

number of college-bound Hispanic students; a Native American counselor and out-reach program were initiated; at-risk student classes and support systems were added and increased; special education student programs were enhanced; gang forum, drug and alcohol prevention programs were instigated; and monies needed to keep athletic, fine arts and performing arts were raised.

Dr. Gary also encouraged programs to support gender equity, as well as ethnic and cultural diversity. And he encouraged professional development and personal creativity among staff members, maintaining the highest standards for the faculty, students and himself.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, Dr. Gary gained the admiration and respect of all and represents everything that is positive in our public education system. For these reasons and countless others, it is most appropriate that we honor his commitment and service to perhaps our nation's most important resource—educating our youth.

TOGO ELECTION STATEMENT

HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 25, 2005

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am Congresswoman CORRINE BROWN, and have served in the House of Representatives over twelve years. I have observed and monitored elections in areas as diverse as Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean, and Haiti in particular. In years past, I have traveled to Africa and other parts of the world to monitor living conditions and the status of human rights.

From what I saw, although there was some tension in Lome before and during the election, I witnessed more than anything thousands of calm voters who patiently waited in long lines to vote for the candidate of their choice. Overall, the Togolese seemed very pleased that an American, particularly a Member of Congress, was present during the election.

The election problems I encountered on Election Day were similar to voting problems in the United States. These problems consisted of the following: Very long voting lines, polls not opening on time, electricity (where it existed) going out briefly, and some voters' names not being on the voting rolls (by the way, I found it interesting that the international monitors in Togo told me they would not mention that I was from Florida). I stayed at the polls through the evening when the voting boxes from Lome's polling sites were brought to City Hall for a public count. Many of Togo's citizens, together with international observers and dignitaries, were present for the count which lasted into the night. Although our team stayed in Lome, there were observers stationed throughout the country.

By the next day, the Economic Coalition of West African States (ECOWAS) declared that the election, although not perfect, was generally peaceful and successful. ECOWAS accepted the announced vote tally of 60 percent of the vote for Gnassingbe Essozimana Faure, declaring him the newly elected President of Togo. In addition to meetings and briefings with ECOWAS leaders, I also met with and

worked closely with hundreds of other international Independent Election Monitors.

To me, Togo's Presidential Election of 2005 was an exceptional election because of the unexpected death of Togo's President, who had been in power for thirty-five years. Under his rule, Togo developed a Constitution and a Parliamentary government with a Prime Minister. And, according to the Togolese Constitution, within 60 days of the death of a President, there must be a Presidential election, and Africa's Coalition of Economic Countries (ECOWAS) set the election date for April 24th 2005.

Indeed, Togo's recent Presidential Election was important, not just for Togo, but for all of Africa and for the world. Clearly, each African election is newsworthy as another step towards democratization. I believe that a free, fair and democratic election in Togo was also particularly important, so that post election Togo does not descend into chaos, and destabilize the neighboring African countries with refugees.

Lastly, as a sign of ongoing progress, the elected government and the opposition groups are meeting in Abuja, Nigeria's capitol, to discuss the distribution of power within the new government. Attending the meeting will be the African Union's chairman, Nigeria's President Obasanjo, and Niger's President Tandja, who is currently presiding over ECOWAS. Also in attendance are Faure Gnassingbe, Togo's elected President, representatives of Togo's opposition coalition, led by exiled leader Gilchrist Olympio, defeated presidential candidate Emmanuel Akitani Bob and Harry Olympio, an independent candidate, as well as the leaders of Gabon, Burkina Faso, and the UN Secretary General's representative, Ould Abdallah.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 25, 2005

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 210, I was detained in my office. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

REMARKS REGARDING TRANSPORTATION OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

HON. SPENCER BACHUS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 25, 2005

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to meet with the senior operating officials of nearly all of the Nation's freight railroads, large and small. What I heard from them, each of them, was their continued commitment to the safe and secure transportation of all goods tendered to them in interstate commerce.

I also heard their concern about being caught in the middle of a political crossfire over the issue of transporting certain hazardous materials through major cities located along their rail lines. They find themselves in this untenable position because of a legal

duty. The common carrier obligation requires them to accept all legal goods for transport. Despite this legal duty and with no regard for the vital role some of these commodities play in protecting the public health and welfare, there are communities like the District of Columbia that are using every resource at their disposal to prevent railroads from going through their towns with these goods; in particular, hazardous materials.

Railroads clearly are the safest means of transporting hazardous materials, with a 99.996 percent safety record. These materials include chlorine to clean your water and propane to heat your homes. The transportation of the most hazardous chemicals represent three-tenths of one percent of the railroads' annual revenue, but well over 50 percent of their insurance premiums. But the railroads are not allowed to get out of the business. And if they did, the transportation of these goods would be much less safe.

That is why I urge my colleagues to oppose local initiatives such as those enacted by the District of Columbia and now being contemplated by other cities, like Cleveland, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Baltimore and Atlanta, in trying to prohibit the routing of these goods through their cities. The Constitution vests the Federal Government with the responsibility for regulating interstate commerce (Article I, Section 8). Through (among others) the Federal Railroad Safety Act, the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, and ICCTA, Congress has given Federal agencies the responsibility to oversee the transportation of hazardous materials in interstate commerce. Further, in the case of DC, the Department of Homeland Security is actively analyzing rail security matters, particularly hazmat transportation (e.g., through the DC Rail Corridor Project's vulnerability assessment, and an analysis of security of hazmats that pose a toxic inhalation hazard).

What the DC Council has done, and what other cities are threatening to do, not only usurps the responsibilities and actions of the Federal Government, but also actually increases the risks of hazmat transportation, by increasing transit time and distance due to rerouting, and by shifting the risk involved with hazmat transport to other areas of the country. Rerouting trains carrying hazardous materials will cause delays, idling of hazmat containers, and switching of containers to other trains. Each handling of hazmat containers raises the risk level. In sum, the re-routing potentially threatens national security, disrupts interstate commerce, and jeopardizes public health.

We should be constantly vigilant about our national security. Thus, we cannot let the misguided efforts of myopic municipalities compromise our Nation's health, economy, safety and security through punitive and ill-advised legislation, such as that passed by the District of Columbia.

TRIBUTE TO W. CALVERT "CAL" BRAND

HON. MIKE PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 25, 2005

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, the State of Indiana lost a pillar of the community last week.