

Congressional Budget Office estimated would be needed for mothers to afford to work the longer hours and maintain their benefits.

Disgracefully, their proposals don't stop there. The Republican budget leads to \$24 billion less in child support payments. It also cuts \$14.3 billion from Federal student aid programs so the average student borrowing for college will now pay an additional \$5,800. It cuts health care for disabled and impoverished people, aid for abused and neglected foster children, financial assistance to the aged and disabled poor and food subsidies.

However, they don't cut everything. In true Republican, let-them-eat-cake fashion, the Republican budget does have one program to help those in need. The bill provides two \$40 coupons to people so that they can buy converter boxes for their television sets, so they can watch digital television.

Together, America can do better than trading crisp, clean digital television for food, health care and education. I urge my colleagues to vote against this disgrace and not pay for tax cuts for millionaires on the backs of the poor.

HONORING ERIE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS, RALPH J. GALANTI, JR.

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 18, 2005*

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and gratitude that I stand here today to recognize Ralph J. Galanti, Jr., Erie Community College Director of Athletics who is retiring after 36 years of service to ECC.

Born and raised in the City of Lackawanna, over the last three and one-half decades Ralph "Chico" Galanti has completely transformed ECC's athletic program, putting ECC on the map in the college sports world.

As coach of the ECC hockey team, Galanti led the team to appearances at eight NJCAA national championships, winning five regional titles.

In his role as Athletic Director, Galanti was instrumental in brining football to ECC and had a hands on role in the development of ECC's Burt Flickinger Athletic Center, a facility awarded for its design, which not only serves the college but the entire community, hosting national athletic events.

Galanti's ongoing efforts increased enrollment at the school where he pushed students to balance athletics and academics.

For his accomplishments, Chico has been inducted into the Greater Buffalo Hall of Fame and the National Junior College Athletic Association Hockey Coaches Hall of Fame.

The Ralph and Grace Galanti Memorial Scholarship fund honor's Ralph's parents, and continues his legacy of commitment, by assisting the student athletes in our community.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure I recognize Ralph Galanti, Jr., a man whose devotion to Erie Community College has shaped the lives of thousands of ECC students and left a positive mark on the entire Western New York community. On behalf of the residents of New York's 27th Congressional District I would like to wish Chico health and happiness in his retirement by using his signature farewell, "be happy."

HONORING THE LIFE OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL THOMAS A. WREN

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 18, 2005*

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas A. Wren and to recognize his service to our Nation.

Lt. Col. Wren graduated from George Mason University and received a commission in the Army Reserve through the Reserve Officer Training Corps. He joined the 80th Division Army Reserve unit in 1984 and held positions in Virginia, Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania. He was called to active duty four times since 2000, serving in Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq. While not on active duty, Lt. Col. Wren worked as a project manager at Sytel working on projects at USAID, USDA, Army Research Laboratory as well as the State Department. His numerous decorations include two Bronze Stars.

His most recent assignment was assisting with the training of the Iraqi military. Tragically, Lt. Col. Wren was killed in an accident on November 5, 2005 in Tallil, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Words cannot express the gratitude we feel to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. This is a debt that can never be repaid. I know words are not much comfort for the family of Lt. Col. Wren, who are no doubt suffering in the wake of the loss of this intelligent and dedicated man. I hope they will take some solace in knowing that we will never forget Lt. Col. Wren's sacrifice or the sacrifices made by other patriots like him in defense of our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I call upon my colleagues to remember in our minds and in our hearts the bravery and sacrifice of Lt. Col. Thomas A. Wren, as well as that of all the men and women of the armed services who honorably protect the American people.

COERCED STERILIZATIONS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND SLOVAKIA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 18, 2005*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, last week, the district court in the Czech town of Ostrava reached a very important decision. The court concluded that, in 2001 after the birth of her second child, a local Romani woman was sterilized without informed consent. In fact, since last year, the Czech Ombudsman has been examining dozens of similar cases. Although he has not yet issued any public findings, it is expected that the Ombudsman will confirm that many other Romani women experienced similar violations of their rights, as documented by several Czech human rights groups and the European Roma Rights Center.

Sadly, the issue of sterilizations without informed consent is not new in this region. As early as 1977, the dissident group Charter 77 reported on systematic efforts to target Romani women in Czechoslovakia for coerced

sterilization. While the vast majority of sterilizations in the Czech Republic and Slovakia since 1989 were performed with informed consent, the Ostrava case demonstrates that the practice of performing sterilizations without informed consent did not completely end with the fall of the communist regime.

That precedent-setting court decision sheds light on a number of legal points in one specific case. At the same time, there are many larger questions still at issue, including whether racism against Roma contributed to the abuse. Frankly, given the large percentage of Roma among the victims of sterilization without informed consent compared with the small percentage of the Czech population that Roma constitute, it is hard for me to believe that race did not play some role. There are, of course, other possible factors to consider: what role did a poor quality of medical care or training play in these cases of medical malpractice? Did a lack of respect for an individual's liberty—a hold-over mentality from the totalitarian period—also contribute to the abuse?

I welcome the Ostrava court's decision and commend the plaintiff in that case, Helena Ferencikova, for her courage in bringing it forward. I have also been heartened by the apparent seriousness of the Ombudsman's investigation into this difficult and sensitive matter.

Unfortunately, similar issues in neighboring Slovakia continue to be met with government denials and stonewalling.

In 2003, the Slovak Government concluded a year-long investigation into allegations that some Romani women were sterilized without informed consent, even after the fall of communism. That investigation was deeply flawed. At one point, for example, a spokesperson for the Minister for Human Rights threatened that anyone bringing forward allegations of sterilization without informed consent would go to jail, one way or another. This is not the way to foster confidence in an investigation or to encourage victims to speak out.

Significantly, the Czech investigation and the Slovak investigation both revolved around the same 1992 Czechoslovak law on sterilizations, put in place before the two countries split apart. Czech authorities have understood that law as requiring that sterilizations had to be requested by the person who was going to be sterilized, that there had to be evidence of consent by that person, and that consent had to be meaningfully informed. Being "informed" means, for example, that the expectant mother must be told why the procedure is necessary. If someone was given false information about the procedure, which was the case in many instances, then she was not meaningfully "informed."

When interpreting the same law, however, Slovak authorities maintained that consent did not have to be "informed." Accordingly, Slovak investigators examined numerous cases where there was no informed consent but still concluded there was no violation of the 1992 law because, according to their twisted logic, consent didn't have to be informed!

In reality, the Slovak Government seemed to organize its investigation into the sterilization cases in a way that was designed to cover up the magnitude of the problem. The Slovak Government's investigation revealed seven cases of Romani minors who were sterilized in violation of the then-existing Slovak law. In reality, the Slovak Government's

interpretation of the concept of "consent" could not be reconciled with modern health norms and had to be changed to explicitly require that consent is informed. (The new law went into effect at the beginning of this year.) In reality, numerous international officials have repeatedly expressed concern over the sterilization practices in the Slovak Republic and the inadequacy of the Slovak Government's response to them, including in the April 2005 report on the situation of Roma issued by the Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner.

In light of all this, it is extremely frustrating to read that Slovak officials have, in recent months, made misleading statements about this important issue. Apparently one official has even declared that "illegal sterilizations of Romani women never happened in Slovakia."

Mr. Speaker, when the institutions of justice are perceived to follow one set of rules for the majority and another for minorities, this is a recipe for social unrest—as we know from our own painful history.

I understand that it is always a difficult exercise for any government to admit its own wrongdoing or the wrongdoings of the majority society—we know this, too. But Romani mistrust of government institutions will only deepen if the Slovak Government persists in denying the wrongs perpetrated against their community.

CONGRATULATING THE VENICE  
HIGH SCHOOL LADIES'  
VOLLEYBALL TEAM

**HON. KATHERINE HARRIS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 18, 2005*

Ms. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Venice High School Lady Indians volleyball team, on their recent victory in the 2006 Class 5A state volleyball championship.

The team's 26–7 regular season record and championship victory certainly deserve applause; however, the manner in which they achieved their goal truly makes them champions.

Under the leadership of Coach Brian Wheatley, this band of sisters turned a potentially disappointing season into a modern-day Cinderella story. Runners-up in 2004, the team began the season with only two returning starters, offering little hope for anything more than a "rebuilding" season. However, a little hope and a lot of grit and determination was all this team needed.

They saw in each other the desire to succeed, the willingness to sacrifice and the wisdom to work as a team; with perseverance and commitment to each other, they refused to give up.

In the end, the season was a learning experience. And it was an experience in which the entire community shared. The Lady Indians deserve their championship, and they deserve our thanks for a season of inspiration.

The members of the 2005 Venice High School Varsity volleyball team are: Leah Bodi, Marla Cooke, Dana Dumas, Natalie Gaudreau, Ashley Graf, Nickie Halbert, Julie Howlett, Casie Richards, Casey Taylor, Michaela Trimble, and Danielle Witte.

To this collection of Cinderellas, I offer my congratulations.

RECOGNITION OF TESSA VELLEK

**HON. KENNY C. HULSHOF**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 18, 2005*

Mr. HULSHOF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of a very special young woman. Tessa Vellek, who hails from my hometown of Columbia, MO, is only eleven years old, but has already accomplished a lifetime of charitable work. Tessa has created a highly successful charitable organization operated by children, known as Euphoria, because, as she stated, "I wanted an organization where kids could decide how they wanted to help other people. I wanted the community to see that we aren't just followers, but a group of motivated youth seeking to make Columbia a better place." Among their many volunteering activities, Tessa and her friends have collected books for schools, shelters and hospitals, gathered food for the homeless and entertained seniors living in retirement communities.

Tessa was recently recognized for her efforts. Every year, Nestlé honors outstanding young women and men for philanthropic activities in their local community. Out of 158 applicants, Nestlé selects 24 young people for their Very Best in Youth award. This year, Nestlé picked Tessa as one of the nation's Very Best in Youth. I could not be prouder of this young woman. Not only has she dedicated significant amounts of her free time to helping out those who are less fortunate, Tessa has also amassed an impressive academic record, including earning straight A's, receiving prestigious academic achievements and winning an award in the National PTA Reflections Essay Contest. I have no doubt she will be highly successful in whatever career she pursues, although a budding passion for literature and creative writing could lead her to become a novelist. These volunteering experiences will surely provide Tessa excellent material to draw from in her writing.

After seeing the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, Tessa organized a Ride/Walk fundraising event in Columbia to help those in the Gulf Coast affected by the hurricane. Nestlé generously agreed to match whatever funds were raised. Out of the \$210,000 raised nationwide, Tessa and her Ride/Walk event netted \$71,000. The combined \$420,000 has been donated to the American Red Cross Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund, which has been invaluable to aiding the plight of storm victims. I am always amazed at the generosity, benevolence and leadership of to day's youth. With people like Tessa and the other Nestlé youth recipients, I strongly believe the future of our nation is in good hands.

I hope my colleagues share in my admiration of Tessa's good works and encourage all Americans to follow this fine young woman's lead and get involved with charitable works in communities and neighborhoods across our great land.

TRIBUTE TO DENNIS B.  
UNDERWOOD

**HON. GARY G. MILLER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 18, 2005*

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life and memory of Dennis B. Underwood, an esteemed Western water expert and chief executive officer and general manager of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Mr. Underwood passed away November 2 at his home in Alta Loma, California.

In commemorating the life of Dennis Underwood, I would like to highlight some of the notable contributions of his career as a humble public servant of this great nation. With a career that spanned nearly four decades, Mr. Underwood took part in water resource development and management at both the state and federal levels. Perhaps his biggest contribution to California's water supply was during his role as the Metropolitan Water District's vice president of Colorado River resources, which he was instrumental in the development of a plan that would bring the state's water use in compliance within its legal apportionment of usage from the Colorado River. Additionally, Mr. Underwood played a central role in negotiating one of the nation's largest habitat conservation programs covering 27 species along approximately 450 miles of the lower Colorado River. During his brief tenure as CEO and general manager of the Metropolitan Water District, Mr. Underwood launched initiatives that sought to further enhance relationships with public agencies as well as seeking new partners to preserve California's water future.

Dennis Underwood's desire to serve his country expanded beyond public service as he honorably served in the military during the Vietnam War as a captain with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Mr. Underwood won the admiration of his colleagues through his respectful interaction and clear sense of leadership; qualities which he carried with him later in life.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring the life of Dennis B. Underwood and recognizing the lasting contributions and accomplishments that highlighted his career in water resource development and management.

TRIBUTE FOR THE AMERICAN AND  
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETIES FOR  
YAD VASHEM

**HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, November 18, 2005*

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support and admiration for the American and International Societies for Yad Vashem, which will convene for their Annual Tribute Dinner on November 20th in New York. The American and International Societies for Yad Vashem are the development arms of Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem, Israel.

The American and International Societies for Yad Vashem provide a great service to the