

Americans have made to the United States in the past and that they continue to make today.

One of the most recent contributions of the Hispanic community came when Sonia Sotomayor was nominated and confirmed to the Supreme Court, becoming the first Latino to serve on our Nation's highest court. Other history-making Hispanic Americans include the Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis, and the Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar. By making these nominations, President Obama showed his commitment to have executive and judicial branches that reflect the diversity of our Nation and include the voice of the Hispanic community.

But the contributions of Hispanic Americans are not limited to the executive or judicial branches. Today, we have over 20 Hispanic Members of Congress. Nydia Velázquez was the first Puerto Rican elected to Congress in 1992 and she has since become the first Hispanic woman to chair a full committee. Congresswoman LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD became the first Mexican-American woman elected to Congress in 1992. The 111th Congress would not be the same diverse, dynamic body without the input of its Latino Members.

Mr. Speaker, we need to look to the Federal Government for evidence of how Hispanic Americans contribute to this country. The 37th Congressional District of California, which I am privileged to represent, is home to a considerable number of Latinos who are making a difference every day.

My city is a city of heroes, of people who work hard to better themselves but who never forget where they come from. I want to share an amazing story with you today about one of our local heroes, Leslie Jimenez. Leslie overcame adversity and graduated from Compton High School, a school that at that time had a very low rate of graduating seniors. Not only did Leslie graduate, but she went on to attend and graduate from Harvard University, too. This fall, Leslie returned to Compton and began teaching advanced placement biology and anatomy and physiology through Teach for America. Leslie took her success and chose to give back to her community and serve as a role model to other Latino students.

Mr. Speaker, I have much hope for the future because Hispanic Americans and all Americans are working together to ensure equality and advancement not only of the Latino community, but of all communities. I look forward to celebrating the accomplishments of Hispanic Americans this year and for years to come.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 783, resolution recognizing Hispanic Heritage Month and celebrating the vast contributions of Hispanic Americans to the culture of the United States.

I'd like to thank my friend Representative MARIO DIAZ-BALART, for sponsoring this important resolution; which I am proud to cosponsor.

Economically, culturally, and politically, Latinos are a vital part of this Nation.

The Hispanic community in America is over 47.5 million people strong, and has an annual purchasing power of well over a trillion dollars.

From science, to sports, business, government, and the arts, Hispanic Americans have made significant contributions that have strengthened our Nation and our culture. And earlier this year, the Hispanic community continued to make history with the confirmation of

Justice Sonia Sotomayor as the first Hispanic to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court.

As former chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, it gives me great pleasure to see the continued progress and growth of our Hispanic American community.

I urge my colleagues to recognize the importance of the Hispanic community to our Nation, and vote in favor of the Hispanic Heritage Month resolution.

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, I urge the passage of H. Res. 783, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would simply ask that Members on both sides of the aisle join with the gentleman from Florida in supporting H. Res. 783, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SALAZAR). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 783.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

NATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 729) expressing support for designation of a "National Firefighters Memorial Day" to honor and celebrate the firefighters of the United States.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 729

Whereas firefighters are often the first to respond to an emergency, whether the emergency is a fire, transportation accident, natural disaster, act of terrorism, medical emergency, or spill of hazardous materials;

Whereas firefighters tirelessly promote fire prevention and safety to protect our Nation;

Whereas people often do not recognize the important and dangerous work of firefighters;

Whereas the United States has more than 1,000,000 firefighters, 71 percent of whom are volunteer firefighters and approximately 15,000 of whom are female;

Whereas there are 1,600,000 fires, on average, in the United States each year;

Whereas approximately 30,000 fire departments operate within the United States;

Whereas a fire department responds to a fire in the United States every 20 seconds;

Whereas fire departments respond to nearly 2,000,000 calls in the United States each year without hesitation;

Whereas approximately 100 firefighters die in the United States each year in the line of duty;

Whereas 343 New York City Fire Department firefighters died in the line of duty at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001;

Whereas an estimated 32,500 structure fires were intentionally set in the United States in 2007, resulting in 295 civilian deaths;

Whereas 103 on-duty firefighter fatalities occurred in 2008–2009 on the fire ground, 11 at other emergency calls, 39 while responding to or returning from alarms, 7 during training activities, and 17 during other on-duty activities;

Whereas approximately 3,600 people die in the United States each year as a result of fires, and over 19,000 are injured;

Whereas October 9 is the anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, in which more than 300 people lost their lives;

Whereas President Harding declared the week of October 9 to be "Fire Prevention Week" in 1922;

Whereas the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service takes place each year at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland, on the Sunday before Fire Prevention Week;

Whereas the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation sponsors the annual memorial service to pay tribute to firefighters who died in the line of duty during the previous year;

Whereas given its significance, the Sunday before Fire Prevention Week would be an ideal day to commemorate Federal, State, and local firefighters killed or disabled in the line of duty;

Whereas the Congress created the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation to honor America's fallen firefighters and their families; and

Whereas in 2001, President George W. Bush signed Public Law 107–051 requiring that the flag of the United States at all public buildings be flown at half staff in honor of the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service in Emmitsburg, Maryland: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) urges the President to designate a day as "National Firefighters Memorial Day" to commemorate Federal, State, and local firefighters killed or disabled in the line of duty; and

(2) calls upon the people of the United States to observe such a day with appropriate ceremonies and respect.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and add any extraneous materials.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am proud to present House Resolution 729 for consideration. This resolution seeks to honor our brave firefighters across the United States, as well as commemorate those firefighters who have been disabled or

killed in the line of duty by expressing the support of the House of Representatives for the designation of a National Firefighters Memorial Day.

The measure before us was introduced on September 10 by my colleague, Representative TED POE of Texas, and enjoys the support of nearly 60 Members of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, according to the National Fire Protection Association, there are over 1.1 million firefighters serving throughout more than 30,000 fire departments across the Nation, including over 300,000 career firefighters, and over 800,000 volunteer firefighters. As we have witnessed time and again, whether in the midst of the terrorist attacks on September 11, in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, or in the face of the daily emergencies faced by our local communities, these brave men and women are always on the front lines in the event of a local, State, or national crisis, and are willing to serve and safeguard their fellow citizens, at great risk to their own personal safety.

According to the United States Fire Administration, which annually collects data on firefighter fatalities across the country, last year witnessed 118 on-duty firefighter fatalities, including the deaths of 66 volunteer firefighters and 34 career firefighters. In addition, the United States Fire Administration has provisionally reported that to date this year, there have been 77 firefighter fatalities, including deaths of two heroic firefighters from my own home State of Massachusetts, firefighter Paul J. Roberts of the Beverly fire department, and fire fighter Kevin M. Kelly of my own Boston fire department.

Notably, the bravery and self-sacrifice demonstrated by our local, State, and Federal firefighters are not limited to their public service on behalf of their fellow citizens, communities, and country here at home. Many of these exceptional public servants are currently deployed overseas in Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan, and other nations in the Middle East, as well as serving on aircraft carriers in support of our military and reconstruction missions abroad, including Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

As reported just last week by the International Association of Firefighters, 16 IAFF members are currently serving together at Kirkuk Regional Air Base in Iraq as members of the 22nd Air Force Reserve Command. Collectively, these soldiers represent 11 IAFF affiliates and constitute one of the largest numbers of IAFF members to serve together in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, our brave local, State, and Federal firefighters stand as a shining example of the public service and principle of shared sacrifice that has come to define our Nation. It is my hope that we can honor their dedication to their fellow citizens, as well as commemorate the lives of our fallen firefighters, through the passage of

House Resolution 729. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.
Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we have some important legislation before us today. House Resolution 729 expresses support for designation of a National Firefighters Memorial Day, and I am honored to be the sponsor of this legislation. Also, I want to thank Chairman TOWNS for bringing this legislation to the floor, and the other 59 cosponsors of this legislation.

The legislation is to honor the dedication and sacrifices of firefighters and the dedication they make every day to keep families and our communities safe. In 2007, there were over 1.1 million firefighters in the United States. Of these, about a third are professional firefighters in the sense that they are career firefighters. But the other 825,000 are all volunteer firefighters. What that means, Mr. Speaker, is they volunteer their services to protect the communities they live in and the people who live around those communities, but they have other jobs to support their families.

One of the volunteer fire departments in Harris County, Texas, is the Atascocita fire department. They still drive around with those reds trucks with the big American flag on the back, something that started after 9/11.

There are 30,000 fire departments that operate in the United States. It is time for the Nation to recognize and honor the bravery and create a National Firefighters Memorial Day to honor Federal, State, and local firefighters who have been killed or disabled in the line of duty. These brave men and women deserve our respect and our gratitude. The time has come for us to create a National Firefighters Memorial Day.

Congress, several years ago, created a National Law Enforcement Memorial Day that we honor and recognize even here on this Capitol grounds every May 15, and it is time that we also recognize and elevate the sacrifices that firefighters have made to a national memorial day as well.

This past Easter Sunday in Houston, Texas, we had two Houston firefighters killed in a house fire saving two people. They were Captain James Harlow who had been a veteran of the fire department for many years, and a rookie, Damian Hobbs. This happened to be his very first fire, and he was killed in that tragic incident. The people in that house were rescued, but after the fire was over with and before the two firefighters were brought from that house, other firefighters from the Houston area came to the home and assembled in two lines as their bodies were brought from the ashes of that fire.

Firefighters are a unique and rare breed. They not only protect and serve our communities, but they are very loyal to each other. The last firefighters killed in the Houston area were also important firefighters, and their names are:

Grady Burke was killed in a fire started by a man that was trying to light a crack pipe.

Kevin Kulow was killed in the El Festival ballroom in a fire set by a man who was trying to get back at his estranged wife. The building burned down, and Officer Kulow was killed.

Captain Jay Jahnke was killed in a high-rise fire in the Galleria area of Houston, Texas.

Also, two firefighters were killed while they were putting out a fire at a McDonald's restaurant in southwest Houston. Their names were Lewis Mayo and Kim Smith.

All communities are affected by fires, and all communities are affected by the fact that firefighters, men and women that wear that uniform, sometimes are disabled, injured, or killed protecting the rest of us.

Mr. Speaker, there is a fire in the United States every 20 seconds. There are 1.6 million fires in the United States every year. Some of those are caused by accident, but many of those are caused by arson. Every year there is an average of 100 firefighters somewhere in the 50 States and our territories that are killed in the line of duty, and some of those are volunteers and some of those are career firefighters. In 2008, there were 118 firefighters killed in the line of duty.

Of course we all remember September 11, 2001, which raised the awareness of the first responders in our country and what they do for the rest of us. When on September 11, 2001, as many people remember when the World Trade Center was attacked, when the Pentagon was attacked, and when there was a plane that crashed trying to protect the rest of us from an attack in Pennsylvania, someone had to respond to those tragedies, and they were our first responders.

Many of the firefighters that responded at the World Trade Center went into those buildings and never came out. Later on September 11, 2001, while many people like myself were watching the video of what was taking place specifically in New York City, observed that when those planes crashed into the World Trade Center, the north and south tower, a lot of folks, thousands of people, good people, but when those planes hit the World Trade Center, Mr. Speaker, those people were running as hard as they could to get away from that terror in the sky. There were other people that when those planes hit the World Trade Center, when they hit the Pentagon over here, they were running as hard as they could to get to that terror that occurred at the World Trade Center and at the Pentagon.

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Who were those people? Well, they were the Port Authority in New York, they were New York City police officers, and they were firefighters and emergency medical technicians.

While it is important for us to always remember the 3,000 people that were

killed on September 11, 2001, it's equally important for us to remember the hundreds that got to live because those first responders ran into those burning buildings and saved other people. Of those responders, there were 37 Port Authority officers killed, there were 23 New York City police officers, and there were 343 firefighters, including 41 of those who were emergency medical technicians. They gave their lives so that others could live.

That is what they do; that is what firefighters do. When they hear the alarm, they know they are going to danger, but because they are a special breed, a rare breed, they do that. They do that because their community and the people are important. And they rush into that fire, whether it's a home that's burning in Houston, Texas, or whether it's an attack on America in New York City. So we honor them by passing this resolution to give them a special memorial day.

Every year in October, we recognize the sacrifice and the commitment that these firefighters do for this country and for the people of this Nation.

And that's just the way it is.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to thank the gentleman for offering this resolution. I want to thank him for his kind words and eloquent words on behalf of our firefighters. I offer my own condolences to the families of Houston—the Harlow, Burke, Kulow, Jahnke, Mayo and Smith families—as well as in my own State, the Roberts family and Beverly and Kevin Kelley's family out of Local 718 in Boston because their loss has been so recent and heartfelt.

I want to also mention BILL PASCRELL of New Jersey, who on our side is a true champion of the cause of firefighters for all the reasons that the gentleman has articulated.

I thank the gentleman. And I ask all our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this resolution honoring American firefighters by passing House Resolution 729.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 729.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY AND NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 831) supporting the goals and ideals of National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month by promoting national awareness of adoption and the children in foster care awaiting families, celebrating children and families involved in adoption, recognizing current programs and efforts designed to promote adoption, and encouraging people in the United States to seek improved safety, permanency, and well-being for all children.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 831

Whereas there are nearly 500,000 children in the foster care system in the United States, approximately 130,000 of whom are waiting for families to adopt them;

Whereas nearly 54 percent of the children in foster care are age 10 or younger;

Whereas the average length of time a child spends in foster care is more than 2 years;

Whereas, for many foster children, the wait for a permanent, adoptive, "forever" family in which they are loved, nurtured, comforted, and protected seems endless;

Whereas the number of youth who "age out" of the foster care system by reaching adulthood without being placed in a permanent home has increased by more than 60 percent since 1998, as nearly 28,000 foster youth "aged out" of foster care during 2007;

Whereas every day loving and nurturing families are strengthened and expanded when committed and dedicated individuals make an important difference in the life of a child through adoption;

Whereas, while 3 in 10 people in the United States have considered adoption, a majority of them have misconceptions about the process of adopting children from foster care and the children who are eligible for adoption;

Whereas 71 percent of those who have considered adoption consider adopting children from foster care above other forms of adoption;

Whereas 45 percent of people in the United States believe that children enter the foster care system because of juvenile delinquency, when in reality the vast majority of children in the foster care system were victims of neglect, abandonment, or abuse;

Whereas 46 percent of people in the United States believe that foster care adoption is expensive, when in reality there is no substantial cost for adopting from foster care, and financial support in the form of an adoption assistance subsidy is available to adoptive families of eligible children adopted from foster care and continues after the adoption is finalized until the child is 18, so that income will not be a barrier to becoming a parent to a foster child who needs to belong to a family;

Whereas significant tax credits are available to families who adopt children with special needs;

Whereas the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, in a partnership with the Ad Council, supports a national recruitment campaign for adoptive parents;

Whereas the Collaboration to AdoptUsKids features a photolisting Website for waiting foster children and prospective adoptive fam-

ilies at www.adoptuskids.org, and in Spanish at www.adoptel.org;

Whereas National Adoption Day is a collective national effort to find permanent, loving families for children in the foster care system;

Whereas, since the first National Adoption Day in 2000, 25,000 children have joined forever families during National Adoption Day;

Whereas in 2008, adoptions were finalized for over 4,600 children through more than 325 National Adoption Day events in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico;

Whereas National Adoption Month celebrates the gift of adoption, recognizing the adoptive and foster families who share their hearts and homes with children in need, and raises awareness of the need for families for the many waiting children, particularly older children and teens, children of color, members of sibling groups, and children with physical and emotional challenges; and

Whereas November 2009 is National Adoption Month, and November 21, 2009, is National Adoption Day, and activities and information about both are available at www.childwelfare.gov/adoption/nam/activities.cfm; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month;

(2) recognizes that every child in foster care deserves a permanent and loving family;

(3) recognizes the significant commitment of taxpayers to support adoption, including the \$1,900,000,000 provided to support adoption through the Title IV-E Adoption Assistance program, as well as the assistance provided through the Title IV-E Foster Care program to 130,000 children waiting for adoptive families, among other important programs; and

(4) encourages the citizens of the United States to consider adoption of children in foster care who are waiting for a permanent, loving family.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 831, a resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month.

I am pleased to have worked with Congresswoman BROWN-WAITE, Congressman TIBERI, and Congressman MCDERMOTT on this legislation.

On any given day, there are over a half million children in our Nation's foster care system, of which nearly 130,000 are waiting for a permanent home through adoption. While 51,000 children found a family to call their own last year through adoption, far too many children in the foster care system remain waiting for some level of permanency.

Adoption provides children who are unable to return to their biological homes with the opportunity to be raised in a safe and loving home, providing them a level of stability that