

Cyprus's accession to the EU is a historic achievement. As an EU member, Cyprus will represent European values and policies and, at the same time, will work toward even stronger transatlantic ties with the United States. This has been a long time in coming, and I believe that Cyprus will have much to contribute to the EU.

However, the commemoration of Cyprus' Independence Day this year, as in the past, is clouded by the fact that the Mediterranean island nation's territory continues to be illegally occupied by the Turkish military forces, in violation of UN Security Council resolutions. Unfortunately, the proposed UN reunification plan did not provide for a functional or durable solution to the island's division. Seventy-six percent of Greek Cypriot voters opposed it, citing concerns about security, property restitution, and the structure of the proposed government.

Cyprus and the United States have a great deal in common. We share a deep and abiding commitment to democracy, human rights, free markets, and the ideal and practice of equal justice under the law.

In fact, Cyprus was among the first nations to express its solidarity with the U.S. immediately following the September 11th terrorist attacks. Cyprus has taken many concrete and active steps to target the perpetrators, collaborators and financiers of terrorism. For example, Cyprus has endorsed and implemented all resolutions and decisions of the U.N. Security Council, the EU and other International Organizations pertaining to the fight against terrorism.

Unfortunately, Cyprus is not without its own difficult history. 37 percent of this nation is still occupied by a hostile foreign power, and it has been for 30 years. On July 20, 1974, Turkey invaded Cyprus, and to this day continues to maintain an estimated 35,000 heavily armed troops. Nearly 200,000 Greek Cypriots, who fell victim to a policy of ethnic cleansing, were forcibly evicted from their homes and became refugees in their own country.

Despite the hardships and trauma caused by the ongoing Turkish occupation, Cyprus has registered remarkable economic growth, and the people living in the Government-controlled areas enjoy one of the world's highest standards of living. Sadly, the people living in the occupied area continue to be mired in poverty.

Last year, the Turkish occupation regime partially lifted restrictions on freedom of movement across the artificial line of division created by Turkey's military occupation. Hundreds of thousands of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots have crossed the UN ceasefire line to visit their homes and properties or areas of their own country that were inaccessible to them for nearly 30 years. The peaceful and cooperative spirit in the person-to-person, family-to-family interactions between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots bodes well for the successful reunification of Cyprus.

In the times we are facing, it is clear that divisions among people create harmful, destructive environments. We must find a peaceful solution to the Cyprus problem. The relationship between Cyprus and the United States is strong and enduring, and we stand together celebrating democracy and freedom.

RECOGNIZING ALAN J. SKOBIN

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 5, 2004

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a very special man, Alan J. Skobin, who has a record of community and civic service that spans more than thirty years. His tireless efforts have made a significant, positive impact on the community and he will be honored on October 9, 2004 with the coveted "Twice A Citizen" Award from the Los Angeles Police Reserve Foundation for his extraordinary volunteer work.

Commissioner Skobin has served as a Reserve Deputy Sheriff with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department for more than twenty years, reaching the rank of Reserve Commander. His experience includes patrol and detective work as well as administration. He has also served on the Department's Valor Awards Evaluation Committee, and has received the coveted Distinguished Service Award from the Sheriff's Department for his overall service. Prior to joining the Sheriff's Department, he served as a Reserve Police Officer with the San Fernando Police Department for eight years, attaining the rank of Sergeant. He is also a graduate of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Citizens Academy.

Commissioner Skobin has also been recognized by a number of private organizations, including the California Peace Officers Association and Baseballers Against Drugs, which honored him with their Positive Image Award.

Alan J. Skobin was appointed to the Board of Police Commissioners by Mayor James K. Hahn in July of 2003, and was immediately elected Vice President. He previously served as Vice President of the Los Angeles City Board of Transportation Commissioners.

Commissioner Skobin is also a member of the State of California New Motor Vehicle Board, where he has served as Board President, chair of the Policy and Procedures Committee and a member of the Administration Committee. He previously served as a Commissioner on the Los Angeles County Institutional Inspections Commission. He is a founding director and member of the Executive Committee of the Sheriff's Youth Foundation of Los Angeles County, which funds education and intervention programs for thousands of at-risk youth each year, and has served as chair of the Youth Foundation's annual Salute to Youth Dinner. Commissioner Skobin is also on the Board of Directors, and is Website and Technology Chair, of the Los Angeles Business Council. He is a past member of the International Board of Trustees of Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY), an international leadership development program for high school students, the Western Region Advisory Committee to the United States Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs Office, the Los Angeles Junior Chamber of Commerce, which recognized his leadership and service as Chair of the Justice and Protective Agencies Committee, and the Mid-Valley Community Police Council, where he served as President. A cancer and brain tumor survivor himself, Commissioner Skobin and his family are active with Padres Contra El Cancer, a nonprofit organization that improves the quality of life for children with cancer and their families.

Commissioner Skobin is a member of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association, the Los Angeles County Bar Association, the American Bar Association, the American Corporate Counsel Association, and is admitted to practice law in both state and Federal courts. Commissioner Skobin has also served as a member of the Judicial Election Evaluations Committee of the Los Angeles County Bar Association, and was an extern in the United States Federal District Court. Commissioner Skobin is Vice President and General Counsel of Galpin Motors, Inc., and has been in management with the Galpin organization since 1977. He has direct responsibility for, or is integrally involved with, a number of significant functions, including legal, information technology, risk management and insurance, real estate, investments and human resources.

Commissioner Skobin and his wife, Romi, are longtime San Fernando Valley residents. They, along with their two children, Jeff and Jennifer, have made community and civic endeavors an integral part of their lifestyle.

Because he exemplifies all that is right with our nation's grassroots volunteer efforts, I am pleased to have the opportunity to recognize Alan J. Skobin as a dedicated, compassionate and committed American.

CLEMENT J. ZABLOCKI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IS DESIGNATED AS A 2004 BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 5, 2004

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I acknowledge the outstanding achievements of the children, parents, teachers and principal at the Clement J. Zablocki Elementary School. The designation of a 2004 No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Award honors only those schools that have successfully achieved excellence in academics and have closed the achievement gap in academic proficiency for all of their students.

The designation of the Clement J. Zablocki Elementary School is particularly meaningful to me because it is named for the former Congressman Clement J. Zablocki who was my predecessor in the United States Congress, and an effective and beloved Representative who served the citizens of Milwaukee's south side for many years.

It is evident that the principles of accountability, focusing on what works, increased flexibility, reduction of bureaucracy and the empowerment of parents, has been successfully integrated into the daily philosophy of the Zablocki Elementary School.

Under the outstanding leadership of Dr. Patricia Waldia this school has not only achieved academic excellence for the students, but has initiated innovative and creative ways of having the children of Zablocki Elementary School involved with community organizations, agencies and businesses that have enriched their lives and broadened their view of the community and world. Dr. Waldia has successfully established bonds between her staff, parents and the community that support all of the goals of the school.

The Clement J. Zablocki Elementary School is only the 5th elementary school in the Milwaukee Public Schools system to be designated as a Blue Ribbon school since 1982.