

oil for the SPR drives up gas prices, and costs taxpayers billions. This is money that working men and women cannot put into other parts of the economy, harming American families and businesses alike.

While I recognize this action should not be taken as a means of reducing prices in the long run, it can have temporary benefits that could go a long way to helping American families who are being squeezed, and to stimulate the economy. I urge you to take this important step.

Sincerely,

RON KIND,
Member of Congress.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING COMMANDER SERGEANT LAWRENCE SKAGGS FOR HIS MILITARY SERVICE AND INDUCTION INTO THE OHIO MILITARY HALL OF FAME OF VALOR

HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker:

Whereas, Sergeant Lawrence Skaggs served in the United States Army; and

Whereas, he was inducted into the Ohio Military Hall of Fame of Valor; and

Whereas, the local Army Reserve Center in Chillicothe, Ohio bears his name in commemoration of his hard work and dedication; and

Whereas, Sergeant Lawrence Skaggs earned the Silver Star, a Purple Heart, Good Conduct, World War II Victory, and Asiatic Pacific Campaign medals for his service; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that along with his friends, family, and the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I commend and thank Sergeant Lawrence Skaggs for his contributions to his community and country.

IN MEMORY OF GOPAL RAJU

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, on April 10, Mr. Gopal Raju, a pioneer of Indian American Journalism, leader in his community, and founder of the publication India Abroad, News India-Times, and the Indian American Center for Political Awareness (IACPA), passed away at the age of 80.

Mr. Raju spent a lifetime supporting the Indian American community and promoting a stronger relationship between India and the United States. In particular, the Washington Leadership Program that was formed under the IACPA has allowed nearly two hundred Indian Americans to participate as interns on Capitol Hill—some of whom have even served in the office of the Second Congressional District of South Carolina.

Additional achievements include launching the Indian American Foundation (IAF)—which raised millions of dollars for causes in India—and the India Abroad News Service that for over 20 years has been a vital channel for information sharing between the United States

and India. Most recently, Mr. Raju was the editor and publisher of News India-Times, Gujarat Times, and Desi Talk.

A man of passion and committed to the needs of his community and his people, Mr. Raju received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor which is given to immigrants for their contributions to the United States, the 2000 Asia Society's Leadership Award, the 2006 Taraknath Das Foundation award, and in 2007 he was recognized by India with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman award.

A memorial service for Mr. Gopal Raju was held on May 17th at the Maharaja Hall in Royal Albert's Palace in Fords, New Jersey. It was organized by India Abroad and the South Asian Journalists Association.

I was honored to have met this incredible individual. I know his humility and selfless contribution to the lives of the millions his programs and publications touched will be missed. My thoughts and prayers are with Mr. Raju's family and the entire Indian American community.

EARMARK DECLARATION

HON. LAMAR SMITH

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I submit the following:

Requesting Member: Congressman LAMAR SMITH.

Bill Number: H.R. 5658.

Account: Department of Defense, Army RDTE (R-1 Line #133).

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Applied Physical Electronics, LLC.

Address of Requesting Entity: 5208 Electric Avenue, Spicewood, Texas 78669.

Description of Request: The requested funds will be used to produce technology to support efforts against terrorist activities, to fund two endowed professors from the University of Texas for antenna design support and for signal and image processing, to acquire key capital laboratory equipment, and to hire 12 highly skilled professional engineers, as well as supporting staff. The UT professors will be funded to continue in their efforts to help design compact antenna structures, as well as the development of algorithms necessary for detecting and identifying explosives and controlling electronics used with Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). The necessary equipment and additional staff will further the development of APELC's technology into systems deployed for defense against IEDs and Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs), with the ultimate objective being the utilization of APELC's technology as integral components of future applicable DoD systems, including MDA, Army, Air Force, DARPA and the Navy.

Description of Matching Funds: APELC is close to securing matching funds from a U.S. prime contractor in the form of a 3 year teaming agreement. The amount is expected to be approximately 1:3 match to the dollars requested. The matching funding will be used to move APELC's technology into deployable systems for field use. Furthermore, the principals of APELC continue investing in the company, and in the form of facility improve-

ment to better facilitate technology development.

CONGRATULATIONS TO CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1958

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to extend my congratulations and best wishes to the Central High School Class of 1958 as they prepare to celebrate their 50th class reunion on May 30, 2008. Central High is located in Galveston, Texas, which is in my Congressional district. Constructed in 1895 to ensure that the segregation laws then in effect did not deny Galveston's African-American children the opportunity to obtain an education, Central High is the oldest high school in Texas built to serve African-Americans.

Laws dictating what schools a child can and cannot attend, based solely on that child's race, are a shameful aspect of America's history. We should take every opportunity possible to salute those, like the students of Central High, who refused to allow the "Jim Crow" laws stop them from obtaining an education.

The class of 1958 holds particular significance, as they were the first class to complete all 4 years in the new Central High that opened in 1954. Madam Speaker, I once again extend my congratulations to the members of the Central High Class of 1958 as they prepare to celebrate their 50th class reunion.

H.R. 5613, THE PROTECTING THE MEDICAID SAFETY NET ACT

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I rise to voice my strong support for H.R. 5613, the Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act. This important bipartisan bill extends a moratorium until April 1, 2009 on seven Administration-imposed Medicaid regulations that if implemented, would severely reduce federal Medicaid funding.

Without the moratorium, Medicaid funding to states for vital programs and services would be cut by \$18 billion over the next 5 years. These cuts include restrictions on Medicaid payments for graduate medical education, GME, rehabilitation services, and outpatient hospital services, among other services.

It would be irresponsible to think about cutting funding to academic medical centers and residency training programs when we currently face a shortage of physicians. If these cuts were allowed to go into effect, we would be unable to provide necessary medical services to many people who depend upon Medicaid.

Constantly cutting funds to the very services which keep our fragmented, nonsystem of health care afloat is inhumane and nonsensical.

The tactic of underfunding federal programs in an attempt to undermine their effectiveness demonstrates the Administration's lack of commitment to the programs that faithfully and effectively serve the American people.

Madam Speaker, passage of H.R. 5613 is simply a necessity. We must halt the underfunding of important Medicaid programs. I wholeheartedly support the passage of H.R. 5613, the Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act.

HONORING DIANE B. GARRO OF
THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of myself and Ways and Means Ranking Member JIM MCCREY to recognize Diane B. Garro, an exemplary public servant. Ms. Garro is retiring after 36 years of distinguished service at the Social Security Administration.

Ms. Garro has devoted her professional life to serving Social Security's current and future beneficiaries. Like many other dedicated SSA employees, Ms. Garro began her career on the front lines, directly serving beneficiaries. Through her talent and hard work, she rose to become a key senior executive.

Ms. Garro started her career with SSA while she was still a college student, and later took a full-time job as a claims authorizer for disability benefits. Her skill and commitment were recognized as she was promoted to a variety of management positions throughout the agency, and she eventually was named as Assistant Deputy Commissioner—the top civil service position—in SSA's Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs, OLCA. She has served with distinction for over 12 years in that position or as Acting Deputy Commissioner. She has helped to establish a high standard for knowledge, cooperation and professionalism in representing SSA with Members of Congress and their staff.

Ms. Garro is recognized as an expert on SSA's disability policies, with a particular expertise in the complex challenge of determining childhood disability. With her early experience as a disability claims authorizer as a base, and additional experience gained in organizational management, she was named Director of SSA's Division of Medical and Vocational Policy, which is responsible for developing the regulations and policies used to determine whether an applicant meets the test of disability in the law. She was chosen to represent SSA on a White House workgroup on children with disabilities, and she addressed the National Commission on Childhood Disability on behalf of SSA.

Ms. Garro also led the development of SSA's medical listing for HIV, creating a streamlined process that allowed individuals with HIV to qualify for presumptive disability payments based on a doctor's certification. As a result, payments for individuals suffering from HIV could begin in a matter of days rather than months. She also played a pivotal role in developing and implementing the procedures the Agency continues to use to expedite benefits to terminally ill applicants.

At the Committee on Ways and Means, we are grateful for Ms. Garro's vast expertise cov-

ering Social Security programs and agency operations, and her skill in communicating vital information to Congress. She has led the Congressional affairs team with a high degree of integrity, knowledge, and compassion. The Subcommittee on Social Security particularly appreciates her unfailing responsiveness, and her timely, accurate, and insightful analysis on issues ranging from disability determination to disclosure of information to the impact of immigration reform on SSA. The technical assistance she and her staff have provided over the years has been invaluable in perfecting the laws Congress has enacted.

Ms. Garro's tenure in OLCA spanned six SSA Commissioners. She led SSA's preparation of witnesses for many hearings, and the Committee learned to expect those witnesses to be ready to handle any question we would ask. Ms. Garro also participated in innumerable Congressional briefings. Her hallmark was a thoughtful, practical, well-reasoned approach to any issue, leavened by a sense of humor that ensured balance and perspective.

Diane Garro's career exemplifies her commitment to providing effective, compassionate, and knowledgeable service to the Agency and to the American public. She can retire knowing she has the respect and admiration of those who have worked with her, and she can be very proud of her accomplishments.

We wish Ms. Garro all the best in her retirement from the Social Security Administration. We thank her for her many years of dedicated Federal service, and we will certainly miss her.

H.R. 3221—FORECLOSURE
PREVENTION ACT OF 2008

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

Mr. TIAHRT. Madam Speaker, owning a home is an essential component of the American dream, and an accomplishment that millions of Americans aspire to and take pride in. In recent months, however, the housing market has entered a slump. The effort to provide a way for all Americans to own their own homes brought a sharp increase in the usage of subprime and exotic mortgages, which proved to be more than the market could handle. We now find ourselves grappling with decisions on how best to "fix" the problems that have arisen in the housing market and in our economy.

However, a broad government handout, such as what has been proposed in recent legislation, is not the answer.

While the housing slump must be addressed, I am concerned by the precedent of using taxpayer dollars to bail out fraudulent lenders and, in some instances, irresponsible borrowers. H.R. 5818 and H.R. 3221, the so-called "Neighborhood Stabilization Act of 2008" and "Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008," propose such a bailout at the cost of responsible, hardworking American families.

These bills do contain important provisions such as the modernization of the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) and reform of Government-Sponsored Entities (GSEs). These

bills, however, also include a \$300 billion taxpayer-funded government subsidizing of irresponsible lending behavior. I fully support the FHA and GSE reform measures that have passed the House of Representatives, yet I cannot support a massive bailout to irresponsible lending practices and market speculators. For these reasons, I voted against H.R. 5818 and H.R. 3221.

While I cannot support legislation that rewards bad behavior at the expense of taxpayers, I remain strongly committed to supporting measures that provide the necessary relief to families who have been victimized without burdening taxpayers for the irresponsibility of others. Therefore, I am supporting two alternative bills introduced before the House of Representatives that precisely address the needs of homeowners in a responsible and fair way.

First, H.R. 5974, The Housing Opportunity for All Americans Act of 2008, addresses the housing slump in a responsible way. Instead of providing a massive bailout to irresponsible lenders and borrowers, this legislation creates a market incentive approach to the housing slump. The market approach includes a one-time tax credit for homebuyers of 10 percent of the home's purchase price (up to \$10,000) for 1 year after the enactment of the bill. Also, under this legislation, taxpayers who are non-resident aliens, flip a home within the 1 year period, or sell a house to a relative simply for the credit, would not be eligible. Furthermore, mortgages which exceed the maximum original principal obligation of a mortgage Freddie Mac will purchase would not qualify.

Second, H.R. 5857, the Homeownership Protection and Housing Market Stabilization Act of 2008, is also a more responsible approach to addressing the current problems facing the housing market. The bill includes provisions to directly protect home buyers and owners, such as housing counseling, improved disclosure practices, fraud combating and prevention measures, and encouragement to re-work loans instead of foreclosing. It also aims to help prevent lenders from falling into the same habits that have recently developed in the industry by providing liability protection for helping troubled borrowers, requiring escrow accounts for subprime borrowers, and reforming appraisal practices for prospective homebuyers. In addition, this legislation contains provisions similar to those that have passed this House with my support: FHA modernization and improved regulation of GSEs, including Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the Federal Home Loan Banks.

These alternative bills provide the integrity of the appraisal process and strengthen mortgage fraud prevention efforts that will help bring stability to the current housing market. These bills together represent a viable alternative, offering an appropriate response to a serious problem without burdening taxpayers for the irresponsibility of others.

I am hopeful that a bipartisan compromise can be achieved in Conference that can be supported by majority of the Members of the House and Senate, as well as the President. An effectual and responsible solution to the current situation must be reached for the sake of our economy and our citizens, and I hope to be able to vote on legislation that provides sensible but effective relief for American homeowners.