

a smooth deployment cycle, from when a family is preparing for a deployment to adjusting to life once the service member has returned home.

Family Readiness Volunteers and Ombudsmen can assist newly enlisted service members and spouses with a wide range of issues—from understanding their health and retirement benefits to serving as a conduit of information to the command.

They can also provide resources and support to families who are seeking support services, such as employment training, mental health counseling or where to find affordable day care services for their young children.

These men and women volunteer their time to selflessly take on the responsibility of helping other military families while they themselves are often coping with the deployment of a loved one.

Madam Speaker, since 2001, nearly two million members of the active duty and reserve force and the National Guard have deployed in support of overseas contingencies in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As we all know, deployments are a difficult time for service members and their families.

Inadequate communication between units abroad and families at home cause unnecessary stress on our service members and their families and can harm the overall readiness of our force. Family readiness equals mission readiness.

I have heard time and time again that when deployed service members know their families are being taken care of, that they can focus on the task at hand. Family Readiness Volunteers and Ombudsmen help reduce the uncertainty and ease anxiety around deployments by keeping families informed and our service members focused on their mission.

I hope you will help me recognize their important role to our national defense.

#### REMARKS HONORING SHARON WALDEN

#### HON. NICK J. RAHALL, II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, I rise before you today to honor a great West Virginian, Sharon Walden who will be inducted into the West Virginia Affordable Housing Hall of Fame on Thursday, May 7th, 2009. Her lifelong commitment to affordable housing, coupled with her tremendous career of leadership, has forever changed the McDowell county community where she was raised and where she continues to make her home.

Sharon's leadership has led to housing and safety for many domestic violence victims, homeless women and their children in West Virginia. Since 1990, she has served as the Executive Director of Stop Abusive Family Environments, Inc. (SAFE). Under her leadership, SAFE went from a small Domestic Violence program with two employees to the first transitional housing facility in my home state of West Virginia that serves victims of domestic violence.

Sharon has truly battled Goliath as David did in 1 Samuel Chapter 17. She worked tirelessly to raise over two million dollars in grants and forgivable loans in order to renovate a

former school building into SAFE's facility. Her perseverance to improve her community did not end there. Next, she established the SAFE permanent housing program which would help first-time, low-income homebuyers in her county. Since then, SAFE has completed 40 rental townhouses with a community center that has been noted as the best rental housing in all of McDowell county.

Under Sharon's leadership, SAFE has formed a non-profit section called SAFE Housing and Economic Development (SHED) which focuses on permanent housing development. In these times of economic uncertainty, when becoming a homeowner can seem like an impossible dream, SHED has helped more than 35 community members reach that goal and become first time homeowners.

Sharon's community work doesn't stop with helping those in need of housing. She helps further economic development as the Executive Director of Travel Beautiful Appalachia. Linking tourism from the rail system to local entrepreneurs, she helps spread local West Virginia treasures across the country.

Sharon's lifetime commitment to helping her neighbors has made a permanent impression on West Virginia. I bring her extraordinary efforts to the attention of the U.S. Congress and urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing Sharon Walden, a hero to her community and the countless families she has helped.

#### SUPPORTING THE CREDIT CARD-HOLDER'S BILL OF RIGHTS ACT OF 2009 (H.R. 627)

#### HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I rise to express my strong support for the Credit Cardholder's Bill of Rights Act of 2009 (H.R. 627), which the House approved last week, and to commend my colleague Ms. MALONEY for her leadership in crafting and championing this measure.

As I am certain is true of all of my colleagues, I am inundated with calls and letters from constituents who are outraged by sudden and arbitrary increases in their credit card interest rates. Their hard-earned taxpayer dollars were used to shore up financial institutions to prevent an economic collapse, and in return, some of the very same financial institutions turned right around and doubled the interest rate they charged their customers.

A letter I received from one constituent, whose interest rate was doubled from 15 to 30 percent, said: "[I]nterest rates such as these are confiscatory. . . . This starts to look like indentured servitude at best, and financial slavery at worst." A letter from another said: "given how much of my taxes are going to bail out these companies, these rates are beyond outrageous and smack of greed." And a letter from another, which was entirely in capital letters, said: "[T]he American people gave billions [in] bail out money because . . . the banks got themselves into trouble. Instead of helping the same taxpayers that helped them by lowering interest rates on credit cards they chose to raise the rates for no reason. . . . When people do the responsible thing it seems they get punished for it. There have to be more

controls on what the banks can do to people who honor their commitments."

I share the outrage of my constituents, and I am pleased to support the Credit Cardholder's Bill of Rights. It will tackle not only usurious interest rates, but a host of other abuses. In 2008 alone, credit-card issuers imposed \$19 billion in penalty fees on families with credit cards according to an industry consultant for Consumer Reports. In 2009 it is estimated that credit card companies will break all records for late fees, over-limit charges, and other penalties, charging more than \$20.5 billion for such fees and penalties.

The Credit Cardholder's Bill of Rights would prevent credit card companies from unfairly increasing interest rates on existing card balances. Credit card holders would be allowed to set their own lower credit card limits, at levels they consider appropriate for their financial circumstances.

The bill would end "double cycle" billing, prohibiting credit card companies from charging interest on balances cardholders have already paid on time. If a cardholder pays on time and in full, the bill prevents card companies from charging additional fees on balances consisting solely of left-over interest.

The bill would also require card companies to provide 45 days advance notice of all interest rate increases or significant contract changes such as the addition of new fees or penalties, and would enact into law recently proposed Federal Reserve Board regulations protecting consumers from abusive credit practices.

This bill establishes many long-overdue protections for consumers and credit card holders, and I am pleased to support it.

#### IN MEMORY OF CORINNE CONTE

#### HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Mr. MARKEY of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of Mrs. Corinne Louise Conte, wife of our former colleague, the late Congressman Silvio Conte, who died on April 28, 2009.

Corinne was born on January 24, 1922, in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, to Charles and Kathleen Clemente Duval. As a teenager, she was a champion swimmer, winning the New England Championship for Breast Stroke Swimming at age 13. Following graduation from Pittsfield High School and St. Luke's School of Nursing in Pittsfield, Corinne served as a nurse in the Navy during World War II where she met her future husband, the late Congressman Silvio O. Conte when he was in the Seabees and recovering from an illness.

Corinne and Silvio were married in Pittsfield on November 8, 1947. After Silvio was elected to the U.S. Congress in 1958, Corinne moved to Bethesda, Maryland, where she raised their four children. While in the Washington, D.C. area, she worked as a real estate agent and was an active partner in her husband's political campaigns. Corinne met every U.S. President from Dwight D. Eisenhower to George H.W. Bush, and many of the world's leaders from the 1950s through the early 1990s. She also danced with Lyndon B. Johnson at his Inaugural Ball and served on President George

H.W. Bush's special Committee on Mental Health in the late 1980s.

Corinne was an avid Red Sox fan and was very thankful that she lived to see the "Curse of the Bambino" broken. She was committed to her Catholic faith and was a daily communicant for years at Little Flower Roman Catholic Church in Bethesda, Maryland, as well as Notre Dame Roman Catholic Church and St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church, both in Pittsfield. In her younger years, she had a private pilot's license. But, most of all, Corinne loved to play cards on a daily basis while living with her daughter in Mill Valley. She enjoyed a last game with her children a few days before her death, which she won, decisively.

Corinne was a friendly and cheerful person who was loved by everyone who knew her. She had a remarkable and full life, and I extend my condolences to the family on her passing.

DEDICATION OF THE BRUCE W. CARTER DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER IN MIAMI

**HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 6, 2009*

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, today I want to express my deep gratification and support as the Miami Veterans Affairs Medical Center dedicates their building to Pfc. Bruce W. Carter, USMC. Although we can never truly do enough to honor his sacrifice, Pfc. Bruce Carter, through the tireless efforts of his mother Georgi Carter Krell and so many others, will be remembered.

Pfc. Carter, a member of the 2nd Battalion 3rd Marines 3rd Marine Division, died in the Quang Tri Canyon Province in the Republic of Vietnam in 1969. His Medal of Honor Citation reads in part that "while pinned down by vicious crossfire, with complete disregard for his safety, he stood in full view of the North Vietnamese Army soldiers to deliver a devastating volume of fire at their positions. The accuracy and aggressiveness of his attack caused several enemy casualties and forced the remainder of the soldiers to retreat from the immediate area. Shouting directions to the marines around him, Pfc. Carter then commenced leading them from the path of the rapidly approaching brush fire when he observed a hostile grenade land between him and his companions. Fully aware of the probable consequences of his action but determined to protect the men following him, he unhesitatingly threw himself over the grenade, absorbing the full effects of its detonation with his body. Pfc. Carter's indomitable courage, inspiring initiative and selfless devotion to duty upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life in the service of his country."

The citation speaks volumes. In this time when we have two wars ongoing, it is such a good reminder of the kind of person who serves this country and commits him or herself to the protection of others, even until death. I am sure that Georgi would be the first to say that although this Center is named for Pfc. Carter, it is a testament to the legacy of all of our brave veterans. In her work as President

of the Gold Star Mothers Inc, she knows better than most the toll that war can take on families and I also take this opportunity to thank her for her dedication and tireless work on behalf of our veterans.

SUPPORTING FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH

**HON. RUBÉN HINOJOSA**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 6, 2009*

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, personal financial management skills and lifelong habits begin to develop during childhood. As such, it is essential that we begin preparing our youth as early as possible on how to make informed financial choices, manage money, credit, debt, and risk and eventually become responsible workers, heads of households, investors, entrepreneurs, business leaders, and citizens.

We need to begin working closely with the Department of Education and states and localities to ensure that we begin the financial literacy learning process at least by the time a child enters Kindergarten.

Policy makers of both parties, at the local, state, and federal levels, recently have increased their focus on financial literacy and economic education issues because national surveys reveal troubling gaps in students' and the public's knowledge of these subjects. Economic competency and financial literacy skills are critical for individuals to make sound decisions regarding home ownership, savings, investment, credit and borrowing, and retirement planning. An educated and financially literate populace will strengthen the national economy, especially as individuals improve their own economic well-being.

Our government should lead by example. We should coordinate and communicate a unified message on financial literacy across this Nation. We should authorize and appropriate such funds as necessary to create a broad-based public awareness campaign comprised of a substantial mass-market, multimedia effort in support of a national financial literacy initiative on the scale of the "truth" campaign, developed through the Public Education Fund to discourage smoking among young people.

I believe that the National Endowment on Financial Education and several other financial literacy nonprofits and community based groups would agree with me. My proposed financial literacy initiative would be in addition to the one recommended in the Office of Housing Counseling legislation as introduced by my fellow Financial and Economic Literacy Caucus Co-Chair, colleague and friend, Congresswoman JUDY BIGGERT. I am a proud cosponsor of her legislation and am pleased that it was incorporated into H.R. 1728, the "Mortgage Reform and Anti-Predatory Lending Act."

In 2004, Congress passed a bill known as the FACT Act. One of the provisions in that Act required Treasury and a Financial Literacy Education Commission to create a national financial literacy campaign. They failed miserably, and, consequently, I think we need to revisit Title V of the FACT Act to alter the composition and contributions and goals of the Financial Literacy and Education Commission housed at Treasury once the Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Financial Education is selected.

Mr. Speaker, some disturbing facts.

A 2008 survey of high school seniors conducted by the Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy revealed that students in 2008 answered correctly only 48.3 percent of the survey's questions, a decline from those posted by students in 2006, who correctly answered 52.4 percent of the questions;

Eighty-four percent of undergraduates had at least one credit card in 2008, up from 76 percent in 2004, with the average number of cards increasing to 4.6 according to Sallie Mae's National Study of Usage Rates and Trends 2009 entitled "How Undergraduate Students Use Credit Cards";

Personal saving as a percentage of disposable personal income was 4.2 percent in February, compared with 4.4 percent in January, and up from a 12-month average of 1.7 percent in 2008, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis;

The average baby boomer has only \$50,000 in savings apart from equity in their homes, according to the Federal Reserve Board's Survey of Consumer Finances for 2007; and,

Studies show that as many as 10,000,000 households in the United States are "unbanked" or are without access to mainstream financial products and services.

These statistics are alarming.

All of us here in Congress and across the United States need to take actions necessary to address and improve upon these startling facts. I am pleased to announce that I am a proud cosponsor of Congresswoman CAROLYN MALONEY's Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights. I supported it in Committee and voted for it when it passed the House.

One other way of addressing these alarming statistics is by increasing the number of Members of Congress dedicated to the financial literacy cause. By joining the Financial and Economic Literacy Caucus my colleague and friend

Congresswoman JUDY BIGGERT and I co-founded in 2005 and currently co-chair, Members can take a giant step forward and help us find the ways and means to improve financial literacy across the United States for all individuals during all stages of life.

As members of the Caucus, my colleagues in the House can collaborate on events such as the National Consumer Protection Week Fair, America Saves Week, Financial Literacy Month, and the Financial Literacy Day Fair held every other year in the House of Representatives.

By joining the Caucus, Members can collaborate with us to increase funding for the Council for Economic Education's Excellence in Economic Education (EEE) program. Congress authorized the EEE as part of the No Child Left Behind Act "to promote economic and financial literacy of all students in kindergarten through grade 12." In 2004, the Department of Education selected from a competitive process the Council for Economic Education (formerly named the "National Council for Economic Education") to administer and implement the Excellence in Economic Education program authorized in the No Child Left Behind Act (P.L. 107-110), Subpart 13, Sections 5531-5537).

Educating students in grades K-12 is the best way to help them develop the knowledge and skills they will need for a lifetime of economic and financial decisions. The EEE program accomplishes this through sub-grants to