

those who need work, few are closer to what is happening on our streets and in our neighborhoods than these organizations. People trust them, communities rely on them, and we will help them.

We will also reach out to leaders and scholars around the world to foster a more productive and peaceful dialogue on faith. I am not naive. I don't expect divisions to disappear overnight, nor do I believe that the long-held views and conflicts will suddenly vanish. But I do believe that if we can talk to one another openly and honestly, and if perhaps we allow God's grace to enter into that space that lies between us, then the old rifts between us will start to mend, and new partnerships will begin to emerge. In a world that grows smaller by the day, perhaps we can begin to crowd out the destructive forces of excessive zealotry and make room for the healing power of understanding. This is my hope. This is my prayer. I believe this good is possible because my faith teaches me that all is possible, but I also believe because of what I have seen and what I have lived.

I was not raised in a particularly religious household. I had a father who was born a Muslim but became an atheist, grandparents who were non-practicing Methodists and Baptists, and a mother who was skeptical of organized religion—even though she was the kindest, most spiritual person I have ever known. She was the one who taught me as a child to love, and to understand, and to do unto others as I would want done. I didn't become a Christian until many years later when I moved to the South Side of Chicago after college. It happened not because of indoctrination or a sudden revelation but because I spent month after month working with church folks who simply wanted to help neighbors who were down on their luck, no matter what they looked like or where they came from or who they prayed to. It was on those streets, in those neighborhoods that I first heard God's spirit beckon me. It was there that I felt called to a higher purpose—His purpose. In different ways and in different forms, it is that spirit and sense of purpose that drew friends and neighbors to that first prayer breakfast in Seattle all those years ago, during another trying time for our nation. It is what led friends and neighbors from so many faiths and nations here today. We come to break bread and to give thanks, but most of all to seek guidance. And to rededicate ourselves to the mission of love and service that lies at the heart of all humanity. St. Augustine once said: "Pray as though everything depends on God and work as though everything depends on you."

So let us pray together on this February morning, but let us also work together in all the days and months ahead. For it is only through common struggle and common effort, as brothers and sisters, that we fulfill our highest purpose as beloved children of God. I ask that you join me in that effort and I also ask that you pray for myself, for Michelle, for my family and for the continued perfection of our nation. Thank you so much, God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

Congressman EHLERS. Thank you very much, Mr. President and Michelle, for being with us. This is an auspicious occasion. As I had said earlier, this prayer breakfast started with President Eisenhower and every year since then it has been graced by the presence of the President of the United States. It has been a real blessing to have the President and the First Lady here today.

Congressman SHULER: Welcome back Casting Crowns.

CASTING CROWNS: [sing] Who am I that the Lord of all the earth would care to know my name, would care to feel my hurt. Who am I

that the bright and morning star would choose to light the way from my ever wandering heart but not because of who I am but because of what you've done and not because of what I've done but because of who you are and I am a flower quickly fading here today and gone tomorrow a wave tossed in the ocean, the vapor in the wind, still you hear me when I'm calling but you catch me when I'm falling and you told me who I am, I am yours.

Who am I that the eye that's seen the sin would look on me with love and watch me rise again. Who am I that the voice that calmed the sea would call out through the rain and calm the storm in me, not because of who I am but because of what you've done, not because of what I've done but because of who you are.

And I am a flower quickly fading, here today and gone tomorrow, a wave tossed in the ocean, a vapor in the wind, still you hear me when I'm calling, Lord you catch me when I'm falling and you told me who I am, I am yours.

Whom shall I fear, whom shall I fear, because I am yours.

Congressman EHLERS: Thank you again Casting Crowns for your words of faith and encouragement, we appreciate your participation today.

I hope that all of you have been uplifted and inspired by what you have seen up here—people of different parties, nations, races, generations and backgrounds coming together. As the Prime Minister and the President both said, faith can be a tremendous force for good in this modern world and we all need it—all the help we can get. It all begins with obeying the simple commands that Jesus talked about. Loving God with everything we have and loving our neighbors as ourselves. This is the first and great commandment. We in the Congress are trying to do that and I hope that you will commit to do that more and more in your daily lives. We ask that you will also join in prayer every single day and pray for us in the Congress and in other agencies of leadership around the world as we all try to serve God above all and to serve people and to keep them safe and secure in their lives.

Congressman SHULER: Now to close the event, I am honored to turn to a great American hero—from the age of 23 he was a national leader in the struggle for civil rights and for more than four decades he has been a shining star of justice. To present our closing prayer, the Honorable Congressman JOHN LEWIS of Georgia.

Congressman JOHN LEWIS: My beloved brothers and sisters, let us pray. Lord our God, this morning we stand before you as citizens of the world, as leaders of many great nations, and as humbled public servants, tasked with a powerful responsibility. Lord my God, your people are suffering in teeming cities and in the distant corners of the earth—too many of your children are hungry and naked, homeless and poor, too many are sick, too many forgotten, too many are locked in the struggles of war and suffering alone in silent despair. Lord, we stand before you today as a human family in need of your help. Please Lord, give us the faith to be still and know that you are God. Give us the faith to trust that you are with us at all times. Lord God, give us the power to see that your light shines brightest in times of the greatest need. Lord, give us a will to seek your divine understanding in every decision that we make. Thank you Lord for sending us a man, a leader and a President Barack Obama, we ask for a special blessing on his behalf. Guide his steps and please direct his path. Hold him and his family in the palm of your magnificent and all powerful hand. Let your angels watch

over them, protect them and be their preferred and invisible God. Thank you Lord, thank you this morning for sending men and women who prepare to do thy will. Pour out your blessing upon us all. Give us the power to do what is right, what is fair and what is just. Please Lord show us how we can bring peace to a violent world. Let the day come when we can lay down the tools and instruments of war and study war no more. Lord, give us the will and the way to build and not destroy. Give us the capacity to be reconciled and not divide. Give us the strength to love and not to hate, that these gifts be made manifest in all that we do and in every way that we serve your people. We ask all these things in Thy divine name. This is our plea. This is our cry. This is our prayer. Amen.

Congressman EHLERS: Go in peace, love God. Serve God and your neighbor.

#### TRIBUTE FOR MR. CHARLES R. COUSINS

#### HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 14, 2009

Ms. DeGETTE. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the extraordinary life and exceptional accomplishments of Charles R. Cousins. Charles Cousins has been an important part of the Denver African-American business community. A remarkable citizen, he merits our recognition and esteem as his leadership, service and lifelong devotion to the city of Denver has done much to enrich our community. His license plate: "IOU-00" reflected this self-made success story.

Charles Cousins was born in Denver on New Year's Day, 1918, delivered by Justina Ford, the first African-American doctor in Colorado. The first son in a family of four daughters, he came to be called "Brother" by family and friends, a name that stuck throughout his entire life. His parents, Charles L. and Alta raised a family of six children in the Five Points neighborhood of Denver. As a youngster, Charles started a lifetime of hard work making deliveries on his bicycle for drug stores and dry cleaners and catching worms in the summertime to sell to anglers at City Park.

Charles Cousins began his business career while a student attending Manual High School in 1936. At Manual High, Charles found a way to provide music for the school dances of African American students that were segregated from those of white students. He did the same while a student at Colorado State University, beginning his long career in the jukebox industry.

When white-owned jukebox businesses tried to take over the restaurants and bars where his machines were located, Cousins purchased the buildings, beginning his successful career in real estate. He was a major investor in Denver rental properties and ultimately became a community philanthropist. He owned properties throughout the metro area, including more than 30 buildings in the Five Points area.

A lifetime jazz fan, Cousins is credited with being a key financial backer of the Five Points neighborhood's internationally-recognized jazz scene. Known as the "Godfather of Jazz" in Five Points, he made the famous Rossonian Hotel a must-stop venue for African American

musicians who were barred from other hotels because of racial discrimination.

Raised in the Five Points neighborhood of Denver, Cousins never had a desire to leave his beloved community. His many associations include the Five Points Media Center and the Five Points Business Association. Cousins willed the Simpson Hotel at 28th and Welton Street to the Five Points Business Association upon his death. The organization has plans to establish a work-development center and art gallery on the site.

Appointed in 1979 by Denver Mayor Bill McNichols, Cousins served on the Denver city zoning board for 23 years and served for 20 years as a member of the U.S. Olympic Organizing Committee.

Charles Cousins was also a great advocate of education. He was instrumental in the development of Cole Junior High School's extension program that provided alternative education to students who were not able to learn and achieve in a traditional school environment. He also funded many scholarships for college students. He was a fixture at Manual High School and was honored as the school's "Student of the Century" during their 100th anniversary celebration in 1994.

Charles was most proud of his civic work in the community and received numerous awards from various non-profit groups. He was a charter member of the Beta Theta Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

In 2003, Charles Cousins was honored with a plaza that bears his name at the new Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library in Five Points. He joined his longtime friends, former Tuskegee Airman and Denver Public Schools board member Omar Blair, and former Denver City Councilman Elvin Caldwell in the naming honors of the then newest branch of the Denver Public Library.

Charles Cousins is survived by five siblings and his wife of 53 years, Dorothy. His daughter, Dr. Renee Cousins, is a Denver pediatrician.

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REMEMBERING THE LIFE AND  
WORK OF VIVIAN SMITH

**HON. LINCOLN DAVIS**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 14, 2009*

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, it is one of my honors as a Member of Congress to pay tribute to the fine people that come along and care for our neighbors and assist our communities with their time, love, patience, sweat, financial tidings, and most importantly, compassion.

Vivian Smith, a daughter, sister, mother, grandmother and wife, served her neighbors in Scott County with that famous Tennessee volunteer spirit.

Vivian's resume of carrying for others is as long as it is distinguished. An eight year cancer survivor, Vivian served as Co-Chair of the Relay for Life and was a member of the Leadership Council and Support Group for the American Cancer Society of Scott County.

Serving the Sixth District Scott County School Board member, Vivian was also the first in the history of Scott County to obtain Level 5 Master status, awarded the National School Board Association's Recognition Award

and served on the All Tennessee School Board. She also served on the Scott County Finance Committee, Scott County Fairest of the Fair, Tennessee Scholars advisory committee, Scott County Museum advisory council, Tennessee Technology Cosmetology advisory board, Appalachian Habitat for Humanity, Clinch-Powell Educational Cooperative, Housing Opportunities of People (HOPE), Salvation Army Scott County Unit, Scott County 4-H, Leadership Scott and Youth Leadership Scott and Leadership Upper Cumberland.

Having retired from the Scott County government as Solid Waste Director, Vivian was most proud of organizing and participating in the "Scott County Looks Good to Me" and "I Spy" programs, which were notably successful anti-littering programs.

For her unwavering dedication to volunteer service she was presented the Humanitarian Award from the Scott County Chamber of Commerce. Shortly afterwards, she was presented with the Governor's Volunteer Star Award from the State of Tennessee by Governor Bredesen and was inducted into the Scott County Boys and Girls Club Hall of Fame.

Vivian Smith will be sorely missed and fondly remembered for her grace, compassion and dedication to volunteerism. It has been said that she loved to serve because of the love she had for the people of Scott County. Well, Vivian, the feeling was and will forever be mutual.

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TRIBUTE TO METROPOLITAN  
AIRPORTS

**HON. KEITH ELLISON**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 14, 2009*

Mr. ELLISON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Metropolitan Airports Commission's board members and staff for Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport's recent recognition as the Best Airport in North America and Third Best in the World in its size category.

The Airports Council International granted this award to the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport based on feedback from air travelers during the 2008 Airport Quality Survey. The 2008 airport rankings reflect the responses of more than 200,000 passengers who filled out questionnaires at 108 airports.

Minnesota is well known for the strong work ethic of its residents, and their commitment to ensuring Minnesota continues to be one of the best places to live, work and visit. Those characteristics form the foundation for the Metropolitan Airports Commission's latest outstanding accomplishment.

Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport serves as Minnesota's front door for those who come to the state for business or pleasure. I invite you and all the members of this esteemed Congress to come experience the hospitality Minnesota is famous for from the moment their plane touches down on the runways of Minneapolis-St. Paul.

In closing Madam Speaker, I would like to once again extend my deepest congratulations to the Minneapolis Airports Commission hard work and great accomplishment.

VIETNAM HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

**HON. ZOE LOFGREN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 14, 2009*

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I rise in honor of Vietnam Human Rights Day and to recognize the daily struggle for freedom in Vietnam.

Fifteen years ago, Congress designated May 11th as Vietnam Human Rights Day, recognizing the plight of the people of Vietnam under the repression of their communist government. I am sad to say that these conditions persist to this day.

Just last week, Vietnam's human rights record was examined by the United Nations Human Rights Council, under the Universal Periodic Review. As part of this proceeding, numerous non-governmental organizations reported a wide range of serious abuses.

Journalists, dissidents, and whistleblowers are imprisoned merely for questioning government policies in public or calling attention to corruption or other wrongdoing. Citizens are arrested, detained, and imprisoned without due process of law. Independent political parties and labor unions are banned. In all of this, the Vietnamese government scorns the rule of law, violating its international human rights obligations and, often, its own constitution.

Abuses of religious freedom are also a serious problem. In its Annual Report for 2009, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has again called for Vietnam to be designated as a Country of Particular Concern by the State Department. I commend the Commission for making this recommendation, and urge the State Department to follow its advice.

The United States granted Vietnam Permanent Normal Trade Relations in 2006. Since then, its already abysmal human rights record has gotten even worse. Once the Vietnamese government got the trade agreement that it wanted, it felt free to escalate its repression.

It is time for the United States to consider how it can use its considerable leverage to assist those who are striving for human rights and democracy in Vietnam. I rise to honor their efforts and sacrifices.

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INTRODUCTION OF THE PRE-AP-  
PRENTICE AND APPRENTICESHIP  
TRAINING ACT OF 2009

**HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 14, 2009*

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, the Pre-Apprentice and Apprenticeship Training Act of 2009 makes mandatory the one half of one percent of funds now available under 23 U.S.C. 140(b) to ensure federal highway funds are used to provide on-the-job training and other services to combat a serious training deficit that builds in the effects of past discrimination and that is necessary because the current cohort of journeymen and other skilled workers is retiring. Currently, only 17 states use fund previously made available for training and even that participation is spotty. The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee,