

El Dorado Furniture is a success by any standard. From its humble sales of \$18,251 its first year, it boasts sales of \$125 to \$130 million in 2002. Not many businesses can claim at least a 22 percent increase every year. Apart from El Dorado's business success, it has served as a source of family unity. All the family members continue to work in the business, including seven of the 19 grandchildren.

Passion for the furniture business has been in the Capo family's blood and can be traced back to Cuba. Pedro Capo's father describes him as a child "having an active imagination" and as a child who "loved to share his ideas with the whole family". In the last 10 years, Pedro Capo has been sharing his ideas as a member of National Home Furnishings Association, and in his new position as president, he will continue to share his ideas with National Home Furnishings Association members about getting the most out of their retailing businesses.

I urge all our colleagues to join me in paying tribute to the entire Capo family, and especially to Mr. Pedro Capo, a man that embodies the American dream. He serves as a shining example and reminder that anything is possible in the United States and that dreams can and do come true. A man who stands out as a light for all; whether newly arrived immigrant or multi-generational United States citizen.

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#### WILDLIFE GRANTS PROGRAM

### HON. CHARLES F. BASS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 13, 2003*

Mr. BASS. Mr. Speaker, today, Congress is failing to protect America's wildlife by short-changing the State Wildlife Grants program. As many know, I am a strong and consistent supporter of this program, which works to preserve wildlife and save endangered species. Last year, I joined 57 colleagues in recommending \$150 million in funding. Regrettably, the Fiscal Year 2003 omnibus legislation dramatically decreasing the spending level supported by the House last July.

Restoration of previous funding levels for the State Wildlife Grants program, translates into greater protection of endangered species. In particular, 78 species in New Hampshire are threatened, endangered or classified as a "species of concern." These include the Karner Blue butterfly, Piping Plover, and Blanding's turtle. Through the State Wildlife Grant program, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department is able to monitor viability and health. States that monitor wildlife in a comprehensive manner are able to identify and heal declining species that, unchecked, would require "emergency room" care to avoid their extinction. Clearly, preventive measures save the wildlife and also taxpayer dollars eventually required for heroic measures.

In 2000, when 315 of my House colleagues and I passed the Conservation and Reinvestment Act, we did not foresee the dramatic cuts to the State Wildlife Grants program. Today, we can and should commit more resources for national conservation efforts.

#### TRIBUTE TO RUTH WILLIAMS BUCE

### HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 13, 2003*

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Ruth Williams Buce who died on January 20, 2003, after a brief illness at the age of eighty-two.

Ruth Williams Buce was born in Alexander City, Alabama, and was the first woman in her family to earn a college degree. She was a member of the "greatest generation," the generation that secured democracy and built America in the 20th century.

Ruth made friends everywhere she went in her unending pursuit of continuing education and personal growth. She lived a life of volunteerism and gave generously to many causes. She helped her parents prepare food and deliver it to those in need; she rolled bandages in World War II, and worked as a hospital aide. Most recently she volunteered at the Methodist Country House Health Center. Ruth was an avid participant and a leader in the Friends of the Concord Pike Library, the AAUW Landmarks Group and St. Paul's United Methodist Women.

She is survived by her husband of 60 years, William Austin Buce and her children, James A. Buce and his wife Judith, Robert E. Buce and his wife Barbara, and Janet Buce Cook. She also leaves two grandchildren, Julie and Brian Buce.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Ruth Williams Buce for her lifetime of extraordinary service to her community and her country and extending our deepest sympathy to her entire family.

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#### A TRIBUTE TO MISSION SPRINGS WATER DISTRICT FOR 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

### HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 13, 2003*

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like today to offer my congratulations to the board of directors and employees of the Mission Springs Water District for 50 years of high quality service to the residents of Desert Hot Springs, California and the surrounding desert communities.

As you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, water is one of the most important concerns to residents of a desert community. However, many of my colleagues from the watery East may not know that there are millions of gallons of some of the finest water to be found in the underground basins of the deserts of California.

Blessed with one such basin, the early residents of the community (later to become the city) of Desert Hot Springs established, by vote, a water district that was later to become Mission Springs Water District. That original district served one square mile when it was created in February 1953. Today, it covers 135 square miles of a rapidly growing desert area.

Since its inception, the district has committed itself to provide, protect and preserve

its high-quality drinking water. The district has gained widespread respect for its water conservation and attention to top quality materials in its distribution system.

Mr. Speaker, I know that it is common for members of Congress to speak proudly of the quality of their local products. But in this case, the product served by Mission Springs Water District has certified by experts as some of the best in the nation. The district has received one gold and two silver medals in the largest international water tasting competition held: the Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, International Water Tasting and Competition.

In 1998, the district sponsored state legislation to ensure protection of its award winning groundwater. The legislation amended Section 13281 of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act (the California Water Code), granting special protection to the Mission Creek and Desert Hot Springs Aquifers—the sources of the cities drinking water and world-renowned mineral water. The district has continued to support other legislation that protects water resources throughout California.

The district has also been a good corporate citizen. In 1999, the district created the Mission Springs Foundation, a 501(c)(3) dedicated to educating the community about water and human impact on water quality. It was instrumental in the formation of the Desert Hot Springs Groundwater Guardian Team in 1995. The Groundwater Guardian is committed to working in the community with the mission of "teaching the community to care for and about groundwater." In 2000, under the leadership of district and the Groundwater Guardian Team, the newly constructed Desert Hot Springs High School became the first Groundwater Guardian Campus in the Nation.

In 1995, the district sponsored the First Big Blood Drive on behalf of the Desert Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce and the Coachella Valley Blood Bank. The drive set records for net pints donated in a single day drive in subsequent years.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that in its 50 years of existence, the Mission Springs Water District has not only provided the highest quality water in the nation to its customers, but has also served as an inspiration source of community pride for those who live in its service boundaries. Please join me in congratulating the board and employees, and wishing them well for the future.

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#### RECOGNIZING VIRGINIA RUE, AS- SISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF THE NAPA VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT AT THE TIME OF HER RETIREMENT

### HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, February 13, 2003*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Virginia Rue, who is retiring after working for 27 years in the field of education. During the past nine years, Mrs. Rue has served as the Assistant Superintendent of the Napa Valley Unified School District.

Mrs. Rue has been dedicated to education throughout her life. Part of a new generation of women who refused to be denied a university education, she enrolled at Old Dominion