

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM
MAYOR SCARCELLA OF STAFFORD,
TEXAS

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 19, 2009

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, public officials looking for ways to increase economic growth and attract new residents and businesses to their cities, counties, or states could learn a lot from the city of Stafford, Texas, and Mayor Leonard Scarcella. Stafford has flourished since 1995 when, under Mayor Scarcella's leadership, the city eliminated the property tax.

Thanks to the absence of property taxes, Stafford residents enjoy cheaper mortgages and have more disposable income than similarly situated residents of towns with property taxes. The extra income as a result of the freedom from property taxes is particularly beneficial during today's tough economic times.

The loss of property tax revenue has not deprived Stafford residents of quality city services; in fact, Stafford resident Alice Rolston told the Houston Chronicle that the police check on her home when she is on vacation, many homeowners living in towns with high property taxes can't count on that type of service.

Entrepreneurs looking to start up businesses are attracted to Stafford because of the lack of property taxes, Fortune magazine ranks Stafford the 36th best American city to start and run a small business.

While Stafford sales, franchise, and permit fees account for some of its ability to operate without a property tax, the major factor in the city's success is the city's fiscally prudent management. Stafford Councilman Cecil Willis says the mayor watches every penny in the city's budget. City employees often perform two or more functions and the city council even debates whether to authorize the purchase of light bulbs and pencils.

Madam Speaker, Mayor Scarcella is also a good argument against term limits, as he is one of the few elected officials who remains as committed to low taxes today as when he led the fight to eliminate the property tax. Mayor Scarcella should serve as a role model to us all in how to effectively govern without burdening the people with excessive taxes.

HONORING DR. TONY STEWART

HON. G. K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 19, 2009

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, I rise to express great sadness about the untimely passing of Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Tony Stewart.

Dr. Stewart has served as superintendent for the past nine years, and he had earned the respect of the community as a talented and dedicated educator who worked tirelessly to ensure every student received the best possible education. I will remember him for always stressing the responsibility and importance of working to make a difference in the lives of others.

He started his career in 1963 as a teacher, assistant principal and athletic director at Spotsylvania High School in Virginia before serving as a principal for several other schools in Virginia. Dr. Stewart's first job as a superintendent was at Culpeper County Schools in Virginia, where he served for 13 years starting in 1981. He became superintendent of North Carolina's Burke County Schools in 1994, where he served until coming to Elizabeth City-Pasquotank in 2000.

Dr. Stewart received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Appalachian State University and completed postgraduate work at the University of Virginia and Virginia Tech University. He received his doctorate in education from Nova Southeastern University in 1995 and also completed the Principal's Executive Program at the University of North Carolina that same year.

Madam Speaker, I ask that everyone join me in offering our deepest condolences to his family, friends, loved ones, community and colleagues. Dr. Stewart has been a tremendous asset to the community and he will be greatly missed.

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION LAND
CONSERVATION ACT

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 19, 2009

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be joined today with Representatives ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, GERALD CONNOLLY, ROB WITTMAN, DONNA EDWARDS, CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, FRANK WOLF and STENY HOYER to introduce legislation National Capital Region Land Conservation Act of 2009. The legislation amends the Capper-Cramton Act of 1930, authorizing appropriations of up to \$50 million per year for cost share grants to State, regional and local governments to acquire land in the greater Washington Metropolitan area (as defined by the U.S. Census) for a variety of conservation, environmental and recreational purposes. The program would be administered by the U.S. National Park Service.

Few cannot help but notice the green spaces that make up the central core of our nation's capital. Were it not for some visionaries at the turn of the 19th Century, however, our nation's capital would be a different place today. There would be no Mall, monument core, Rock Creek Parkway, Union Station, Lincoln Memorial or Tidal Basin. These icons that define the city today were part of the 1902 McMillan plan, named after Senator James McMillan of Michigan, who chaired the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia. The commission Senator McMillan established to draft the master plan included some of the greatest American architects, landscape architects and urban planners of the day including such luminaries as Daniel Burnham, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and Charles McKim and sculptor August Saint-Gaudens. The commission's plan, in many respects, was an early form of urban renewal that removed many of the slums that surrounded the Capitol, replacing them with new public monuments, open spaces and government buildings.

As visionary as the plan was, it also took some vision and political muscle to make it a

reality. That credit falls largely to two Members of Congress: Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas and Rep. Louis Cramton of Michigan. Both Members embraced the vision and worked over a period of years to enact legislation to advance the McMillan plan. Best known among these laws is the Capper-Cramton law of 1930 authorizing land purchases and creating today's the National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Today, more than a century since the McMillan plan and more than 70 years since the enactment of Capper-Cramton, the time is now for a new plan, one that is responsive to the development patterns and demographics that were never envisioned at the turn of the last century. In 1902, the population of the District of Columbia was 278,000. Outside a few dirt roads and a few railroad junctions that ran into Northern Virginia and Maryland, the suburbs didn't exist. Dairies and farming hamlets populated Northern Virginia and Montgomery and Prince Georges County, Maryland.

Today, the District is home to 600,000 residents and swells to more than 1,000,000 during the workday. A network of roads and heavy rail radiate out from the city, like spokes on a wheel, linking more than 5,300,000 people who are spread out into the suburbs and fringe communities that consider themselves part of the greater metropolitan Washington, D.C. region. Today, we need a program for the greater metropolitan region.

We also need a program that helps lead the way in public investments to preserve the green infrastructure of parklands, fresh drinking water sources, steep slopes, stream valleys, forests, wetlands, wildlife corridors, scenic view sheds, historic sites and land buffering national monuments, battlefields that surround the national capital region and are endangered of being lost to development. Safeguarding these green assets is critical to this region's economy, quality of life, and environmental protection. Green infrastructure have been long recognized as essential elements of urban design and critical to safeguarding our region's drinking water supplies and restoration of the nationally important Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac River, truly our "Nation's River."

Unless we act now to protect the remaining green infrastructure around our Nation's Capital, we run the risk of permanently degrading the environment in and around Washington, D.C. Between 1990 and now, the region's population grew by about 10 percent but the amount of impermeable surface grew about 40 percent. Forecasts predict that by the year 2030, the Greater Washington, D.C. region will grow by an additional 2 million persons.

I believe Congress can and should help the nation's capital address this growing need to preserve this region's green infrastructure by amending the time honored and visionary Capper-Cramton Act. The original Act gave life to many of the elements that we appreciate and consider invaluable today. It is time once again to act and preserve our source of fresh drinking water, connect this region's network of nonmotorized trails, provide buffers to protect scenic vistas along the Potomac particularly above Great Falls, and in Charles and Saint Mary's Counties in Maryland, and pocket parks in the more urbanized parts of the region.

I encourage you to support this act.