

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

United States and the entire world. Through Yad Vashem's collection of testimonies from Holocaust survivors and families to the database of victims' names, they work to restore the dignity of those who perished and suffered at the hands of the Nazis. Through continuous documentation, Yad Vashem honors the lives and accomplishments of Holocaust survivors. Additionally, they develop educational programs to ensure that future generations never forget the lessons of the Holocaust.

This past year, thanks to the help of development efforts by the American and International Societies for Yad Vashem, the museum celebrated the grand opening of the new Holocaust History Museum at Yad Vashem. This phenomenal museum uses technology and symbolism to convey the story of European Jewry during the Holocaust.

This year's Annual Tribute Dinner will honor two outstanding couples who have impacted the lives of countless individuals across generations, Mindy and Ira Mitzner of Houston, Texas, and Marilyn and Barry Rubenstein of Brookville, New York. Through their tireless efforts, these couples have made remembering the Holocaust a sacred legacy. Their lives reflect the understanding that our society must heal and remember in order to prevent this catastrophe from repeating itself.

I applaud the American and International Societies for Yad Vashem for their vital work in honoring the memory and legacy of Holocaust victims and survivors.

LEGISLATION TO ABOLISH
AVIATION BARRIERS

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 18, 2005

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to have introduced the "Abolishing Aviation Barriers Act of 2005".

Currently there are two laws governing commercial aviation in the U.S. based on miles of flight restrictions. One governs the use of New York's LaGuardia Airport (LGA) and the other governs usage of Washington, D.C.'s Reagan National Airport (DCA). Restrictions exist at LaGuardia on the departure or arrival of non-stop flights to or from airports that are farther than 1,500 miles from LGA. Reagan National has a similar restriction for non-stop flights to or from airports 1,250 miles from DCA. These restrictions are commonly referred to as "perimeter rules."

The original purpose of these perimeter rules was to restrict LGA and DCA airports to business travelers flying to and from East Coast and Midwest cities and to promote traffic to other, newer airports by diverting long haul flights to Newark and Kennedy airports in the New York area and Dulles airport in the Washington, D.C. area. However, over the years, the federal government has made many changes and granted numerous exceptions to the perimeter rule at DCA because the air traveling public is eager for travel options.

Today, there are nonstop flights between Washington Reagan National and Denver, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Salt Lake City

and Seattle. LGA's rule was enacted by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey with an exception already contained therein—for flights between Denver and LGA. It was justified on the basis of ground congestion, i.e. automobiles. The old road network that gave rise to this excuse has long since been replaced with the help of federal money.

In fact, a 1999 study by the Transportation Research Board stated that perimeter rules "no longer serve their original purpose and have produced too many adverse side effects, including barriers to competition . . . The rules arbitrarily prevent some airlines from extending their networks to these airports; they discourage competition among the airports in the region and among the airlines that use these airports; and they are subject to chronic attempts by special interest groups to obtain exemptions."

That same year, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) stated that the "practical effect" of the perimeter rule "has been to limit entry" of other carriers. The GAO found that airfares at LaGuardia and Washington National are approximately 50 percent higher on average than fares at similar airports unconstrained by the perimeter rule.

Mr. Speaker, I have introduced this legislation to promote more consumer choice and lower airfares for not only my own constituents, but for all of our air travelers.

GULF OPPORTUNITY ZONE PUBLIC
FINANCE RELIEF ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. WILLIAM M. THOMAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 16, 2005

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following correspondence for the RECORD.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, November 17, 2005.

Hon. MICHAEL G. OXLEY,
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN OXLEY: I am writing concerning H.R. 4337, the "Gulf Opportunity Zone Public Finance Relief Act of 2005," which passed the House last night by unanimous consent.

Section 4 of the bill allows for the Federal guarantee of certain State bonds. I recognize the Committee on Financial Service's jurisdictional interest in Section 4 of the bill, and agree that by allowing the bill to be passed, the Committee on Financial Services does not relinquish any jurisdiction over H.R. 4337 or similar legislation. I would also support your request to be represented on a conference on H.R. 4337, if one should become necessary.

Finally, I will include this letter and your response in the Congressional Record under the portion for floor consideration of this measure.

Best regards,

BILL THOMAS,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,
Washington, DC, November 17, 2005.

Hon. WILLIAM THOMAS,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMAS: I have received your letter concerning H.R. 4337, the "Gulf Opportunity Zone Public Finance Relief Act of 2005," which the House passed last night. The bill was also introduced yesterday and was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

I appreciate your recognition that the Committee on Financial Services has a jurisdictional interest in section 4 of the bill. This section allows for the Federal guarantee of certain State bonds. However, I understand that the need to move this bill expeditiously did not permit consideration of the bill by this Committee. It is my understanding this procedure will not prejudice the Committee on Financial Services with respect to its prerogatives on this or similar legislation. I appreciate your support for a request for conferees from this Committee in the event of a House-Senate conference.

I hope that this exchange of correspondence will appear in the Congressional Record. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Your truly,

MICHAEL G. OXLEY,
Chairman.

IN HONOR OF HICKORY FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD'S DEDICATION TO SERVICE

HON. PATRICK T. MCHENRY

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 18, 2005

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of their new building dedication on November 20, 2005, I commend Hickory First Assembly of God for their committed service to communities locally and globally for almost 50 years. The first small group of faithful believers set the standard for selfless service that church members today still honor and follow.

Pastor Brian Campbell, the devoted pastoral staff, and a team of church members have worked together to plan a new space with additional seating in the sanctuary and more room for fellowship in the foyer, offices and nurseries. The expansions are part of Hickory First Assembly's efforts to continue the mission of Acts 1:8, which says "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Locally, the church reaches out to those in need by organizing teams to serve in the community. Nationally, church teams ministered in the Gulf Coast region after Hurricane Katrina; And internationally members actively participate in foreign missions through financial giving and traveling with groups to different countries in need.

As Christians, we are called to do great things for God. Living in a free nation, we have the privilege to practice our faith and make a difference in the lives of others. Truly a gateway church, Hickory First Assembly demonstrates a positive influence on the community by consistently communicating and living out biblical values.