

of America. She served a 4-year term as the General Secretary of the Cyprus Federation of America, an umbrella organization representing Greek Cypriot associations and brotherhoods throughout the United States.

In addition, Ms. Christodoulou, who has a 14-year-old son, was President of the Parent-Teacher Association of the Greek Afternoon School of St. Demetrios and is currently serving on the School Board of the St. Demetrios Greek American School.

In recognition of these outstanding achievements, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Ms. Christodoulou and the Pancyprian Association's Women's Issues Network, for their passion and commitment to the betterment of the Astoria community.

TRIBUTE TO THE PLEASANTON
RAGE UNDER-12 GIRLS SOCCER
TEAM

HON. RICHARD W. POMBO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2003

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of a very talented group of young women in California's 11th District. The Pleasanton Rage Soccer Team has won the 2003 Under 12 Girls Cal-North Snickers State Cup Championship and will now advance to the Far West Regional Championship in Hawaii this June.

On the afternoon of Sunday March 2, 2003, the Rage beat the Bay Oak Bombers of Alameda 2 to 1 in the final game of the championship at Lucchesi Field in Petaluma, California.

This is the first time in 13 years that an Under-12 girl's soccer team from Pleasanton has won this title of State Cup Champions.

The team of 16 girls has been working extremely hard—training three days a week since last July and attending tournaments to prepare them for this prestigious title. In January, the team played their first round of games for the State Cup Tournament in Morgan Hill, California. They played against teams from a pool of 51 in their age group from clubs in the Cal North district which stretches as far south as Bakersfield and all the way to the Oregon border in the north. Through their first six games in the State Cup Tournament, they shut out every opponent. They entered the finals with an amazing record of 17 goals for and 0 goals against.

Impressively the only goal they gave up came in the first minutes of the Championship game on a penalty shot. After adjusting to the artificial grass surface, the Rage came back to seal the win with 2 consecutive goals for the biggest win of their lives.

Each player was given a 1st place medal and the team was awarded a large trophy for their accomplishment. Parents were on hand to give out Hawaiian leis while many fans with blue and white hair and face paint were there to show their support of this amazing young Rage team. The Pleasanton Rage Girls U-12 team is currently ranked #1 in the State and #12 in the Nation.

They have earned the right to represent California in the Far West Regional in Hawaii from June 23–June 28th, 2003. In the week

long tournament they will compete against teams from Hawaii, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Wyoming, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, and Colorado.

The Championship Rage players are Michelle Avendano, Krista Bormann, Sammy Cloutier, Marisa Fraticelli, Tanya Hanson, Stacey Hildebrand, Claire Kennedy, Olivia Klei, Ashley Loughmiller, Amanda Luxford, Ashlyn Mazur, Rachael McGlinchy, Sophie Metz, Carlee Payne, Katie Voss, and Kim Zetterlund. They are coached by Gary Oetman and Paul Ratcliffe and trained by Phillippe Blin.

The team is to be congratulated for their remarkable performance and provided with the best wishes of everyone in California's 11th District as they continue to compete at the national level.

24TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
TAIWAN RELATIONS ACT

HON. TOM DeLAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2003

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, on April 10, 1979, the Taiwan Relations Act became law, and the United States affirmed its friendship with the people of Taiwan.

That friendship remains a cornerstone of America's vision for a free, secure, and prosperous Asia at peace with itself and the community of nations.

The TRA requires the United States to provide Taiwan sufficient arms to defend herself and demands a peaceful resolution to its dispute with Beijing.

Under the TRA, the Taiwanese are assured the United States will not allow bullying or blackmail across the Taiwan Strait.

Today, its 24th anniversary, this historic legislation is even more relevant than at its enactment.

Though Taiwan is one of America's largest trading partners, our friendship is much deeper than an economic partnership. Our two nations are bound by common values of self-determination, freedom, and economic opportunity.

We are also bound by a common resistance to the efforts of any regime to repress man's God-given human rights.

"The price of liberty is eternal vigilance," Thomas Jefferson said.

Free men and women in Taiwan, whose neighbors on the mainland suffer under the boot-heel of Communist tyranny, have no choice but to live that sentiment every day.

Taiwan is a free nation, and must remain so. Her open and tolerant society should be seen by Beijing not as a threat, but a model for progress.

I have traveled to Taiwan several times. Anyone who has can tell you it is home to a vibrant, modern nation of free and prosperous people, grateful for America's friendship.

It is now our responsibility to ensure that friendship grows even stronger. Our responsibility in such times is no less than to ensure the security of free men everywhere in the world.

The House of Representatives understands this responsibility, and has affirmed its support for Taiwan numerous times since TRA, including in its overwhelming passage of the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act in February, 2000.

So, too, does the President. He has made it clear the United States will do whatever it takes to defend Taiwan. His Administration has provided Taiwan with essential weapons systems and continues to expand our economic partnership. The House will continue to work with the Administration to ensure Taiwan's security.

For 24 years, the United States has cultivated a relationship with Taiwan, whose roots run to the core of our shared love of liberty. Against the harsh winds of despotism, that relationship has bloomed, and through the eternal vigilance of our two nations, billions will one day enjoy its fruit.

HONORING FORMER PRISONERS-
OF-WAR

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2003

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues in recognizing National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day.

As others have said, America's former POWs are national heroes. Their service to our country placed them in dangerous situations and led to their capture and imprisonment.

Many suffered brutally at the hands of their captives. Many died.

During this time of hostilities in Iraq, we particularly remember the service members held prisoners there and ask for their humane treatment as we seek their immediate release. We also ask for an accounting of all the missing.

We take great pride in the successful rescue of Pfc. Jessica Lynch. We hope for her swift recovery.

Mr. Speaker, we shall never forget the tens of thousands of Americans who endured the hardship of enemy confinement—individuals like Bob Brigham of Torrance, California.

An Army private during World War II, Mr. Brigham was captured by the Nazis July 27, 1944 at St. Lo, France.

Nine months to the day, he was liberated from the camp at Memmingen, Germany, but not after hard labor digging air raid shelters under the camps railroad tracks.

Brian Ward of San Pedro was captured by the North Vietnamese when his F-4 bomber was shot down 2 days after Christmas 1972 while on a combat mission northeast of Hanoi.

Both he and his pilot suffered broken arms and back injuries as a result of their ejection. They were immediately captured, stripped of everything but their underwear, and transported to the "Hanoi Hilton". Two weeks later, they were transferred to a prison known as the "Zoo" a few miles southeast of Hanoi.

Mr. Ward was returned to the United States on March 29, 1973 as the next-to-last prisoner released from Hanoi.

There are other former POWs among the residents of my District. I salute them all. Their physical and emotional scars remain a reminder of the high price of liberty.

Mr. Speaker, I also join my colleagues in remembering those whose fate in time of war remains unknown.

While patriotic ceremonies and speeches will commemorate this day, for the families of the missing, the war is never over. Their loved

ones are still unaccounted for. Their hearts have a very big hole that will never be filled.

The POW/MIA flag is posted in my federal offices and on the wall behind my desk. I am proud of the role I played in authoring legislation to require that flag to be flown at federal facilities on patriotic holidays.

POW families will not forget their loved ones. Nor will this Nation. Wherever it takes us, for as long as it takes us, we will work to bring them home.

REMEMBERING OUR FORMER
PRISONERS OF WAR

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2003

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here tonight to commemorate "National Former Prisoners of War Recognition Day."

Sacrifice. It's a word we all know. All of us have made some sacrifices in our lives. We make sacrifices for our family, for our close friends, even for our neighbors and coworkers.

Anyone who has ever served or is serving in our Armed Forces knows that military life requires many sacrifices. Over one million Americans have given their lives, the ultimate sacrifice, while serving in our nation's Armed Forces.

Throughout history, the brave men and women of our Armed Forces have risked their lives. They have done so not merely for family or coworkers, but for a cause represented by the American flag—the freedom to choose and the liberty to succeed.

But no one knows the meaning of sacrifice better than America's former prisoners of war. All those who have been POWs know the true meaning of freedom. They have paid a tremendous price for the liberty we all cherish. Their service and sacrifice, and that of their fellow veterans, make our way of life possible.

Throughout the history of the United States, more than 500,000 Americans have been taken prisoner. Each of these courageous men and women has experienced horrors unimaginable in the annals of civilized existence. Most have endured long-term deprivation of freedom and the loss of human dignity. Today, many continue to experience prolonged battles with various illnesses and other disabilities.

There are no words to adequately describe the sacrifices made by our former POWs. Humble words can never repay the debt we owe these brave men and women. However, special days like today provide us with the opportunity to reflect upon the terror that these great Americans endured in service to their country.

While we can never fully comprehend the suffering they experienced, we must respect their unwavering dedication to life. Without question, American POWs have demonstrated an unflinching devotion to duty, honor and country.

Their service helped preserve our freedom through two world wars and regional conflicts of the cold war era. Our former prisoners of war have given more than most Americans will be called upon to give for their country.

As we honor our former POWs tonight, we are reminded of our current prisoners of war being held in Iraq. We pray for their safe return and are working to secure their freedom.

"Former Prisoners of War Recognition Day" serves as a poignant reminder of the sacrifice and commitment of all the American men and women whose patriotism has been tested by the chains of enemy captivity.

Their experiences underscore our debt to those who place their lives in harm's way and stand willing to trade their liberty for ours. As a nation, we must always remember the sacrifices made by our men and women in uniform.

SENSE OF HOUSE REGARDING
SYSTEMATIC HUMAN RIGHTS
VIOLATIONS IN CUBA COM-
MITTED BY CASTRO REGIME

SPEECH OF

HON. PETER DEUTSCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 8, 2003

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Resolution condemning the arrest of Cuban political dissidents.

As the United States and the world's attention is focused on Iraq, Fidel Castro and his regime in Cuba have abruptly ended a perceived period of leniency and burgeoning democracy, by undertaking one of the harshest crackdowns against internal dissent. If the Castro regime believes that the arrest and conviction of 80 political dissidents in "kangaroo courts" for daring to advocate free speech and other rights for the people of Cuba will be ignored by the United States, Castro is greatly mistaken. My colleagues and I in the U.S. Congress have spoken in a unified voice condemning the unwarranted arrests of Cuban dissidents, and we will continue to aid Cuban people in gaining the basic human rights.

One individual to be tried in the "summary trials" which bear little semblance of justice is Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, a physician who has first-hand knowledge of Cuban prisons for his activism on behalf of human rights. In February 2000, he was imprisoned and tortured for hanging the Cuban flag upside down, an undeniable act of non-violent civil disobedience. Dr. Biscet's freedom in October 2002 was short-lived and within months, this supporter of Dr. King's and Thoreau's peaceful methods of political change, has again been arrested for political dissidence and now faces life imprisonment under the draconian "Law 91."

Sharing in Dr. Biscet's good intentions, and sadly his fate of imprisonment, is Raul Ramon Rivero, an independent journalist and leader of the Cuban newspaper service. He is another nonviolent activist who was arrested on preposterous charges and sentenced to 20 years in prison for the simple possession of a Sony tape recorder and a Samsung computer, universal tools for most reporters. As numerous members of the Cuba Society of Independent Journalists like Rivero have been arrested and imprisoned, information emanated to the Cuban people has been severely limited.

Marta Beatriz Roque, a Cuban economist, also faces 20 years in prison for political dissent. The Castro regime arrested Ms. Roque, and other economists like her, for speaking the truth about the failings of the Cuban com-

munist economy. As was true with the historically similar failing Soviet economy, Castro's silencing of all economic criticism will not prevent the Cuban people from knowing the reality of their impoverished economic situation.

Castro's arrest of these and other political dissidents, many of whom signed the "Joint Statement" highlighting the regime's failures, is a Stalinist tactic aimed at stifling popular unrest. This joint statement, published on March 9, 2003, reiterated the well-known facts that the regime refuses to "respect the internationally recognized human rights or accept the existence of legitimate political opposition." Castro's harsh tactics will only stall the inevitable, the establishment of a free and democratic Cuba. The people of Cuba are impoverished and oppressed, and they are no longer swayed by Castro's empty rhetoric of helping "the people."

Dr. Biscet's, Rivero's, and Roque's passion for democracy and human rights for the people of Cuba is both inspiring and contagious, and this is what Castro fears most. The tides are turning against the Castro regime. His recent assaults on his own people epitomize Castro's true nature, his inability to ever be anything other than a fear-driven, totalitarian despot. These arrests and amplified oppression stress his anxiety and his desperate attempts to maintain power. Only the strong and the courageous can affect change, and we in the United States will continue to stand with those who strive to bring freedom to Cuba.

HONORING THE DILLARD HIGH
SCHOOL BOYS, SOUTH BROWARD
HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS, AND DEER-
FIELD BEACH HIGH SCHOOL
GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAMS ON
THE OCCASION OF WINNING
THEIR RESPECTIVE FLORIDA
STATE BASKETBALL CHAMPION-
SHIPS

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2003

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to give national recognition to three phenomenal high school basketball programs in my district. The Dillard High School Boys and South Broward High School Girls Basketball Teams have accomplished what many would consider a miraculous feat: each school has won four consecutive Florida state basketball championships. The Deerfield Beach High School Girls Basketball Team is also to be honored for winning Florida's 2003 Class 6A Championship, the largest division in Florida high school sports.

We often associate good coaching with star athletes and great strategy. However, Darryl Burrows and Abby Ward, Dillard and South Broward High Schools' respective coaches, have shown much more than an ability to outwit the competition. Their teams have continually dominated the competition, and each team is considered one of the best in the country.

Additionally, Everett Jackson, Deerfield Beach High's coach, lead a team that overcame many obstacles in route to one of Florida's most prestigious high school championships. He and his players too are to be commended for a job well done.