

Pauline C. Garcia. Pauline illustrated the spirit of kindness to her community, and prepared young children to be the future leaders of their communities. Her compassion will live on in the hearts of those lives she touched and I extend my deepest sympathy and I have no doubt that her memory will continue to be a source of inspiration and comfort for her family.

12TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 25, 2002

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 12th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Twelve years ago, people from across the country gathered to celebrate the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, one of the Nation's landmark civil rights laws since the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The ADA opened up the true promise of America to people with disabilities who, for decades have been held back—not by a wheelchair and a flight of insurmountable stairs—but by simple public ignorance.

Because of the Americans with Disabilities Act, people with disabilities are gaining equal access to public sector services. The public sector has rallied to the ADA's goals and states and local governments have developed some of the most innovative and meaningful responses to the ADA.

As a result of this important civil rights law, employers now provide a range of adjustment measures to ensure that employees with disabilities can keep their place in the job market, resulting in unprecedented economic opportunities for our disabled population.

ADA has torn down barriers that prevented people with disabilities from getting access to education, the job market, and simply living their daily lives.

As I reflect on our accomplishments here in Congress since I started to serve my constituents as a member in 1986, this is one of the pieces of legislation, I am most proud of. The Americans with Disabilities Act is a historic example of Congress being true to our centuries-old heritage of freedom and equal opportunity.

This landmark legislation took more than 2 years to pass because even in the halls of Congress, there were hurdles of ignorance to overcome. The ADA itself was born of one man's determination to break down the barriers which had diverted his career plans and caused him to reevaluate his dreams throughout his life. My former colleague in the House of Representatives and original author of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Tony Coelho, didn't grow up wanting to be a Member of Congress. But he did grow up with epilepsy. As a youth Tony wanted to be a clergyman, but he was kept back because of public ignorance about his disability.

They say that God works in strange and mysterious ways. Tony Coelho's first dreams were shattered by discrimination, but this was, in fact, a blessing for the entire nation. Tony would go on to write the most comprehensive anti-discrimination bill for persons with disabilities in United States history. What more proof

do we need that someone with a disability can be one of the most able people our nation has ever seen?

When Congress passed and the President signed the Americans with Disabilities Act, we implemented what is, in effect, a 20th century Emancipation Proclamation for the estimated 43 million Americans who have some type of physical or mental disability. For the first time in history, these individuals were guaranteed their rights to explore the full range of their talents, ability, and creativity.

By outlawing discrimination against disabled persons in employment, transportation, public accommodations and telecommunications, the ADA guarantees to persons with disabilities the same rights which most of us in this chamber take for granted—the right to go to their neighborhood grocery store, attend a movie, eat in the local diner, hold a job, ride a city bus, or simply talk on the telephone.

Pre-existing laws and federal regulations under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 have been effective, but only so far as the policies of the government, its contractors, and recipients of federal funds have been concerned. These laws left all other areas of American life untouched.

Many young Americans who have benefitted from the equal educational opportunity guaranteed under the 1973 law and the Education of the Handicapped Act, have found themselves on graduation day facing a closed door to the mainstream of American life. For years, generations of disabled Americans have been turned away at movie theatres, refused tables at restaurants, left stranded in wheelchairs at bus stops and denied meaningful employment opportunities.

As a cosponsor of the landmark ADA bill and as a legislator who has worked closely with the disabled since the mid-1970s, I am proud of the fact that the ADA broke down barriers and helped to correct these demeaning disadvantages.

I am also proud of my community's early acceptance of individuals with disabilities, especially the deaf. Rochester is home to the National Technical Institute for the Deaf and the first city in the city to broadcast News for the Deaf each weekday.

The Declaration of Independence gave voice to the fundamental principles upon which this nation would grow to greatness—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Twelve years ago the Americans with Disabilities Act reaffirmed these sacred principles for millions and millions of United States citizens who have had to suffer unjustified segregation and exclusion.

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY
WATER RESOURCES CONSERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 22, 2002

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2990, the Lower Rio Grande Valley Water Resources Conservation and Improvement Act of 2001, which was introduced by my good friend Congressman RUBÉN HINOJOSA.

Among other things, this legislation amends the Lower Rio Grande Valley Water Resources Conservation and Improvement Act of 2000 to authorize the construction of 20 additional specified projects in Texas and increases the authorization of appropriations for carrying out these projects.

As you know Mr. Speaker, the Rio Grande and the areas along both sides of the border have been severely impacted by drought conditions during the last decade. In fact, given the recent problems with the Mexican water debt, we are hearing more about the dire conditions of farmers in the area than in years past. There are more than seven million people residing in the Lower Valley of the Rio Grande river with approximately one million of those living in the United States. The area is one of the fastest growing areas of our country with projected populations more than doubling by the year 2050.

This area encompasses 29 water districts located in the United States below the International Falcon-Amistad Reservoir System, which supplies nearly 95 percent of the water needs of this area. Mr. Speaker, we need to make significant improvements to irrigation canal delivery systems. We need to develop aggressive strategies to conserve water and we need to improve the overall management of the most precious resource in the area—water.

On December 28, 2000, the President signed into law the Lower Rio Grande Valley Water Resources Conservation and Improvement Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-576). The legislation authorized the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) to develop a program to investigate and identify opportunities to improve the water supply for selected counties along the Texas-Mexico border. The bill on the floor today amends this law by adding 14 new water conservation projects; modifying the criteria for water supply studies; and increasing the authorization for carrying out the studies. In addition, this bill increases the authorization for construction of facilities from \$10 million to \$47 million. Mr. Speaker, we need to do everything in our power to facilitate good water management and conservation strategies along the U.S.—Mexico border. I applaud the efforts of my colleague for introducing this important legislation and I ask my colleagues to support its passage.

MUWEKMA OHLONE INDIAN TRIBE

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 25, 2002

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, The Muwekma Ohlone Indian Tribe is a sovereign Indian Nation located within several counties in the San Francisco Bay Area since time immemorial.

In 1906, the Tribe was formally identified by the Special Indian Census conducted by Indian Agent C.E. Kelsey, as a result of the Congressional Appropriation Act mandate to identify and to purchase land for the landless and homeless California Indian tribes.

At this time, the Department of Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs federally acknowledged the Verona Band as coming under the jurisdiction of the Reno and Sacramento Agencies between 1906 and 1927.