Florida, which I have the privilege to represent.

Since 1949, American Legion Post 273 has been serving the community of Madeira Beach and Pinellas County. Post 273 has more than 3,100 members, making it the largest post in the Great State of Florida and the 5th largest post in the World. In its 50 years of service, Post 273 has a record of service that is second to none.

Post 273 has many volunteers who perform thousands of hours of volunteer service at the Veterans Affair's Hospital at Bay Pines. Among these activities are an annual Thanksgiving Day dinner for disabled veterans, and a New Years Day luncheon. The Honor Guard at Post 273 has performed at 108 funerals in the past 12 months, and has participated in several other functions including the biannual reading of Madeira Beach's deceased veterans. The Post also provides financial assistance to the families of needy veterans.

The service of Post 273 goes beyond veterans. Post 273 has sponsored 14 students for Boys State, where enterprising young boys are selected in their junior year of high school to go to Tallahassee and participate in a detailed study of Florida's State Government. In addition, Post 273 also sponsors an annual oratorical contest, where boys and girls compete nationwide for more than $18,000 in scholarships. Post 273 also sponsors activities and events that inform the community's young people about child safety, drug and alcohol abuse, and suicide prevention.

In its service to the community, Post 273 has been active in the Special Olympics, giving mentally challenged youth a chance to succeed, assists the American Red Cross with an annual blood drive, has a strong record of environmental protection, as it sponsors a recycling program, and raised money to provide sea oats for the Madeira Beach beach renourishment program.

Finally, I would be remiss if I neglected to mention American Legion Baseball. Each year, the American Legion sponsors approximately 86,000 young men in legion ball. Madeira Beach Post 273 sponsors two teams, providing uniforms, equipment, umpires, and travel funds.

Mr. Speaker, the service that American Legion Post 273 has provided veterans and families in the community of Madeira Beach for the last 50 years is remarkable and I wish all the members much success as they begin their next 50 years of service.

THE FOGGY BOTTOM ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES 40 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY, 1959–1999

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 1999

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to salute the Foggy Bottom Association as it celebrates forty years of service in one of Washington's oldest neighborhoods. The Foggy Bottom Association is not only one of the oldest, it is one of our most active and valuable associations.

The Foggy Bottom Association's recorded history dates back to 1765 when Jacob Funk, a German immigrant, purchased and subdivided 130 lots between 24th and 19th Streets, NW and H Street to the river. This area, known as Hamburg, was the site of docks, glass factories, breweries, a gas works, and later stately homes and what were known as ''alley dwellings.'' Shortly after World War II, public and private developers moved in, building large residential complexes, highways, government and private office buildings, and cultural and educational centers. At the same time, run-down housing stock was being purchased and rebuilt by a mix of people who formed the core of what is now the Foggy Bottom Association. This organization was dedicated to protecting and promoting the neighborhood.

Today, Foggy Bottom is an unusual mixture of homes, apartment dwellings, churches, hotels, restaurants, small businesses, large institutions and government agencies. Many old, historic buildings have been restored and are open to the public.

Music, art, good fellowship, and lots of history are all part of the anniversary program which culminates on June 19, 1999—the day the Foggy Bottom Association was incorporated in 1959.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of this body to join me in celebrating the Foggy Bottom Association and congratulating the membership for their commitment to the preservation and protection of one of our treasured neighborhoods.

CONSEQUENCES OF GUN CONTROL

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 1999

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I recommend that my colleagues read today's Washington Times article entitled ''Disarming Good People'' before voting on unconstitutional and counter-effective gun legislation. Outlined within, are some of the disastrous consequences of enacting more gun control. While the lawmakers demand even more restrictions on the sale, ownership, and the use of firearms, we currently have the highest level of gun control in our Nation's history. Yet only 50 years ago, there were no violent incidents in schools like the recent tragedy. Instead of rushing to disarm the law-abiding, let us first examine the current 20,000 gun laws already on the books for their effectiveness.

DISARMING GOOD PEOPLE

Editor's note: The following is an open letter from 287 economists, law-school professors and other academics to Congress, regarding gun-control legislation before the House of Representatives. Some but not all of the names of the signatories appear here.

After the tragic attacks at public schools over the last two years, there is an understandable desire to ''do something.'' Yet, none of the proposed legislation would have prevented the recent violence. The current debate focuses only on the potential benefits from new gun control laws and ignores the fact that these laws can have some very real adverse effects. Good intentions don't necessarily make good laws. What counts is whether the laws will ultimately save lives, prevent injury, and reduce crime. Passing laws based upon their supposed benefits while ignoring their costs poses a real threat to people's lives and safety.

These—gun control laws will primarily be obeyed by law-abiding citizens and risk making it less likely that good people have guns compared to criminals. Deterrence is important and disarming good people relative to criminals will increase the risk of violent crime. If we really care about saving lives we must focus not only on the newsworthy events where bad things happen, but also on the bad things that never happen because people are able to defend themselves.

Few people would voluntarily put up a sign in front of their homes stating, ''This home is a gun-free zone.'' The reason is very simple. Just as we can deter criminals with higher arrest or conviction rates, the fact that would-be victims might be able to defend themselves also deters attacks. Not only do guns allow individuals to defend themselves, they also provide some protection to citizens who choose not to own guns since criminals would not normally know who can defend themselves before they attack.

The laws currently being considered by Congress ignore the importance of deterrence. Police are extremely important at deterring crime, but they simply cannot be everywhere. Individuals also benefit from being able to defend themselves with a gun when they are confronted by a criminal.

Let us illustrate some of the problems with the current debate.

The Clinton administration wants to raise the age at which citizens can posses a handgun to 21, and they point to the fact that 18- and 19-year-olds commit gun crimes at the highest rate. Yet, Department of Justice numbers indicate that 18- and 19-year-olds are also the most likely victims of violent crimes including murder, rape, robbery with serious injury, and aggravated assault. The vast majority of those committing crimes in this age group are members of gangs and are already breaking the law by having a gun. This law will primarily apply to law-abiding 18- to-21-year-olds and make it difficult for them to defend themselves.

Waiting periods can produce a cooling-off period. But they also have real costs. Those threatened with harm may not be able to quickly obtain a gun for protection.

Gun locks may prevent some accidental gun deaths, but they will make it difficult for people to defend themselves from attackers. We believe that the risks of accidental gun deaths, particularly those involving young children, have been greatly exaggerated. In 1996, there were 44 accidental gun deaths for children under age 10. This exaggeration risks threatening people's safety if it incorrectly frightens some people from having a gun in their home even though that is actually the safest course of action.

Trade-offs exist with other proposals such as prison sentences for adults whose guns are misused by someone under 18 and rules limiting the number of guns people can purchase. No evidence has been presented to show that the likely benefits of such proposals will exceed their potential costs.

With the 20,000 gun laws already on the books, we advise Congress, before enacting yet more new laws, to investigate whether many of the existing laws may have contributed to the problems we currently face. The new legislation is ill-advised.

Sincerely,

Terry L. Anderson, Montana State University; Charles W. Baird, California State University Hayward; Randy E. Barnett, Boston University; Bruce L. Benson, Florida State University; Michael Block, University of Arizona; Walter Block, Thomas Borcherding, Claremont Graduate School; Frank H. Buckley, George Mason University; Colin D. Campbell, Dartmough College; Robert J. Cottrol, George Washington University; Preston K. Covey, Carnegie Mellon University; Mark Crain, George Mason University;

Tom DiLorenzo, Loyola College in Maryland; Paul Evans, Ohio State University; R. Richard Geddes, Fordham University; Lino A. Graglia, University of Texas; John Heineke, Santa Clara University; David Henderson, Hoover Institution, Stanford University; Melvin J. Hinich, University of Texas, Austin; Lester H. Hunt, University of Wisconsin-Madison; James Kau, University of Georgia; Kenneth N. Klee, UCLA; David Kopel, New York University; Stanley Liebowitz, University of Texas at Dallas; Luis Locay, University of Miami; John R. Lott, Jr., University of Chicago; Geoffrey A. Manne, University of Virginia; John Matsusaka, University of Southern California; Fred McChesney, Cornell University; Jeffrey A. Miron, Boston University; Carlisle E. Moody College of William and Mary; Craig M. Newark, North Carolina State University; Jeffrey S. Parker, George Mason University; Dan Polsby, Northwestern University; Keith T. Poole, Carnegie-Mellon University; Douglas B. Rasmussen, St. John's University; Glenn Reynolds, University of Tennessee; John R. Rice, Duke University; Russell Roberts, Washington University; Randall W. Roth, Univ. of Hawaii; Charles Rowley, George Mason University; Allen R. Sanderson, University of Chicago; William F. Shughart II, University of Mississippi; Thomas Sowell, Stanford University; Richard Stroup, Montana State University; Robert D. Tollison, University of Mississippi; Eugene Volokh, UCLA; Michael R. Ward, University of Illinois; Benjamin Zycher, UCLA; Todd Zywicki, George Mason University.

CROP INSURANCE EQUALIZATION ACT OF 1999

HON. SAXBY CHAMBLISS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 1999

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Crop Insurance Equalization Act of 1999. I am honored to have Representative MARION BERRY, Representative CHIP PICKERING, and Representative SANFORD BISHOP joining me as original cosponsors of this comprehensive crop insurance reform legislation.

The need for an effective safety net could not be more obvious. It is imperative that we provide our nation's farmers with a federal crop insurance program that is affordable and workable. Our farmers cannot and should not become dependent on annual disaster bills; in the past nine years, the federal government has spent over $9.5 billion in emergency farm funds. By crafting a strong program that will both increase participation in the program and increase affordability to farmers across the nation, we have sought to eliminate the need for such yearly crop loss disaster aid.

Back in February, Georgia's Eighth District hosted the House Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on Risk Management, Research, and Specialty Crops for hearings on the federal crop insurance program. During those hearings, I personally witnessed how frustrated farmers and agents are with the program. Simply put, the program does not work for them.

The Crop Insurance Equalization Act of 1999 addresses concerns that have been voiced to the extent possible. This reform package significantly improves the program not only for farmers in the Southeastern United States, but for those across the entire nation. This bill does not simply make cosmetic changes to the program; it focuses attention on the root of the problem by seeking to restore an improved, updated rating system. Beyond reform for the crop insurance program, this bill expands the non-insured assistance program for those who cannot participate in crop insurance.

Crop insurance reform is a top priority for this Congress, and the Crop Insurance Equalization Act of 1999 is a sufficient vehicle for achieving appropriate reform.

TRIBUTE TO JONAS BRONCK APARTMENTS

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 1999

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, it is with joy and pride that I rise to pay tribute to Jonas Bronck Apartments for Senior Citizens, which will celebrate its 25th Anniversary of services to seniors and the Bronx community on Wednesday, June 15, 1999.

Mr. Speaker, the history of Jonas Bronck Apartments begins with the merger of one nearly-defunct Lutheran congregation and one small but vibrant Lutheran congregation in the Tremont section of the Bronx 32 years ago. In June of 1967, Pr. Albert O. Wollert, the pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church on East 178th Street, was called to serve concurrently as pastor of St. Thomas English Lutheran Church on Topping Avenue. St. Thomas English Lutheran Church had had a short but fruitful life of 59 years, but due to radical demographic changes in the neighborhood after the Second World War it has dwindled to a remnant of old members.

The young and visionary Pr. Wollert, then 39, saw an opportunity to bring life and service out of the death of a church. Within months Pr. Wollert managed to convince the ''old St. Thomas'' members to formally join with Trinity. He also managed to convince the members of Trinity to receive the small remnant of ''old Saint Thomas'' members into Trinity Church, and to name the merged congregation ''Saint Thomas Evangelical Lutheran Church of The Bronx.'' The entire operation was finalized on December 12, 1967, and on Christmas Eve the two congregations worshiped together for the first time. From this time forward the church on East 178th Street, the current location, would be known simply as ''St. Thomas Lutheran Church.''

On June 3, 1968, the ''old Saint Thomas'' building, which is still standing at its original location, was sold to Bethany Church and Missionary Alliance. For over a year, the St. Thomas Congregation considered investing the proceeds in different types of projects.

After many adjustments and readjustments, and some help from then-Governor Nelson Rockefeller, the plans for a building to be called Jonas Bronck Apartments for Senior Citizens were approved, and a combination of state and federal funding was secured. Final approval was received on April 24, 1970, from the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal.

Mr. Speaker, on May 5, 1974, Jonas Bronck Apartments for Senior Citizens was formally dedicated and opened its doors to the senior citizens of our Bronx community and the larger New York metropolitan area. Though Jonas Bronck Apartments was the brainchild of a former pastor and the parishioners of St. Thomas Lutheran Church of The Bronx, the 216 unit, 16 story facility for seniors is a success story of cooperation between the private and governmental sectors.

I applaud the commitment and the efforts of everyone involved with Jonas Bronck Apartments for Senior Citizens, its board, staff, and supporters for the assistance they provide to the elderly.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Jonas Bronck Apartments for Senior Citizens and the individuals who have made 25 years of service possible.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 1999

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained yesterday returning from my congressional district. Had I been present for rollcall Vote No. 204, I would have voted ''yea'' on H.R. 1400, the Bond Price Competition Improvement Act of 1999.

TRIBUTE TO RABBI RICHARD A. BLOCK

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 1999

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Rabbi Richard Block, an outstanding leader of the 14th Congressional District and senior rabbi at the Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills, California for the last twelve years. Rabbi Block steps down as head of this remarkable congregation this weekend to accept the post of President and Chief Executive of the World Union for Progressive Judaism in Jerusalem, the world's largest organization of religiously affiliated Jews.

Rabbi Block was ordained and awarded a Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1982. During his academic career, Rabbi Block earned numerous awards for academic distinction, writing and sermonic excellence.

Upon ordination, he was chosen Rabbi of Greenwich Reform Synagogue in Riverside, Connecticut and in 1987 came to Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills, California.

As senior rabbi he helped create a variety of programs aimed at advancing Jewish education and congregational life. His achievements include: Experiment in Congregation, a unique national partnership aimed at reinvigorating Jewish education and congregational life; the creation of a nationally recognized program to integrate émigrés from the former Soviet Union in Jewish life; the Koret Synagogue Initiative, a collaboration between synagogues, the Koret Foundation and the Jewish Community Federation. Rabbi Block was honored by the Jewish Family and Children's