governor Tim Kaine and the State Board of Education awarded Vienna Elementary the Board of Education Excellence Award. The award recognizes a school's ability to successfully meet benchmark standards in academic performance, and it also recognizes progressive improvement over time.

Vienna Elementary School is strengthened by its superb staff and also by an engaged and active public. The strong support of parents and area organizations teamed with the dedication of the school educators and administration provides an atmosphere that enables children to have new opportunities and access to robust academic support.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the rededication of Vienna Elementary School. I extend my congratulations and appreciation to the teachers, administrators, staff, parents and community partners who understand that quality education is the key to a bright future for our children.

DR. MILDRED JEFFERSON INSPIRED AN ENTIRE GENERATION OF PRO-LIFE LEADERS

**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 18, 2010*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, today, I want to recognize and honor the life of Dr. Mildred Jefferson, who passed away on October 15, 2010, at the age of 84.

Dr. Jefferson was a trailblazer of her time. She was the first African-American woman to graduate from Harvard Medical School, the first female surgical intern at Boston City Hospital and the first woman admitted to membership in the Boston Surgical Society.

Dr. Jefferson was born in Pittsburg, Texas, on April 6, 1926, to Gurthie Jefferson, a minister, and Millard Jefferson, a schoolteacher. She graduated from Texas College in Tyler and earned a master's degree from Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts before attending Harvard Medical School. In her lifetime she also was the recipient of 28 honorary degrees.

Her life was historic in many ways, yet she will be remembered not only for the lives she saved as a physician but also for the lives she saved as an advocate for the unborn.

From the earliest years of the right to life movement, she dedicated herself to the cause, always beautifully articulating the humanity of unborn children. Poised and passionate, always focused and extremely devoted, she made history and inspired an entire generation of pro-life leaders.

Dr. Jefferson was among the founders of the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) and from 1975–1978 she served three terms as President of NRLC. She also served as director of Massachusetts Citizens for Life and a board member of American Life League. She was also a founding member of the board and a past president of the Value of Life Committee of Massachusetts and was active in Black Americans for Life.

Among all of her accolades and accomplishments, she should be best known for her own eloquent description of why she stood in solidarity with the unborn fighting day in and day out for their first right, the right to life. In her own words,

"I became a physician in order to help save lives. I am at once a physician, a citizen, and a woman, and I am not willing to stand aside and allow the concept of expendable human lives to turn this great land of ours into just another exclusive reservation where only the perfect, the privileged, and the planned have the right to live."

Dr. Jefferson was always graceful. She embodied compassion. Her life is an example to us of the impact of faithful devotion to the sanctity of human life. Dr. Jefferson knew that you cannot speak of human and civil rights, while precluding virtually all protection to the most persecuted minority in the world today: unborn children.

She reminded us all, "The right-to-life cause is not the concern of only a special few but it should be the cause of all those who care about fairness and justice, love and compassion and liberty with law."

Dr. Jefferson is correct when she said,—the cause for the right to life concerns all of us. Someday, when our goal of ending abortion is finally realized, future generations of Americans will look back on us and wonder how and why such a rich and seemingly enlightened society, so blessed and endowed with the capacity to protect and enhance vulnerable human life, could have instead permitted, and even promoted, death to children and exploitation of women by abortion.

It was an honor to work alongside Dr. Jefferson to fight the injustice of abortion, and I know her legacy and memory will live on in the lives of those who knew her and in the lives of the unborn children she helped save.

HONORING REVEREND DEFOREST B. SOARIES

**HON. RUSH D. HOLT**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 18, 2010*

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, Reverend DeForest B. Soaries has dedicated his life to im-

proving the lives of others. Whether it was organizing a campaign in college to stop drug use on campus, starting non-profit groups to improve the lives of his church community or working for the Federal Government to improve the voting system, he has been and will continue to be a true asset to the state of New Jersey. And while we were once adversaries in a political campaign, I am honored now to call him a good friend.

Reverend Soaries' leadership positions within our community, State and Federal Governments show the commitment he has to helping people move forward. As the Secretary of State for New Jersey, he was the first African-American male to serve as a constitutional officer and worked across party lines to achieve progress in the government, including increased funding for the arts.

His time as a Secretary of State and his years of ministry prepared him to be the first chairman for the Federal Election Assistance Commission. The agency was created to help improve the election system in America and to stay ahead of the curve on technological advancements in voting. Reverend Soaries' character was tested as he helped get the agency off the ground without the resources originally promised. While not all of the plans were accomplished during his time as chairman, Reverend Soaries did lay the ground work for the operation of the EAC.

I have appreciated Reverend Soaries insight and collaboration with my efforts to enact election reform. His contributions have strengthened my election reform legislation, and I greatly value his efforts.

Reverend Soaries has also made significant contribution to his community and the congregation of the First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens over the last twenty years. He has and is continuing to help create better family units by encouraging people to become foster parents or adopt. He is also creating new homes for low and moderate income families, while providing numerous financial and employment support groups to meet the needs of the community. Recently, he hosted a program that allowed those who had run into trouble with the law to come to church and deal with their pending arrest warrants or other legal issues in a safe environment.

The First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens has grown from a parish of a few to over 6,000 people. However the goals of improving the community have not changed. Reverend Soaries has helped the church maintain their goals of "spiritual growth, educational excellence and economic empowerment" through his continuous dedication to creating a debt free parish. He has created a four part program called "dfree" that teaches people how to live a financially responsible life and get out of debt. Reverend Soaries facilitated the construction of the inspirational \$17 million church complex that makes possible a number of church programs and has greatly benefited the surrounding community and Central New Jersey.

Reverend Soaries is a valued pastor of his parish and I congratulate him on the celebration of his 20th anniversary with the First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens, and look forward to the accomplishments yet to come in the next 20 years.

THE SOCIAL SECURITY WIDOWS  
AND SPOUSAL PROTECTION ACT

**HON. CHELLIE PINGREE**

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 18, 2010*

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Madam Speaker, I am here today to introduce a bill that addresses a serious problem that affects many retired federal and state employees in Maine and across the nation.

Public servants have performed incredibly important services for their communities and country, but sadly many are being driven into poverty because of the Government Pension Offset, GPO. Of the 5,300 workers in Maine subject to this provision, 3,700 lose all of their Social Security widows or spousal benefits to the GPO. I just don't think that's fair for people who have devoted years to public service.

The effects of the current Government Pension Offset formula are most dramatic on lower income women—79% of beneficiaries affected by the GPO are women. After raising their families and serving the public, these women are devastated by losing most or all of their Social Security benefits after the already overwhelming loss of their spouses to death or divorce.

The legislation I am proposing is targeted at lifting out of poverty those hardest hit by the GPO. It would eliminate the GPO for beneficiaries whose combined monthly pension and Social Security widows or spousal benefits before offset is less than half the maximum Social Security benefit. Others would see a graduated Government Pension Offset. Under this formula, no one would see a reduction in their Social Security benefits and those in the lower incomes would have benefits raised to a livable rate.

I am pleased that the legislation has earned the support of both the Maine Education Association and the Maine State Employees Association. Lorraine Noel, President of the Maine Federation of Chapters for the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, states, "This legislation is a good first step in addressing the injustices caused by the Government Pension Offset."

Make no mistake, I remain committed to completely repealing the GPO and the Windfall Elimination Provision, and have cosponsored a bill to do so. But in a struggling economy, measures to overturn these offsets are difficult. I hope this incremental reform will alleviate the worst effects on those most damaged by the Government Pension Offset and bring our vulnerable public servants out of poverty.

Please join me in supporting the Social Security Widows and Spousal Protection Act of 2010. We should not have someone's years of public service be the cause of their poverty.

RECOGNIZING NOVACO AND THE  
RECIPIENTS OF THE 2010 VOLUNTEER  
OF THE YEAR AWARDS

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 18, 2010*

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor NOVACO and to rec-

ognize the recipients of the 2010 Volunteer of the Year Awards.

NOVACO is committed to helping homeless victims of domestic violence become healthy, secure, and self-sufficient. Victims of domestic violence often feel that they have no safe place to turn. Fear, financial uncertainty, and the feeling of isolation often imprison these victims in abusive environments. When a victim breaks free, he or she can too easily end up homeless and alone.

Domestic violence affects every racial, ethnic, and socio-economic group. Many of us know a friend, neighbor, or family member who has been victimized. More than 15 million children in the United States live in families in which partner violence occurred at least once in the past year. Each day, 3 women die as a result of domestic violence. More than 1 in 4 women will be the victim of domestic abuse in her lifetime; more than 3 of 4 Americans know someone who has been victimized.

For more than a decade NOVACO has provided critical services to homeless families who have escaped domestic abuse and who are seeking to rebuild their lives and become self-sufficient. Assistance is provided in many areas including transitional and permanent housing, counseling, childcare, education, job training, and life skills classes. Through the robust support of area businesses and churches, NOVACO has grown into a leader in breaking the cycle of domestic violence.

NOVACO has initiated a number of innovative programs that have resulted in significant advancements for those in need. Their "Good Neighbor" program connects client families with sponsors to assist them in transitioning to self sufficiency. Through the financial management courses, women have learned how to manage their financial affairs, addressing one of the most daunting aspects of escaping domestic abuse.

NOVACO is strengthened by the dedication of its volunteers. I am honored to recognize the following 2010 Volunteers of the Year:

Volunteer of the Year: Joen Schultz  
Volunteer Group of the Year: Gracing Spaces

Volunteer Business of the Year: Brookfield Homes

Outstanding Community Support Award: King of Kings Lutheran Church

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing NOVACO, its volunteers and other supporters for their tireless work on behalf of so many who feel stranded and powerless. NOVACO is making a difference in our community, and I pledge to continue working with NOVACO and similar organizations to put an end to domestic abuse.

TRIBUTE TO SPENCER C. DISHER,  
JR. M.D.

**HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 18, 2010*

Mr. CLYBURN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding physician and community leader as he retires and enters a new phase of his life. Dr. Spencer Disher of Orangeburg, South Carolina, has served the medical profession and his community admirably for half a century.

Spencer Disher was born in Darlington, South Carolina, and graduated as Salutatorian of his class at Mayo High School. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from South Carolina State College, now University, and entered Meharry Medical College in Nashville in 1956. Following graduation, he trained for a year at Kate B. Reynolds Hospital and served two years in the U.S. Army. While serving as an Army Captain, Dr. Disher was the Chief Physician for the Pentathlon athletes on the U.S. Olympic Team.

In 1963, Dr. Disher returned to South Carolina and began his medical practice in Orangeburg. He has also served as the college physician at Voorhees College, Denmark Technical College and Claflin University, where he currently serves as Medical Director of Student Health Services. He also holds the position of State Grand Medical Director for the Masons of South Carolina.

In addition to practicing medicine, Dr. Disher has been very involved in organizations that support and advance the profession. He has served as the Chair of the Grants and Proposal Committee of the Board of Trustees of the National Medical Association, and is a member of South Carolina Board of Medical Examiners. He was the Chief of Staff at The Regional Medical Center in Orangeburg. For eleven years, Dr. Disher served as chair of the Executive Board of the Palmetto State Medical Dental Pharmaceutical Association, PMDPA. He also served as president of the PMDPA in 1975. He chaired the Public Health and Consumer Affairs Committee of the National Medical Association, NMA, for over a decade.

Dr. Disher is currently a member of the Meharry Medical College Board of Trustees, and has been a staunch advocate of the school. Two of his sons have graduated from Meharry. He has established the Spencer C. Disher, Jr., M.D. Endowed Scholarship to enable students from South Carolina to pursue their dream of studying for Medical, Dental or a Doctorate Degree in the Biomedical Sciences at Meharry Medical College.

Dr. Disher has been recognized by many organizations including Alpha Phi Alpha and Omega Psi Phi Fraternities. He is a member of the New Mount Zion Baptist Church. In addition to his many professional affiliations, he is a 33rd Degree Mason, a Shriner, and a member of the NAACP. Dr. Disher is married to the former Annette Moorer, and is the father of eight children.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in celebrating the wonderful professional contributions of Dr. Spencer Disher. He has distinguished himself as doctor who cares not only for the patient but for the community as a whole. He has been a tremendous leader and a consummate professional throughout his career, and I am proud to call him a friend. I wish him Godspeed in retirement and know that he will continue to play an important part in the Orangeburg community for years to come.

HONORING THE REPUBLIC OF  
TURKEY'S 87TH REPUBLIC DAY

**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, November 18, 2010*

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, as a co-chair of the Congressional Caucus