

under the strong leadership of Chairman JIM OBERSTAR has already taken the first important steps to include training as an essential part of building our infrastructure when he included, at my request, \$3 million specifically for training in the General Services Administration stimulus authorization this year. He also included \$20 million for federal highways training programs.

Today, the official unemployment rate already is at 15 percent for blacks and 8 percent for whites, a typical gap throughout economic cycles. Most analysts predict that there is more unemployment to come. This surface transportation reauthorization is also necessary to finally afford the opportunity for minorities and women to gain their first foothold in the high-wage construction industry.

More than 25 years ago, the federal government abruptly ended the government-sponsored labor-management remediation program designed to address training and exclusionary practices in the construction industry. Although deliberate exclusion has largely receded, elimination of this program has left a significant training deficit for workers in skilled construction trades, which is largely responsible for the white male profile of the construction industry today. This training deficit guarantees that infrastructure jobs will continue to go to trained, mostly white male construction workers, who now have faced a long period of unemployment and job scarcity. Particularly considering a steep rise in unemployment for minorities and whites alike, this bill will also help avoid racial tension.

Because of the scarcity of trained workers during boom times, a few union programs had even begun training ex-offenders as pre-apprentices and apprentices to do construction work. This bill will mount a major national infrastructure program focused on job creation with a well-designed component of pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs that can lead to high-paying journeyman jobs for the new workers who will be needed in the future. And it will assure compliance with the 14th Amendment and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which bar discrimination in the use of government dollars.

More than 25 years ago the federal government prematurely ended the successful government-sponsored labor-management remediation program that addressed exclusionary practices and lack of training in the construction industry. Without a significant and systematic government effort, a serious training deficit has remained and continued to build. This training deficit is largely responsible for the white male profile of the construction industry today. Unless training is a strong component of the highway and transit reauthorization, underrepresentation of minorities and women will deepen.

Training is a major barrier, particularly for African Americans and women in construction. Congress recognized the training deficit and encouraged the use of one half of one percent for training in the use of highway funds. Because use of federal funds was not mandated for training, only 17 states have chosen, intermittently, to fund training programs, since the program was authorized in 1998. Without appropriate training, federal funds will exacerbate the training deficit among previously excluded groups and others who have not had access to training in the construction trades.

A recent study of African Americans, in particular, in the construction industry in eighteen

metropolitan areas found that they are underrepresented in construction jobs. If African Americans were employed in construction at the same rate that they are employed in the overall workforce, the study estimated that 42,700 more African Americans would be employed in construction in the eighteen metropolitan areas.

The official unemployment rate as of April 2009 already is 15 percent for African Americans and 8.8 percent for whites. This disparity has been typical throughout economic cycles.

A major, well-designed component in the surface transportation reauthorization bill for pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs can lead to high-paying journeyman jobs, where, in good times and scarce, labor supply has developed.

Congress must assure compliance with the 14th Amendment and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which bar discrimination in the use of government dollars.

#### CELEBRATING ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

#### HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 14, 2009*

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I am proud to support the House Resolution celebrating May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

As we continue to struggle through one of the deepest economic crises in recent history, we must not forget to recognize and appreciate the contributions of the Asian Pacific Islander American (APIA) communities of our great country.

If one looks at the long history of the Asian American experience, they will undoubtedly see a collective story of perseverance and triumph. They will also see that this story is ongoing, and is defined by the tremendous contributions that Asian and Pacific Islander Americans continue to make.

They will see the earliest Asian immigrants, who in spite of being completely excluded from American citizenship and its basic protections, shouldered the labor to build a railroad system and support a growing agricultural sector that changed the face of America.

They will see the countless Japanese Americans, who despite being interned, stripped of their hard-earned wealth and forced to rebuild their lives, served their country faithfully and without question.

They will see the numerous Asian Pacific Islander Americans, who despite all that has been endured, now serve as exemplary public servants leading our county. From city councilors, to the President of the United States, who grew up in Indonesia and Hawaii, the APIA community deserves recognition and has much to be proud about.

Finally, they will see that despite all that has been accomplished, despite everything that there is to be proud of, we cannot lose sight of the fact that much remains to be done. We must continue to help the many Asian Pacific Islander Americans who endure racism, struggle against poverty and are fighting for equal access to the fundamental institutions of our country.

America has always been a reflection of its people. As we recognize May as Asian Amer-

ican Heritage Month, let us recognize that America would not be the grand nation it is today without our friends in the Asian Pacific Islander American communities.

HONORING PETER L. LITRENTA

#### HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 14, 2009*

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Peter L. Litrenta, a husband, father, 25-year Navy veteran and civic leader with a passion for San Diego, its waterfront and its people. Pete, as he was affectionately known, peacefully passed away in his Coronado home on April 22, surrounded by his loving family. He lived a full and meaningful life, making countless contributions to San Diego and serving as an inspiration and role model to all.

Pete was born in Racine, Wisconsin on April 25, 1942. He attended the University of Notre Dame, earning a BA in Communications in 1964. He began his Navy career after graduation, later earning an MA in Public Relations from Boston University in 1972.

Not long after his 23rd birthday, Pete met the love of his life, Linda. Theirs was a fairytale romance. Pete and Linda married just four months after they first met and celebrated their 43rd anniversary just five months ago. While Pete's life took him all over the world, San Diego was Pete's home. It is where he and Linda raised their three wonderful daughters, Danielle, LyAnne and Katie. Family was Pete's first and only true love.

But Pete did have other passions: Notre Dame football, the United States Navy, and San Diego, just to name a few.

Pete's Navy Career marched alongside history, from the Gulf of Tonkin incident to the terrorist bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut. Mr. Litrenta organized Beirut the news bureau, serving as spokesperson for the Marines when they landed in 1982. In 1986, he developed and implemented the San Diego Rally Against Drugs, mobilizing over 35,000 people to parade down Broadway to bring awareness to the dangers of drug use.

After retiring from the Navy, Pete worked for the Chamber of Commerce and then for the San Diego Port Tenants Association. He became intimately involved in nearly all aspects of San Diego's social, civic and philanthropic endeavors. Pete's influence on San Diego is everywhere. If you watched the Holiday Bowl, Pete helped select the teams on the field. If you gazed upon the waterfront, you will see the USS Midway Museum, which Pete helped bring to our port. If you saw Dennis Conner defend the America's Cup, Pete served on the Organizing Committee in charge of media and community relations.

Whether volunteering or working, Pete was intimately connected to the community. He served as President of the San Diego Fleet Week Foundation and the Coronado Schools Foundation. Pete was a member of the Mayor's BRAC Task Force, served on the Board of the Chamber of Commerce, the San Diego USO, the San Diego Convention and Visitors' Bureau, the USS Midway Museum, the San Diego Taxpayers' Association, and the Holiday & Poinsettia Bowls. At times, it seemed as if