

These loyal and dedicated individuals share this prestigious honor with over 300 additional Lodge members who have previously attained this important designation.

This memorable day will begin with a morning mass at Saint Joseph the Worker Catholic Church in Gary, Indiana, with the Reverend Father Stephen Loncar presiding. The festivities will be culturally enriched by the performance of several Croatian musical groups. The Hoosier Hrvati Adult Tamburitza Orchestra directed by Frank Jovanovich, the Croatian Glee Club "Preradovic," and the Croatian Strings Tamburitza and Junior Dancers directed by Dennis Barunica will perform at this gala event. A formal dinner banquet will end the day's festivities.

Mr. Speaker, I urge you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commending Lodge President Betty Morgavan, and all the other members of the Croatian Fraternal Union Lodge Number 170, for their loyalty and radiant display of passion for their ethnicity. The Croatian community has played a key role in enriching the quality of life and culture of Northwest Indiana. It is my hope that this year will bring renewed hope and prosperity for all members of the Croatian community and their families. I am proud to represent these gifted residents of the First Congressional District of Indiana.

**RICHARD HAIRE RETIRES FROM
CORRALES ELEMENTARY**

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 18, 2002

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, we all know that our schools will never be any better than the men and women who teach in them. I rise today to pay tribute to a remarkable teacher who has made Corrales Elementary one of the best in my home state of New Mexico.

Corrales has been truly fortunate to have someone of the talents and dedication of Mr. Haire within the community. It is an honor to be able to recognize him on this special occasion.

After serving as an exemplary elementary school teacher in New Mexico for more than 32 years, Richard Haire is retiring the chalk, and will end a career that will conclude with teaching a fifth grade class of children at Corrales Elementary for twenty-three consecutive years. I say he is retiring the chalk because I know that he will continue to contribute to the community in a variety of ways.

Mr. Haire graduated second in a class of 360 in 1965 from Commack High School in upstate New York, where his classmates voted him most likely to succeed. He graduated cum laude from the State University of New York with a BA in psychology, and then received his Ms in Education from Syracuse University.

In addition to teaching children, Mr. Haire was a mentor to scores of his colleagues. Indeed, he is a teacher's teacher. His greatest service to our community lies in his devotion as an educator to his students. He deserves the greatest praise both from the families of these young individuals, and from all those whose lives he has touched. His efforts are an

invaluable investment in New Mexico's future and we are all truly blessed that we had such a dedicated professional in the classroom.

It is impossible to find a former student whose life has not been changed positively by Mr. Haire. Everyone can point to a turning point where his teaching caused each to embark upon a course of action. In his service to education, Mr. Haire embraced the principle that one person can make a difference, by leading by example, getting people involved, touching everything and everyone in the community.

Teachers like Richard Haire do make a difference. I believe so strongly in education. I know that as we battle the ills of our society—poverty and hopelessness—education is the great beacon and the great hope. I strongly believe that our public school system will continue to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The commitment Mr. Haire has made to children both in and out of the classroom continues to illustrate the power of a single person.

Mr. Speaker, in 1818, Thomas Jefferson said, "A system of general education, which shall reach every description of our citizens from the richest to the poorest, as it was the earliest, so will it be the latest of all the public concerns in which I shall permit myself to take an interest." This quotation embodies Richard Haire's career.

We will dearly miss his service at Corrales Elementary.

LEGISLATION TO AMEND THE NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSING LOAN PILOT PROGRAM

HON. ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGO

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 18, 2002

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation which will amend the Native American Housing Loan Pilot Program by making spouses of qualified Native Americans, including American Samoans, Native Hawaiians, Native Alaskans and American Indians, eligible to obtain VA home loans.

While veterans living in most of our nation have been able to obtain home loans guaranteed by the federal government for decades, certain segments of our veteran population did not obtain this benefit until the 1990s. Many American Samoan, Native Hawaiian, Native Alaskans and Native American Indian veterans who lived on native lands were not eligible for home loans because, among other reasons, fee simple title to the land could not be acquired. Without clear title to the land, commercial banks would not make home loans and, without commercial loans, the Department of Veterans Affairs could not offer assistance to these veterans.

In 1992, Congress created a pilot program to address this problem. This program was created through §8 of P.L. 102-547 and is now called the Native American Housing Loan Pilot Program. The Native American Housing Loan Pilot Program provides VA direct housing loans to Native Americans who, because of where they live, are not eligible for the national VA home loan guarantee program. Pacific Islanders, Native Hawaiians, Native American Indians and Native Alaskans all benefit from this program.

For nine years, this program has been a tremendous success—hundreds of loans have been made and the default rate is very low. However, this direct loan program does not solve the housing problem for veterans married to American Samoans, Native Hawaiians, Native Alaskans and Native American Indians.

In American Samoa, for example, there are many non-Samoan veterans married to a Samoan spouse who are ineligible to obtain VA home loans. These non-Samoan veterans are surprised to find out first, that the national VA home loan program is not available to them, and second, that they are ineligible to participate in the Native American Housing Loan Pilot Program, which is operational in American Samoa.

The bill I introduce today will expand the eligibility of the program by making spouses of qualified American Samoans, Native Hawaiians, Native Alaskans and Native American Indians eligible to obtain VA home loans.

This would be a small adjustment to the current eligible population and would be made available only in those few areas in which the national VA home loan program has not been implemented.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

**ISRAEL DESERVES THE RIGHT TO
DEFEND HERSELF**

HON. RONNIE SHOWS

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 18, 2002

Mr. SHOWS. Mr. Speaker, since September 11th, Americans have been living in a new age. Attacks on New York and Washington made us keenly aware of our vulnerability.

Never before had we been attacked so savagely so close to home. That is a day we will never forget.

Well, Mr. Speaker, now we all know what it must be like to be an Israeli, because this has been the pattern of THEIR lives, every day.

Israel has long lived under the shadow of terrorism. In the aftermath of 9-11, Americans need look no further than the people of Israel as a source of strength and courage.

Terrorists have no regard for innocent human life and have threatened innocent Israelis for years.

But in recent weeks these terrorists have escalated their bloody tactics and threaten ALL innocent Middle Easterners who just want to live in peace.

They have escalated their violence to a terrifying level that threatens regional stability and world peace.

Mr. Speaker, the whole world is watching and wondering and praying for peace in the Middle East and an end to this senseless slaughter.

Our President has stepped up to the plate and initiated negotiations towards that end.

That's all well and good, Mr. Speaker, but on the very day that Secretary of State Powell arrived in Israel to begin the process, yet another terrorist bomb blew a hole in the heart of peace itself.

And in spite of this we continue to insist that Israel pull its troops out of the West Bank! Mr. Speaker, we are asking Israel NOT to defend herself.

Mr. Speaker, how can we ask Israel to pull back—to stop defending itself—at the very