

THERE'S A NEW LAWMAN IN TOWN: CHRISTOPHER JAMES MCCAIN

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, earlier this week, as the sun set in South East Texas, on January 3, 2007, 35 highly-trained, well-disciplined, dedicated disciples of the law were sworn in as new Houston Police Officers. One of those officers was Christopher McCain.

McCain comes from a law enforcement family. His stepfather, Eddie, an HPD Officer for over 25 years, pinned the new police badge on McCain at the Police Academy Graduation. Present at the graduation were his proud mother, Janet, who has spent most of her career helping people of the Houston community, and his brother Ryne.

Madam Speaker, peace officers are the last strand of wire in the fence between good and evil. They are what separate us from the anarchy of the lawless. By wearing the badge, they swear to protect, defend, and serve the citizens.

McCain, 28 (born 1978), is a single parent of 2 small children. His youthful wife met an untimely death in 2005. When this occurred, McCain accepted the duty to raise his children alone.

Although becoming an HPD officer is the beginning of a new career, McCain has spent his life in public service. After receiving his GED, McCain volunteered and joined the U.S. Marine Corps. He served 4 years on active duty as a non-commissioned officer in Special Operations, assigned to the desert sands of the Middle East and he also served in Japan. After being discharged, he was recalled to active duty in 2003. McCain's dramatic enthusiasm for serving our Nation as a Marine was another trait of our Nation's great warriors.

Here's what President Ronald Reagan said about the Marines:

Some people spend an entire lifetime wondering if they made a difference in the world. But, the Marines don't have that problem.

Christopher McCain was one of those Marines.

When his tour of duty was over with the Marine Corps, McCain went to work for the Harris County (Houston), Texas Juvenile Probation Department. He was a Master Sergeant in the training division of the boot camp. Boot camp teaches youthful offenders discipline, hard work, and self worth. He spent 5 years (2001–2006) helping the troubled youth of the streets of Houston.

But all of his life, Christopher McCain wanted to be a peace officer. Now that dream has been accomplished. Christopher McCain is a Texas Lawman!

Peace officers, who wear the badge, are the best we have to offer to our towns and cities. Serving the people, protecting the citizens, capturing outlaws and bringing them to justice, is what these peace officers do for the rest of us.

In Houston, we call our peace officers "Houston's Finest." Officer Christopher McCain is now one of those who wear the badge and the blue uniform of "Houston's Finest." He, like his fellow peace officers, is a cut above the rest of us—and that's just the way it is.

INTRODUCING THE FAIR MINIMUM WAGE ACT OF 2007

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, as part of this first 100 hours of the 110th Congress, I am proud to introduce the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007. The introduction of this bill provides Congress with a long-overdue opportunity to stand up for the dignity of those 5.6 million workers in the United States making minimum wage, or near minimum wage.

The Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 would increase the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour in three steps over two years. Under this bill, sixty days after enactment, the wage would rise from the current \$5.15 per hour to \$5.85 per hour. One year later, it would rise to \$6.55. And a year after that, it would finally rise to \$7.25 per hour. The bill also extends federal minimum wage coverage, under a separate timetable, to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

For almost a decade, the federal minimum wage has remained at just \$5.15 an hour. The nation's poorest workers have suffered through the longest period in the history of the law without a pay raise. As a result of congressional inaction, the real value of the minimum wage has hit a 51-year low. If the rate remains unchanged in 2007, a minimum wage employee working full-time will earn only \$10,712, which is \$5,888 less than the \$16,600 needed to lift a family of three out of poverty. This is unconscionable. These Americans have suffered at poverty wages for far too long. It is time for Congress to demonstrate that it values hard work.

Nearly 13 million American workers will see their pay rise as a result of the Fair Minimum Wage Act—5.6 million workers directly and 7.4 million workers indirectly. This number includes 7.7 million women, 3.4 million parents, and 4.7 million people of color. 79 percent of these workers are adults, and the majority of these workers work full-time.

Families with affected workers rely on those workers for more than half of their family's income. 46 percent of child-rearing families with affected workers rely solely on the earnings from those workers. If this bill becomes law, over 6.3 million children would see their parents' income rise. For a family of three this means an additional \$4,400 a year, equaling 15 months worth of groceries or two years worth of health care for these families. It will mean greater dignity on the job.

Congress has a moral duty to raise the minimum wage. Churches, synagogues, and other faith groups are calling on Congress to support the Fair Minimum Wage Act. In this country, an average CEO earns more before lunchtime in one day than a minimum wage worker earns all year. This is a moral outrage in the richest country on earth. With the costs of health insurance, gasoline, and college tuition increasing, it is important, now more than ever, that we raise the minimum wage so that these hard working Americans are able to meet basic human needs.

Raising the minimum wage is not only the right thing to do, it is also economically prudent. Increasing the minimum wage will help

boost the economy as a whole, putting more money into the hands of those people who need it and will spend it—indeed, spend it on basic necessities. Last year, some 665 economists, including several Nobel Laureates, signed a statement in support of raising the minimum wage. As they explained, the "minimum wage helps to equalize the imbalance in bargaining power that low-wage workers face in the labor market. The minimum wage is also an important tool in fighting poverty."

Raising the minimum wage is critical to fighting the middle class squeeze in this country. America's middle class is this country's economic backbone. It is what makes us strong. Yet the middle class is shrinking. Since 2001, the number of Americans living in poverty has increased by 5.4 million, to 37 million. More than one in six American children now lives in poverty. The Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 is an important first step for this new Congress in its efforts to stand up for the middle class and to stem the squeeze.

INTRODUCING WE THE PEOPLE

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the We the People Act. The We the People Act forbids federal courts, including the Supreme Court, from adjudicating cases concerning state laws and policies relating to religious liberties or "privacy," including cases involving sexual practices, sexual orientation or reproduction. The We the People Act also protects the traditional definition of marriage from judicial activism by ensuring the Supreme Court cannot abuse the equal protection clause to redefine marriage. In order to hold federal judges accountable for abusing their powers, the act also provides that a judge who violates the act's limitations on judicial power shall either be impeached by Congress or removed by the president, according to rules established by the Congress.

The United States Constitution gives Congress the authority to establish and limit the jurisdiction of the lower federal courts and limit the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. The Founders intended Congress to use this authority to correct abuses of power by the federal judiciary.

Some may claim that an activist judiciary that strikes down state laws at will expands individual liberty. Proponents of this claim overlook the fact that the best guarantor of true liberty is decentralized political institutions, while the greatest threat to liberty is concentrated power. This is why the Constitution carefully limits the power of the federal government over the states.

In recent years, we have seen numerous abuses of power by Federal courts. Federal judges regularly strike down state and local laws on subjects such as religious liberty, sexual orientation, family relations, education, and abortion. This government by Federal judiciary causes a virtual nullification of the Tenth Amendment's limitations on federal power. Furthermore, when federal judges impose their preferred policies on state and local governments, instead of respecting the policies adopted by those elected by, and thus accountable

to, the people, republican government is threatened. Article IV, section 4 of the United States Constitution guarantees each state a republican form of government. Thus, Congress must act when the executive or judicial branch threatens the republican governments of the individual states. Therefore, Congress has a responsibility to stop Federal judges from running roughshod over state and local laws. The Founders would certainly have supported congressional action to reign in Federal judges who tell citizens where they can and can't place manger scenes at Christmas.

Madam Speaker, even some supporters of liberalized abortion laws have admitted that the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision, which overturned the abortion laws of all fifty states, is flawed. The Supreme Court's Establishment Clause jurisdiction has also drawn criticism from across the political spectrum. Perhaps more importantly, attempts to resolve, by judicial fiat, important issues like abortion and the expression of religious belief in the public square increase social strife and conflict. The only way to resolve controversial social issues like abortion and school prayer is to restore respect for the right of state and local governments to adopt policies that reflect the beliefs of the citizens of those jurisdictions. I would remind my colleagues and the federal judiciary that, under our Constitutional system, there is no reason why the people of New York and the people of Texas should have the same policies regarding issues such as marriage and school prayer.

Unless Congress acts, a state's authority to define and regulate marriage may be the next victim of activist judges. After all, such a decision would simply take the Supreme Court's decision in the *Lawrence* case, which overturned all state sodomy laws, to its logical conclusion. Congress must launch a preemptive strike against any further federal usurpation of the states' authority to regulate marriage by removing issues concerning the definition of marriage from the jurisdiction of federal courts.

Although marriage is licensed and otherwise regulated by the states, government did not create the institution of marriage. Government regulation of marriage is based on state recognition of the practices and customs formulated by private individuals interacting in civil institutions, such as churches and synagogues. Having federal officials, whether judges, bureaucrats, or congressmen, impose a new definition of marriage on the people is an act of social engineering profoundly hostile to liberty.

It is long past time that Congress exercises its authority to protect the republican government of the states from out-of-control federal judges. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to co-sponsor the *We the People Act*.

MATH AND SCIENCE EDUCATION LEGISLATION

HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce a package of four bills aimed at improving our nation's math and science education at the pre-school through university levels.

Too often, our young students lack the academic background necessary to learn math and science skills in elementary school. The Math and Science School Readiness Act (H.R.) promotes pre-mathematics and pre-science school readiness in preschool-aged children enrolled in the federal Head Start program. The bill updates the current law provision that requires that Head Start programs develop preschoolers' "numeracy skills" by requiring that such programs instead ensure that children develop and demonstrate basic pre-math and pre-science skills, such as counting, grouping similar objects together, and deciphering whether items have been added or subtracted. I included a similar provision in the major Head Start reauthorization bills that passed the House in 2003 and 2005, but unfortunately these bills did not become law.

Now more than ever, our nation's future economic competitiveness and national security will depend upon a workforce equipped with necessary math and science skills. Our students lag behind their international peers on several key indicators, and our states and schools are not held accountable for K–12 science education. The Science Accountability Act (H.R.) holds states and schools accountable for ensuring that our K–12 students are learning science. It amends the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 to require that the science assessments, which begin in the 2007–2008 school year, be included in the state's accountability system beginning in the 2008–2009 school year. It also gradually phases in annual assessments in science in grades 3–8, matching the existing requirements for reading and math assessments.

This package of math and science bills also provides resources for improving math and science education. A tandem of bills provides incentives for teachers and businesses to enhance math and science education.

A key component of high-quality math and science education is a qualified teaching workforce. The National Science Education Tax Incentive for Teachers Act (H.R.) helps bring qualified math and science teachers to our K–12 schools and helps retain them. Eligible teachers may receive a tax credit of up to \$1,500 per year.

A former science educator, I understand that students should learn math and science primarily by doing math and science. Schools lack the necessary equipment and some teachers lack training in how to use the equipment. The National Science Education Tax Incentive for Businesses Act (H.R.) encourages businesses to donate new and needed math and science-related equipment to schools or donate teacher training services. Businesses may receive a tax credit equal to 100 percent of the value of their donations.

I am hopeful that the House and Senate can quickly act on this legislative package and that President Bush will sign the bills so that our nation's math and science education may be improved on all levels.

TRIBUTE TO MR. ANTHONY
L'ESPERANCE

HON. GARY G. MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor Mr. Anthony L'Esperance, a fellow Southern Californian.

Mr. L'Esperance has lived a long and distinguished life. During World War II, he honorably served as a Lieutenant Commander in the Merchant Marines. His duty and commitment to this great nation have helped build the pillars of hope, peace and freedom that so many in the world still look up to.

Mr. L'Esperance was also featured in the pages of *Life* magazine for his work as a master magician and is credited for inventing a precise slide-calendar that incorporates the days lost due to the switch from Julian to Gregorian calendars.

But his greatest accomplishment and passion in life is his family. For more than 62 years, Mr. L'Esperance has been married to his wife Mary. They have been blessed with a son, Paul, a daughter-in-law, Jan, and granddaughter, Morgan.

Madam Speaker, I respectfully ask that this 110th Congress join me in saluting Mr. L'Esperance for his service to our country and community.

RENEWABLE ENERGY COULD TRANSFORM HAITI

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I would like to share with my colleagues the following op-ed that appeared last week in the *Orlando Sentinel*. This article discusses how a U.S.-backed biomass policy for Haiti could move our Caribbean neighbor away from the trajectory of state failure. As the article notes: "Support for bioenergy as part of the solution to Haiti's economic dilemma—unemployment and lack of energy—could advance the development of Haiti, and reinforce the governance and security reforms that Haitians so desperately deserve." I hope all of my colleagues keep this article in mind as we enter the 110th Congress.

[From the *Orlando Sentinel*, Dec. 26, 2006]

HOPE AFTER H.O.P.E. FOR HAITI?

(By Johanna Mendelson-Forman)

In its final hours, the 109th Congress gave new life to Haiti's manufacturing sector, passing a trade bill that included the H.O.P.E. legislation that would create up to 7,000 new jobs by allowing Haitian assembly plants to import, duty-free, textiles that would be made into clothing for the U.S. market. While not a long-term solution to Haiti's ills, the symbolism of this action went further to bolster the morale of the Haitian private sector than anything in recent years.

Haiti suffers from many problems, not the least of which is lack of jobs. Violence and kidnappings continue to undermine security in Port au Prince. Even with the presence of a robust U.N. Peace Mission, a country of 8