

everyone to enjoy. Nowhere is it more critical than in my home State of Pennsylvania.

Over the past 50 years, Pennsylvania has received approximately \$300 million in land and water conservation funding for protection in many areas of national significance, such as Gettysburg National Military Park, the Paoli Battlefield, the Brandywine Battlefield, Valley Forge National Historical Park, and John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge.

Not only have we seen the LWCF at work on the State level, we have also seen its benefits at the local level, including the Birdsboro Waters Forest Legacy Project, protecting critical woodlands at the East Coventry Wineberry Estates, expanding Shaw's Bridge Park in East Bradford Township, and enhancing the Pottstown Borough Memorial Park with a new dog park, pavilions, restrooms, ballfields, and walking trails.

The outdoor recreation industry, Governors, mayors, sportsmen, small-business owners, conservation leaders, landowners, ranchers, farmers, and millions of Americans are united in a push for permanent reauthorization and full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund because it provides an economic benefit to our region and across the country. The LWCF gives a boost to the \$646 billion recreation economy and serves to protect our national parks and other public lands from being destroyed.

Indeed, in one such study, the Outdoor Industry Association has found that outdoor active recreation generates \$21.5 billion annually in consumer spending in Pennsylvania alone. Outdoor recreation supports over 219,000 jobs across the State and generates \$7.2 billion in wages and salaries. It also produces \$1.6 billion annually in State and local tax revenue.

Outdoor recreation benefits the Pennsylvania economy. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that each year over 5.4 million people participated in hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching in Pennsylvania, contributing \$5.4 billion to the State economy.

Additionally, the Land and Water Conservation Fund State Assistance Program provides matching grants to help States and local communities protect parks and recreation resources. Nationwide, the LWCF has benefited countless counties in America, supporting over 41,000 projects.

The State assistance 50-50 matching program acts as the primary investment tool to ensure that all can enjoy hiking, biking, running trails, community parks, and playgrounds. Approximately \$4 billion in LWCF grants have been awarded to States, including \$4.27 million for 34 total projects in Berks County, \$4.78 million for 30 total projects in Chester County, \$2.8 million for 49 total projects in Montgomery County, and over \$800,000 for 11 projects in Lebanon County. These are all counties in my congressional district.

Our public lands and outdoor recreation areas are an integral part of our heritage, civic identity, and local community. I believe the Land and Water Conservation Fund is one of our most important conservation programs and an excellent example of a bipartisan commitment to the safeguard of our natural resources and cultural heritage, and we must reauthorize it.

As an original cosponsor of H.R. 1814 to permanently reauthorize the LWCF, I look forward to working with my colleagues to preserve our public lands so that current and future generations may continue to enjoy and appreciate them year-round.

I respectfully call upon my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to work for a bipartisan solution to reauthorize this very important program.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month, I would like to recognize the great achievement of Latinos within their communities.

America has been home to countless numbers of outstanding Latinos over time who reflect the best of our community: activists like Cesar Chavez and Joan Baez; artists like Selena and Carlos Santana; the brave women and men who have served in our armed services; and, of course, today's ambitious young DREAMers.

Latinos, like all Americans, are committed to building a better and stronger future for our country and within our communities. We strive to instill a culture of hard work, of healthy living, and of academic success.

Latino families recognize the importance of attaining an education in today's society. In the past decade, Latinos have worked to cut their dropout rate in half, while tripling enrollment in 2- and 4-year colleges.

The top degrees that we earn speak to our involvement in community: our liberal arts degrees, to help the less fortunate; to heal the sick with our healthcare degrees; to create employment with our business diplomas.

In regards to health care, with the landmark Affordable Care Act, a record 2.6 million new Latinos are signed up for health care, and they are on track to leading healthier lives.

But, Mr. Speaker, even with these great advances in our communities, there is still so much work to be done. Although our dropout rate is lower, we still have the highest dropout rate among all ethnic groups. Latinos have increased their scores in math and science, but we are still below the national average. And while our communities have made massive strides in putting our children in college, still only 15 percent of college degrees are in the hands of Latinos, again, the

smallest percentage of any ethnic group.

And even while 2½ million new Latinos signed up for health care, 25 percent of Latinos have no healthcare plan, and we battle high obesity and diabetes.

So I have seen these issues firsthand in my district and in California and, as a whole, have seen and have worked to improve our condition.

This Congress, I introduced the All-Year ACCESS Act, which would restore Pell grants for both full-time and part-time students, giving access to postsecondary education all year-round. Back in my home district, I relaunched Enroll OC, adding an additional 2,000 people this year, Latinos in my district, to health care.

So while we make these incredible strides in wellness and education, the Latino community still has so many issues to address. I will tell you this: the problems are not just Latino problems; they are problems for the United States because, you see, America is a family. It is a familia, and we have to address these issues together because, for the first time in my beautiful home State of California, the largest majority ethnic group is now Latino.

And you know what? This should not frighten people, Mr. Speaker. I think it is actually pretty exciting because the Latino community is so embedded in the success of the American Dream, and the American Dream is so embedded in us. We are not aliens, Mr. Speaker. We are doctors, lawyers, community leaders, social workers, laborers, and DREAMers. But more importantly, we are sons, daughters, parents, siblings, and we are neighbors.

It is time for the United States as a whole to embrace the power and the potential of the Latino community and to realize that we share the common goal of furthering the greatness of this Nation. I believe as soon as we realize Latinos yearn to share the same American values and aspirations as so many descendants of other immigrant groups—of Italian Americans and Irish Americans and German Americans and Asian Americans and all Americans—certainly America will thrive.

Latinos are finding their voice, and America needs to listen.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 24 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania) at 2 p.m.