

REFLECTS ON THE 100th ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRIANGLE FIRE

**HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, April 15, 2011*

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, from Wisconsin to Washington, we are at a crossroads right now about the kind of America we want to be. At this important moment, it would do us well to reflect on our shared past, when our nation reached a similar crossroads—after the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire, one of the worst industrial accidents in American history, which occurred a century ago last month.

I say “accident,” but really there was more at work here. If you do not know the story, the Triangle Fire resulted in the death of 146 garment workers—17 men and 129 women—most of them young immigrant women under the age of 25. In the months before the fire—until they successfully struck for shorter hours and better pay—they had been working 13-hour days, and getting paid 13 cents an hour.

The fire happened in a garment factory that took up the eighth, ninth, and tenth floors of a New York City building, one with poor ventilation and no real safety measures in place. When the fire started, likely due to a cigarette or match, the owners of the Triangle Company were notified by phone and escaped.

But nobody told the workers. And so, when the fire began to rage, these women could not get out. Fire blocked many of the exits, and one of the main stairways had been locked shut by the Triangle Company—the foreman with the key had also left. And so many women tried to escape by jumping to their deaths. Those who did not leap burned.

The Triangle Fire was a nightmare that unfolded before the entire nation. Because of this tragedy, church leaders called for a renewed commitment to the principles of social justice, known as the Social Gospel. And a generation of progressives was moved to reform. Within three years, 36 new state laws passed to regulate fire safety and workplace safety, and New York became a model for the nation.

Because of the Triangle Fire, all of America saw firsthand what happens when women and workers are left without basic protections. And we as a people realized that government has an important role to play in ensuring the life, health, and dignity of workers.

That is why I am concerned about the many attempts by the majority to cut basic protections, or to see the assaults on employees’ rights taking place in states like Wisconsin and Ohio. We know where all of this leads—Our nation has lived it, a century ago.

Before us are two different visions of America. I know which I want to live in, and which I want to strive for.

HONORING THE LIFE OF VIRGINIA BRAUN

**HON. DAVID DREIER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, April 15, 2011*

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to pay tribute to Virginia Bradley Braun—

a philanthropist, a civic leader, a proud Californian, and a patriot. She was very active in politics and a long-time friend and supporter of Governor and President Ronald Reagan. It was a privilege to call her a friend as well.

GINIE, as she was known to all, contributed enormously to her adopted home in the greater Los Angeles area. Like me, Ginie grew up a Midwesterner, then came to California at a young age, and quickly called it home.

She and her husband Henry gave generously to the community, supporting a vast array of worthy causes, from education to the arts to children’s health. But Ginie was most generous with her time. She spent a lifetime volunteering for civic organizations, political causes, and charities that helped to improve the lives of those who shared her community.

One of her most dedicated endeavors was her support for Pepperdine University, a tremendous institution that has served Southern California since 1937. Ginie joined the Pepperdine University Board in 1983 and was named to the University’s Board of Regents in 1995. Her legacy lives on in the Henry A. and Virginia B. Braun Center for Public Policy, which was dedicated in 2003. The Braun Center will continue to advance the academic excellence to which Ginie was so devoted.

But Ginie’s greatest generosity to the university was reserved for institutions and programs that did not bear her name. From athletics to arts, Ginie was a very proud supporter of Pepperdine, its facilities, its faculty and its students.

As University President Andrew Benton said, “Ginie radiated life.” Her energy and charisma were irrepressible. She brought them to every one of her life’s endeavors, and inspired those around her with her love of life and generosity of spirit. I know that I am joined by countless others in celebrating the tremendous life of Ginie Braun.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MR. AND MRS. JOHN AND TINA DOWD

**HON. LOU BARLETTA**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, April 15, 2011*

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor and acknowledge Mr. and Mrs. John and Tina Dowd, recipients of the 2011 Volunteers of America Pennsylvania’s Spirit of Youth award.

The Spirit of Youth award is given to those who instill hope and belief in the advancement of all. Their support of the community and of Volunteers of America ranges from helping children to helping those who are young at heart. John and Tina Dowd exemplify these traits, and have used their own lives to help others.

John Dowd grew up in Sunbury, Pennsylvania. He attended Shikellamy High School before studying engineering at the Pennsylvania State University. John is the president of Sundance Vacations, which he grew from one small office in Pocono Lake, Pennsylvania, into a national company that was named one of the Inc 500 fastest-growing companies two years in a row. As he grew his business, he also dedicated himself to giving back to his community. In addition to his work with Volunteers of America, John donates to the Luzerne

Foundation and the Wyoming Valley Children’s Association. His company sponsors local Little League and booster club sports teams, and he participates in many other local and national charitable causes.

Tina Dowd co-founded Sundance Vacations with her husband, John. Tina is a graduate of Kutztown University of Pennsylvania. She has been an integral part of growing the business. In November 2010, Tina accepted the Employer of the Year Award at the seventh annual Stevie Awards for Women in Business. In addition to managing and training employees, Tina oversees all of the firm’s communications. John and Tina spend a lot of time with their three daughters, but like her husband, Tina volunteers for many organizations. Tina serves as vice president of an organization serving homeless children and their families in Carbon County—an organization she helped found. She is a member of the Lehigh Area School District Board of Directors, the Community Action Council of Palmerton Area Churches, and the Luzerne Foundation Millennium Circle. She is a past board member of the Northeast Pennsylvania Better Business Bureau.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. and Mrs. Dowd have not only grown a business that employs more than 700 people, but they have used their talents to give back to the community they love so much. Their philanthropic efforts and volunteerism have helped so many of our neighbors. John and Tina are extraordinary both as a couple and as individuals. Mr. Speaker, today, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating John and Tina Dowd, recipients of this year’s Volunteers of America Pennsylvania’s Spirit of Youth award.

RETIREMENT OF LAUSD SUPER-INTENDENT RAMON CORTINES

**HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, April 15, 2011*

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the distinguished 55-year career of Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Superintendent Ramon Cortines.

Superintendent Cortines began his career as an educator in 1956, teaching a class of 44 sixth graders, in Aptos, California. He taught at the elementary, middle and high school levels before becoming a school administrator and ultimately serving as Superintendent of Schools in Pasadena, San Jose, San Francisco, New York City and Los Angeles.

Superintendent Cortines is one of our nation’s most experienced educators. He has advised every President or his Education Secretary since the Carter Administration, and in 1992 he chaired the Department of Education transition team for President Clinton. Cortines served as Superintendent of LAUSD briefly in 2000 and returned to the position in 2008, during which time he steered the district through unprecedented fiscal challenges while improving pupil attendance, school safety and student achievement.

Upon his retirement today, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the distinguished career of this dedicated public servant.