

commitment to the protection of democratic institutions and peoples. President Ma also expressed his commitment to these same principles:

In fact, Taiwan has much to offer foreign investors. We are a country with a sophisticated legal infrastructure, a democratically open and stable political system and a viable and liberal economy.

We therefore want to end Taiwan's isolation from the world by putting our economic relations with the Chinese mainland on a more normal footing. At the same time, the more contentious political issues will be left on the back burner. We will put off political talks until after a firm foundation for economic, cultural and educational exchanges has been established and buttressed by reciprocal trust and confidence on both sides.

Strengthening the relationship between the United States and Taiwan is essential. This Congress must continue to remain firm in our commitment to Taiwan and meet our obligations under the TRA, as President Ma expressed:

Undoubtedly, the resilience of the TRA and the recent cross-strait détente have opened new opportunities for Taiwan, the U.S. and the mainland to pave a common path towards cooperation, instead of confrontation. This new equilibrium can result in a win-win-win situation for all sides. Obviously, America's role is pivotal. For peace negotiations to continue, the United States is well advised to not only reaffirm but also bolster its commitments under the TRA. The new-found rapprochement with the mainland only means we must with equal, if not greater, effort work to fortify U.S.-Taiwan relations on the basis of mutual trust. This I believe calls for an expansion of bilateral interaction especially at higher levels so as to always guarantee clear communication and better cooperation. Furthermore, a strong commitment in U.S. arms sales and support for expanding Taiwan's international space will enhance our position in face of a power imbalance now rapidly developing across the strait.

Therefore, we come here today not only to commemorate a historic point in cross-strait relations, but, more importantly, to celebrate the endurance of Taiwan-U.S. relations. The strength of the TRA is more vital and crucial at this critical juncture of development than ever before. U.S.-Taiwan relations, the stability of the status quo and even the entire region hangs in the balance. Therefore, I call on Taiwan and the United States to continue to honor the commitments that have bound their destinies together in common friendship and interest for the past three decades.

Madam Speaker, it is my express hope that as we move forward from this 30th Anniversary, the United States and Taiwan will continue to recognize the importance of our shared destinies and act accordingly for the preservation and promotion of our shared values.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT HATE CRIMES PREVENTION ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 29, 2009

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1913, the

Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act. I am a cosponsor of this legislation because we must do all that we can to protect those who are injured because of their gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, or disability.

Hate crimes can occur in any community—even one as wonderful and diverse as mine. On July 4, 1999—when we should have been celebrating the welcoming and embracing traditions of our great country, my district was rocked by the killing spree of the white supremacist, Benjamin Nathaniel Smith. This madman left us grieving for Ricky Byrdsong, a former Northwestern University coach, a well-known community leader, a deeply religious man, a man who was committed to his family. His only crime was the color of his skin—he was African-American. Smith also murdered Won Joon Yoon, an Asian American student from Indiana.

The bill we are considering today takes an important step toward making America a more just society, by closing a glaring loophole in our justice system that prevents the Federal Government from prosecuting cases where women, gay, transgender or disabled persons are victims of bias-motivated crimes for who they are. These crimes not only devastate victims and their family and friends, but they devastate the community to which the victim belongs by creating fear and intimidation. Hate crimes chip away at the very foundations of what it means to be an American—that all people are created equal and are afforded the same freedoms and protections.

America must no longer ignore hate crimes of any kind. Everyone, regardless of race, sexual, orientation and gender identity, must be equal in the eyes of the law. The passage of H.R. 1913 will send the powerful message that America stands for tolerance and inclusion, and is opposed to prejudice in all its forms. I want to thank my good friend, Congresswoman TAMMY BALDWIN, and the entire LGBT Equality Caucus for their tireless work to get this bill passed and urge my colleagues to vote “yes” to H.R. 1913.

CREDIT CARDHOLDERS' BILL OF RIGHTS ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. THOMAS E. PETRI

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 29, 2009

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration of the bill (H.R. 627) to amend the Truth in Lending Act to establish fair and transparent practices relating to the extension of credit under an open end consumer credit plan, and for other purposes:

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Chair, I am disappointed that Congressman MURPHY and I will not have the opportunity to offer our amendment to the Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights Act which would require credit card companies to report on marketing agreements with institutions of higher education and alumni associations. The amendment also would direct the Government Accountability Office to analyze and report to Congress the impact of these arrangements on student credit card debt. To that end, today we will be introducing this amendment as a stand-alone bill, the Student Credit Card Transparency Act of 2009.

According to a recent study, students are now graduating with an average credit card debt of more than \$4,100, up from \$2,900 just four years ago. The average number of cards per student has grown to 4.6, with over half of college students reporting they have four or more cards. The combined impact of credit card debt and growing student loan debt can greatly limit a student's future career choice. Furthermore, compounding debt from late payments and high penalties can further jeopardize a young person's financial future by making it difficult to take out their first mortgage, buy a car or even rent an apartment.

As I'm sure we all know through our own experiences or through our children's, college students have become prime targets for credit card marketing campaigns. Most students enter college without a credit card and are quickly saturated with e-mails, direct mailings and on-campus solicitations to sign up for their first credit card. A recent report by the U.S. Public Interest Research Group revealed that, of the students they surveyed, 80 percent said they had received mail from credit card companies. Students reported receiving an average of nearly five mailed solicitations per month. In addition, 22 percent of students reported receiving an average of nearly four phone calls per month from credit card companies.

While the practice of targeting college students may not be much of a surprise, students and parents may be alarmed to learn that many colleges, universities and alumni associations have entered into lucrative agreements with these companies to allow exclusive marketing of their cards. In these arrangements, schools receive large cash payments in exchange for handing over their students' contact information—such as address, e-mail address, and telephone numbers. These confidential agreements may also go further and give companies exclusive face-to-face access to students on campus, such as during sporting events or at the student union. Some provide the university or alumni with additional money based on a percentage of purchases using the card.

Despite the fact that hundreds of schools throughout the country have such arrangements, very little is known about them. Last year's “pay to play” scandal in the guaranteed student loan program exposed the practice of lenders and financial aid administrators putting their own interests ahead of their students' when it came to compiling their “preferred lender list.” While arrangements between credit card companies and schools don't necessarily mean the student's financial interests are being harmed, I believe it is imperative to have at a minimum a better understanding of these arrangements. For instance, are schools and associated foundations making arrangements with companies that offer the best rates for their students?

This bill simply seeks greater transparency by requiring credit card companies to report these arrangements. Then Congress, students and parents will be able to judge whether these agreements reflect the best interests of students or that of the school or related institution.

I am happy to have the support of the United States Students Association, USPIRG, Consumer Federation of America, National Association of College Admissions Counselors, and the American Association of Collegiate

Registrars and Admissions Officers and want to thank Congressman MURPHY for his work on this important bill.

IN HONOR OF GUST SEVASTOS

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 30, 2009

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of Mr. Gust Sevastos, as he is being recognized by the Cleveland AHEPA—American Hellenic Education Progressive Association—as the Socratic Award Honoree of the Year, at their 44th Annual Scholarship Awards Banquet.

Mr. Sevastos immigrated to Cleveland in 1958, with not much more than the clothes on his back, faith in his heart and the promise of the American dream. He married, started a family and began his own business. He also began a legacy of dedicated service to the Greek community of Cleveland. His service to others and spirit of volunteerism continues to reflect throughout our community.

Mr. Sevastos served as president of Annunciation Church, and was one of the founding members of the annual Greek Heritage Festival. His dedication to preserving his heritage while assisting others to succeed is also evidenced in the Chios Society, where he held leadership positions on both local and national levels. During his tenure with the Chios Society, he led many fundraising efforts and raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for medical clinics, including an eye clinic and hospital, to provide greatly needed medical services for the poor in the beautiful coastal town of Chios, Greece. Mr. Sevastos has also helped raise tens of thousands of dollars toward college scholarships for young adults in the Cleveland community. His significant contributions have not gone unrecognized. He has been honored numerous times by local, state and national leaders of the United States and Greece as well.

Madam Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor of Mr. Gust Sevastos upon his recognition as the Cleveland AHEPA's Socratic Honoree of the Year. His leadership, kindness, service to others and commitment to preserving the rich cultural heritage of his Greek homeland serves to deepen the diversity in our Cleveland community. Mr. Sevastos' lifelong spirit of volunteerism and dedication to helping others has enriched the lives of numerous families and individuals—from Cleveland to Chios, connecting us all in our shared humanity. I consider Mr. Sevastos to be a friend and mentor, and I wish him and his family an abundance of peace, health and happiness.

TRIBUTE TO IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY'S OFFICE OF BIOTECHNOLOGY

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 30, 2009

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the Office of Biotechnology at Iowa

State University in Ames, Iowa on their 25-year anniversary.

In 1984, Vice President of Research Daniel Zaffarano appointed a Biotechnology Council comprised of five colleges at the university: Agriculture, Engineering, Home Economics, Science and Humanities, and Veterinary Medicine. Despite facing early skepticism by some, within two years the Iowa General Assembly backed the biotechnology program with \$17 million in funding after the Council convinced the public of the benefits.

Over the last 25 years, the Office of Biotechnology has provided critical support to many of the university's academic colleges and to K-12 outreach programs. The office has also helped provide research funds to new faculty and equipment and resources to 28 different service facilities at the university.

I congratulate Iowa State University's Office of Biotechnology on this historic anniversary and for its great contributions to science and the State of Iowa. It is an honor to represent current director Walter Fehr, as well as each current and past member of the Office of Biotechnology in the United States Congress and I wish the Office great success in the future.

INTRODUCING THE PARENTAL CONSENT ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 30, 2009

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Parental Consent Act. This bill forbids Federal funds from being used for any universal or mandatory mental-health screening of students without the express, written, voluntary, informed consent of their parents or legal guardians. This bill protects the fundamental right of parents to direct and control the upbringing and education of their children.

The New Freedom Commission on Mental Health has recommended that the federal and state governments work toward the implementation of a comprehensive system of mental-health screening for all Americans. The commission recommends that universal or mandatory mental-health screening first be implemented in public schools as a prelude to expanding it to the general public. However, neither the commission's report nor any related mental-health screening proposal requires parental consent before a child is subjected to mental-health screening. Federally-funded universal or mandatory mental-health screening in schools without parental consent could lead to labeling more children as "ADD" or "hyperactive" and thus force more children to take psychotropic drugs, such as Ritalin, against their parents' wishes.

Already, too many children are suffering from being prescribed psychotropic drugs for nothing more than children's typical rambunctious behavior. According to Medco Health Solutions, more than 2.2 million children are receiving more than one psychotropic drug at one time. In fact, according to Medco Trends, in 2003, total spending on psychiatric drugs for children exceeded spending on antibiotics or asthma medication.

Many children have suffered harmful side effects from using psychotropic drugs. Some of the possible side effects include mania, vio-

lence, dependence, and weight gain. Yet, parents are already being threatened with child abuse charges if they resist efforts to drug their children. Imagine how much easier it will be to drug children against their parents' wishes if a federally-funded mental-health screener makes the recommendation.

Universal or mandatory mental-health screening could also provide a justification for stigmatizing children from families that support traditional values. Even the authors of mental-health diagnosis manuals admit that mental-health diagnoses are subjective and based on social constructions. Therefore, it is all too easy for a psychiatrist to label a person's disagreement with the psychiatrist's political beliefs a mental disorder. For example, a federally-funded school violence prevention program lists "intolerance" as a mental problem that may lead to school violence. Because "intolerance" is often a code word for believing in traditional values, children who share their parents' values could be labeled as having mental problems and a risk of causing violence. If the mandatory mental-health screening program applies to adults, everyone who believes in traditional values could have his or her beliefs stigmatized as a sign of a mental disorder. Taxpayer dollars should not support programs that may label those who adhere to traditional values as having a "mental disorder."

Madam Speaker, universal or mandatory mental-health screening threatens to undermine parents' right to raise their children as the parents see fit. Forced mental-health screening could also endanger the health of children by leading to more children being improperly placed on psychotropic drugs, such as Ritalin, or stigmatized as "mentally ill" or a risk of causing violence because they adhere to traditional values. Congress has a responsibility to the nation's parents and children to stop this from happening. I, therefore, urge my colleagues to cosponsor the Parental Consent Act.

SALUTING HARLEM'S OWN RAMONA "MONA" LOPEZ

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 30, 2009

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to salute and congratulate my dear friend, an outstanding businesswoman and community leader, Ramona "Mona" Lopez in celebration of the 369th Veterans' Association Annual Pre-Mother's Day Brunch taking place on Sunday, May 9 at the elegant Marina del Rey.

Affectionately known in Harlem as Mona by her many fans, friends, business associates and Jazz musician legends, was born on the Island of Puerto Rico and came to New York at an early age. Mona was educated in the Public School system, raised three daughters and embarked on a career that has spanned over three decades. Her daughters Joann, Eva, and Dolores have blessed her with four grandchildren, Margaret, Kimberly, Eva, and Jonathan.

Since December 1978, Ms. Mona Lopez has managed Showman's Cafe in all of its locations within my Congressional District. Showman's, originally located next to the