

teaching children's choral music either at church, in Glendale elementary schools, or at the Los Angeles Children's Chorus. Her community involvement has included serving on the boards of Glendale Healthy Kids, Verdugo Workforce Investment, Los Angeles County School Trustees Association, and the League of Women Voters, as well as on the Glendale Arts and Culture Commission.

Before her election to the Glendale Unified School District Board of Education in 2005, Joylene worked locally as a substitute teacher and completed graduate work in education. She has since served as the Board's President, working to find ways to enrich and increase student learning through arts instruction and career-technical education opportunities. In the face of drastic state funding cuts and in an effort to ensure budgetary support for educational priorities, Joylene has facilitated creative, courageous, and cooperative community conversations about what is most essential for student success.

Joylene's steadfast dedication and selfless service are an invaluable addition to the legacy of Women's History Month. With gratitude and admiration, I ask all Members of Congress to join me in honoring an extraordinary woman of California's 29th Congressional District, Mrs. Joylene Wagner.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. NEIL ABERCROMBIE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 19, 2009

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Madam Speaker, I regret that I missed rollcall vote No. 107 through 115. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall votes 107 and 109 through 115. I would have voted "no" on rollcall vote 108.

INTRODUCTION OF THE UNIVERSAL RIGHT TO VOTE BY MAIL ACT

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 19, 2009

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Universal Right to Vote by Mail Act of 2009—a bill to allow any eligible voter to vote by mail in a federal election if he or she chooses to do so.

In my home state of California, voters already have this right. California is one of the twenty-eight states that already provide this convenient alternative to voters.

While I love the ritual of going to the polls to vote, I know that getting to the polls on Election Day is often difficult. For some, it's impossible.

That is why I have introduced a bill that builds upon the growing trend of states to bring the polls to the voters. I believe we should try to meet our constituents halfway by increasing access to the electoral process.

What I am proposing is not new or even untested. States ranging from my home state of California, to Wisconsin, to North Carolina, to Maine have already adopted this voter-friendly policy.

With mail voting, citizens can vote from the convenience of their own homes. They will have more time to mull over their choices and make informed decisions, and they will be able to do so on their own terms.

Not surprisingly, studies have shown that some of the biggest supporters of voting by mail are parents, who must schedule time to go to the polls around so many other obligations.

Studies have also indicated that adding the option to vote by mail does not create a partisan advantage for one political party over the other.

Republicans and Democrats both benefit from similar increases in voter turnout when voters are given the choice to mail in their ballots.

In fact, overwhelming support for voting by mail is consistent across nearly every demographic—including age, income level, race, education, employment status and ideology. It is a win-win for all Americans.

After adopting a universal right to vote by mail system in 1978, California saw a thirty percent increase in the use of mail-in ballots.

Other states that have implemented this policy have seen the same degree of support from voters, which is why it is hardly surprising that States offering the option of mail-in ballots often experience greater voter participation.

There is also an extremely low incidence of fraud with voting by mail when compared to other methods of voting.

As the former President of the League of Women Voters of San Diego, I care deeply about the integrity of our electoral system.

Twenty-eight states have already proven this option works, and it is safe. It is time to give voters in the remaining states this convenient, secure and affordable alternative.

While I am proud to be from a state where citizens already have this right, I believe democracy works best when all citizens have an equal opportunity to have their voices heard.

Right now, an uneven playing field exists between states that already offer the option of mail-in ballots and states that do not.

When the same election is more accessible to voters in California than it is to voters in other states, the system is unfair.

States that fail to offer this choice stand to compromise their leverage in federal elections by curbing the greatest level of voter participation.

We should follow the lead of over half of our nation's states and ensure a uniformity of rights for all voters.

I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in supporting this effort to strengthen the democratic process and give American voters the choices they deserve.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 19, 2009

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, on Monday, March 16, 2009, and Tuesday, March 17, 2009, I was not present for 6 recorded votes. Had I been present, I would have voted the following way: Roll No. 125, yea; Roll No. 126, yea; Roll No. 127, yea; Roll No. 128, yea; Roll No. 129, yea; Roll No. 130, yea.

HONORING DAVID S. GALLATIN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF EXCELA HEALTH

HON. JOHN P. MURTHA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 19, 2009

Mr. MURTHA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to David S. Gallatin, Chief Executive Officer of Excelsa Health. I would like at this time to draw attention to some of his accomplishments and contributions to our health system and the community of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.

David S. Gallatin has long been associated with Excelsa Health and its predecessors, Westmoreland Health System and Westmoreland Hospital. He served, in a voluntary capacity, on the Board of Trustees from 1982 through 2004. During his time on the Board, he was a member of the Executive Committee (1985 to 2004); served as a member of the Finance Committee (1990 to 2004); filled the role of Vice Chairman (1994 to 1999), was named Chairman from 1999 to 2004.

In January 2003, the Westmoreland Health System Board of Trustees voted unanimously to name David S. Gallatin as its Chief Executive Officer, after having served as Interim Chief Executive Officer, while continuing his role as Board of Trustees Chairman until his term expired June 30, 2004.

David S. Gallatin, cited for his leadership skills and vision, helped devise and implement a turnaround plan for the health system, one that resulted in meaningful growth, capital strength, physician recruitment, and retention of a professional work force. He championed the acquisition of the latest clinical technologies, thereby advancing the quality of care for the residents of Westmoreland County and beyond. Further, he, among others, spearheaded the successful merger of Westmoreland Health System with Latrobe Area Hospital, and later, Mercy Jeannette Hospital, creating and expanding the county's largest and only health care provider, Excelsa Health. His vision of a distributed delivery model assures local access to advanced health care, which is evident in Excelsa Health's Centers for Excellence, state of the art Emergency Departments and nationally recognized Stroke Prevention programs.

Therefore, I join in commending David S. Gallatin for his history of hard work and service to our health system and the communities it serves.

RECOGNIZING NAACP MID-MANHATTAN BRANCH'S SALUTE TO NAACP WOMEN OF EXCELLENCE

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 19, 2009

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, today I rise to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing NAACP Mid-Manhattan Branch of the Metropolitan Council of NAACP Branches as they pay tribute to the everlasting accomplishments and contributions of the NAACP Women of Excellence in celebration of Women's History Month and the Centennial Anniversary of the

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

NAACP Mid-Manhattan Branch honors the Honorable Hazel N. Duker, President of the New York State Conference of NAACP Branches; the Honorable Mildred Roxborough of the NAACP National Development Department; the Honorable Laura D. Blackburne, Counsel for the New York State Conference of NAACP Branches & NAACP Special Contribution Fund; the Honorable Paula Brown Edme of the NAACP National Development Department; the Honorable Gloria Benfield, Membership Chair for New York State Conference of NAACP Branches; and the Honorable Shirley Stewart Farmer, Co-Founder of the NAACP Mid-Manhattan Branch. As a Life Member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, I am proud to join Mid-Manhattan Branch in saluting these NAACP Women of Excellence.

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premiere advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors. The Mid-Manhattan Branch recently celebrated its 40th Anniversary since its founding in 1966.

In the mid 1960s a group of citizens, concerned that there was no NAACP Branch in the Mid-Manhattan area, met for several months to plan a branch. Over 500 letters co-signed by Roy Wilkins and Ralph Bunche, invited hopefully interested residents to a meeting at Freedom House (120 Wall Street, New York, NY).

For forty years, the Mid-Manhattan Branch has been an advocate for all its citizens in the struggle for civil rights and equality. Today, the Branch plays an active role in confronting the gaps and disparities in healthcare, economics, education funding, Criminal Justice, diversity in the Courts and in the Judiciary.

Their efforts continue in voter education, registration and mobilization, as well as youth development and enrichment programs. Today, the Mid-Manhattan Branch has over 600 members, with eight working Committees (Education, Health, Fundraising, Legal Redress, Membership, Civic Engagement, Veteran Affairs, and Youth Council).

A TRIBUTE TO DR. SONYA
MKRYAN

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 19, 2009

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Sonya Mkryan of Altadena, California. Every March we celebrate Women's History Month in recognition of the contributions and the sacrifices made by our nation's women. Accordingly it is my privilege to highlight Dr. Mkryan as a woman whose extraordinary efforts are vital to my district.

Sonya was born in Sanjak, the French mandate of Syria, and emigrated at age ten to Soviet Armenia with her parents and three siblings. By the time she travelled from Armenia to the United States with her husband and three children in 1979, she had obtained a PhD in Technical Studies and worked for two

decades as a scientist and researcher at the Armenian Academy of Sciences. Her first job in America was as a mechanical inspector for Robertshaw Industrial Products.

As an educator and geophysicist, Sonya has taught in the Pasadena Unified School District as a professor of physics at Polytechnic Institute. For the past twenty-three years she has contributed her knowledge and experience to the County of Los Angeles' Department of Public Social Services in hopes of serving society for the better.

A woman of multiple talents, Sonya is also an artist and a writer. Over the last twenty years she has held several solo shows and has actively participated in many group exhibitions. Aside from scientific articles published in the Russian, she has published six books of poetry and short stories: five in Armenian and the sixth in English. She is a member of the Armenian Writers Union of California and is an honorable member of the International Society of Poets.

Sonya's life story is a testament to the brilliant potential of this nation's women and her steadfast dedication and selfless service are an invaluable addition to the legacy of Women's History Month. With gratitude and admiration, I ask all Members of Congress to join me in honoring an extraordinary woman of California's 29th Congressional District, Dr. Sonya Mkryan.

CONGRESSIONAL TRIBUTE
HONORING FAY SINKIN

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 19, 2009

MR. GONZALEZ. Madam Speaker, on March 4, 2009, the world was bereft of a powerhouse environmentalist when Fay Sinkin passed away at the age of 90. Born in New York City, Fay came to San Antonio 66 years ago after marrying Bill Sinkin after he proposed on their first, blind date. Fay quickly made San Antonio her home, and the residents of the city will be forever grateful.

She joined the San Antonio Chapter of the League of Women Voters, serving as its president for several years, and was a tireless fighter for the equality of women and minorities. She was one of the first women in the city to sit on a jury, and she fought the mayor and the city council to improve the living conditions for San Antonio's Blacks and Hispanics.

The protection of the Edwards Aquifer would become her life's work. When Fay heard of the proposal to build a massive development which threatened the city's water supply, she took action. With her allies in the Edwards Aquifer Preservation Trust, she enlisted the assistance of the city's congressman, Henry B. Gonzalez, and set forth to protect her fellow citizens. The Government Canyon State Natural Area now stands where some saw only a chance at quick profit. The growth of San Antonio and the health of its citizens would not have been possible without the work of Fay Sinkin.

Fay and Bill Sinkin continued to work to improve the lives of San Antonians, Texans, and the entire country until the end of her days. Just this past January, she recalled the myriad

changes she had seen over six decades in the city, the improvements no one could have imagined when she first arrived, looked over a land so different from any she had known and declared herself home.

San Antonio was Fay Sinkin's home for 66 years. The City feels a little emptier now, but we have all lived richer, better lives because of the life of Fay Sinkin. Her life may have ended, but her contributions will live on and generations shall enjoy the fruits of her labor.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 19, 2009

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Madam Speaker, due to an illness in my family, I was unable to be in attendance on the floor of the House on March 12, 2009, and unable to record my vote on H.R. 1262.

Had I been able to cast my vote on this bill I would have voted in strong support of the Water Quality Investment Act of 2009. H.R. 1262 is a comprehensive bill that will result in a total investment in our nation's water infrastructure of \$18.7 billion over five years, this legislation will fund the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, and provide \$13.8 billion in Federal grants over five years to the Clean Water SRF to provide low-interest loans to communities for wastewater infrastructure.

Our nation's wastewater infrastructure is deteriorating and in dire need of repair. In many regions of the country, sewer systems and water infrastructure facilities were built in a different era and for much smaller populations. Many water systems have reached the end of their useful life or have been completely overwhelmed from increased use. H.R. 1262 goes a long way towards renewing the federal commitment to addressing our nation's substantial needs for water infrastructure to ensure that communities across the country have safe drinking water and effective wastewater treatment facilities.

I am pleased that this legislation has passed the House and I only regret that I was not able to be present to cast my vote in support. In addition to voting "yes" on Rollcall No. 123, I would have voted "no" on Rollcall No. 122, against the Mack Amendment to the bill, which would have removed prevailing wage provisions from the bill. I also would have voted "yes" on Rollcall No. 124, H. Res. 224, supporting the designation of March 14, 2009 as Pi Day.

PUBLIC LANDS SERVICE CORPS
ACT OF 2009

HON. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 19, 2009

Mr. GRIJALVA. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the Public Lands Service Corps Act to expand an already successful program that employs and trains thousands of young people and helps repair and restore our public lands. I am delighted that my colleague, House Natural Resources Committee Chairman NICK RAHALL, has agreed to join me as an original cosponsor of this important bill.