

the Attorney General to assign a National Amber Alert Coordinator. The Coordinator will establish minimum standards for the issuance of AMBER Alerts, including the extent of dissemination of alerts. The minimum standards will require vital information relating to the special needs of the child, including the child's health care needs, to be provided to the appropriate law enforcement and public health officials. Also, the dissemination of the AMBER Alert will be limited to the geographic area most likely to facilitate the recovery of the abducted child.

H.R. 1104 also requires the Secretary of Transportation to provide grants to states for the development or improvement of AMBER Alert communication or notification systems along America's highways. It requires the Attorney General to provide grants to States for the development or enhancement of programs and activities for support of the AMBER Alert communications plans.

I wholeheartedly support all of the AMBER Alert provisions of H.R. 1104. These provisions improve the AMBER Alert system and help to reduce the likelihood that children who are kidnapped will also be physically abused, sexually abused, or murdered. These provisions also improve the chances that abducted children will be returned to their families.

I have reservations about supporting H.R. 1104 because it is not a clean AMBER Alert bill. I believe that the Amendments to the bill dealing with prison sentence guidelines, pre-trial release, and law enforcement investigation powers should be dealt with in separate legislation.

More importantly, the extraneous provisions will delay the ultimate passage of the AMBER Alert Bill. Every day that goes by without a national AMBER Alert system in place puts the lives of children at risk. According to an October 2002 U.S. Department of Justice Report titled the National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children (NISMA Report), 12,222 children were the victims of traditional kidnappings in the year 1999 alone. That amounts to approximately 33 children kidnapped nationwide per day.

While the members of the House debate extraneous amendments, hundreds of children are being kidnapped and murdered. As the Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I strongly believe that the best way to save children's lives is to vote in support of H.R. 1104, even if I do so reluctantly.

That is why, Mr. Chairman, I reluctantly vote in favor of H.R. 1104.

HONORING PAUL BETANCOURT

HON. CALVIN M. DOOLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2003

Mr. DOOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Paul Betancourt, who is being honored as the outgoing president of the Fresno County Farm Bureau, FCFB. Paul Betancourt has spent more than a decade serving my district through his activities with the Fresno County Farm Bureau, which represents over 6,000 members, produces more than 300 crops and grosses more than \$3.2 billion annually. Paul Betancourt has set an example

through his dedicated commitment to our community.

Since completing his 2-year role as president of the FCFB, Mr. Betancourt continues to serve on the FCFB Executive Committee and he was recently appointed to serve as the Industry Representative on the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District's Citizens Advisory Committee. Before serving as FCFB President, Betancourt also served as the FCFB secretary-treasurer and second and first vice presidents.

In addition to all of his work with the FCFB, Mr. Betancourt has served in a number of various community activities. Through his Farm Bureau activities, Mr. Betancourt served on the board of directors of the Fresno Chamber of Commerce, and represented FCFB at many industry and community forums and events. Mr. Betancourt currently serves on the Kerman Unified School Board of Trustees, and is involved in the Fresno Area Collaborative Regional Initiative. Additionally, Mr. Betancourt is a noted columnist for a local business publication and he teaches Sunday school at the Kerman Covenant Church.

Mr. Betancourt currently farms more than 750 acres of cotton and almonds in Fresno County, where he has also grown crops such as tomatoes, sugar beets, cantaloupes, barley, and cattle. Paul Betancourt's intimate knowledge of farming issues and his dedicated commitment to farmers and Fresno County residents as a whole should serve as an example of leadership and dedication in the Central Valley of California.

Mr. Betancourt has contributed to the improvement of the community through his work in and out of the Fresno County Farm Bureau. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in congratulating Paul Betancourt on his retirement as president of the Fresno County Farm Bureau.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. HARRY B. NISSLEY

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2003

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Harry B. Nissley, a local hero in my community who has dedicated over 50 years of his life to educating and inspiring our students.

Mr. Nissley worked as a tennis coach for the El Monte Union High School District from 1946 until his retirement in 2001. Over the course of his career, he has received numerous honors, including the San Gabriel Valley Administration Association's Service Award and the California Interscholastic Federation Award. But most enduring is the imprint he has left on the lives of hundreds of students, athletes and peers. Mr. Nissley's enthusiasm, caring and dedication is exemplary of a great educator.

Mr. Nissley went above and beyond the call of duty to make sure that students were given every opportunity to excel. Every spring, he hosted the Keeley Tennis tournament to help pay for student competition entry fees and often used his own money to help those students with financial hardships. Mr. Nissley's enthusiasm was only surpassed by his desire

to enhance each student's life. He strived to instill in his students a strong and positive sense of self worth.

Earlier this year, a former student and professional tennis player, honored Mr. Nissley by organizing an event commemorating his contributions. During the event, numerous former students and athletes praised him with kind words and fond memories.

Mr. Nissley is now 90 years old. At the request of his students, colleagues, friends and family who wanted to recognize his numerous contributions, the community of El Monte recently nominated him for induction into the California Interscholastic Federation Hall of Fame. Not only is the number of years he taught at the El Monte Union School District already a state record, but his commitment and selflessness is immeasurable.

I would also like to join the community of El Monte in showing my appreciation for Mr. Nissley by asking Congress to recognize his vast contributions to our youth, and outstanding dedication to service.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ST. CROIX NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA STUDY ACT

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2003

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to direct the Secretary of Interior to conduct a study of the suitability and feasibility of establishing the St. Croix National Heritage Area.

According to the National Park Service, National Heritage Areas are places that are federally designated to preserve an important aspect of America's past and share it with visitors. They are generally started at the grassroots by community members who envision places where the best of the past becomes part of a sustainable future.

National Heritage Areas are not living theme parks seeking to freeze places in time. They seek instead to conserve their special natural spaces and historic places as part of their communities' social and economic futures. The successful melding of past and future is the National Heritage Area challenge.

The unique natural, historic and cultural resources of the island of St. Croix represent distinctive aspects of American heritage that are in my view, worthy of recognition and provide outstanding opportunities for recreational and educational opportunities.

In introducing this bill I hope to utilize our spectacular natural and historic resources to spur economic development on my home island which badly needs it. As Interior Secretary Gail Norton noted during her visit to St. Croix: "We certainly want to protect the wonderful environment here and to match that great environment with a thriving economy. Heritage tourism might be one option for St. Croix".

Mr. Speaker, there are currently 23 existing national heritage areas across 17 states. As the Ranking Democrat on the House National Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee, I can confirm that heritage areas are just one of a growing number of collaborative, community-based conservation strategies that have developed in recent years to identify, preserve, and interpret resources.