

public service career of Ms. Janet M. Bedrosian. Ms. Bedrosian has honorably served the U.S. Bureau of Land Management for nearly 38 years and will retire on April 2, 2011.

Ms. Bedrosian was born in Tennessee and moved to Grass Valley, California, as an infant, where she grew up in California's Mother Lode country and graduated from Nevada Union High School as class valedictorian.

Ms. Bedrosian attended the University of Nevada-Reno, where she earned dual degrees in journalism and English. Ms. Bedrosian, currently the Deputy State Director, External Affairs at the BLM's California State Office, began her BLM career in 1973 at the Nevada State Office as its first public affairs staff member. She also worked in the Washington, D.C. office as Assistant Public Affairs Chief before returning to California to work in the state office as a public affairs specialist and congressional liaison. Ms. Bedrosian worked with California's 54-member Washington delegation, more than 120 full-time members of California's State legislature, and key State and local governments and their staffs. During this time, she built a robust and comprehensive congressional and legislative program that remains unequalled in the BLM's history. Her understanding of government processes and her ability to develop strong relationships have been crucial to many of the BLM's and Department of the Interior's successes, particularly in California.

Issues for which Ms. Bedrosian played a key role include the coordination between elected officials, the Department of the Interior, the National Park Service, and the BLM that resulted in passage of the California Desert Protection Act—the largest piece of wilderness legislation in the contiguous United States ever to come before Congress.

Ms. Bedrosian is well respected for her knowledge of land management and her ability to handle complex issues. Due to these attributes, a former BLM Director called upon her to act as the BLM's Chief of Staff in 2007.

For her dedication, expertise, and service, Ms. Bedrosian has been honored with the two highest awards from the Department of the Interior—the Meritorious Service Award in 2007 and the Department's highest civilian honor, the Distinguished Service Award, presented to her in 2010. According to the Interior Department, "Recipients of the Distinguished Service Award must have demonstrated extremely significant long-term contributions to Departmental programs and missions." These awards are signed by the Secretary of the Interior and have been presented since 1948. Ms. Bedrosian is recognized nationally as an expert, a leader, and among the best External Affairs managers the BLM has ever had.

Outside the workplace, Ms. Bedrosian enjoys politics, travel, and making cookies. But mostly, she enjoys her family: husband Tod, son Sean, and daughter Kate; and her three sisters, brother, and father, all of whom live in the Sacramento area.

Ms. Bedrosian's nearly four-decade career in public service deserves the highest appreciation and commendation. I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Ms. Janet Bedrosian on a successful career and in wishing her happiness in her retirement.

HONORING MR. RALPH C. LORIGO

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ralph C. Lorigo and his many years of dedicated service to Western New York.

Ralph was born on July 17th, 1947 to Ralph E. and Caroline (Juliano) Lorigo. He attended St. Lucy's School on Swan St. through the age of 12 and went on to West Seneca High School after his family moved to West Seneca in 1960. Upon graduation from high school, Ralph earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Buffalo. He would go on to attend the University of Buffalo Law School, earning his juris doctorate degree in May of 1973.

Ralph's interest in politics, which was certainly passed on to him from his mother Caroline, began in 1981 when he decided to run for Town Justice in West Seneca. Though his first bid was unsuccessful, Ralph went on to serve as a member of the Town Committee, then Town Chairman, and eventually as an Executive Board Member. In 1990, Ralph became the Erie County Conservative Vice-Chairman and in 1993 was a candidate for the New York State Supreme Court in a narrowly unsuccessful election campaign. Finally in 1995, Ralph became the Erie County Conservative Chairman and continues his work in that position to this day.

In addition to his political career, Ralph is also a dedicated member of the West Seneca Lions Club. He helped start a West Seneca Youth Court in 1984, has taught in the West Seneca Continuing Education program since the 1970's, sat on the West Seneca Continuing Education Board for several years, and has been involved in many other community programs.

Ralph is married to the former Deborah Caruana and has three adult children: son Michael (wife Devonie), son Joe (wife Jean), and daughter Jaime. Ralph and Deborah also have three grandchildren, Adrianna, Alana, and Alexa.

On a personal note, Mr. Speaker, let me say that I have had the high privilege of knowing Ralph Lorigo for more than 25 years. As an attorney and political leader, Ralph's career has been one of intense dedication to those whom he has represented. But as a husband, father and community leader, Ralph's true priorities—family, faith and community—have never failed to stand out. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Ralph C. Lorigo for his many years of tireless service on behalf of the Western New York community.

HONORING THE 150TH YEAR OF
ITALIAN UNIFICATION

HON. PATRICK J. TIBERI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that Congressman BILL PASCRELL and I rise on behalf of the Italian American Delegation to honor the 150th year of Italian Unification.

On March 17th, 2011 the Republic of Italy celebrates their 150th year of unification throughout Italy and across the United States with a series of activities turning 2011 into an "Italian Year."

150 years ago the Risorgimento gave birth to modern Italy, preserving the ideals of western civilization: the protection of the rights, freedoms, and liberty of individuals.

Much of what we are as Americans and what we believe in has roots in Italy. As long time allies, we share a unique partnership in the arts, sciences and politics. Our friendship is strengthened through our common values and historical ties. It has been shaped through the ideas and contributions of great figures like Andrea Palladio and Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and Gaetano Filangieri, Giuseppe Garibaldi and Abraham Lincoln.

As co-chairs of the Italian-American delegation, we are proud to represent millions of Americans who like ourselves, are of Italian descent. Our ancestors have brought proud traditions of service with them to the United States. We still share those values today and with assistance from many Italian-American community organizations we continue to pass these traditions onto future generations.

As President Kennedy stated during the Centennial celebration of Italian Unification, "We have the old and the new bound together and inextricably linked, Italy and the United States, past, present and we believe, future."

We proudly recognize and celebrate this 150th anniversary of Italian Unification and the continued friendship between the United States and Italy.

A WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH
TRIBUTE TO SHIRLEY CHISHOLM

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, during our celebration of Women's History Month, I would like to take an opportunity to honor the late Honorable Shirley Anita Chisholm. She was a trailblazer and an inspiration for many people across the country, including myself.

Shirley Anita Chisholm was born on November 30, 1924, in Brooklyn, NY to immigrant parents. She was an alumna of Girls High School, and earned her B.A. from Brooklyn College in 1946. In 1952, she went on to earn her M.A. from Columbia University in elementary education. During her time in school she became interested in and became a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and the NAACP.

Prior to her political career, she was an educator—a nursery school teacher from her college graduation in 1946 until 1953. From 1953 to 1959, she served as the director of Hamilton-Madison Child Care Center, and from 1959 to 1964 she was an educational consultant for the Division of Day Care in New York City.

Shirley Chisholm's political career began when she ran for the New York State Legislature in 1964. She proudly served there for four years. In 1968, she won election to the United States House of Representatives, becoming the first African-American woman elected to Congress. Congresswoman Chisholm was re-

elected six times, and retired in 1983. During her tenure, she was a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus, and was an important advocate for women, children, and inner city residents.

Her distinguished career was marked by challenging barriers. Shirley said: "I want to be remembered as a woman who fought for change in the twentieth century." We remember her today as a powerful force for change, an advocate for the most vulnerable in society, and an inspiration for many. On January 25, 1972, she became the first major-party black candidate for President of the United States of America and the first woman to run for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the life and accomplishments of Shirley Chisholm on the occasion of Women's History Month.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NATIONAL GUARD TECHNICIAN EQUITY ACT

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce much-needed legislation to benefit one of the most deserving groups of workers in our nation. The National Guard Technician Equity Act will go a long way toward correcting many wrongs in several outdated laws that harm the men and women who serve our country.

National Guard dual-status technicians are a unique group of workers. They are civilian employees of the National Guard in all 50 states and each territory. However, as a condition of their civilian position, they also must serve in either the Air or Army National Guard. These men and women serve the National Guard in a variety of capacities, from helicopter, airplane, and tank mechanics to clerical and support workers. National Guard technicians also serve their country on the military side of their jobs—during deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, and on state active duty in events such as Hurricane Katrina, forest fires, and floods.

The primary law that covers National Guard dual-status technicians is the Technician Act of 1968. Because of many outdated and unfair provisions in this law, technicians receive the worst of both worlds—on the civilian and military side of their jobs. My legislation, the National Guard Technician Equity Act, will correct these injustices.

First, the Technician Act requires that if a technician is no longer fit for military duty, then that person must be fired from their technician position, even if they are fully capable of performing their civilian duties. In a time in our nation with record unemployment, we should not be losing experienced, expert employees like this. My legislation would allow technicians the option of remaining in their civilian position if they have 20 years of creditable service as a dual-status technician. This not only will retain some of our best and brightest, but also will clear the way for other National Guard members to advance in the military ranks.

Second, the Technician Act bars technicians from having the same appeal rights as most other federal employees—including their counterparts in other Defense Department posi-

tions. Federal employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement have the right to file a grievance in the event of an adverse action (typically a long suspension or termination of their employment), and then proceed to arbitration; otherwise, they have the right to file a case with the Merit Systems Protection Board, a neutral federal agency. While technicians can file a grievance, they can only appeal to the Adjutant General in their state, not to any neutral third-party. My legislation will allow National Guard technicians the same right to appeal their case to a neutral party that most other federal workers have.

Third, most National Guard members are able to enroll in the TRICARE Reserve Select program, a key health benefit. However, despite the requirement that National Guard dual-status technicians must join the Air or Army National Guard, they are ineligible for TRICARE or TRICARE Reserve Select. Instead, technicians can only participate in the FEHBP program. FEHBP plans are generally significantly more expensive than TRICARE Reserve Select. My legislation takes the common-sense step of studying the feasibility of including National Guard technicians in the TRICARE or TRICARE Reserve Select programs.

Fourth, National Guard technicians also receive the worst of both worlds—military and civilian—when it comes to retirement. The FY 2000 National Defense Authorization Act included a provision to provide technicians who started work after 1996 to have "special category" civilian retirement. This means that they can retire somewhat earlier than most other federal workers, due to the dangerous nature of their jobs. However, technicians who were already working for the National Guard on or before 1996 were exempted from this improved retirement. My legislation will ensure all National Guard technicians—regardless of when they started work—will have the same retirement. Further, although active duty members of the military can retire after 20 years of service at any age, National Guard members, including technicians, must wait to retire until they are 60 years old for full military retirement. A provision in the FY 08 NDAA allows National Guard members to retire 3 months early for every year of service, but that provision does not go far enough. Since technicians can be fired from their civilian position if they cannot meet their military requirements, many of them depend on their civilian and military retirement if this occurs. Therefore, my legislation will ensure technicians—and all other members of the National Guard—receive a fairer military retirement by reducing the age of normal military retirement from age 60 to age 55.

Finally, my legislation corrects other injustices that harm technicians and treat them differently than their civilian and/or military counterparts. They include: requiring the federal government to pay FEHBP premiums during Emergency State Active Duty; doubling the amount of military leave for all federal employees in the National Guard; giving technicians the same right during a reduction in force that other federal workers have; giving technicians the same access to enlistment and re-enlistment bonuses and student loan repayment benefits that other National Guard members receive; and the right to receive overtime pay for overtime worked.

National Guard dual-status technicians have waited 43 years for Congress to correct these

inequities and injustices. I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this important legislation that benefits the brave men and women who so proudly serve our nation.

TO CONGRATULATE STEVE P. CHOI ON BEING NAMED THE 36TH PRESIDENT OF THE KOREAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 17, 2011

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, as the incoming co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Korea, it is my great honor to congratulate Steve P. Choi on being named the 36th President of the Korean American Association of the Washington Metropolitan Area.

My community, the 11th Congressional District of Virginia, is enriched by its great diversity. More than 1 in 4 residents are foreign born and 40% are minorities. Asian-Americans, particularly Korean-Americans, comprise the largest ethnic population. The National Capital Region is home to more than 80,000 Korean-Americans making this area the third largest Korean community in the United States. Fairfax County, which I represent, has a sister-city relationship with the Songpa-gu district of Seoul, Korea.

The Korean-American community contributes immeasurably to the Northern Virginia region. A large percent of businesses in the area are owned and operated by Korean-Americans, who provide a robust variety of jobs, goods, and services to local residents. The strong character and work ethic displayed in the Korean-American community are consistent with that of so many immigrant groups who have come before. Education is highly regarded and sought after, and honesty, integrity and dignity are values that are instilled at a young age and continue to develop throughout life.

The Korean American Association of the Washington Metropolitan Area plays a critical role in providing information, opportunities, and services to local Korean-Americans. Throughout my career, first as a district Supervisor, then as Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and now as the U.S. Congressman representing this district, I have worked closely with the Korean American Association of the Washington Metropolitan Area as well as other Korean-American groups to ensure that the needs of the community are addressed and that its voices are heard. I look forward to working with Mr. Choi as he begins his term as president of this esteemed organization so that together we can continue the progress toward achieving of our common goals.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Steve P. Choi on being named the 36th President of the Korean American Association of the Washington Metropolitan Area and in wishing him continued success.