

loom large even if the American taxpayers were willing to continue present subsidies. And they are not.

When the private railroads turned over their passenger business to the Government in 1971, Congress made what was referred to as a one-time grant of \$140 million for startup help. More than two decades later, a total of about \$15 billion in taxpayer assistance has been granted to Amtrak.

This legislation seeks to achieve the evolution of a passenger rail network in this Nation which can be viable on greatly reduced taxpayer subsidies. Current Federal subsidies for Amtrak, including operating, capital, and mandatory retirement payments, total more than \$1 billion annually. Of that total, nearly \$400 million is for operating subsidies. The goal of this legislation would be to reduce and possibly phase out the operating subsidies over a 5-year period.

In December, the Amtrak Board of Directors took very positive action in announcing some route closings, truncations, and frequency reductions. But these realignments were targeted only at dealing with the current revenue shortfall of about \$200 million. These decisions, painful as they were, represent just the first step. Much more remains to be done.

Since some of Amtrak's unprofitable routes have been mandated by Congress, it is imperative that Congress provide Amtrak with the assistance needed to reinvent this system into one that is operated under strict business principles.

My legislation would remove the painful decisions that must be made from the political realm and place them in the hands of an independent Commission modeled after BRAC, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. The Total Realignment of Amtrak Commission [TRAC] would conduct an economic analysis of the entire Amtrak system and hold public hearings around the country to ensure that the public and other stakeholders were given the opportunity to be heard. This would be as fair a process as humanly possible with the end goal to make recommendations on route closings and other realignments urgently needed to ensure the survival of a passenger rail system in America.

In addition to economic data, TRAC would also review nonmonetary data such as the contributions made by certain routes toward alleviation of airport congestion, pollution abatement, and energy conservation. This Commission would also examine alternative modes of transportation in rural areas, as well as look at uses communities could make of abandoned rail lines.

Under my legislation, no segment of the Amtrak system would be exempt from review, including the Northeast corridor. TRAC would also examine the ridership forecasts and other assumptions underlying the Northeast corridor, particularly with respect to the continuation of the electrification of this corridor from New Haven to Boston, a project that will demand large subsidies in future years. This is about a \$2 billion project, with nearly \$500 million already expended.

The recommendations of this Commission would not be limited to a system which offers national, interconnected service. After the completion of systemwide economic analysis, the Commission could find, for example, that the only system which can be justified to the taxpayers is one that provides regional serv-

ices. However, connectivity could be an option examined by States along currently unprofitable long haul routes. If States would decide to continue service along such routes slated for closure, State officials could contract with Amtrak to continue service, possibly using flexibility under block grants.

I would point out that, under current law, this Commission would face a difficult dilemma. Because the Rail Labor Protection Act mandates payment of 6 years of full benefits to any rail worker who loses a job due to a route closing, many of the most unprofitable routes would cost more to close than to keep them limping along at a loss. In fact, under the 30-mile rule also in current law, an Amtrak employee is entitled to demand the full severance package if he is merely relocated 30 miles or more. No union workers in the private sector are afforded such generous severance compensation, and these astronomical costs are one of the reasons that every trip on this system costs American taxpayers \$25.

My colleague, Mr. BARTON of Texas, has reintroduced his legislation to remedy this dilemma by limiting such severance benefits to 6 months and by eliminating the so-called 30-mile rule. I am supporting my colleague's bill and its speedy enactment would be very helpful to the decisions which would have to be made by the route closing Commission.

After conducting a complete, systemwide, economic review, TRAC would present its recommendations to Congress. The Commission's recommendations would then be considered by Congress under an expedited timeframe with no amendments permitted and an up-or-down vote.

The members of TRAC would be appointed by the President and by the majority leadership in the House and Senate, in consultation with minority leadership in both bodies. My legislation calls for the membership of the Commission to be comprised of individuals with expertise in rail finance, economic analysis, legal issues, and other relevant areas. Also serving on the Commission would be the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation, one representative of a rail labor union, and one member of rail management.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would reiterate that saving passenger rail service in this country requires objective analysis and urgent remedies. And, I believe it has to be a system that we can justify to the taxpayers.

TRIBUTE TO COL. WILLIAM F. GABELLA

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 1995

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Col. William F. Gabella, who recently received his Master of Law (LLM) in Air and Space Law from McGill University in Montreal, Canada.

Mr. Speaker, as Colonel Gabella receives his degree, I would like to join his colleagues, family, and friends throughout the community of Canon City in congratulating him. Colonel Gabella is an individual whom I greatly admire and respect, and I am pleased to salute him on this important occasion.

This amazing accomplishment was arrived at by hard work and great intelligence. Colonel

Gabella is a credit to Colorado and I'm proud to say he resides in my congressional district.

My best wishes to Colonel Gabella and his family. He has made all who know him proud.

A TRIBUTE TO PHILLIP L. WILLIS, AN AMERICAN HERO

HON. JOHN BRYANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 1995

Mr. BRYANT of Texas. Mr. Speaker, one can tell a lot about a man by what he chooses to do with his life. And Phillip LaFrance Willis was an American hero who chose to live his to the fullest.

This much decorated veteran of World War II died of leukemia on Friday, January 27, 1994, at his home in Dallas.

Phil Willis, major, U.S. Air Force, retired. That is how he will be best remembered. And that is the way he would want to be remembered.

At daybreak on December 8, 1941—the morning after the day of infamy—23-year-old Second Lieutenant Willis, wearing his cowboy boots as he patrolled a beach near Pearl Harbor, captured America's first enemy prisoner of World War II.

Until his retirement as a 28-year-old major as a result of combat injuries in 1946, Phil Willis served with distinction as a B-17 bomber pilot through the Battles of Midway, Guadalcanal, the Coral Sea, New Guinea, and New Britain.

In 52 missions, he was credited with sinking four ships, including one of Japan's largest troop transports, and a submarine and shooting down eight enemy aircraft. He walked away from two downed bombers in the Pacific without losing a crewmember.

His service earned him more than 20 decorations, making him among the most decorated Texas pilots of the war and winning him a place in the Army Air Corps Hall of Fame at Brooks Field in San Antonio.

Born in Kaufman County, TX, on August 2, 1918, Phil Willis did not confine his patriotism to military service.

Throughout his 76 years, Phil Willis was devoted to his country, his community, and his fellow citizens. Whether in uniform, in appointed or elective public office, in community and veterans organizations, or in private life, he was devoted to public service. Loyalty always guided him.

While working to earn his 1948 undergraduate degree from North Texas State University, now the University of North Texas, the young veteran was elected to the Texas House of Representatives from Kaufman County, where he served two terms.

Simultaneously elected to the Texas Legislature, Phil and his brother, Doyle Willis, who continues to serve with distinction, are the only two brothers to have served together in the Texas House of Representatives.

Phil Willis also served as a member of the San Antonio Zoning and Planning Commission and was a Texas Centennial Statehood Commissioner. As a real estate broker, builder, and developer, he was always active in professional and business affairs.

He was named Man of the Year by the San Antonio Jaycees in 1951 and was tirelessly devoted to veterans affairs, particularly through the Veterans of Foreign Wars of which he was a life member and which honored him for distinguished service in 1958 and elevated him to National Aide-de-Camp that year.

Phil Willis served as president, chaplain, and trustee of his chapter of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association and served as its representative to the Greater Dallas Veterans Council.

A 32d Degree Scottish Rite Mason, he was active in raising funds for the Shrine Crippled Children's Hospital.

He was proud to be a member of the Sons of the Republic of Texas and the Sons of Confederate Veterans, and he earned accolades as an award winning chili cook.

Phil Willis was devoted to his family—his wife of 51 years, Marilyn Stubblefield Willis, his daughters, Linda Pipes and Rosemary Roach, and his four grandchildren—his church, and his friends.

He was a good yellow dog Democrat who served as a precinct election judge. In fact, his memorial service program proclaims that he was a "proud, conservative Sam Rayburn Democrat."

Phillip L. Willis, major, USAF, retired, a man who served his country and community exceeding well, a man of humor and good will who enjoyed life and those he lived it with, a man described appropriately, and with humor in that memorial program as "A myth of a man—he didn't myth much."

Phil Willis, patriot and friend, we will miss you.

50 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF VFW POST 4012, NORTHVILLE, MI

HON. LYNN N. RIVERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 1995

Ms. RIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a very important organization in my district. The Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4012 in Northville, MI, achieved the milestone of 50 years on January 30, 1995. On February 4, 1995, the Post is celebrating this milestone with their families and friends.

VFW Post 4012 has been supportive of service men and women at any time of need. Every month members from the post travel to nearby VA hospitals to enjoy fellowship with fellow veterans. During the Persian Gulf conflict the post provided support to our soldiers by sending over 1,200 CARE packages to our troops. The post also operates, in conjunction with the local American Legion, their own cemetery for local veterans.

VFW Post 4012 has been a leader within the VFW organization. They were the first post worldwide to achieve 100, 200, 300, 400, and 500 lifetime members. Including the ladies' auxiliary, the post currently has over 600 members, a feat that speaks to the commitment of veterans to continued service to our community.

Post 4012 is having an impact on everyone in the Northville community. Their efforts include coordination of parades with the American Legion, opening the doors of their hall for

several community organizations to meet at no cost, and finally, in an effort to help with the costs of college, a local scholarship for Northville students.

Mr. Speaker, the members of VFW Post 4012 all served this country once. Now they are serving their country again. And I for one would like to thank them for all they have done, and will continue to do. So to Commander Gordon Mason, Senior Vice Commander Henry Tiilikka, and all members of Post 4012: Congratulations on your 50th anniversary.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN WINDWOOD

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 1995

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, a cherished part of the American dream is home ownership. It gives people a sense of permanence and a stake in their communities and in their country.

Today, a first of its kind public-private partnership with Fannie Mae and the city of Brownsville, Texas Commerce Bank, the Department of Housing and Urban Development HOME Program, Federal Home Loan Bank of Dallas, and Mercantile Bank NA, was announced for the development and construction of a subdivision to provide affordable housing to hundreds of Brownsville residents. The single-family homes to be constructed at Windwood will be available for purchase by families earning as little as \$11,500 per year through a unique lease-purchase financing plan that will transfer fee-simple ownership to qualifying families in 2 years.

Today in Texas, 59.3 percent of the families own their own homes. This rate compares with a national home ownership rate of roughly 64 percent, according to the latest U.S. Census figures. As the Representative of families living in the 27th Congressional District of Texas, I am pleased to see the Brownsville Community Development Corp., Fannie Mae, Federal Home Loan Bank of Dallas, and the Texas Commerce Bank spearheading such public-private partnerships which will help young, hardworking families in south Texas move into the home they have always wanted.

The Windwood Development will be the largest lease-purchase housing program on a single site ever financed by Fannie Mae's Southwestern Regional Office. Fannie Mae will buy over \$11.2 million in first lien loans originated by Texas Commerce Mortgage Co., a division of Chemical Bank. Families wishing to purchase their home under the lease-purchase program must make a \$750 down payment, exhibit a credit history acceptable to Texas Commerce Mortgage Co., complete a first-time home buyer education program, and contribute monthly payments for 2 years to an escrow account set up to assist the family in saving the remainder of the down payment and closing costs.

This public-private partnership is one of the State's most innovative combinations of public and private sector financing. Anytime a city can completely recover a public sector investment through the immediate creation of a property tax base, while at the same time providing safe, high-quality housing and the op-

portunity for home ownership for our citizens—we all win.

The subdivision at Windwood is specifically targeted to provide the opportunity for young, working families to own a high quality home of their own. This reduces the need for them to live in cramped quarters with their parents, or to pay for building their own home later.

The total project is expected to be completed within 2 years and will cost approximately \$13 million. Financing partners will include Texas Commerce Mortgage Co.—supplying \$11.2 million in one-time assumable loans, the Department of Housing and Urban Development HOME Program—through the city of Brownsville, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Dallas—providing \$1.6 million in second lien deferred loans, and Mercantile Bank NA—lending \$10 million for interim construction and development financing, and Fannie Mae. The Community Development Corp. of Brownsville will be the project owner through the lease purchase period, and will serve the project developer.

I commend the financing partners for recognizing the needs of the local community, while at the same time exhibiting the willingness to invest in new solutions to help working Brownsville families realize a part of the American dream. It is only through public-private partnerships such as these that the dream of home ownership will become a reality for many of our working families in south Texas.

AMENDING THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIRPORTS ACT OF 1986

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 1995

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce legislation to amend the Metropolitan Washington Airports Act of 1986, which has been overturned by a Supreme Court ruling. Under the 1986 Airports Act, Congress transferred control of National and Dulles Airports from the Federal Aviation Administration [FAA] to a local authority, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority [MWAA]. When the Supreme Court last month upheld a decision by the Appeals Court regarding the constitutionality of the Congressional Board of Review, it also dissolved the authority of MWAA. On March 31, MWAA's ability to pass a budget, issue bonds, and implement plans for the \$2 billion renovations at National Airport will end. Consequently, we, in Congress, must act quickly and pass legislation to allow National and Dulles Airports to continue to operate.

My legislation would create a new Airport Authority governed by a board of directors made up of 11 members who would meet certain criteria: they must live in the area affected by the airports; and they cannot be paid for their services on the board.

The members of the board of directors would be appointed: 1 by the Governor of Virginia, 1 by the mayor of the District of Columbia, 1 by the Governor of Maryland, 2 each by the representatives from the local governments of Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia who sit on the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments [COG] board