CONGRATULATING MR. CHARLES McDONALD ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, it is with a tremendous amount of pride that I rise today to honor Mr. Charles McDonald on the occasion of his retirement after serving as president of the Alabama Retail Association for 35 years.

Charlie McDonald has been a devoted advocate for the retailers and business community of Alabama all of his life. Moreover, Charlie is a worker, not a talker, and he knows how to get the job done.

He served the Alabama Council of Association Executives for over three decades. In 1987, he served as chairman of the Alabama Civil Justice Reform Committee, and in 1992, he chaired the Alabamians for Workers' Compensation Reform.

A graduate of the University of Alabama, Charles received the School of Commerce and Business Administration's Retailer of the Millennium Award in 1999. He was also honored by the Food Marketing Institute with the Donald H. MacManus Retail Association Executive of the Year Award, and the American Society of Association Executives awarded him the Grand Award for Management Achievement. This year, the National Retail Federation honored Charles with the prestigious J. Thomas Weyant Lifetime Achievement Award.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating a dedicated community leader and friend to many throughout Alabama.

I know Charles's colleagues, his wife Elaine, his children, and grandchildren, and his many friends from throughout the country join me in praising his accomplishments and extending our heartfelt thanks for his many efforts over the years on behalf of the state of Alabama.

THE PORTER COWBOYS' 5A SOCCER TITLE

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Porter Cowboys, winners of the University Interscholastic League Class 5A boys' soccer state championship. These young players came painstakingly close to defeat, but rose to victory in a 2–1 double-overtime win, earning Brownsville's first 5A state championship, and the pride of South Texas.

The Cowboys came back from a 1–0 deficit against the highly regarded team of Coppell in a match that went to two 10-minute overtime periods. The agility and perseverance of this team gained the recognition of even the rival coach who could not deny the heart the Cowboys put forth.

Less than a minute later, Porter tied up the game 1–1, after Coppell's only goal. The winning shot scored with 3:42 left on the stadium scoreboard, leaving the Cowboys' solid defense squad to protect the lead. The team left it all on the field to earn the Rio Grande Valley's first 5A title in soccer.

With such dedicated players and skilled coaching, it seems only right that their remarkable qualities led them to this year's championship. Their triumph is significant to both the team and their fans because it tells the story of how the road to victory is paved by those who never give up.

The Cowboys' success comes from sheer persistence and true teamwork. These young men have learned the supreme principles of both sports and life. They have experienced that winning is great but success is sweeter when teamwork and faith defy expectations and confront challenge.

These are the young champions: Eric Chapa, Edgar Sanchez, Aldo Sierra, Juan Razo, Jose Alvarado, Peter Ruiz, Victor Vela, Cristian Sierra, Wilfredo Fernandez, Edgar Acuna, Jorge Briones, Jovanny Briones, Alex Lara, Humberto Lopez, Gerardo Herrera, Mario Perez, Gerardo Martinez, Diego Rodriguez, Michael Cedillo, Angel Cardenas, Jesus Sanchez, Miguel Vasquez, Jose Mojica, Jorge Gandara, Abpsa Cardenas, Jose Sosa, and Abel Perez.

The coaches who led them to victory are Luis Zarate, Arturo A. Puig Jr., Pedro Valdez, and Miguel Marroquin.

I congratulate the Porter Cowboys who through their unwavering endurance and determination have brought great pride and joy to all of South Texas. I ask the House of Representatives to join me today in commending this outstanding band of champions who have learned the most important lessons of competition, faith, and commitment. Mr. Speaker, these young men have inspired us and made us exceptionally proud.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, April 25 and Wednesday, April 26, I was absent for votes on rollcall numbers 100 through 108. Had I been present, I would have voted "Yes" on rollcall number 100, "Yes" on rollcall number 101, "No" on rollcall number 102, "No" on rollcall number 103, "Yes" on rollcall number 104, "Yes" on rollcall number 105, "No" on rollcall number 106, "Yes" on rollcall number 107, and "No" on rollcall number 108.

CONGRATULATING RAYMOND S. ANGELI ON THE OCCASION OF RECEIVING THE B'NAI B'RITH AMERICANISM AWARD

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask you and my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives to pay tribute to Raymond S. Angeli, of Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania, who will be the recipient of the B'nai B'rith's annual "Americanism Award" on May 7.

The honoree of this prestigious accolade is traditionally selected by past award recipients and the presidents of various service organizations.

Mr. Angeli, who serves as president of Lackawanna College, was previously a member of the late Pennsylvania Gov. Robert P. Casey's cabinet. He served as secretary of the Department of Community Affairs after having served as Deputy Secretary for Programs at the agency and as Director of its Northeast Regional office.

A veteran of the United States Army, Mr. Angeli retired with the rank of lieutenant colonel. He served two combat tours in Southeast Asia, one as commander of a helicopter company. He also served as a Department of Defense inspector general and as foreign area officer in the U.S. Embassy in Paris, France.

While in military service, Mr. Angeli was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star, The Air Medal and the Pennsylvania Meritorious Service Medal.

Active in state, regional and community affairs, Mr. Angeli served as chairman of the board of the National Institute for Environmental Renewal, the state's Interagency Task Force on affordable housing and the Pennsylvania Housing and Finance Agency.

Mr. Angeli serves on the boards of the Great Valley Technology Alliance, St. Joseph's Center, Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority and the Delaware and Lehigh Corridor Authority.

Mr. Angeli is a past recipient of the Boy Scouts of America's Outstanding Citizen Award in Northeastern Pennsylvania, UNICO's Man of the Year Award and the University of Scranton's Distinguished Alumnus Award.

A native of Blakely, Pennsylvania, Mr. Angeli earned a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Nebraska and a master's degree in education from Scranton University.

Mr. Angeli and his late wife, Nancy, are the parents of two daughters, Ms. Emy Angeli and Mrs. Tracy Barone.

On a personal note, I want to express my own appreciation for the commitment Ray has made to his community. Although I met him during his tenure in Governor Casey's Cabinet, it has only been since my Congressional district expanded to include Scranton that I have had the opportunity to work closely with Ray on several projects. I know that I can count on him to have thought carefully about every project he undertakes and to have determined that it is in the best interest of the Northeastern Pennsylvania. We are indeed fortunate to have him in our community.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Mr. Angeli on this auspicious occasion. Mr. Angeli's commitment to service and excellence has earned him the respect and admiration of the greater Scranton community. It is fitting that such an award would be presented to him.

APRIL 5, 2006 LETTER TO SECRETARY RUMSFELD

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I sent the following letter to Secretary Rumsfeld requesting

records pertaining to Pentagon plans to use U.S. Special Forces to advise, support and train Iraqi death squads:

Hon. DONALD RUMSFELD,
Secretary of Defense,
The Pentagon, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY RUMSFELD: I am writing to request a copy of all records pertaining to Pentagon plans to use U.S. Special Forces to advise, support and train Iraqi assassination and kidnapping teams.

On January 8, 2005, Newsweek magazine first published a report that the Pentagon had a proposal to train elite Iraqi squads to quell the growing Sunni insurgency. The proposal has been called the ''Salvador Option,'' which references the U.S. military assistance program, initiated under the Carter Administration and subsequently pursued by the Reagan Administration, that funded and supported ''nationalist'' paramilitary forces who hunted down and assassinated rebel leaders and their supporters in El Salvador. This program in El Salvador was highly controversial and received much public backlash in the U.S., as tens of thousands of innocent civilians were assassinated and ''disappeared,'' including notable members of the Catholic Church, Archbishop Oscar Romero and the four American churchwomen. According to the Newsweek report, Pentagon conservatives wanted to resurrect the Salvadoran program in Iraq because they believed that despite the incredible cost in human lives and human rights, it was successful in eradicating guerrillas.

Mr. Secretary, at a news conference on January 11, 2005, you publicly stated that the idea of a Salvador option was ''nonsense.'' Yet mounting evidence suggests that the U.S. has in fact funded and trained Iraqi assassination and kidnapping teams and these teams are now operating with horrific success across Iraq.

We know that the Pentagon received funding for training Iraqi paramilitaries.

About one year before the Newsweek report on the ''Salvador Option,'' it was reported in the American Prospect magazine on January 1, 2004 that part of $3 billion of the $87 billion Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill to fund operations in Iraq, signed into law on November 6, 2003, was designated for the creation of a paramilitary unit manned by militiamen associated with former Iraqi exile groups. According to the Prospect article, experts predicted that creation of this paramilitary unit would ''lead to a wave of extrajudicial killings, not only of armed rebels but of nationalists, other opponents of the U.S. occupation and thousands of civilian Baathists.'' The article further described how the bulk of the $3 billion program, disguised as an Air Force classified program, would be used to ''support U.S. efforts to create a lethal, and revenge-minded Iraqi security force.'' According to one of the article's sources, John Pike, an expert of classified military budgets at www.globalsecurity.org. ''the big money would be for standing up an Iraqi secret police to liquidate the resistance.''

We know that some of the Pentagon's Iraq experts were involved in the Reagan Administration's paramilitary program in El Salvador.

Colonel James Steele, Counselor to the U.S. Ambassador for Iraqi Security Forces, formerly led the U.S. Military Advisory Group in El Salvador from 1984–1986, where he developed special operating forces at brigade level during the height of the conflict. The role of these forces in El Salvador was to attack 'insurgent' leadership, their supporters, sources of supply, and base camps. Currently Colonel Steele has been assigned to work with the new elite Iraqi counter-insurgency unit known as the Special Police Commandos, operating under Iraq's Interior Ministry.

Director of National Intelligence, John Negroponte, was U.S. Ambassador to Iraq from June 2004 to April 2005. From 1981 to 1985, he was ambassador to Honduras where he played a key role in coordinating U.S. covert aid to the Contras, anti-Sandinista militias who targeted civilians in Nicaragua. Additionally, he oversaw the U.S. backing of a military death squad in Honduras, Battalion 3–16, which specialized in torture and assassination. The U.S. had similar programs of supporting paramilitary groups set up Nicaragua and Honduras as its program in El Salvador. In a Democracy Now interview on January 10, 2005, Allan Nairn, who broke the story about U.S. support of death squads in El Salvador, suspected that Ambassador Negroponte would most likely be involved in the economic side of U.S. support to death squads in Iraq.

We know that a wave of abductions and executions, in the style of the death squads of El Salvador, and with ties to an official government sponsor, and to the U.S., has hit Iraq.

News reports over the past 10 months strongly suggest that the U.S. has trained and supported highly organized Iraqi commando brigades, and that some of those brigades have operated as death squads, abducting and assassinating thousands of Iraqis. Some news highlights:

May 1, 2005—Los Angeles Times reports that the U.S. is providing technical and logistical support to the Maghawir (Fearless Warrior) brigades, the Interior Ministry's special commandos, according to Major General Rasheed Flayih Mohammed. Iraqi authorities plan to increase deployment of the 12,000-strong Maghawir (Fearless Warrior) brigades, which are composed of well-trained veterans who have worked closely with U.S. forces in Najaf, Fallujah and Mosul and include the Wolf, Scorpion, Tiger and Thunder brigades.

May 16–20, 2005—Los Angeles Times and New York Times reveal discovery of 46 bodies, all Iraqi men abducted and slain execution-style, in various locations: floating in the Tigris, dumped in ditches and garbage-strewn lots, and buried at a poultry farm.

June 15, 2005—Washington Post reports that U.S. forces had knowledge of secret and illegal abductions of hundreds of minority Arabs in Kirkuk. The abductions were by forces led by Kurdish political parties and backed by the U.S. military.

June 20, 2005—Los Angeles Times reports that Saad Sultan, of Iraq Human Rights Ministry said that police and security forces attached to the Iraqi Interior Ministry, thousands of whom have been trained by American instructors, are responsible for abusing up to 60% of estimated 12,000 detainees in prison and military compounds. He says the units have used tactics reminiscent of Saddam's secret intelligence squads.

July 3, 2005—Reuters News reports that the government of Iraq publicly acknowledged that the new security forces were using torture. Article further says that accounts are common of people being seized by armed men in the uniforms of the police, army or special units like Baghdad's Wolf Brigade police commandos, and then disappearing without trace or being found dead.

July 28, 2005—Los Angeles Times reports that members of a California Army National Guard company, the Alpha Company, who were implicated in a detainee abuse scandal, trained and conducted joint operations with the Wolf Brigade, a commando unit criticized for human rights abuses. In an online Alpha Company newsletter, Captain Haviland wrote, ''We have assigned 2nd Platoon to help them transition, and install some of our 'Killer Company' aggressive tactical spirit in them.'' The article further states that despite the Wolf Brigade's controversial reputation for human rights violations, it is regarded as the gold standard for Iraqi security forces by U.S. military officials.

August 31, 2005—BBC reports that on the night of August 24, a large force of the Volcano Brigade raided homes in Al-Hurriyah city in the Baghdad, kidnapping and then executing 76 citizens. The victims were all shot in the head after their hands and feet had been tied up. They suffered the harshest forms of torture, deformation and burning.

November 16, 2005—Reuters News reports the discovery of 173 malnourished men, some of whom were tortured, imprisoned in a secret jail run by Shi'ite militias tied to the Interior Ministry.

November 17, 2005—Newsday reports that in the past year, the U.S. military has helped build up Iraqi commandos under guidance from James Steele, a former Army Special Forces officer who led U.S. counterinsurgency efforts in El Salvador in the 1980s. The brigades built up over the past year include the Lion Brigade, Scorpion Brigade and Volcano Brigade.

February 15, 2006—Associated Press reports that the Interior Ministry has launched a probe into death squad allegations.

February 19, 2006—BBC reveals that morgues in Baghdad receive dozens of bodies picked up daily from rivers, sewage plants, waste burial sites, farms and desert areas. Most of the bodies are handcuffed and blindfolded civilians with a bullet or more in the forehead, indicating that they were executed. The handcuffs used on the victims are like those used by the Iraqi police.

February 26, 2006—The Independent reports that outgoing United Nations' human rights chief in Iraq, John Pace, revealed that hundreds of Iraqis are being tortured to death or summarily executed every month in Baghdad alone by the death squads working from the Ministry of Interior. He said that up to three-quarters of the corpses stacked in the Baghdad mortuary show evidence of gunshot wounds to the head or injuries caused by drill-bits or burning cigarettes.

March 9, 2006—Los Angeles Times reports that Iraqi police officers who worked at the Interior Ministry's illegal prison had received American training, and that U.S. trainers have also given extensive support to 27 brigades of heavily armed commandos accused of a series of abuses, including the death of 14 Sunni Arabs who were locked in an airtight van last summer.

March 10, 2006—Sidney Morning Herald reports that men wearing the uniforms of U.S.-trained security forces, which are controlled by the Interior Ministry, abducted 50 people in a daylight raid on a security agency. Masked men who are driving what appear to be new government-owned vehicles are carrying out many of the raids.

March 27, 2006—The Independent reports that while U.S. authorities have begun criticizing the Iraqi government over the ''death squads,'' many of the paramilitary groups accused of the abuse, such as the Wolf Brigade, the Scorpion Brigade and the Special Police Commandos were set up with the help of the American military. Furthermore, the militiamen were provided with U.S. advisers some of whom were veterans of Latin American counter-insurgency which also had led to allegations of death squads at the time.

Mr. Secretary, in light of this evidence of U.S. support for and the existence of death squads in Iraq, what is the basis for your January 11, 2005 statement, that the idea of a Salvador option in Iraq is ''nonsense''?

I request a copy of all records pertaining to Pentagon plans to use U.S. Special Forces to

advise, support and train Iraqi assassination and kidnapping teams. I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

DENNIS J. KUCINICH,
Member of Congress.

TRIBUTE FOR THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NAACP BAY CITY BRANCH

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to honor the Bay City Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People as it celebrates 50 years as a dedicated champion of civil rights. On June 2, 2006 the members of the Bay City Branch will come together to revere its founding members and renew its commitment to justice for all.

Roy Wilkins chartered the first branch of the NAACP in Bay City in 1918. This was at a time when the NAACP was instrumental in convincing President Woodrow Wilson to publicly denounce lynching. The Branch was disbanded but it was re-chartered in 1938 by Attorney Oscar Baker Sr. and chartered a third time in 1946.

In 1955, NAACP member Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a Montgomery Alabama bus and one of the largest grassroots civil rights movements was born. The NAACP was at the forefront of this struggle and Reverend Obie Matthew, Pastor of the Second Baptist Church, organized the present Bay City Branch the following year on October 8, 1956. 50 years later the Branch is still fighting for equality of all citizens.

The Bay City Branch has led the fight against discrimination in housing, education, employment, healthcare, and the criminal justice system. Some of its notable fights were the Migrant Negroes from Georgia Case, the Bay County Skating Rink Case in the 1960s, the Woolworth 5&10 Store Sit-in, the hiring of the first African American teachers by the Bay City School District, and the inclusion of a Black History Class in the Bay City Central High School curriculum. The Branch has given away more than 70 scholarships to high school students. They have supported CORY Place, sponsored a summer USDA Food and Activity program for children, and worked with other local agencies to improve the living conditions in Bay City.

The hymn, Lift Every Voice and Sing, was written by James Weldon Johnson in 1900. In it he wrote, ''Sing a song full of hope that the present has brought us; Facing the rising sun of our new day begun, Let us march on till victory is won.'' Under the current leadership of President Idella White, the Bay City Branch is marching on in the fight to remove barriers to racial equality. The Bay City Branch remains committed to educating citizens about their constitutional rights, and the adverse effects of racial discrimination.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating the Bay City Branch of the NAACP for 50 years of commitment to social justice. The members are to be commended for their steadfast fight against racial hatred and I pray that together we will eliminate this scourge from our nation and the world.

IRAN FREEDOM SUPPORT ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 282, the Iran Freedom Support Act, which has 360 bipartisan cosponsors who represent approximately 216 million Americans.

Following continued Iranian threats to develop and deploy nuclear weapons, increasing evidence that Tehran is interfering with stabilization efforts in Iraq, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's denial of the Holocaust and comments that Israel should be wiped off the map, and ongoing Iranian support of international terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah, it is time for the United States to take concrete steps to hold Iran accountable for its actions.

I am a co-sponsor of H.R. 282 because I feel it is a priority to ensure that Iran is not abusing the basic rights of its people, endangering the well-being of its neighbors, or destabilizing the region. H.R. 282 strengthens existing United States sanctions against Iran, authorizes support to democratic reformers within Iran, and calls for American investors to divest their holdings of companies invested in Iran's energy sector. The legislation is designed to deny Iran the necessary funds to advance its quest for nuclear weapons.

Iran is a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and has foresworn acquiring nuclear weapons. Yet, it operated a clandestine nuclear program for nearly two decades before it was exposed in 2002.

Iran's continued behavior has led to the decision by the International Atomic Energy Agency to report Iran to the United Nations Security Council. Late last month, the Security Council issued a unanimous statement reiterating calls by the IAEA and members of the international community for Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment efforts and permit U.N. inspectors to reenter Iranian nuclear facilities. Now the United States Congress must use every diplomatic and economic tool at its disposal to address this situation.

While Iran must be held accountable for its actions, I will be demanding that the President of the United States seek the consent of Congress before any military plans are considered. There is no military solution to resolving this conflict. The only solution is to use diplomacy, work with the international community, and promote change in Iran from within.

Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons threatens the stability of the entire Middle East and could spark a dangerous and unprecedented nuclear arms race. I urge all of my colleagues to act now and support H.R. 282.

FREEDOM FOR ALFREDO MANUEL PULIDO LÓPEZ

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind my colleagues about Alfredo Manuel Pulido López, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Dr. Pulido López is a dentist, an independent journalist and a member of the Christian Liberation Movement. He believes in writing and speaking the truth about the nightmare that is the Castro regime. As a dentist, trained in protecting and nurturing human life, he could not tolerate the tyrant's incessant abuse of Cuban people. He understood the human condition and he knew that freedom is infinitely superior to the ills of tyranny and repression.

On March 18, 2003, as part of the dictator's condemnable crackdown on peaceful prodemocracy activists, Dr. Pulido López was arrested because of his belief in liberty over repression. In a sham trial, he was sentenced to 14 years in the inhuman, totalitarian gulag.

On April 18, 2006, Dr. Pulido López's wife Rebeca Rodriguez Sauto visited him and found that his health has significantly worsened. According to the report that she filed with Cubanet, Dr. Pulido López is dangerously malnourished, deeply depressed and distraught. She reports that he is afflicted with chronic bronchitis and dark bruises of an unknown origin have appeared on his skin.

Despite his seriously declining health, Dr. Pulido López stated in the Cubanet report that he has no real reason to ask for a medical parole since he is an innocent man to begin with and what the dictatorship's officials really have to give him is freedom. He continued telling his wife, ''I am more firm in my convictions every day. I am not going to renounce them. They know that my health is affected. They can do what they want.''

Dr. Pulido López's commitment to freedom, in the face of declining health in the grotesque gulag, is a brilliant example of the heroism of the Cuban people. It is a crime against humanity that Castro's totalitarian gulags are full of men and women, like Dr. Pulido López, who represent the best of the Cuban nation.

Mr. Speaker, we must speak out and act against this abominable disregard for human rights, human dignity, and human freedom just 90 miles from our shore. My colleagues, before it is too late, we must demand the immediate and unconditional release of Alfredo Manuel Pulido López and every political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

TRIBUTE TO THE VILLAGE OF BREESE

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2006

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Breese, Illinois upon her sesquicentennial. The Village of Breese was formed in 1856 and will celebrate her sesquicentennial on June 2–4, 2006.