

**RECOGNIZING DIDLAKE, INC. AND THE ABILITYONE PROGRAM -- HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY (Extensions of Remarks - March 24, 2010)**

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**HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY**  
OF VIRGINIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Wednesday, March 24, 2010

- Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize a program which in the last several years has helped more than 40,000 Americans who are blind or who have significant disabilities gain skills and training that ultimately led to gainful employment: The AbilityOne Program.
- The AbilityOne Program harnesses the purchasing power of the Federal Government to buy products and services from participating community-based nonprofit agencies that are dedicated to training and employing individuals with disabilities. This program affords Americans with disabilities the opportunity to acquire job skills and training, receive good wages and benefits and gain greater independence and quality of life.
- This comes within a segment of the population that has suffered from significant, chronic and unacceptable unemployment. However, opportunities realized through the AbilityOne Program have done much in helping to bring people who are blind or have significant disabilities into a working society. I am proud to recognize Didlake, Inc., located in Virginia's 11th district, as one shining example of a nonprofit agency working through the AbilityOne Program to enrich the lives of people with disabilities.
- For more than 40 years, Didlake has provided a wide-range of resources to expand opportunities for people with disabilities in Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia. Didlake offers training and support services to people with significant disabilities leading to employment on federal, state and local contracts such as facility management, mailroom operations, administrative services, fleet management, product packaging and more.
- The mission of Didlake stands as a true example of why community nonprofit agencies and programs like AbilityOne are a winning proposition for all parties involved. For an individual with a significant disability who has never had the opportunity to hold a job, be independent, participate in the community, or play an important role in society; the training and support that organizations like Didlake offer, and the employment opportunities afforded through partnership with the AbilityOne Program are truly invaluable.
- Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I extend my support to the AbilityOne Program. I also want to commend the dedication and commitment of Didlake President and CEO Rex Parr and his staff for helping individuals who have significant disabilities find employment. Their work helps people live fuller lives and become more active members of society. I also commend each AbilityOne employee who works every day to improve their lives and support our federal government's mission.

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