

TRIBUTE TO MR. TONY "FISH"
AGUIRRE

HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 4, 2006

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Tony "Fish" Aguirre, a remarkable and compassionate leader whose legacy has touched so many Kansas Citizens. Mr. Aguirre entered our world on February 8, 1929, and passed on March 19, 2006. His passing is a deep loss felt by his family, the Westside community, the greater Kansas City area, and most assuredly, the thousands of lives he touched through his 50-plus years of service to Kansas City's youth.

Tony was blessed with natural athletic ability and became a talented all-around athlete in his youth, almost being drafted to play professional baseball and being offered a college basketball scholarship. At the age of 17, his God-given talent led to his calling of coaching the boys and girls from his neighborhood, the Westside. Tony went on to graduate from Redemptorist High School in 1949 and later married his wife, Joan. Tony credited his wife with encouraging him to return to athletics at the Guadalupe Center after graduating from high school. From that point forward, Tony Aguirre and Guadalupe Center athletics would become synonymous and well-known throughout Kansas City.

From the age of 17 until his death, Tony coached kids year-round in basketball, baseball, softball, and football for the Guadalupe Center. Tony was more than just a coach to the Westside youth; he was a friend, mentor, father figure, and counselor to at least three generations of ball players. Tony was at the forefront of youth development, before youth development became a key program term. His cheers and support came hand in hand with the patience and kindness Tony shared with "his kids." Tony went that extra mile, whether it was keeping the Sacred Heart gym open late for basketball practice, or marking the park fields for baseball, softball, or football, Tony did everything possible to help "his kids" be competitive and proud of themselves. Tony impacted the lives of many, and his influence was far reaching, both inside and outside the Latino community. Tony will long be remembered for his kind smile and words of encouragement he shared with everyone.

In 1988, the Guadalupe Center established the Tony Aguirre High School Scholarship Award to help deserving students from the Hispanic community attend private or parochial high school in Mr. Aguirre's honor. In 2000, the city of Kansas City, MO, honored Tony's contributions by naming the newly constructed Westside Community Center after him. Never seeking accolades, Tony received numerous awards throughout his life for his service, coaching, and dedication to youth.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in expressing our heartfelt sympathy to his wife, Joan Aguirre, his children, Sandy, Steve, Arlyne, Kathy and Amy, his 19 grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild, and his many relatives and friends. I urge my colleagues to please join me in conveying our gratitude to his family for sharing this great man with us, and to accept our condolences for their tremendous loss. He was an inspiration to us all.

COMMENDING THE NORTH TEXAS
FIREFIGHTERS FOR SERVICE
DURING THE PANHANDLE FIRES

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 4, 2006

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend those North Texas firefighters who risked their very lives to protect so many others from the Panhandle fires that have plagued the west Texas region.

North Texas has seen its fair share of wildfires this year. Always showing their bravery and professionalism, local firefighters have fought back these deadly fires and now, as the call was heeded for assistance to our fellow Texans. Our firefighters selflessly gathered to take swift action in fighting the fires in the west. With adversity clearly in sight, these firefighters went far beyond their call of duty and exemplified the very definition of courage.

The combined efforts of the North Texas fire, rescue and emergency services helped to end the deadly wildfires before they threatened even more homes and families. I am pleased to commend the following departments for their services: Lewisville Fire Department, Lake Cities Fire Department, Little Elm Fire Department, Denton Fire Department, Flower Mound Fire Department, Coppell Fire Department, Carrollton Fire Department, Denton County Fire Marshals Office, Denton County Emergency Services, North Tarrant County Volunteer Fire Department, Hurst Fire Department, and Forrest Hill Fire Department.

It brings me great pride to commend the firefighters of these areas for their care and dedication. May they be an example to us all.

COLLEGE ACCESS AND
OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 30, 2006

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 609) to amend and extend the Higher Education Act of 1965:

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Chairman, as a former teacher, mother, and grandmother, I rise in opposition to H.R. 609, the so-called College Access and Opportunity Act. H.R. 609 represents a major missed opportunity to make college more affordable and accessible, to boost America's economic competitiveness, and to invest in America's future.

The Republican majority is bringing this bill to the floor just 2 months after they passed the Budget Reconciliation Act, which slashed federal student aid programs by \$12 billion. H.R. 609 does nothing to reverse this raid on student aid, nor does it do anything to make college loans more affordable. In fact, this bill freezes the authorized level of the maximum Pell grant scholarship. If this bill is passed, Pell grants would be frozen at just \$200 above the current level until 2013. This would mean less money to help students go to school.

With millions of American families struggling to pay for college, it is critical that Congress

act to make college more affordable. I would like to share with my colleagues part of a letter that a constituent from Des Plaines, Illinois, recently wrote to me:

My son who is out of college for 2 years, makes about \$30,000. His major was public relations, but could not get a job in that field since he had no experience. So he finally got a job in sales. Since he went to school in Iowa, we consolidated his loans with an Iowa firm. His loans were over \$100,000. His monthly payment was about \$500 [in addition] he has the federal loans [amounting to] over \$100. As of Feb. 6th he will pay over \$700 a month for his private loan plus his federal loans which will bring him over \$850 a month. This is for the next 20 years . . . I would like for someone to tell me how does the government expect kids to be able to make a life for themselves when the interest rates keep going up on school loans? Why can't students have a lower fixed rate?

I also understand that when kids get out of college you are figuring that you will be making enough money to pay their loans. But what about the kids that aren't engineers, doctors, or lawyers? What about those average kids who go to college because they know in order to get a job these days you need that degree but do not make large salaries and barely make enough money to live. My kids are used to hard work, for example, working two jobs. I guess I figured that once you have that degree, it would be a little easier to get a job. Obviously, that is not the case.

This is just one of thousands of such stories. The members of the majority must be hearing them too. However, H.R. 609 contains little assistance for the millions of low- and middle-income families who continue to struggle to pay for college. Instead the majority chose to make tax breaks for the wealthy a priority over helping the next generation of Americans go to college.

That is why I encourage all of my colleagues to support the Democratic alternative. The Democratic alternative would cut in half the student loan interest rate for borrowers who are most in need. The substitute also establishes a new Predominantly Black Serving Institution program, a new graduate Hispanic Serving Institution program and Minority Teaching Centers for Excellence to increase the number of highly qualified teachers, including minority teachers. The substitute provides for year-round Pell grants. It establishes a minimum grant of \$500,000 for tribal colleges. It repeals the single lender rule, which requires student borrowers to consolidate their loans with their existing lender. Under the substitute, the borrower could choose which lender he or she wishes to use to consolidate loans.

At a time when the United States needs to invest in innovation and education in order to compete in the 21st century, H.R. 609 leads us in the wrong direction. It will force many students to forgo college altogether. For many students, financial barriers are the principal factor that determines whether they will successfully complete college or not. American students need and deserve more affordable college opportunities, not additional barriers to achievement and opportunity. I literally shake my head in wonder at these counterproductive cuts. We should be increasing opportunities for Americans to further their education. The Republican majority has instead given us a shameful sham of a bill.

I urge all of my colleagues to adopt the Democratic alternative and to oppose H.R.