

There are lots of reasons to change that policy. First, it's simple equity, the same treatment. In addition, making bankruptcy relief available to homeowners will make the system respond to reasonable requests for renegotiations, which would be cheaper, faster, and easier than the foreclosure process for everybody. The simple act will stem the flood of foreclosures and uncertainty, which will help stabilize home values currently in free fall, and it will make it harder for another speculative bubble to be created. Knowing that homeowners will be treated the same as business in bankruptcy will make people think twice about aggregating vast numbers of dicey mortgages, simply taking a profit, and passing the package on to others.

I am introducing the Bankruptcy Equity Act to provide bankruptcy judges the power to align the homeowner's mortgage to its current value and terms and put ordinary homeowners on the same playing field as speculators and businesses. It makes sure private and federally insured mortgages are eligible for modification, allowing FHA, VA, and the Department of Agriculture to pay out claims on insured mortgages modified in bankruptcy.

For an immediate solution to the foreclosure crisis, allowing families to stay in their homes, to be treated equitably, and prevent the next bubble from forming, I strongly urge my colleagues to examine the Bankruptcy Equity for Homeowners Act and join me in treating homeowners as fairly as we treat speculators and investors.

RECOGNIZING PHILIP AMERIS AND CAROL COULTAS FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING WORK ON BEHALF OF THE WORKING MEN AND WOMEN OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

HON. MARK S. CRITZ

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2012

Mr. CRITZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize two dedicated champions of the American worker for receiving an award for outstanding labor leadership. Each year, the Allegheny County Labor Council confers its Labor's Man of the Year and Labor's Woman of the Year Awards on one male and one female who have worked passionately and effectively to advance the cause of organized labor in western Pennsylvania. This year's Labor's Man of the Year is Philip Ameris, President and Business Manager of the Laborers' District Council of Western Pennsylvania. Labor's Woman of the Year for 2012 is Carol Coultas, a longtime servant of western Pennsylvania's labor movement, who most recently served as Executive Vice President of Communication Workers of America (CWA) Local 13500. The enthusiasm with which these two individuals have worked to advance the material wellbeing and workplace safety of hardworking Americans over the years is a tribute to their integrity and selflessness.

In 1994, Philip Ameris was appointed a Field Representative for Laborers International Union of North America Local 1058. Since then, he has risen through the ranks on account of his outstanding managerial and organizational skills. In his current post, he over-

sees the Labor District Council of Western Pennsylvania's efforts to provide fair working conditions and wages to the hardworking men and women who build and maintain western Pennsylvania's physical infrastructure.

Mr. Ameris also holds leadership positions on several prominent labor boards. He serves as Chairman of the Western Pennsylvania Laborers' Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee, Chairman of the Western Pennsylvania Laborers' Education and Training Trust Fund, Chairman of the Laborers' Combined Funds of Western Pennsylvania Pension and Welfare Funds and Chairman of the Western Pennsylvania Laborers' Political Action Fund.

An 8th degree black belt, Mr. Ameris is the founder of several martial arts instruction programs for young children. He has served as a martial arts instructor to the children within his own programs for the last 30 years.

Mr. Ameris has been married to his wife Jeanne for the last 30 years. He and Jeanne have two sons—Philip, Jr. and Jimmy—who are both proud members of the Laborers' International Union of America.

Carol Coultas is a 30-year veteran of the Communications Workers of America. In addition to having served as Executive Vice President of CWA Local 13500, she has been the President of the CWA Local 13051 Retired Members Council and Executive Vice President Emeritus of the CWA Local 13500. Ms. Coultas has also served as a board member of the Pennsylvania Alliance for Retired Americans, a trustee and delegate to the Allegheny County Labor Council and a member of Jobs for Justice.

Ms. Coultas began her career as a Long Distance Telephone Operator for the Bell Telephone Company in 1944. She first became a member of CWA when she went to work in Bell's Special Accounts Business Office. From that moment on, she has worked with the utmost passion to protect the rights and the livelihoods of working families and seniors.

In addition to being a dedicated advocate for active and retired American workers, Ms. Coultas is also a devoted wife to her husband Ronald—a Vietnam veteran and retired National Guardsman—loving mother to her daughter Bernadette and proud grandmother to her grandchildren David and Emily.

Mr. Speaker, all of us should strive to replicate the passion for serving others that Phil Ameris and Carol Coultas have exhibited throughout their distinguished careers as labor leaders. I want to congratulate them on receiving such a well-deserved honor.

HONORING MAYOR HAL BALDWIN

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2012

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the commitment of the late Mayor Hal Baldwin of Schertz, Texas. Mr. Baldwin, one of the longest continuously serving council members in the state of Texas served on the Schertz City Council for twenty-nine years and as the city's Mayor of another eighteen years. Mayor Baldwin's nearly forty years of service to the community will echo even in his passing.

Mr. Baldwin, the Wichita, Kansas native moved to Schertz, Texas in 1967 as he was finishing a 20-year enlisted career in the Air Force with the rank of Senior Master Sergeant. While on active duty, Baldwin served with the 51st Fighter Interceptor Wing, Naha Air Force Base, Okinawa, during the latter months of the Korean War. He also served at Headquarters, 7th Air Force, Tan Son Nhut Air Base during the Vietnam War. He finished his military career at Randolph Air Force Base, where he served as the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Command Graphics Branch, Presentations Division, Headquarters, Air Training Command.

By the early 1970s, Baldwin's first interaction with city government was with the Citizens Advisory Committee that advised City Council on matters. Later, he partook in a program called "Project Transition" which was an Air Force program that sought to let retiring members work half a day in a civilian job for a period of time until they retired and could work full time in that job. As a tax-assessor collector for the City of Schertz as his half day civilian job, he learned about city government and issues. After six years, he took a job as a business manager for the school district and served in this position until his retirement in 1998.

After serving his country and learning the ropes of city government, his political career began. He was appointed as a City Council member and in 1994 he ran for Mayor of Schertz, won and served in that position until 2012. His landmark services as Mayor include the formation of the Schertz-Seguin Local Government Corporation and more recently raising awareness of historical places in the area, such as a number of century old homes in the city. I had the honor of working collaboratively with Baldwin since 2006 on projects for the City of Schertz, including bringing a new Post office to the area.

The mayor and Mrs. Barbara Baldwin were married for 55 years, they have five children, eight grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren, all of whom reside in the Schertz area. Mayor Hal Baldwin's love for the Schertz community can be measured by one simple fact—he has spent half his life in public service to that community.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to have had the opportunity to recognize the late Mayor Hal Baldwin. His hard work and valor have truly impacted many lives and our community.

HONORING GORDON TSAI

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 16, 2012

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.