

COMMENDING VALERIE S. VELEZ FOR COORDINATING THE PEER LEADERS UNITING STUDENTS PROGRAM (PLUS) TO ADVOCATE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PREVENTION POLICIES AND TO REDUCE TOBACCO USE AMONG YOUTH

**HON. RAUL RUIZ**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 18, 2015*

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, today I am honored to recognize Health Education Program Specialist, Valerie S. Velez for her tireless efforts to preserve the Peer Leaders Uniting Students (PLUS) program that engages student leaders to address the social issues in their community. This year they have chosen to focus on eliminating social disparities in tobacco use in the local community of Hemet, California.

Ms. Velez has been working as a Health Education Program Specialist at the Hemet Unified School District (HUSD) since 1992. She earned a Master's degree in Public Health from U.C. Berkeley and B.S. from U.C. Davis in Applied Behavioral Sciences. In addition, Ms. Velez has been responsible for coordinating a wide variety of programs, including health education and safe school climate programs for HUSD; federal initiatives from the U.S. Department of Education, and the State Tobacco Use Prevention Education grant.

The PLUS program engages middle and high school students as peer leaders promoting mutual understanding and respect on their campuses, working toward innovating solutions that create more welcoming, positive and connected school environments in which students can thrive socially and academically.

In 2014, almost 100 students from the HUSD began collaborating with the Hemet Community Action Network and the California Department of Public Health to improve social disparities in tobacco use in the local community through youth advocacy. Students also made a presentation to the City Council to demonstrate the detrimental health effects of second hand smoke and tobacco waste. Soon after, the City Council adopted a landmark ordinance for the City of Hemet that bans tobacco use in parks.

I am pleased to recognize Ms. Velez for her service and for being a champion for the PLUS program, in the face of budget obstacles.

For her work and on behalf of the HUSD students, I applaud Ms. Velez on her dedication to make our community better and look forward to even more accomplishments in the future.

200 YEARS OF EXEMPLARY SERVICE FROM MOBILE DISTRICT, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

**HON. BRADLEY BYRNE**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 18, 2015*

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, on May 4, 1815, the Chief of Engineers issued orders to Lieutenant Hipolite Dumas, which began the long and proud history of engineering service to the Gulf Coast and Mobile.

Mobile District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is celebrating 200 years of exemplary service to the Southeast region, the U.S. military and the Nation.

For its first 70 years in Mobile and along the Gulf Coast, these engineers surveyed and fortified the southern coast from St. Marks River in Florida to Lake Pontchartrain to the west. Forts were the key elements of the coastal defense system, but complementary structures such as lighthouses and towers were also constructed. In addition to the coastal fortifications, Gulf Coast engineers also began surveys to look at connecting the inland waterways with the Tennessee-Coosa River canal study.

Following the Civil War, in 1870, an engineer office was opened in Mobile, Alabama. Eighteen years later the Mobile District was officially established in a formal reorganization of operations at the national level.

The nation turned toward rebuilding the economy after the Civil War and developing the nation's transportation system became a positive, tangible means of measuring progress. Major navigation surveys were conducted on Southeastern rivers such as the Coosa River, the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee Flint, the Black Warrior, Tennessee-Tombigbee, and the Alabama River between 1870 and 1879.

When Mobile District was established in 1888, the District's boundaries were from the Escambia River westward to the East Pearl River. Montgomery District had responsibilities from the Escambia River eastward to St. Marks River in Florida. In 1933 the two districts merged into one, the Mobile District. The District also was also given responsibilities for all military construction for the Army and Army Air Corps in Mississippi, Tennessee and Alabama.

The 1930's were a busy time for the Mobile District. Modernization of the Black Warrior River system began, taking the number of locks required to transit the waterway from 17 to 5. Construction of Brookley Field, the Southeast Army Air Depot and the Mobile Air Service Command during World War II began. The Flood Control Act of 1936 set into motion a national flood protection plan and gave the Corps jurisdiction over federal flood control protection investigation and river improvements.

As busy as the 1930's were, World War II resulted in the largest wartime mobilization effort ever for the United States. The magnitude of Mobile District's work can be judged by expenditure for construction. Between December 1941 and December 1943, nearly \$1 billion was expended in the District on facilities that included 32 Army airfields, an ordnance training center, two arsenals, three Army ground force depots, five harbor defense installations, nine Civil Aviation Administration airfields, two Army Air Force supply depots, one Army Air Force cantonment, six Ordnance manufacturing plants, nine Army ground force cantonments and six special installations.

In the 1950's construction of Buford Dam in Georgia was initiated, Jim Woodruff Lock and Dam was completed, Walter F. George Lock and Dam construction began and the Army Ballistic Missile Agency was established at Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, Alabama in 1956.

In 1959 NASA was established at Redstone Arsenal for the Saturn Project. The construc-

tion of facilities for the Saturn project, a rocket program that was the work of the von Braun team at Redstone, was one of Mobile District's biggest projects. The District was responsible for the testing facilities at Redstone Arsenal associated with the Saturn booster, and eventually one of the major construction projects of the post Korean War period, the Mississippi Test Facility.

In the 1960's, the District continued the legacy of improving and developing the Nation's inland waterway transportation system. West Point Dam was authorized, Carters Dam on the Coosawatee River and Millers Ferry Lock and Dam on the Alabama River began. Construction of the Claiborne Lock and Dam and Robert F. Henry Lock and Dam also began in the 60's.

In the 1970's Mobile again took on new responsibilities. Construction responsibility for Cape Canaveral District was shifted to Mobile. Military construction in Florida, the Panama Canal activities and Central/South America programs were also shifted to Mobile. The 1970's also saw construction begin on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, at the time the largest Civil Works project in Corps history.

The 70's ended with Hurricane Fredric hitting Mobile on September 12, 1979. Under Public Law 84-99 the Corps was authorized to provide emergency assistance during disasters. The States of Alabama, Florida and Mississippi were all declared Federal disaster areas. Mobile District has been a national leader in emergency response actions for the Corps. Through the District's innovation the Corps developed a national-level Detachable Tactical Operations System to provide immediate support to disaster stricken areas. This was never more evident than after 9/11 when the District supported the New York City police and fire departments with these units.

The 80's saw innovation within the Corps, with Mobile District once again leading the way. Life Cycle/Project Management was first tested and then established in Mobile District. It has now become the standard for Corps management. This decade also saw the opening of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway to navigation, creating the transportation artery from the Gulf Coast to the Nation's mid-section first envisioned in the mid 1800's. Base Realignment and Closure also began in the 80's. Mobile District has been involved in all the BRAC National Environmental Policy Act requirements for BRAC from 1988 until the present.

The closing decade of the 1900's once again revealed Mobile's innovation. In 1994 the Scanning Hydrographic Operational Airborne Lidar Survey, or SHOALS, was first tested. This innovative 3-D technology was adapted for underwater mapping. When later combined with the U.S. Navy's CHARTS system, the team became a world leader in underwater mapping. The 1990's also saw the completion of the J-6 Large Rocket Test Facility, the completion of the John J. Sparkman Center located at the U.S. Army Arsenal at Redstone, Alabama. The Sparkman Center and follow on phases, encompasses more than 1 million square feet and is one of the most modern military facilities in the world.

As the Nation entered the new century Mobile District continued its record of excellence. The Von Braun Center at Redstone Arsenal was completed in 2014 and is home to the

Space and Missile Defense Command and the Missile Defense Agency. The District responded to and assisted in recovery operations when four hurricanes struck the State of Florida in 2004. In 2005, Mobile District began a comprehensive analysis and design for the Mississippi coastal counties to make them more resilient and less susceptible to risk from hurricane and storm damage following the devastating landfall of Hurricane Katrina along the Mississippi coast. From this analysis came the Mississippi Coastal Improvement Program, an innovative approach to achieving the goal of a more resilient coast.

Since 2000, Mobile has also completed four Headquarters complexes for major key commands, U.S. Central Command, U.S. Southern Command, U.S. Army Material Command and the U.S. Special Operations Command. They also were the design and construction agent for the new cantonment area and training ranges for the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) which relocated from Fort Bragg, North Carolina to Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. They are also responsible for the construction of various facilities at Eglin Air Force Base to support the Joint Strike Fighter program.

Mobile District continues to serve a variety of programs and missions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee and Central and South America. While I know my colleagues from these States are as appreciative as I am for their work, I am especially proud to have the District Headquarters in my District and in Mobile.

It is with pride that I say, Happy Birthday to Mobile District on your two hundred years of exemplary, innovative and dedicated service. On behalf of a grateful Nation, thank you to all the civilian and military members of the Mobile District for all you have done.

COMMEMORATING THE 50TH  
ANNIVERSARY OF HEAD START

**HON. FILEMON VELA**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 18, 2015*

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Head Start, which provides children from low-income families access to comprehensive preschool programs and prepares children for success in kindergarten and beyond.

On May 18, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson launched Project Head Start as an eight-week summer demonstration project to teach low-income students needed skills before they started kindergarten. Over the past 50 years, Head Start has served 30 million children and families across the country who earn less than 100 percent of the federal poverty line or who have a disability.

Head Start is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and directly supports local agencies delivering services. The services Head Start children and their families receive include education, nutrition, dental, health, mental health transition, parental involvement and complete social service support. This strong support network provides the tools families need for their children to succeed upon entering primary school.

Continued access to the Early Head Start and Head Start programs helps ensure that

children develop the academic and life skills they need to succeed in their academic careers. Head Start alumni are more likely to finish high school, go to college, and be in good health, and are less likely to commit a crime. In 2012, HHS conducted a study that by the end of the 3rd grade, children who participated in the program were more likely to have favorable social emotional developmental outcomes and favorable cognitive impacts.

For 50 years, this program has given children the tools to succeed by ensuring a high quality education and access to healthcare and social services. The Head Start program represents a critical investment in the education of our nation's children.

In 2014, local affiliates like Neighbors in Need of Services Inc. (NINOS) and Community Action Corporation of South Texas (CACOST) served over 8,000 children in the 34th District of Texas. These organizations help improve the lives of children and their families in South Texas. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Head Start on its 50th Anniversary today, and I wish continued success to all the Head Start staff and volunteers who are helping people, changing lives, and building communities.

RECOGNITION OF THE 50TH ANNI-  
VERSARY OF THE HEAD START  
PROGRAM

**HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 18, 2015*

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 50th Anniversary of Head Start. "Project Head Start" was launched by President Lyndon B. Johnson on May 18, 1965. Originally designed as an eight week summer demonstration project, Head Start has expanded into an array of pre-school programs that provides children from low-income families with a comprehensive array of services to prepare them for successful entry into kindergarten and illuminates the pathway for a brighter future.

In the State of Texas, 71,465 children and pregnant women were benefitted by Head Start last year. 4,068 of those served were from the 30th Congressional District of Texas—the district that I serve. Head Start is instrumental in uplifting families in my home state by providing resources to families who, just like you and me, want to see their children reach their full potential.

In its 50 year history, Head Start has served more than 30 million children and their families. Head Start alumni are more likely to finish high school, continue on to college and become self-reliant wage earners. This is only possible because of the access to services Head Start provides to disadvantaged children. It is important that, at this critical juncture in our nation's history, we increase our support of all Head Start programs. Every child in America should be afforded an equal opportunity to succeed, regardless of their socio-economic background.

President Obama recently called upon all Americans, including leaders of private and philanthropic organizations, communities and governments at every level, to make investments in our next generation of thinkers,

dreamers and doers. Investing in early childhood education is one of the best investments we can make as a nation. There is no better way to strengthen our economy and bolster our communities.

As a body of legislators, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to lead by example. We can help hardworking, low-income families build pathways out of poverty. We owe it to our future and the future of our great nation to ensure that all of our children have all equal opportunity to succeed. If, as a society, we are serious about giving children a bright and promising future, we must increase our investment and expand the vital programs Head Start offers.

Mr. Speaker, today, as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Head Start, I ask, that as a body, we reaffirm our investment in the children of America. Now is the time to expand upon the vision of President Lyndon Baines Johnson and his "Great Society" programs that resulted in the creation of Head Start. I urge my colleagues to support bipartisan efforts to give all of America's children a head start in life and close the educational opportunity gap.

HONORING DR. TOMÁS MORALES  
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS AP-  
POINTMENT AS NATIONAL  
CHAIRMAN OF THE HISPANIC AS-  
SOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND  
UNIVERSITIES

**HON. RAUL RUIZ**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 18, 2015*

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, today I am honored to recognize California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) President, Dr. Tomás Morales on his appointment to serve as National Chairman of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU).

Dr. Morales has led a life of distinguished service as an Educator and University President, and has held senior positions at three of the largest public universities in the nation, including California State University (CSU), The State University of New York (SUNY) and the City University of New York (CUNY). Among his many contributions to higher education, Dr. Morales has also served as Co-Chair of the National Task Force on College Readiness for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, creating a roadmap for K–12 school systems to prepare students for college upon graduation.

Born in Puerto Rico and raised in New York, Dr. Morales knows firsthand the struggles our youth face as they strive to achieve the American Dream through higher education. Growing up, Dr. Morales worked hard by delivering newspapers and cleaning apartment floors before realizing his own dreams through education.

Overcoming adversity, Dr. Morales went on to earn a bachelor's degree in history from SUNY New Paltz and a master's degree and doctorate in educational administration and policy studies from SUNY Albany.

I am proud to recognize Dr. Morales' nearly four decades of service and look forward to seeing the vision and leadership he will bring to the National Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities and their mission to