

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Samuel A. Brandt for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

RECOGNIZING IMPERIAL HIGH SCHOOL RECIPIENT OF 2006 DISPPELLING THE MYTH AWARD

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 6, 2006

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize Imperial High School, in my congressional district, the only high school in the Nation to receive a 2006 Dispelling the Myth Award, an award of the Education Trust. Five schools were presented this award by Department of Education Secretary Margaret Spellings on November 3, 2006, as part of the Education Trust's 17th National Conference on "Closing the Achievement Gap."

Imperial High is described in the award program as a school "just a few miles from the Mexican border. Seventy percent of Imperial's students are Latino, many of whom are English language learners. Seven years ago, the school was considered chaotic and low-performing. After . . . identifying students who need help and support, matching instruction to standards, and encouraging students to think beyond high school graduation, Imperial is now considered a California Distinguished School."

There are 773 students in grades 9–12 at Imperial High. Principal Lisa Tabares and her teachers deserve great praise for the caring environment and high standards they have developed in which remarkable accomplishments are achieved by their students.

The Education Trust, funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and eight other Foundations, has worked since 1990 for the high achievement of all students, focusing especially on schools serving concentrations of low-income or Latino, African-American or Native American students who, because of their environment, may need assistance to achieve at high levels. Their Dispelling the Myth Program honors high-performing and gap-closing schools that serve large populations of low-income or minority students.

The four other schools so honored in 2006 are Capitol View Elementary in Atlanta, GA; East Millsboro Elementary in Millsboro, DE; M. Hall Stanton Elementary in Philadelphia, PA; and Port Chester Middle School in Port Chester, NY.

"These schools provide compelling evidence . . . that when we teach students to high levels and focus on closing the achievement gaps, students succeed," said Kati Haycock, director of the Education Trust. "These schools are a testament to the power of committed educators to transform the lives of children who too often get less than their fair share of what public education has to offer. We owe these educators a great deal of gratitude."

As an educator, one of my top priorities is to provide a quality education for each and every child. I am proud of the principal and

teachers and especially the students of Imperial High School for their achievements. I sincerely thank them for their contribution to the community of Imperial.

TRIBUTE TO COUNTY SUPERVISOR CYNTHIA MURRAY

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 6, 2006

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor County Supervisor Cynthia Murray on the occasion of her retirement from two terms on the Marin County Board of Supervisors,

Since she was first elected in 1998, Cynthia has been a forceful voice on key issues in Marin County. She has been in the forefront of promoting transportation infrastructure improvements, from fighting for public transit as a member of the Golden Gate Bridge Board to chairing the Policy Advisory Group for widening a key bottleneck on Highway 101.

Cynthia has also stepped up on other important issues, especially emergency services and disaster preparation, seniors' independence, education and workforce, sustainable economic development, the battle against Sudden Oak Death, and wetlands preservation. She has chaired the Disaster Council and the Long Term Care Task Force and served on the Schools to Careers partnership, North Bay Watershed Association, which she founded, and Novato Business Education Roundtable. Regionally she sits on the Bay Area Economic Forum and chairs the Bay Area Water Forum.

Cynthia has been a strong partner to my offices in working for shared priorities such as education—life-long learning, mentorship and internship programs for youth, and increased access to technology in schools; affordable housing—Community Development Block Grants, the Section 8 voucher program, Community Opportunity funds; breast cancer research; the Older Americans Act and expansion of programs for seniors; transportation—car pool lanes, bike paths, the Golden Gate Bridge seismic retrofit, and the acquisition of the railroad right of way; conversion of Hamilton Air Base, and environment—acquisition of Bel Marin Keys V and restoration of over 1,800 acres of wetlands in Bel Marin Keys, Hamilton and Bahia.

Born and raised in New Jersey, Cynthia was the oldest of seven children. This may explain why she so easily handles many responsibilities. She graduated from Rutgers University and moved to Marin in 1978. In 1988 she moved to Novato where she served 7 years on the Novato City Council, including one term as mayor. She has two children, Katie and Mack, who are both in college.

Mr. Speaker, Cynthia Murray will remain active and involved in local issues. I have enjoyed working with her as a supervisor and look forward to her continuing participation in issues affecting the people of Marin and Sonoma Counties.

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE JOHN J. "JACK" RODGERS

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 6, 2006

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an outstanding citizen of Columbus, GA, who has distinguished himself as a dedicated and exemplary public servant. The Hon. John J. "Jack" Rodgers at age 64 is retiring from the Columbus Consolidated Government after 24 years as a member of the Columbus Council. He served 8 of those years as mayor pro tem, having been unanimously elected to that position by his fellow councilors for four consecutive 2-year terms.

Mr. Rodgers, who was born in Pittsburgh, PA, has lived in Columbus since 1961. He was inducted into the United States Army in 1961 and served honorably for 2 years. Shortly after his honorable discharge in 1963, he married the former Barbara Riddle who has given him constant love and support in parenting two children, through whom Jack and Barbara have four grandchildren. Mr. Rodgers not only adopted Columbus, GA, as home for himself and his family, but also accepted leadership roles in business and government. He earned a B.S. at Columbus State University in 1973.

Jack Rodgers had a distinguished 21-year career with Ford. He then launched his own mortgage company and has been chair and CEO for 15 years. His successful participation in the business community provided an excellent background for his work at Chattahoochee Valley Community College in Phenix City, AL, where he taught business and economics for 7 years.

During his service on the Columbus Council, Mr. Rodgers was selected for four 1-year terms as Budget Review Committee chairman. He also served as the council's Ethics Committee chairman, and had a major role in developing revisions to the city's tax law by chairing the council's Occupational Tax Committee. Among the many notable and worthy projects to which he has contributed vital energy and leadership was the placement of the "Eternal Flame" memorial in front of the Columbus Government Center, a project for which he and then-Councilor Bobby Peters led fundraising efforts in the private sector. His wisdom and counsel, especially in financial matters, are frequently sought by other councilors and by citizens in his council district, as well as throughout the city.

Jack Rodgers is known as a devout Christian, a longtime member and leader in Edge-wood Baptist Church of Columbus. He has often been called upon for invocations and other prayers in council meetings and on other public occasions.

His civic and social affiliations, which bespeak his dedication to service, include: the Rotary Club of Columbus; the Columbus Georgia Convention & Trade Center Board, of which he formerly served as vice-chairman; the Valley Rescue Mission, of which he is a former board member; president of the Heritage Educational Foundation; board member of the Columbus Technical College Foundation; and board member of the There is HOPE Foundation. His leadership qualities also have made him valuable to governmental associations: the Georgia Municipal Association; the

National League of Cities; and the Georgia Municipal Association/Association County Commissioners of Georgia.

Today, as Jack Rodgers moves into retirement from government service, we honor him and thank him for all he has done for the benefit of Columbus, GA—as an elected official and as a private citizen dedicated to the good of others. His exemplary service to his community has set a standard of dedication and leadership that has inspired many and will inspire many others.

TRIBUTE TO MR. KEVORK S.
HOVNIANIAN

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 6, 2006

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a most deserving business and community leader, Mr. Kevork S. Hovnianian. On Saturday, November 18, 2006, Kevork was honored as the Honorary Life Chairman and founder of the Fund for Armenian Relief at the New York Public Library.

Kevork has been a benefactor in his community for decades. His business successes have always been interposed by examples of community leadership in both the United States and Armenia. He has exemplified the pursuit of business consciousness and never compromised his commitment to providing “homes” and not just housing.

Kevork will leave a personal legacy marked by numerous accomplishments. In the 1980s, he partnered with the city of Newark to rejuvenate the areas impacted by the riots some thirteen years before. In 1996, the New Jersey Institute of Technology awarded him a President’s Medal for “Distinguished Achievement to an Outstanding Entrepreneur.” Not three years later, his carer ethic earned him a place among other greats like Thomas Edison and George Gallup on the list of “Twenty Five Top New Jersey Business Leaders of the Century.”

The achievements he has earned since his immigration to the United States have not made him forget his roots. Kevork has loyally contributed to the Armenian people in times of celebration and need. The Diocese of the Armenia Church and the New Jersey Council of Christians and Jews both named him Man of the Year in recognition of his aid to earthquake victims in Armenia.

He currently serves as the chairman of the Armenian Church Endowment Fund and Fund for Armenian Relief, which works for international development. This organization pledges to provide short and long-term plans for the economic and social development in Armenia. It is responsible for a variety of programs, ranging from soup kitchens to educational scholarships and implementing agricultural technology. There is a special focus on preparing Armenian youth as the future of their nation.

As much as he is an active part of the Armenian community, Kevork remains vigilant in providing available health services to children and families in the local community. In 2002, Mr. Hovnianian helped establish the K. Hovnianian Pavilion and the Alton A. Hovnianian Emergency Care Center at River-

view Medical Center. The expansion of River-view provided the facility with a new pavilion and emergency care center, which now houses the most advanced emergency and critical care centers in the area. Earlier this year, he funded the first state-designated children’s hospital in New Jersey’s Monmouth and Ocean counties, named The K. Hovnianian Children’s Hospital in his honor. Here, families can find dedicated and personal health professionals who treat their patients as if they were their own children.

Mr. Speaker, Kevork embodies the American dream. He came to America to escape political turmoil in Iraq, and through hard work and unwavering motivation, he is now able to realize that dream in others through his service to the community. His dedication and passion deserves the utmost recognition.

SIKHS CELEBRATE BIRTHDAY OF
GURU NANAK, FIRST SIKH GURU

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 6, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because earlier this month, about 15,000 Sikhs from all over the world celebrated the birth of the first Sikh guru, Guru Nanak, in his birthplace, Nankana Sahib, which is now in Pakistan. The Sikhs in attendance chanted slogans of “Khalistan Zindabad” calling for the liberation of the Sikh homeland, Khalistan. Over 3,000 Sikhs from Punjab were in attendance and many of them commented on how much better they were treated in Pakistan than in their own country.

A delegation of Sikhs met with Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. He pledged to build a road from Kartarpur, where Guru Nanak died and where there is a shrine to him, to the Indian border if India would build a road to the border also and repair a bridge at the border. This would enable Sikhs to go to Kartarpur and honor Guru Nanak whenever they choose to do so. I call on the governments of Punjab and India to build this road and fix the bridge.

The Pakistani government also issued an open invitation to Sikhs to come and visit Nankana Sahib whenever they wish with no restrictions, although they did express concern that agents of India’s Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) would use this to come in and try to undermine Pakistan. That is a very real and legitimate concern.

It is tragic and offensive that the Sikhs who went to Nankana Sahib felt that they were better treated in Pakistan than in their own country. That just shows why the Sikhs in Punjab need to be free of Indian rule. The sovereignty of the Sikhs, recognized in the Indian constitution, was used in cancelling Punjab’s water deals with India. It should be used by the Legislative Assembly to declare Punjab’s independence, as the Sikhs did on October 7, 1987. Such a declaration from the legislature would carry a lot of weight.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come for the beacon of freedom, America, to take a stand. We can help to stop the tyranny and the repression by stopping our aid and trade to India until full human rights are restored to all people there. And it is time for a free and fair

plebiscite in Punjab, Khalistan on the question of independence, as well as Kashmir, Nagalim, and wherever people seek their freedom. India promised Kashmir a plebiscite in 1948 and it has not yet delivered on the promise. When will “the world’s largest democracy” decide that it is time for the people to enjoy the most basic of democratic rights, the right to self-determination? If India is the democratic country it says it is, what could be wrong with a simple vote?

I request the permission of the House to insert the Council of Khalistan’s press release on the events in Nankana Sahib into the RECORD at this time.

SIKHS CELEBRATE GURU NANAK’S BIRTHDAY
WITH REVERENCE—AIR FILLED WITH
KHALISTAN ZINDABAD SLOGANS

WASHINGTON, DC, November 16, 2006.—More than 15,000 Sikhs came from the United States, Punjab, Thailand, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, and around the world to Nankana Sahib celebrate the 537th anniversary of the birth of their first Guru, Guru Nanak, founder of the Sikh religion. Guru Nanak was born in 1469. This is the highest number of Sikhs who have attended the event since the partition of India. Over 3,000 Sikhs came from Punjab. At the celebration, the air was filled with slogans of “Khalistan Zindabad.”

The delegation met with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz in Islamabad on November 4. He welcomed the Sikhs with open arms and offered a road link between Kartarpur and the Indian border if India agrees to build a road on its side and repair the bridge. He said Sikhs were free to visit Kartarpur whenever they want without a visa. The Pakistani government has issued an open invitation to Sikhs from around the world to come and visit Nankana Sahib with no restrictions. Any genuine Sikh who wants to come and visit may do so. There was some concern about agents of India’s Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) coming to destabilize Pakistan, however.

The government and people of Pakistan welcomed the Sikhs and treated them so well that Sikhs from Punjab asked why they were treated so well in Pakistan, which is not our country, but in the Sikh homeland, Punjab, Khalistan, the Indian government does not treat them fairly. India attacked the Golden Temple, the center and seat of Sikhism, in June 1984. Since then, the Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs and another 52,268 are being held as political prisoners, according to a report by the Movement Against State Repression (MASR.) India has killed over 90,000 Muslims in Kashmir as well as 2,000 to 5,000 Muslims in Gujarat, over 300,000 Christians in Nagaland, and tens of thousands of Assamese, Bodos, Dalits (the dark-skinned, aboriginal “Untouchables”), Manipuris, Tamils, and other minorities. In 1994, the U.S. State Department reported that the Indian government had paid over 41,000 cash bounties for killing Sikhs. A MASR report quotes the Punjab Civil Magistracy as writing “if we add up the figures of the last few years the number of innocent persons killed would run into lakhs [hundreds of thousands.]” The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government’s murders of Sikhs “worse than a genocide.”

Last year, 35 Sikhs were charged and arrested in Punjab for making speeches in support of Khalistan and raising the Khalistani flag. “How can making speeches and raising a flag be considered crimes in a democratic society?” asked Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh. President of the Council of Khalistan, which leads the peaceful, democratic, nonviolent struggle to liberate the Sikh homeland from