

Her contributions to the Southern Arizona community and the U.S.-Mexico borderlands are numerous: creating multi-jurisdictional partnerships to conserve riparian areas and desert landscapes; partnering agencies, conservationists, ranchers, business interests, and students; educating scores of birders and other citizens to become active policy-makers and advisors; protecting critical habitats from devastation wrought by mining, development, overgrazing, and other harmful activities; and creating a community more literate in the articulation of social and environmental justice.

Sonja Macys will leave a legacy that cannot be adequately expressed in words, and gives all of us who have known and worked with her hope that we can truly achieve the goals that we set out to accomplish together. The Tucson community and the wildlife of the Sonoran Desert will sorely miss Ms. Macys, but I have no doubt she will go on to accomplish great things in her future endeavors. I wish her the best of luck.

TRIBUTE TO DANNY VALDEZ

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 18, 2007

Mr. CUELLAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Danny Valdez on his inauguration as Webb County Judge on January 1, 2007.

Judge Valdez was first elected into office as justice of the peace in May 1982 and has served for nearly 25 years. This inauguration marks the start of his sixth 4-year term with the court in Webb County. Judge Valdez has received numerous awards such as the Community Service Award by LULAC Council No. 12, and the Nuestro Orgullo Award by S.C.A.N. due to his passion in working with at-risk youth in the community, and addressing issues such as truancy, gang violence, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, and juvenile delinquency. He also was recognized for his commitment to the rule of law by the Laredo Bar Association with the Liberty Bell Award and the 2005 Hispanic of the Year Award by LULAC Council No. 7.

Aside from presiding over one of the busiest courts, Judge Valdez is actively involved in community activities such as working with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Education Program in bringing male and female inmates to local middle and high schools to educate students about the dangers involved in making the wrong choices. He worked with the Lamar Bruni Vergara Trust in the development of the Lamar Bruni Vergara Boys' Scout Camp Huisache and was also instrumental in the development of the Lamar Bruni Inner City Recreation Center. Judge Valdez also reached out to low-income families by chairing the Annual Toys for Tejanitos Drive, the Angel Wish Program, and the Annual Fishing Derby for physically challenged students.

Judge Valdez has given out over \$60,000 in scholarships to promising young students from the Laredo Independent School District. He also started the Supply Our Students Campaign that has raised funds for nearly 70 tons of school supplies for low-income students in Webb County. He is truly one of the great Laredoans and it is because of him that the youth in the community have realized their im-

mense potential in creating a new and better future for themselves by learning from the values of Judge Valdez.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to have had this time to recognize the dedication of Judge Danny Valdez to his community.

FREEDOM FOR RAYMUNDO
PERDIGÓN BRITO

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 18, 2007

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about Raymundo Perdigón Brito, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Perdigón Brito is an independent journalist in Cuba who is striving to create a society that tolerates human rights, freedom, and democracy. He has been a peaceful supporter of bringing the most fundamental of human rights to a people shackled by a tyrant's brutal machinery of repression. Unfortunately, because of his unwavering support of freedom for the people of Cuba Mr. Perdigón Brito has been targeted by the dictatorship.

In November of 2006, Mr. Perdigón, his sister Ana Margarita Perdigón and several other journalists launched the Yayabo Press news agency. On November 29, 2006, just 12 days after its launch, Mr. Perdigón Brito was arrested by State Security thugs and told to cease his journalistic activities or that he would be sent to prison. Mr. Perdigón Brito was always aware of the risks he was taking as a journalist and he was well aware of his many colleagues serving long prison terms in Castro's hellish gulags, yet rather than allow his voice to be silenced, he preferred to fight for the cause of freedom and democracy on that enslaved island.

On December 5, 2006, Mr. Perdigón Brito was "sentenced" to 4 years in the inhuman squalor of Castro's gulags on charges that he posed a "pre-criminal danger to society". A charge often used to detain pro-democracy activists, even when they have committed no offense, simply because the regime regards them a potential threat to its grotesquely brutal and repressive totalitarian control.

In Mr. Perdigón's absence, his sister, Ana Margarita Perdigón, replaced him as Editor of Yayabo Press. This development did not pass unchecked or unnoticed within the inner circles of the regime's henchmen. According to a dissident journalist who spoke to Reporters Without Borders, "The political police knew this and did everything to ensure the news agency is disbanded as soon as possible".

On the morning of December 5, 2006, as Mr. Perdigón Brito's relatives were leaving the courthouse in the central province of Sancti Spiritus, Cuba, nearly 100 regime thugs attacked them viciously. This barbarous and vile hate crime was carried out with such regimented violence that Mr. Perdigón Brito's father was hospitalized due to serious injuries sustained during the attack.

Madam Speaker, it is repulsive that only 90 miles from our shore, brave souls like that of Mr. Perdigón are locked in dungeons because they too believe in the freedoms we hold sacred to our way of life. My colleagues, let us remember those whose suffer under the totali-

tarian nightmare that is the Castro regime. Let us demand the immediate release of Raymundo Perdigón Brito and every prisoner of conscience in the dungeons of totalitarian despots.

TRIBUTE TO MR. TONY HOUSEMAN

HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 18, 2007

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Tony Houseman for his continued conservation efforts and his dedicated service to the Houston Safari Club. Tony has been a member of the Houston Safari Club for over twenty years and has served as the Club's Convention Chair in 1996 and the President from 1997-1998. He also has been awarded three distinguished awards from the Houston Safari Club with the 1998 Conservation Award, the 2005 Lifetime Service Award, and the 2007 Frank Green Award.

His tireless leadership has had a positive impact in Texas and across our nation. When Tony and Ray Petty were asked by Congressman Jack Fields to help organize and start the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, which I am a proud member, he never hesitated in saying yes. Every year, for ten straight years, they traveled to Washington D.C. to increase the membership and clout of the Caucus and help fight for the rights of the hunter and the hunting community. Now, the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus has one of the highest memberships and continues to advocate the interests of sportsmen.

Tony also has taken a leadership role in too many projects to list, with notable ones being Operation Bright Lights and the Tony Houseman State Park and Wildlife Management Area. Operation Bright Lights raises funds and works with professional hunters to build schools and water wells in Tanzania, and recently he and his wife Gisela took a trip there and visited one of the newly built schools. For the state park, Tony donated 1,500 acres to conserve the Blue Elbow Swamp in South East Texas. This 3,300 acre conservation site on the Sabine River remains a magical place for wildlife.

Madam Speaker, Tony Houseman is the consummate hunter and conservationist and a friend I deeply admire. Thank you for helping me honor him today.

COLLEGE STUDENT RELIEF ACT
OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 17, 2007

Mr. REYES. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5, a bill that would expand educational opportunity for millions of young Americans by slicing interest rates on federally-subsidized student loans in half.

This fair, well-balanced legislation would open the doors to America's colleges and universities for millions of our sons and daughters who would have otherwise been dissuaded by

the high cost of pursuing a higher education. Among those millions will be young men and women who will be the first in their families to attend college. There will be inventors and innovators, businessmen and women, generals, scientists, leaders of all stripes, and, surely, future members of this body.

At the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) in my district, students entering school in 2007 will save \$2,300 on an average debt of \$13,800, and student entering in 2011, when the full interest rate cuts take effect, will save over \$4,400 on the same amount of debt.

These savings would mean the world to my community of El Paso and to Latino communities across the country. This is true because Hispanic students have historically borrowed less on average than other groups, a reluctance that means students are often too busy working for a paycheck to complete their degrees in a timely fashion. The six billion dollars in loan relief we are passing today will mean our kids will have the ability to borrow the money they need to finance their educations and ultimately get the jobs that will allow them prosperous lives.

What we are doing today also has broader significance. It is significant to the strength of our economy and the security of our country. If America is to compete economically with countries like China and India and fill key positions in our national security agencies, we need to start by sending more kids to college. Under current policy, financial barriers will prevent 6.4 million high school graduates from attending college and would cost our economy 12 million college-educated workers by the year 2020. This is a crisis, Madam Speaker. We need to recognize right now that the investments in education we make or choose not to make today will determine our economic future—whether or not our grandchildren and great-grandchildren have high-quality jobs.

College access is an integral part of our competitiveness and security puzzle, because we will not find the answers to the challenges we face as a nation without a well-educated and innovative workforce. The bill we are passing today will make our country a safer and a more prosperous place.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to pass this bill, and I look forward to continuing this dialogue about the importance of education for national competitiveness and security.

TRIBUTE TO ARTHUR NOZIK,
SARAH KURTZ AND JERRY OLSON

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 18, 2007

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize three researchers from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, the premier national laboratory for renewable energy and energy efficiency research.

The American Chemical Society recently honored Arthur Nozik, a senior research fellow at NREL, with a special tribute of accomplishments in *The Journal of Physical Chemistry B*.

During the past 30 years, Dr. Nozik has earned a leading position in the fields of photoelectrochemistry, semiconductor-mol-

ecule interfaces, nanoscience and quantum size effects in semiconductors and carrier dynamics in semiconductor quantum dots and quantum wells. He has written more than 160 peer-reviewed publications, 35 book chapters and has edited or co-authored several books in these fields.

Dr. Nozik has been awarded 11 U.S. patents. He also invented a novel photochemical diode for splitting water to generate hydrogen, and the identification of several important solar photoconversion approaches using hot carrier effects, size quantization, and superlattice concepts that could, in principle, enable a leap in efficiency of solar energy conversion.

Dr. Nozik, who joined NREL in 1978, received the 2002 Energy Research Award of the Electrochemical Society. He was a senior editor of *The Journal of Physical Chemistry* from 1993–2005 and is a fellow of both the American Physical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

NREL solar energy researchers Sarah Kurtz and Jerry Olson have spent the past 20 years developing the multi-junction solar cell. These solar cells have demonstrated higher solar energy conversion efficiency than conventional silicon cells and are already the choice for most space applications. For their contributions to the field of photovoltaic energy, Kurtz and Olson have been recognized as laureates of the Dan David Prize, given by the Dan David Foundation in cooperation with Tel Aviv University and the French Ministry of Culture and Communication. They and other winners will share \$3 million in prize money.

The photovoltaics community has made tremendous progress during the last 30 years. In the past few years, the investment in concentrator systems using high-efficiency, multijunction solar cells has mushroomed. Although this investment is not yet reflected by large installations, the Dan David prize recognizes this technology for its future promise to transform energy markets.

I'm enormously proud to have NREL in my district and equally proud of the work of these three scientists.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICE NEGOTIATION ACT OF 2007

HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 12, 2007

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4, the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2007, because we owe our seniors a drug benefit program that is accessible and affordable. I believe that this legislation brings us one step closer.

My fellow Democrats and I were outraged that the current Medicare Part D drug benefit forces many elderly beneficiaries to choose between their medication and basic needs, such as food and utilities. The health concerns of our elderly Medicare beneficiaries are urgent, and I am proud that we have now passed legislation that will arm the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services with an additional tool to address these needs.

The intent of H.R. 4 is to open a path of negotiation of drug prices to remove the burden of affordability from the shoulders of our elder-

ly. This bill should neither tie the hands of private drug plans, nor create unnecessary hurdles for the pharmaceutical companies that develop life-saving medicine. Rather, the intent is to give the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services the needed authority to effectively and efficiently offer affordable prices to seniors.

We need Medicare Part D to be a benefit, and not a burden, to our friends and neighbors who use it. The fact that these individuals could get prescription drugs cheaper through Canada, Drugstore.com, or Costco is not only a disservice to Americans who trust Medicare for the healthcare they need—it is not good public policy. Every year, premiums and drug prices rise, and seniors are forced to bear more and more of the cost of their healthcare.

However, we cannot let this bill and its provisions become the tool that kills the goose that lays the golden eggs. The United States is the international leader of pharmaceutical and medical innovation. Every year, we achieve numerous historical breakthroughs in medicine and treatment that improve the quality of life of millions of Americans, due to the research and dedication of our pharmaceutical companies and their tens of thousands of employees. It is because of American innovation that an HIV/AIDS or cancer diagnosis is no longer a death sentence; that an athlete and an amputee can be the same person; and that a child with asthma does not have to stay in after school.

Research and development are costly. Inherent in each pursuit is a great amount of risk. On average, only one out of every 10,000 possible medications successfully makes it through development and Food and Drug Administration approval. It can take more than 15 years and \$800 million to develop just one drug. Congress should not allow any public policy to move forward that would indirectly hinder innovation or advances in medicine. As we make needed improvements in the Medicare Part D plan, we must ensure that scientific advances continue. Therefore, we must balance our encouragement of competition and innovation in the private market with public health.

I believe that with H.R. 4 we are one step closer to answering the needs of our elderly. We have a real chance to provide a more accessible, affordable, and effective drug benefit to our seniors. Americans are living longer, healthier lives than ever before, and it is our duty to ensure that this trend continues.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HOME OWNERSHIP FOR AMERICA'S VETERANS ACT OF 2007

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 18, 2007

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Home Ownership for America's Veterans Act of 2007 along with my distinguished colleague from California, Congressman WALLY HERGER.

The Home Ownership for America's Veterans Act of 2007 corrects an inequity in the federal Qualified Veterans Mortgage Bonds (QVMB) program available to a number of states for the purpose of financing home loans