

she sees in society. I have known her for many years, and, I can speak from first-hand experience about the positive impact she has had on our community and on the lives of countless young people. She says what she thinks, she stands up for what she believes in, and she works hard to achieve her goals. She is a person of intelligence, determination and accomplishment.

Some of Ms. Ayers' experiences and deeds were recently chronicled by South Florida's preeminent political reporter, Michael Putney, in an article that ran in the Miami Herald on June 1, 2005. I want to share this article with my colleagues, so they can get a sense of this remarkable woman's character.

[From the Miami Herald, June 1, 2005]

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST, INJUSTICE IS A GREAT
MOTIVATOR

(By Michael Putney)

Community activist Georgia Jones Ayers carries more than memories of racism in Miami; she carries the proof. She keeps it in her purse as a constant reminder. It's a yellowed, well-worn abstract of title to her grandmother's home in "Railroad Chops (sic), Colored Addition." That's the home where Ayers, now 76, was born and raised. And which her grandmother, Eliza Pierce, lost to the city of Miami, in a racist land grab and for \$3.29 in unpaid taxes. The tax sale is dated Aug. 29, 1924.

"It's because of this," she says, brandishing the legal document like a dark talisman, "that I am who I am and do what I do."

For more than half a century, Ayers has worked to right what she considers wrongs done to her community, and by her community. Currently, she runs Alternatives to Incarceration out of the Metro Justice Building where first-time offenders are released to her custody to complete programs that allow them to avoid having a permanent criminal record.

Then there's her Janet Reno New Chance Alternative School, which takes disruptive sixth-to-eighth graders and instills discipline and learning in them. "I don't believe in brutality," Ayers says, "but when I was in school I'd get a spanking for arriving late. These days you tell 'em you're going to tan their backside, and they say they'll call HRS (the predecessor to DCF). But that's what some of 'em need."

Make no mistake, Ayers is tough. And smart. And still angry after all these years about the injustice done to her grandmother.

She says that her grandfather, Charles Pierce, went in 1923 to pay the overdue property taxes with \$100 he had saved from his job with Henry Flagler's railroad. But he was never seen again—probably murdered for the money.

"My grandmother would have paid those taxes if she'd been able to read," Ayers told me. "But she was illiterate and couldn't read the notices. So she lost her home for a few dollars." It was on land in Allapattah between 46th and 50th streets and 12th and 14th avenues that had been set aside for black railroad workers. But Ayers says whites eventually wanted the land and found ways to seize it. First, through foreclosure because of unpaid taxes.

"And then on Aug. 1, 1947 at 11 a.m. the police came in and evicted 35 families, including mine, because they wanted the land for an all-white school."

That was Allapattah Elementary. Ayers attended Liberty City Primary, the predecessor to what is now Charles R. Drew Elementary. On the 25th anniversary of the McDuffie riots we stood across from the

school in an empty lot at Northwest 62nd Street and 17th Avenue. One of the many empty lots along Martin Luther King Boulevard since the 1980 riots.

"I knew Arthur McDuffie," she says. "He sold insurance like I did for many years. He was a sweet, gentle man."

On the Saturday in May 1980 when four Metro policemen were acquitted of beating McDuffie to death, Ayers went to the Metro Justice Building with other black leaders to organize a peaceful protest. "We wanted an orderly meeting where people could vent their anger," she recalls.

The anger could not be contained. Injustice is a great motivator. It's what keeps Ayers going with vigor.

She's upset that Haitian immigrants fail to recognize or respect what American blacks went through here before they arrived. She's upset that black kids who struggle to learn standard English are expected to learn Spanish. "I'm not prejudiced against Haitians or Cubans. I just want people to respect our heritage." She says this caressing that abstract of title, which is smooth from touching but still carries a sharp sting.

I generally reject the idea of reparations for slavery. Many generations stand between us and the direct victims, although the shame of slavery endures. But Ayers is still very much alive, and she carries proof of the racism that robbed her family. Twice, in fact. How do we repay her? I'm not sure, but we can begin by simply saying thank you for channeling so much anger into so many good works.

THE CURRENT SITUATION IN HAITI

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 9, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to make note of the distressing developments unfolding in Haiti. The situation in that country is becoming increasingly unstable, with elections scheduled to take place a few months from now. The current state of Haiti does not bode well for a peaceful and legitimized election process.

A June 9th article in the Miami Herald entitled "Senior U.S. official visits unsettled Haiti" points out that the ongoing instability is causing widespread discontentment with the interim government led by Prime Minister Gerard Latortue. The lack of confidence is even being voiced by respected and influential members of Haitian society, such as Ariel Henry, a member of the U.N. sanctioned "Council of Wisemen" which nominated Latortue to head the interim government.

Mr. Henry has gone so far as to call the governmental performance of the country a failure, and has warned that the Council of Elders may call for Latortue's resignation if some semblance of stability is not achieved soon.

It has been over a year since the forced removal of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the nation's democratically elected leader. Without question, conditions in the country are worse since Aristide's removal due to the widespread violence and human-rights violations perpetrated by the lawless elements which overthrew the Aristide government.

Indeed, 700 people have died in less than a year in Haiti. The violence is escalating to such a level that the U.S. State Department's top official for the Americas, Roger Noriega, arranged a last-minute visit this week to assess the situation. Secretary of State Rice herself labeled the developments in Haiti "troubling" on Monday, and called for close examination of the strength of the country's U.N. force.

On the election front, all is not well. The nation's electoral council is stricken by internal strife and wrangling. A campaign to register up to 4.5 million eligible voters has signed up only 113,000 in a month and a half. The only party with wide support among Haiti's impoverished majority is the Lavalas Party of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Still angered by his removal, the party has so far refused to participate in the upcoming election.

All this presents a very troubling picture for Haiti. In the short-term the U.N. force must be increased. In addition, all the stakeholders involved must take a long and hard look at whether the scheduled date for Haitian elections is practical considering the current reality.

[From the Miami Herald, June 9, 2005]

SENIOR U.S. OFFICIAL VISITS UNSETTLED
HAITI

(By Jacqueline Charles and Joe Mozingo)

The U.S. State Department's top man for Latin America and the Caribbean arrived in Haiti on Wednesday to assess a surging wave of violence and increasing demands for the resignation of U.S.-backed Prime Minister Gerard Latortue.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Roger Noriega met with the political head of the U.N. peacekeeping mission and other top officials in Haiti at the start of his two-day visit.

Haiti's violence has turned so worrisome that even the so-called Council of Wisemen—a group of respected Haitians that picked Latortue to head the interim government after the hasty departure of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide last year—has lost confidence in him.

"It's a failure," said Ariel Henry, a neurosurgeon and vice chairman of the seven-member council. "There is no governance." He added that the council will soon issue an ultimatum to Latortue: bring the country under control in 30 days or resign.

What leverage the council has is unclear. But Henry's statement carries political weight.

During the weekend, a meeting of about 20 political parties sponsored by the U.N. mission here came largely to the same conclusion about Latortue, although three major parties say they would not go so far as to call for his resignation.

The Bush administration has pinned its hopes for stability on Latortue's ability to pave the way for elections this fall. But many Haitians doubt the country is ready, given a paroxysm of recent violence in the capital.

The 7,400-strong U.N. peacekeeping mission that began arriving in Haiti after Aristide fled during an armed revolt has not been able to tamp down the kidnappings, carjackings and shootouts that have left hundreds dead in recent months and have kept a ruined economy from recovering.

Washington has stood by Latortue and focused more on the need to strengthen the U.N. peacekeeping force, which has been criticized as too passive. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice this week said the U.N. mission needed to increase its forces or conduct more aggressive operations. She appeared to reject a growing push among the Haitian political class for the return of the U.S. Marines deployed here in the three months after Aristide's departure. She said it was crucial that the Brazilian-led force in Haiti succeed.

"It was a real breakthrough for this hemisphere to have Brazil in the lead and then to have other Western Hemisphere states actually engaged in peacekeeping," Rice said at a news conference Tuesday. "We are devoted to making that mechanism work, and so we are talking with the U.N. about what more needs to be done."

Chantal Regnault contributed from Port-au-Prince.

STEM CELL RESEARCH
ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005**HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 9, 2005

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, over the past couple of weeks, I have heard from all sides of this very impassioned debate regarding the issue of stem cell research. There are many arguments on both sides which resonate with compassionate people, and I have taken a great deal of time and reflection to reach my current position in favor of stem cell research as provided under H.R. 810.

As a Member of Congress, I have been a very consistent supporter of the value of human life in all of its stages. I have had personal experiences with diseases that hold the greatest hope of being treated with the help of research on stem cells including diabetes and Parkinson's disease, and I believe that our respect for human life should compel us to strive to treat diseases which are currently untreatable.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is important to closely consider what is in this bill and what is not in this bill. This bill would allow researchers to apply for federal grant money to perform research on tissue which would otherwise be discarded as medical waste. I have heard some of my colleagues say that they are against the creation of embryos for the purpose of scientific research, and I agree. This bill would not allow research on any lines of stem cells unless they had been created for reproductive purposes and if the people involved grant their consent. I do not believe that this bill would encourage the creation of more embryos because the bill would not allow funding to be used if the donating parties had received any compensation for the donation of tissue for research.

It is important that we recognize that stem cell research is a reality in our time, and what is uncertain are the parameters through which it will be pursued. I would prefer that this type of research is done at home rather than abroad where it can be pursued with the oversight of the United States Congress and where we can be certain of the moral restraint of American values.

When the President issued his guidelines for acceptable research on stem cells in August 2001, he acknowledged that federal funding could be appropriate, provided that it was done so in a moral way. In his judgment, a moral way included research with the informed consent of the donors involving excess embryos created solely for reproductive purposes; and that it was done without any financial inducements to the donors.

I believe that H.R. 810 respects human life in the way that we should by allowing scientists to use human tissue which would otherwise be discarded as medical waste, and I urge my colleagues to support its passage.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL HOME-
OWNERSHIP MONTH AND THE IM-
PORTANCE OF HOMEOWNERSHIP
IN THE UNITED STATES**HON. GARY G. MILLER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 9, 2005

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate homeowner-

ship in America. Recently, the President designated June as National Homeownership Month as he has done for the past three years. To complement this designation, I have introduced a resolution to recognize National Homeownership Month and the importance of homeownership in the United States. This resolution expresses the sense of Congress that the House of Representatives:

- (1) fully supports the goals and ideals of National Homeownership Month; and
- (2) recognizes the importance of homeownership in building strong communities and families.

IMPORTANCE OF HOMEOWNERSHIP IN AMERICA

For generations, the goal of owning a home has been the bedrock of our economy and a fundamental part of the American Dream. Over the last three years, as we have faced the challenges of war and economic uncertainty, the housing and refinancing markets have helped to keep our economy moving. Nationally, housing generates more than 22 percent of the Gross Domestic Product and accounts for nearly 40 cents of every dollar spent. America's housing markets are the envy of the world. We enjoy the lowest interest rates and the highest homeownership rates of any developed nation. In fact, the national homeownership rate in the United States has reached a record high of 69.1 percent and more than half of all minority families are homeowners. Over 73.4 million Americans are now homeowners, with many more achieving this goal on a daily basis.

Homeownership is the single largest creator of wealth for Americans. It is the largest investment most families will ever make and a key to promoting long-term economic stability for all Americans. For these reasons alone, we must continue to promote strong housing and refinancing markets in America.

HOMEOWNERSHIP BUILDS STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Aside from helping millions of Americans achieve their dreams, homeownership also helps to build neighborhoods and strengthen communities.

Families who own homes have a vital stake in their communities, a stronger interest in the safekeeping of their neighborhoods, and a deeper commitment to the quality of their schools and libraries. Each home is a critical piece in a successful neighborhood, allowing families to enjoy community events together and share in the lives of their neighbors and friends. Owning a home also provides children with a place to learn, play, and grow, and gives homeowners a tangible stake in their cities and towns. As millions of American families have demonstrated, increased homeownership helps to build better communities, and better communities help to build a Better America.

CONGRESS'S ROLE IN PROMOTING HOMEOWNERSHIP

As responsible legislators, we need to ensure that government helps, rather than impedes, homeownership in America. When I came to Congress, I made it my top priority to highlight federal policies that have hindered the availability of housing in this country and to find ways for government to positively impact homeownership in America. While we have done much to help Americans become homeowners, we must do more. I firmly believe that Congress must cultivate an environment where more Americans can turn the dream of homeownership into reality.

I URGE MY COLLEAGUES TO SUPPORT HOMEOWNERSHIP
MONTH

I am very pleased to see the President has made it a priority to promote affordable housing and homeownership. The Administration

has taken a leading role in finding new and innovative ways to expand homeownership, particularly among minorities. I want to commend the hard work of Secretary Jackson and his team at HUD for their work in developing programs to increase affordable housing and encourage homeownership. I urge my colleagues to recognize the importance of homeownership in the United States and reinforce our commitment to providing homeownership opportunities for more Americans by cosponsoring this important resolution.

TRIBUTE TO LUIS RODRIGUEZ
MAYORAL**HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 9, 2005

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to pay tribute to baseball legend Luis Rodriguez Mayoral. For his outstanding service to the game of baseball, the National Puerto Rican Day Parade will honor Mr. Mayoral by having him serve as the Puerto Rican Grand Marshall for the world-famous parade June 12, 2005 in New York City.

Mayoral has been involved in baseball for over thirty years as a scout, manager, journalist and author. Throughout his many years of service to the game, he has had a positive and important impact on the sport and many of its players.

Mayoral's resume is long and impressive. He served as a scout for the Pittsburgh Pirates and the Chicago White Sox from 1972 to 1980 and as General Manager for the Arecibo and San Juan Baseball clubs in Puerto Rico from 1983-1985. He has also served as director of Spanish broadcasting for the Texas Rangers and as Latin American Liaison for the Detroit Tigers. In addition to this experience, Mayoral has been an important baseball broadcaster and journalist. He has broadcast over 2,000 baseball games for CBS, including All-Star and World Series games, and served as chief baseball correspondent for Puerto Rico's El Vocero newspaper for 18 years. He also found the time to write five books about baseball including a well received biography of the late, great Roberto Clemente.

As a result of his hard work and dedication, Mayoral has received numerous honors and awards. He has been honored by the Puerto Rican, Mexican and Laredo-Texas Halls of Fame. He was also a guest of President George W. Bush in the White House in 2001 and was named Puerto Rico's Sports Commentator of the Year.

Mr. Speaker, as many of my colleagues already know, I have a deep love and respect for the game of baseball. It is my belief that it is not just a game but an institution that has helped to bridge the gap between generations of Americans. As a lover of the game, I have a deep respect for all those who have had a hand in building and sustaining this uniquely American institution. While the players get all the attention, people like Luis Mayoral play a key role in making the game what it is by finding the players, bringing the joys of the game to the people, and expanding its accessibility. Mayoral's efforts have not only helped to bring new talent to the game but also new insight.

For his many years of service to the game of baseball, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Mr. Luis Rodriguez Mayoral.