

loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.”

We owe gold star mothers and their families a debt that can never be fully repaid. I hope all Americans will take this opportunity to recognize and thank America's Gold Star Mothers.

CONGRATULATING COMMISSIONER
NANCY WHITE

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 29, 2005

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Commissioner Nancy White, who is the recipient of the 2005 Alexander Macomb Woman of the Year Award from the March of Dimes.

Nancy White has dedicated her life to educating and improving her community. After Mrs. White received her Bachelor's degree from Michigan State University and her Master's degree from Wayne State University, she began her 22-year career in the Fraser Public School District. She served as a teacher, counselor, and coach.

In 1992, Mrs. White was elected by the people of Fraser and southern Clinton Township as their representative on the Macomb County Board of Commissioners. Since then, she has dedicated the last seven years to the County Board. Her strong leadership was recognized by her fellow board members and she was elected in January 2005 to serve a two-year term as chair of the Macomb County Board of Commissioners.

Mrs. White is committed to efficient and responsive County government. She lives out this commitment by creating a Strategic Visioning Task Force, a forum for Mayors throughout the County and endeavoring to work on a bipartisan basis. She was the Co-Chair of a County-wide effort to defend the County's military installations in the recent BRAC process. She has traveled to the Middle East on a trade mission with other government and business leaders from Southeastern Michigan.

Mrs. White's excellent leadership skills are not only utilized on the Macomb County Board of Commissioners. She served as chair of the Macomb County Community Mental Health Board and co-chair of the Clinton Township American Red Cross Blood Drive.

In 2002, the community acknowledged Mrs. White's leadership and commitment. She was awarded The Woman of Distinction Award from the Girl Scouts of America for her many outstanding contributions as a mentor and community leader.

Mr. Speaker, I have been honored to work in collaboration with Mrs. White over a number of years and to see first hand her commitment and devotion to improving communities throughout Macomb County. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Commissioner Nancy M. White as she receives this distinguished award.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 29, 2005

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 45th Anniversary of the Republic of Cyprus. It was on October 1, 1960, that Cyprus became an independent republic after decades of British colonial rule.

I am very fortunate and privileged to represent Astoria, Queens—one of the largest and most vibrant communities of Greek and Cypriot Americans in this country. Among my greatest pleasures as a Member of Congress are participating in the life of this community and the wonderful and vital Cypriot friends that I have come to know.

As a full-fledged member of the European Union, Cyprus is playing a vital role in European affairs while also strengthening relations with the United States. On July 25, the United States and the Republic of Cyprus signed a reciprocal Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) Ship Boarding Agreement, which is aimed at preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Cyprus was the first EU member to sign this agreement. Earlier this month Cyprus became a signatory to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Finally, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Cyprus offered both its condolences and assistance to the victims of this horrible disaster.

I am saddened that the commemoration of Cyprus' Independence Day this year, as in the past, is clouded by the fact that Cyprus continues to be illegally occupied by the Turkish military forces, in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. On July 20, 1974, Turkey invaded Cyprus, and to this day continues to maintain an estimated 35,000 heavily armed troops. However, I remain hopeful that an end to this division will be achieved.

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. 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.

I am encouraged that since 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 U.N. 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 relation-

ship between Cyprus and the United States is strong and enduring, and we stand together celebrating democracy and freedom.

THE SOCIAL SECURITY COLA PROTECTION ACT

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 29, 2005

Ms. HERSETH. Mr. Speaker, before I was elected to the House of Representatives, I made a promise to thousands of seniors in South Dakota that, if they would send me to Washington, I would fight for them, stand by them, and make their voice heard. To help keep that promise by protecting the retirement income of nearly 100,000 South Dakotans from rising health care costs, the "Social Security COLA Protection Act" was the first piece of legislation I introduced upon my arrival.

Today, I am reintroducing the "Social Security COLA Protection Act" because the situation facing seniors in South Dakota and around the country is just as dire today as it was a year ago.

For retirees who depend on Social Security benefits to live, the only defense against increasing prices for food, clothing and energy is an annual cost-of-living adjustment, or COLA. However, rising Medicare premiums are diminishing the purchasing power of this yearly increase in benefits.

Over the last 5 years, monthly Medicare Part B premiums have nearly doubled. On September 16th, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services announced that Medicare beneficiaries will pay an additional 13 percent out of their Social Security checks in 2006. This marks the third consecutive rise of more than 10 percent and exceeds the 12 percent increase Medicare's trustees predicted in March. Every dollar that goes toward rising Medicare premiums is one less South Dakota's seniors can use to pay for groceries or utility bills.

We're not wealthy in South Dakota. Retirees in South Dakota clip coupons. They put off buying the things they need. They live modestly because that is what they must do to get by. It is no exaggeration to say that retirees in South Dakota need every penny of their COLA. Not just so they can maintain a basic standard of living—but so they can live with dignity.

My legislation protects retirees by ensuring that no more than 25 percent of their COLA can be absorbed by the increase in Medicare premiums. Next year, it would protect 100,000 South Dakotans who otherwise would see their scarce dollars taken from food, clothing and other essential purchases. For those who depend on Social Security to pay their bills, this legislation will help them save enough to buy new clothes, extra medicine or just a plane ticket to visit the grandchildren.

Last Congress, my legislation had the support of 116 members of the House and of prominent advocacy groups for seniors such as the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, the Alliance for Retired Americans and Families USA. I hope that Congress will take up and pass this legislation quickly, because the need for it is real and immediate.