

support Israel's right to exist in peace and security, defend religious freedom and provide humanitarian relief to those in need."

By choosing David L. Hyman for this recognition, the American Jewish Committee brings honor to the award itself and to the legal profession of Philadelphia. I extend my own best wishes to this richly deserving super citizen in our midst, and I say: Mazel Tov, Counselor.

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PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. JEFF FORTENBERRY**

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 6, 2008*

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, March 4, 2008, I was inadvertently detained and thus I missed rollcall votes Nos. 88, 89, and 90. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on all three votes.

IN HONOR OF ANDY WILLNER

**HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 6, 2008*

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Andy Willner's lasting contributions and dedication while serving as NY/NJ Baykeeper Executive Director. Mr. Willner's commitment to safeguarding the Hudson-Raritan Estuary helped eliminate pollution and restored efficiency in the estuary's streams and shores for almost twenty years.

In March Mr. Willner will retire after eighteen years of service as Baykeeper. On March 7, 2008, at the Liberty House Restaurant in Liberty State Park, the Baykeeper's Founders Fete will honor Mr. Willner for all he has done in keeping New Jersey and New York waterways safe.

Mr. Willner began his distinguished career as a sailing vessel captain, city planner and boat builder. He has always concerned himself with environmental issues and has thus participated in numerous conferences concerning shore protection and keeping our harbors safe.

Later, he served as member on the Dredge Materials Management Work Group and the Hackensack Meadowlands Special Area Management Plan among the various environmental organizations he was a part of. Mr. Willner has received many renowned awards for his work including the "Hero of the Harbor" Award as well as the Stewardship Recognition Award from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Mr. Willner began his work with the NY/NJ Baykeeper in 1989 and has served as Executive Director for eighteen years. His work with the Baykeeper included bringing attention to coastal issues, protecting our shores, and eliminating pollution in our waters. With the momentous efforts of Andy Willner, the Hudson-Raritan Estuary has been kept safe and protected for nearly twenty years.

Madam Speaker, I sincerely hope that my colleagues will join me in celebrating the work of Andy Willner. His continual efforts to keep our waters protected will continue to benefit and inspire the people of New Jersey.

PASS FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

**HON. DAVID G. REICHERT**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 6, 2008*

Mr. REICHERT. Madam Speaker, While I am pleased that the House has once again renewed Andean trade preferences, I think this bill highlights more than ever the need to pass pending free trade agreements that have languished for far too long without consideration. We must continue to open markets to encourage American companies to innovate and compete with their global counterparts. This grows our economy and creates jobs.

I am proud to represent a district in Washington State that integrates our nation's leading technology innovators with a vibrant and highly productive small business community. Opening new global markets gives them incentives to improve their products, produce more goods, and employ more American workers. I have seen these job-creating effects first-hand, with trade accounting for 1 out of every 3 jobs in my state.

In this time of economic uncertainty, Congress must act now to advance America's broader trade agenda. We cannot allow important agreements with Panama and Korea to remain on hold while Europe and China continue to knock down trade barriers and improve their competitiveness in the global economy. And surely recent provocative comments by the leader of Venezuela helps put into perspective the urgent need to use the power of trade in Colombia. I urge my colleagues in the Majority to stop the delays and pass these free trade agreements. Let's advance the trade measures needed to grow our economy, create jobs, and not only improve our relations with global partners, but also to foster global peace and freedom.

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CONGRATULATING THE INDIANA GIRLS BASKETBALL STATE RUNNERS-UP OF WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL IN SOUTH BEND, INDIANA

**HON. JOE DONNELLY**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 6, 2008*

Mr. DONNELLY. Madam Speaker, today I congratulate the South Bend Washington High School Lady Panthers, the 2008 State Runners-Up in the 4A girls basketball division.

In their quest towards this title, the Lady Panthers compiled a 23-2 record on the road to their third consecutive trip to Consecro Fieldhouse in Indianapolis. Unfortunately the team faced a disappointing loss there, but they can still be proud of their reign as South Bend's premier girls basketball team.

The South Bend Washington team consisted of 12 outstanding young women: Seniors Emily Phillips, Vanessa Wiley, Meagan Phillips and Shalana Murray; Juniors Skylar Diggins, Karis Phillips, Alandrea Pfeifer-Nailon, Takoia Larry and Rakeesha Lane; Sophomore Avante Newsome-Gunn; Freshmen Terran Scott and Alexis Macon.

Head Coach Marilyn Coddens was assisted by Don Coddens. Officials such as Mayor

Steve Luecke, School Superintendent Robert Zimmerman, Washington Principal George McCullough Jr., and Athletic Director Patrick Mackowiak lent support and encouragement throughout the season.

The city of South Bend and the surrounding area rallied behind the Lady Panthers. In what has become a winter tradition on the West Side of South Bend, thousands of fans gathered to send off the team and to travel south for the big game where they made the event at the Fieldhouse feel like a home game.

Again, I offer my congratulations to the members of the girls basketball team of South Bend Washington High School on their Semi-State title and their fearless, spirited play at the Championship game.

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HONORING MAXINE HALPERN

**HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 6, 2008*

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, Maxine Halpern has involved herself deeply in Jewish affairs internationally, nationally, and locally. She is a born and bred Bronxite who graduated from City University of New York.

Maxine is the daughter of two World War II veterans, the U.S. Army and the Royal Air Force. Traveling to England to visit family began at an early age and touring foreign lands became a lifelong interest, having traveled to over 40 countries on 5 continents as well as throughout much of the United States.

She is a supporter of over 50 philanthropies both secular and religious. Maxine has been awarded the Nahum Goldman Leadership Award, and is a member of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's international Leadership Council, among other equally prestigious organizations.

She is also active in local Jewish communal life as a member of the board of trustees, as vice president, and as president of the Riverdale Temple. She was appointed founding president of the Congregation Shaarei Shalom. For all of her outstanding contributions to community life, the Riverdale Jewish Community Council presents her with the Michael Schreck Community Builder Award.

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RECOGNIZING MICHAEL K. (MICK-EY) ENGLETT FOR EXCELLENCE

**HON. JEFF MILLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 6, 2008*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the U.S. Congress, it is an honor for me to rise today in recognition of Michael K. Englett and his induction into the Florida Community College Activities Association Women's Basketball Hall of Fame.

For the past 18 years, Okaloosa County and the surrounding community have benefited significantly from the service of Mr. Michael Englett, dean of student services and director of athletics for Okaloosa-Walton College. Mr. Englett's vision of a comprehensive athletic program transformed Okaloosa-Walton College and propelled the school beyond the

standard of excellence. Under Mr. Englett's direction, sports complexes were constructed, a strength center was erected, the gymnasium was renovated, and intercollegiate athletics were reinstated, after nearly 12 years of their absence.

In addition to his outstanding modifications to student life, Mr. Englett developed the Raider Club to supplement institutional scholarship assistance. In just 13 years, the Raider Club has raised over \$1 million in fundraising and has substantially increased scholarship aid.

During his tenure at Okaloosa-Walton, Mr. Englett expanded college athletics to encompass much more than sports. He devised a plan for gender equity, increased graduation rates, and because of his efforts, saw his team win 14 Panhandle Conference Championships. His fusion of athletics into college life elevated the school from academic excellence to overall distinction.

Northwest Florida is greatly indebted to Mr. Englett's foresight and ingenuity. His immense dedication to the community has led to an increased enrollment at Okaloosa-Walton College and a greater academic environment.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the U.S. Congress, I am proud to recognize Michael K. Englett on his outstanding achievements and exemplary service in Okaloosa County and northwest Florida.

TRIBUTE TO LANCE CORPORAL  
GENTIAN MARKU

**HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 6, 2008*

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Madam Speaker, I want to pay tribute to a hero, LCpl Gentian Marku of Warren, Michigan. Today, I ask that the House of Representatives honor and remember this exceptional young man who died serving his country.

Gentian Marko immigrated with his family to the United States in 1997, at the height of civil unrest in Albania. Once arriving in the United States, Gentian left behind his troubled childhood, and became the intelligent, diligent, and responsible young man that we know. After graduating from Warren Woods Tower High School in 2001, Gentian had hoped to become a police officer. At the recommendation of his father, a former first captain in the Albanian military police, Gentian joined the Marine Corps to help his chances at acceptance to the police academy.

After enlisting in the Marines in August 2002, Gentian was assigned to the First Battalion, Marine Expeditionary Force. In 2003, Gentian returned to Albania during a 2-week exercise with the Marines and served as a translator during meetings with the Albanian military and civilian leaders. Gentian had said it was one of his proudest moments being able to do something for both of his countries.

On November 25, 2004, Lance Corporal Marku was killed in action in Fallujah, Iraq, in the Anbar province. At the time, the Marines had awarded him medals for good conduct, humanitarian service, combat action and other activities.

My thoughts, prayers, and deepest gratitude for their sacrifice go to Gentian's family. There are no words that can relieve their pain and I

can only offer to convey my deep respect and highest appreciation.

Madam Speaker, Lance Corporal Marku gave the ultimate sacrifice not only for the freedom and security of his family and our country, but for the people of Iraq. I wish to remember his bravery, conviction, and selflessness as he is honored today.

CONGRATULATING WILLIAM P.  
BURKE, THE RECIPIENT OF THE  
GREATER PITTSSTON FRIENDLY  
SONS OF ST. PATRICK 2008  
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

**HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 6, 2008*

Mr. KANJORSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask you and my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives to pay tribute to William P. Burke, of West Pittston, Pennsylvania, who is the 2008 recipient of the Greater Pittston Friendly Sons of St. Patrick Achievement Award.

He graduated in 1956 from St. John's High School in Pittston and later from the Wilkes-Barre Business College where he majored in finance and accounting.

Mr. Burke served in the U.S. Army, First Armored Division, Fort Hood, Texas, from 1961 to 1963. Mr. Burke has been an active member of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick for 52 years.

President Harry S. Truman was guest speaker at the first Friendly Sons banquet Mr. Burke attended. Mr. Burke is a sustaining member and past president of the organization. He was the recipient of the Man of the Year Award in 1991.

Mr. Burke is a charter member of the Wolfe Tone Luzerne County Division I Ancient Order of Hibernians and is presently chairman of the standing committee. He is a member of the President John F. Kennedy Council 372 Knights of Columbus and its Fourth Degree, serving as comptroller for the past 40 years. He is also a member of the Knights of Columbus Choir.

Mr. Burke is a member of St. Casimir, St. John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist, and St. Joseph Parish, Pittston, where he serves as an usher and a senior altar server. He is also a member of the parish finance council.

Mr. Burke has been a baseball coach in the West Pittston Little League and a basketball coach for the Wyoming Area Catholic High School.

He has served as chairman of the West Pittston Democrat Organization and he is a former member of the Luzerne County Democrat Executive Committee. He also served as parade chairman for the Pittston Tomato Festival.

Mr. Burke is a member of Fox Hill Country Club and the West Side Social Club, Avoca. After 37 years of employment with Pope and Talbot Company, he served for several years as director of purchasing for Luzerne County, a post from which he retired in 2006.

Mr. Burke and his wife, Nora, are the parents of three children. They also have nine grandchildren.

Madam Speaker, please join me in congratulating Mr. Burke on the occasion of this

special honor. Mr. Burke's dedication to family and community has improved the quality of life and highlighted the value of service above self.

HONOR THE LIFE OF LIEUTENANT  
RAFAEL VAZQUEZ

**HON. RON KLEIN**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 6, 2008*

Mr. KLEIN of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Lieutenant Rafael Vazquez of the Palm Beach Fire Rescue. Known as "Ray," this brave firefighter died tragically on Monday, March 3, as a result of a random shooting in West Palm Beach, Florida.

The details of Lt. Vazquez's death are heartbreaking. The 42-year-old lieutenant had just finished eating lunch with his wife, Michele, and their 4-year-old son when, ever the caring parent, Ray decided to go back inside the restaurant to exchange a toy that had come with his child's meal.

It was a fateful decision. Once inside, Ray was met by a deranged gunman, Alburn Edward Blake, who opened fire. When it was over, Lt. Vazquez lay dead and four others were injured. Then Alburn Edward Blake turned the gun on himself.

Ray's life was one of tireless dedication toward protecting his fellow citizens. Formerly a firefighter with the town of Lake Park, he was hired by the Palm Beach Fire Rescue in February 2001 and was promoted to Rescue Lieutenant in January 2007. He had been assigned to Rescue 28 in Royal Palm Beach, Florida. Lt. Vazquez is survived by his wife Michele, an officer with Palm Springs Public Safety, and their 5 children, ages 4–21.

In closing, I think the best way to honor Ray's life in Congress is to let his wife Michele speak for him in her own words. She says, "I don't understand why these horrible things happen. But no horrible thing can take away our memories. My husband was an outstanding father and the most giving husband. He was my best friend; I'm going to miss him so much."

A dedicated firefighter, father, and human being, Lt. Ray Vazquez deserves all the honor and praise this distinguished body can bestow upon him.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL  
LAND ASSISTANCE, MANAGE-  
MENT, AND ENHANCEMENT ACT  
(FLAME ACT)

**HON. NICK J. RAHALL II**

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 6, 2008*

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement Act, or the FLAME Act.

Last year, our country saw the devastating effects of catastrophic, emergency wildland fires in southern California. For the past several years, we have witnessed tragic fire seasons that have put American lives and our