

In the years to come, I sincerely hope that Lebanon Township will continue to build on the foundations of the past to ensure a happy and prosperous future for all its residents.

I offer my congratulations and best wishes to Mayor Art Gerlich and the Township Committee. It is my honor to have this municipality with the boundaries of my district. And it is my good fortune to be able to participate in its very special anniversary.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 1998

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, due to a medical emergency, I missed 11 votes which occurred between January 27, 1998 and February 5, 1998. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

Roll call Vote number 1—Present, 2—No, 3—No, 4—Yes, 5—Yes, 6—No, 7—No, 8—No, 9—No, 10—Yes, 11—Present.

A TRIBUTE TO EMPRESS CASINO JOLIET

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 1998

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Empress Casino Joliet, a tremendous corporate citizen in Joliet, Illinois as it has been named the 1998 Salute to Industry Award recipient by the Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

From its opening day in June of 1992, the Empress Casino has made a dramatic impact on the economic landscapes of Joliet, Will County and the State of Illinois. In a region where many hard working people have struggled to find consistent and reliable employment, the Empress Casino has risen to become Will County's sixth largest employer, keeping 1600 local employees on its \$45 million annual payroll. During its first 14 days of operation, the Empress Casino welcomed over 50,000 people and has currently hosted over 21 million guests, an incredible achievement for less than six years of operations.

Understanding how local support is a major factor to the Empress Casino's success, the owners have made a substantial commitment to support the community through charitable contributions. In just one year, the Empress Casino has donated nearly \$300,000 to organizations able to assist people in need. Further emphasizing its commitment to boosting the local economy, the Empress reinvests well over \$9 million each year purchasing supplies, products, and services from local businesses. The City of Joliet and the State of Illinois have received substantial benefits from the Empress Casino's success, including \$77 million and \$191 million of tax revenue, respectively.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to join the Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce as we recognize the Empress Casino Joliet as an out-

standing corporate citizen in Joliet and Will County, Illinois. I applaud the owners and employees of the Empress Casino for their dedication made to our community and wish them the best in the future.

TRIBUTE TO LOUIS WALSH, "IRISHMAN OF THE YEAR"

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 1998

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Louis Walsh, who was honored on Friday, February 20, as "Irishman of the Year" by the Denver Chapter of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. I invite my colleagues to join me in extending congratulations to Mr. Walsh on his receiving this outstanding and appropriate honor.

Mr. Speaker, there are many characteristics which we associate with the Irish—loyalty, perseverance, humor, trustworthiness, generosity, hospitality. These are especially true of Louis Walsh. He has also been blessed with an unmistakable Irish wit. For all intents and purposes, his home is your home. But Lou can also be very demanding—he expects the best from all of his friends and colleagues, and in doing so he has contributed markedly to improving the quality of their lives.

Lou appreciates the best of everything, whether it be music, drink, entertainment or, most important of all, friendship and loyalty. He appreciates the good life all the more for having starting out in humble circumstances. Lou was born on March 5, 1928, in Curry, County Sligo, Ireland, one of ten children. Life was simple and full of hard work, but that did not stop Lou from riding ten miles on his bike to get to a dance, arriving home in time to sleep for but an hour before morning chores. But he had much longer journeys in his future.

Lou attended St. Nathy's College before traveling to England to teach school at Rodbourne College. Soon afterwards, with the assistance of his brother Matt, he made the decision to cross the Atlantic and emigrate to America. Lou initially settled in Chicago and continued his education, attending Peter Shannon's School of Accounting. Mr. Shannon, astutely noting his numerous abilities, employed Lou after his completion of the course. Lou has been everlastingly grateful to Mr. Shannon for believing in him from the start and for assisting him in every possible way. Lou has tried to be similarly inspiring and helpful to others throughout the course of his life.

After five years of work for Mr. Shannon and an additional two years of service as an Army medic during the Korean War, Lou's appreciation of nature and love of beauty prompted him to move to Colorado in 1961. He worked as an auditor for the State of Colorado for a dozen years, during which time he was involved in the creation of the Colorado lottery. Lou also started a real estate business, which proved both demanding and successful. Lou's philosophic foundation appeared on every one of his real estate signs: "Let Right Be Done." This outlook has reflected his approach towards his customers, his neighborhood and his family.

Lou's legacy is to be found in a myriad of activities, organizations and good deeds, most notably those within the Irish community. He was one of the founders of several significant Irish organizations, including The Emerald Athletic Club in Chicago, The Irish Fellowship Club of Colorado and The St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee, which has given rise to one of the most prominent St. Patrick's Day parades in the country. Louis love of Irish culture applies to Irish books (of which he has many), Irish newspapers and magazines (to which he still subscribes), Irish wolfhounds (of which he once had four), Morgan horses (of which he has two), and Irish Whiskey. He appetite for Irish music and entertainment has promoted him to develop and foster Irish concerts and special events, and he has long dreamed of the establishment of an Irish cultural center in Denver. His concern for young people inspired him to organize a summer program in Colorado for Irish students. Finally, Lou's strong and unabated commitment to his church and homeland once gave him the opportunity to host the highest cleric in Ireland, Cardinal O'Faich.

While Lou's devotion to the Irish community is legendary, his greatest passion is for his family: Ann, his extraordinary wife and partner in work as well as in life, son Louis, Jr., who has followed his proud father in his interest in real estate, and innumerable other relatives by blood or friendship whose lives have been touched by his compassion and enthusiasm.

Mr. Speaker, it is time, to paraphrase Lou, to see to it that Right Be Done. I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing appreciation for a fine man and a true Irishman, Mr. Louis Walsh.

TRIBUTE TO THE ST. LOUIS SMALL BUSINESS MONTHLY

HON. JAMES M. TALENT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 1998

Mr. TALENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the St. Louis Small Business Monthly. This month, the St. Louis Small Business Monthly celebrates its tenth anniversary.

Mr. Speaker, the St. Louis Small Business Monthly is more than just a newspaper. It is a valuable networking tool, resource center, and clearinghouse for all things small business. It's a resource by and for the small business owner; it is invaluable to this important community.

Small businesses are not just the engine of our economy, they are the backbones of our communities. The St. Louis Small Business Monthly was founded to support the spirit of entrepreneur and recognizes the vitality and importance of the growth and success of this community. It fills a need in the community and fills it well.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like you to join me in congratulating editor Judy Meador, co-founders Katie Muchnick and Bill Schneider, and the rest of the staff at the St. Louis Small Business Monthly for a terrific first ten years and to its long and prosperous future.

THE MINNESOTA NATIONAL
GUARD—NORWEGIAN HOME
GUARD TROOP RECIPROCAL EX-
CHANGE PROGRAM

HON. MARTIN OLAV SABO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 1998

Mr. SABO. Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 25th Anniversary of the Minnesota National Guard—Norwegian Home Guard Troop Reciprocal Exchange Program. The program is the longest running military exchange between two nations, and it has strengthened the ties between our countries while enriching the lives of the young men and women who have participated in it.

Each February, over 200 soldiers from the Minnesota National Guard and Norwegian Home Guard leave their homes and join the guards of each other's nation. They spend two to three weeks in the other country, training with the host military, visiting cultural sites, and getting to know their new peers. The exchange guards even spend a weekend with a host family, to enrich their experience in the host nation.

The Minnesota National Guard—Norwegian Home Guard Troop Reciprocal Exchange Program is of great value to both our peacekeeping and cultural goals. By training in Norway, members of the Minnesota National Guard gain experience operating in a foreign environment. At the same time, participants from both countries have an opportunity to explore a new culture and to travel at a young age. The Norwegian-Americans of the Minnesota National Guard also have a chance to explore their family roots in Norway. Finally, the coordination between our nations' militaries reinforces our mutual dedication to working for world peace.

I am pleased to recognize the Minnesota National Guard—Norwegian Home Guard Troop Reciprocal Exchange Program for its 25 years of accomplishments, and I wish the program its continued success in the future.

WILMA DEAN OF BARTHOLOMEW
COUNTY, IN

HON. DAVID M. McINTOSH

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 1998

Mr. McINTOSH. Mr. Speaker, I would like to share an inspiring story with my colleagues and the American people about a woman whose whole life has been full of kindness, compassion and hard work. Wilma Dean of Bartholomew County, Indiana has worked for over twenty-five years at the Ramada Inn in Columbus, Indiana as a Senior Guest Representative. Throughout her years of service, she has strived to make people feel good about themselves. And on so many occasions Wilma has performed her duties above and beyond her job requirements. When asked, her co-workers will describe her as a wonderful lady who often stays late to help others. She even performs task outside of those assigned to her. Her co-workers remembered one memorable occasion when she assisted an elderly couple to their room because they were barely able to walk.

In her twenty-five years of service as a Ramada Inn employee, Wilma created a warm atmosphere for the guest that is similar to a home. She would do this through her courtesy and her ability to be a team-player.

Recently, Wilma was rewarded for her exceptional job performance. She was one of five hospitality employees to receive Ramada's nation-wide award: Hospitality Employee of the Year. Wilma's efforts were noticed from Ramada's sixty-thousand employees nationwide.

Wilma Dean's hard work, dedication and kindness is an important example for others to follow. Work hard. Be kind to others. And help your neighbor if you can.

Mr. Speaker, that is my Report from Indiana.

HONORING THE 1997 MASSACHUSETTS
DIVISION II GIRLS SOCCER
STATE CHAMPIONS, SHEPHERD
HILL REGIONAL HIGH
SCHOOL

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 1998

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to honor the team members, coaches, and manager of the Shepherd Hill Regional High School 1997 Girls Soccer team. Hailing from Charlton, Massachusetts, this Shepherd Hill team captured the Division II State Title on November 22, 1997, defeating Marblehead High School in a 3–1 victory.

Before capturing the statewide Division II crown, this team achieved many accomplishments. While accumulating an impressive 18–5–1 record, their hard work both on and off the field secured for these fine players, coaches, and manager the Southern Worcester County League West Conference Championship, the District E Division II Championship, and the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association Academic Excellence Gold Award for having a team Grade Point Average of 3.35.

In gaining these accolades, this Shepherd Hill team demonstrated that athletic and academic excellence can be achieved in tandem. For this reason in particular the 1997 Shepherd Hill Regional High School Girls Soccer Team is a model for athletic teams around both the nation and globe as they have shown that the qualities of determination, commitment, and effort are as important in the classroom as they are on the playing field.

I would finally like to congratulate each and every person associated with the 1997 Shepherd Hill Regional High School Girls Soccer Team. Please let me submit the names of those dedicated individuals who helped bring the Massachusetts Division II Girls Soccer State Championship Title to Shepherd Hill Regional High School. They are Team Co-Captains Katie Brothers, Trisha Cushing, Jen Langlois; Players, Katie Bembenek, Julia Faia, Jessica Frink, Gina Gregoire, Colleen Hackenson, Danielle Houle, Samantha Kane, Melissa Kasheta, Emily Koslowski, Tracy Koslowski, Elizabeth Laplante, Kerry Malone, Kristen Malone, Angela Minardi, Amanda Muise, Jenna Murphy, Moirra Murphy, Wendy

Paquin, Kelly Walsh, Megan Welch, Katelyn Weymouth; Head Coach Harry Logan; Assistant Coaches Karen Jensen and Jody McManus; and Manager Jim Rawson. From this great victory may come many more. Congratulations to you all!

VOTER ELIGIBILITY CONFIRMATION
SYSTEM IS A THREAT

HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 1998

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with grave concern regarding legislative initiatives to restrict voter registration and turnout. The so-called "Voter Eligibility Confirmation System" in effect threatens voting rights of the American constituency.

As introduced, this legislation would establish a federal program for state and local elected officials to "confirm" the citizenship of registered voters and voter registration applicants. The proposal would allow elected officials to submit the names of voter registration applicants and registered voters to the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Social Security Administration for citizenship confirmation through a computerized system.

With all due respect to my colleague, this is bad policy! The data on which this system is based is inaccurate. The fact is that an American citizen can have a social security number and stand the possibility of not being confirmed as a citizen by the Social Security Administration. Thousands of U.S. citizens were naturalized before the agency began keeping computer records at all. As a result, our fellow Americans will be targeted to have their voting rights undermined by the use of such a system.

Women and minorities in our Nation have historically been singled out and questioned based on their surnames or appearance. Although this American struggle has made many progressions, this act of discrimination should not and must not be tolerated by our distinguished House.

Under current federal and state laws, both voter registration fraud and voter fraud are crimes. The notion that massive citizenship verification procedures are needed does not align with the facts. The data received from the House Oversight Committee hearing in 1995 revealed that the real problem of voter fraud had to do with the abuses of State absentee ballot laws, not by Latinos or Asian Americans.

Let's get real. This bill attempts to set measures that not only overturns the Privacy Act projections, but recreates a system that affects the minorities in our America.

As the Honorable Jimmy Carter so eloquently stated in his 1981 farewell address, "America did not invent human rights. In a very real sense . . . human rights invented America."

As we move into the new millennium, let us continue to build bridges in our Nation. We need to address the facts of this proposed legislation and not be distracted by the rhetoric.

All Americans should have the inalienable right to vote and that right must not be determined based on whether an elected official decides that one of our fellow Americans is "ethnic-looking" versus "American-looking."