

wait until after the winter months, and only now are able to continue their conquest for a National Championship.

By finishing second in the northeast regional tournament, Montauk has qualified for the national quarter finals and will play in Dallas this weekend. Entering their league in division III, they battled their way to become the 1995 undefeated division II champions and in the running for the national crown. Montauk is 1 of 16 teams in the U.S. bound for Dallas. They go into this tournament seeded third, if they win they will go on to the National Championship round in Chicago on Memorial Day weekend.

Congratulations and best of luck to the Montauk Rugby Club. May you bring back many more national titles to our neighbors in East Hampton.

## U.S. HOUSING ACT OF 1996

SPEECH OF

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 8, 1996*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2406) to repeal the United States Housing Act of 1937, de-regulate the public housing program and the program for rental housing assistance for low-income families, and increase community control over such programs, and for other purposes:

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Chairman, I stand here in the well today in disgust. I am outraged at what we are about to do to our Nation's low income, elderly, and disabled.

Forty percent of Chicago public housing residence are my constituents. And there are thousands more waiting to get a place to shelter their families.

This Republican-led Congress has been attacking poor people with every breath they breathe and every word they speak.

There is no help for those in need in our cities—only a boot on their neck.

We are not giving these people incentive to work, we are not helping them to a transition to a self-sufficient lifestyle—this Congress is not even giving them a reason to live.

People in our Nation's public housing do not want to live there—they don't want to be reminded that they haven't obtained the American dream of owning a home.

They don't want a Federal Government to house them. They don't want the local governments to house them.

They need programs to help transition these neighborhoods to encourage residents to make their lives better.

The Republican proposals are answers that don't answer, explanations that don't explain, and solutions that don't solve.

## RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

HON. ALBERT RUSSELL WYNN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 9, 1996*

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the interest of bringing to your attention the issue

of religious discrimination in employment. It is my pleasure to represent a district which is rich with diverse religions and great religious institutions. The December 1995 issue of *Meat & Poultry*, included an excellent article in the Labor Report entitled "Honor Thy Neighbor," by Richard Alaniz. I bring this article to the attention of my colleagues and urge them to read it and to stand for religious accommodations in the workplace in accordance with the Civil Rights Act.

Years of publicity and high profile litigation have made most employers aware of the various state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, sex, disability and age. What many employers don't know is that Title VII, the primary federal anti-discrimination law, also prohibits discrimination based on religion.

Due to a lack of complaints and perhaps a general unwillingness to accept such claims, religious discrimination has not been brought to the forefront of the average employer's concern. This could all change as the country leans toward conservatism and as groups such as the Christian Coalition attempt to bring religion into the mainstream.

A recent case involving one of the nation's largest employers and religious discrimination may be indicative of future trends. Wal-Mart, the Arkansas-based retail behemoth, settled a religious discrimination suit brought by a former employee. The employee claimed the retailer forced him to quit after he refused to work on his Sabbath. Rather than litigate the claim, Wal-Mart opted to settle. The settlement calls for the retail chain to train all managers in how to reasonably accommodate workers' religious beliefs as well as pay the plaintiff an undisclosed sum of money.

Wal-Mart is not the only business facing this new problem. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has brought several religious discrimination suits against other businesses, especially in the Midwest and South. While the focus has been on retail establishments, it could shift to any employer who has weekend shifts.

The basis for many of these lawsuits is that many businesses have no guidelines or policies to handle requests for religious accommodation, which often means having a weekend work-day off. Many employers feel it is easier to require everyone to work weekends rather than grant exceptions which would create jealousy and an administrative headache.

However, the courts have clearly stated employers are required to reasonably accommodate requests to observe the Sabbath or other religious days unless the request causes "undue hardship" to the business.

In order to prevent claims of religious discrimination, an employer should have a policy dealing with employee requests to observe the Sabbath or other religious days. Employers should not have blanket policies requiring weekend work unless they are prepared to justify that to grant days off would be an undue hardship on the business. Typical examples of what may constitute "undue hardship" are: difficulty to replace an employee due to a lack of notice or simply not having enough employees; importance of the employee; or economic hardship on the employer.

Scheduling problems are not the only area where employers face the possibility of religious discrimination. In many offices it's common for employees to have bibles, signs, posters or other religious articles on their desks. It's also typical for some persons to talk openly about their religious beliefs and perhaps refer to these belief in some aspect of performing their job. This raises the deli-

cate question of how an employer walks the line between allowing employees to express their religious beliefs and maintaining a professional work environment that does not invite friction between individuals of different religions.

This can be especially difficult when a supervisor or other decisionmaker is the one proclaiming his religious beliefs. The classic example is the fundamentalist Christian employer who only promotes persons of the same religion and church as the employer. This could easily be challenged as a form of religious discrimination in which the company could be liable.

A company's policy should apply equally and fairly to all individuals and religions within the organization. Religious activities that don't impose upon others, disrupt the workplace or create morale problems should be the focus of the policy. For example, this could include a bible on the desk or wearing a cross or other religious symbol as jewelry. Examples of conduct employers probably should not accommodate are proselytizing in the workplace, statements or evidence of religious favoritism, or use of company time and resources for religious practices.

Using company time and resources for religious practices can be particularly dangerous. In one well-known case, a business required employees to attend staff meetings that began with a short non-denominational talk and prayer. An atheist employee resigned, sued the company and claimed her freedom of conscience was violated by the prayer. The court of appeals ruled the plaintiff's resignation was justified and that the prayers constituted religious discrimination. The voluntary and nondenominational nature of the prayer was discouraged by the court in favor of the plaintiff's claim of a feeling of compulsion to attend and participate.

Court decisions such as these leave little room for employers to conduct similar religious practices in the workplace. No matter how generic or vague a religious practice may be, there is always the chance it will be deemed offensive by someone.

The key to avoiding embarrassing and costly litigation is to prepare a clearly defined policy addressing religion, permissible and impermissible actions and to train managers and supervisors to recognize those circumstances in which allegations of religious discrimination may arise. By taking a few simple steps and providing for "reasonable accommodation" of religious practices, a proactive company can avoid the time and expense of an unnecessary law suit.

## HONORING THE HARDYS CHAPEL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 9, 1996*

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I am taking this opportunity to applaud the invaluable services provided by the Hardys Chapel Volunteer Fire Department. These brave, civic-minded people give freely of their time so that we may all feel safer at night.

Few realize the depth of training and hard work that goes into being a volunteer firefighter. To quote one of my local volunteers, "These firemen must have an overwhelming desire to do for others while expecting nothing in return."

Preparation includes twice-monthly training programs in which they have live drills, study

the latest videos featuring the latest in fire-fighting tactics, as well as attend seminars where they can obtain the knowledge they need to save lives. Within a year of becoming a volunteer firefighter, most attend the Tennessee Fire Training School in Murfreesboro where they undergo further, intensified training.

When the residents of my district go to bed at night, they know that should disaster strike and their home catch fire, well-trained and qualified volunteer fire departments are ready and willing to give so graciously and generously of themselves. This peace of mind should not be taken for granted.

By selflessly giving of themselves, they ensure a safer future for us all. We owe these volunteer fire departments a debt of gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

#### THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF RURAL HEALTH CORPORATION

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 9, 1996*

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 25th anniversary of the Rural Health Corp. of northeastern Pennsylvania [RHC]. Tomorrow, the RHC board of directors, employees, and friends of the agency will celebrate 25 years of success, and I am pleased to have been asked to participate in this event.

The Rural Health Corp. has been instrumental providing public health services to the residents of northeastern and central Pennsylvania. The RHC is a private, nonprofit corporation that was founded for the purpose of providing primary and preventive health care to the medically underserved. It concentrates its efforts on helping those people who are isolated geographically or economically from major health service centers, and who have limited alternative health resources.

The RHC is governed by a volunteer, unpaid board of directors selected from the areas served by the corporation; over 50 percent of the board members have utilized the facility's services. The corporation currently serves almost 18,000 individuals throughout the area, providing comprehensive pediatric, adolescent, and adult health care at six medical and three dental centers. Other services include community health education, nutrition education, and transportation.

The first patients were seen by the RHC staff in January 1971, in the first RHC building. By 1973, three additional buildings had been constructed to serve the rapidly growing number of patients that were seeking services from the RHC. The next 4 years focused on expanding services, and strengthening the quality of care. Since 1977, two additional medical centers and one dental center were opened, and a new building replaced the RHC's original facility. In addition, the RHC opened a pharmacy, and a centralized management information system complete with computerized financial, billing, and patient data systems.

RHC has participated in a number of innovative health care programs. Between 1984 and 1988, the corporation established the PennCare Health Plan, a prepaid health care

program for medical assistance recipients. In the fall of 1987, the RHC launched the Luzerne County Integration Project to replace the Pennsylvania Department of Health's Immunization Program, which was then terminated in Luzerne County. The corporation administered the area's State subsidized program of vaccination for peridiatric patients.

In 1987, the RHC responded to a Federal initiative to extend health services to the homeless under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. Services provided by the medical care facility include patient outreach and case management, mental health and substance abuse counseling, emergency and inpatient hospitalization.

The services that the RHC has provided during its years of operation have saved and improved the lives of thousands of people. During its 25-year history, the RHC has evolved from a small county practice into one of the largest providers of primary care in the region, and one of the largest nonprofit community health center programs in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The RHC can be proud of all that it has accomplished. I salute the Rural Health Corp. of northeastern Pennsylvania and wish it continued success as it strives to improve the quality of lives of the people it serves.

#### TRIBUTE TO JAMES R. NUNES

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 9, 1996*

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to James R. Nunes, who is retiring after 33 distinguished years as a police officer and 17 years as Chief of Police in Pleasant Hill, California.

Chief Nunes' distinguished career began in 1959 when he served as a military police officer in the United States Army. He then progressed through the ranks in both the Hayward and Sausalito police departments.

In 1979, he arrived in Pleasant Hill to serve as Chief of Police. He has maintained that esteemed rank to the present, and retires with pride after a long and meritorious career serving the Bay Area.

Chief Nunes has proven himself as a leader among leaders in the field of law enforcement officers and he embodies the very best in community spirit. Beyond his professional duties, he has volunteered his time and energies to a variety of organizations and activities. His caring and dedication are hallmarks of both his professional and personal life.

I know that the other members of the House will join me in thanks to Chief James Nunes for his years of dedicated service to society and wish him the very best in the future.

#### TRIBUTE TO COMDR. CHESTER O. BURTON, U.S. NAVY

HON. OWEN B. PICKETT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 9, 1996*

Mr. PICKETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a truly outstanding naval officer,

Comdr. Chester Burton, Supply Corps, U.S. Navy, who will soon be completing his tour of duty in the Navy's Office of Legislative Affairs. It is a pleasure for me to recognize several of his many outstanding achievements.

A native of northern Wisconsin, Commander Burton received an undergraduate degree in marketing from St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, MN. After growing up in a rural farming community, Commander Burton felt what better way to see the world than to join the navy. After completing Officer Candidate School in Newport, RI, Chet was commissioned an Ensign in September 1980. He subsequently attended the Navy Supply Corps School in Athens, GA, completing the qualifications to be designated a Supply Corps Officer. After completing basic submarine school Commander Burton reported as Supply Officer of the submarine *LaJolla* (SSN-701) being built at Electric Boat in Groton, CT. During his tour aboard *LaJolla*, Commander Burton was a member of the Commissioning Crew and participated in the ships changing homeport to San Diego, CA.

Following his initial sea tour, Commander Burton served at the Naval Supply Depot in Guam. He then reported to the Naval Air Systems Command in Arlington, VA, where he was selected to participate in the Navy Acquisition Contracting Officer internship program. Due to his outstanding performance as contracting officer for the Rolls Royce engine used on the AV-8B Harrier Jet, he received the Secretary of the Navy's award for excellence in fostering competition and reducing procurement costs.

Subsequent to his tour at NAVAIR, Commander Burton returned to sea duty aboard the submarine tender U.S.S. *Dixon* homeported in San Diego. He then did back-to-back sea tours reporting as Supply Officer aboard U.S.S. *Ohio*, a trident class ballistic missile submarine.

Due to his outstanding performance, he was selected to attend postgraduate school after completing his tour aboard *Ohio*. Commander Burton completed a masters of business administration degree at the University of Virginia's Darden Graduate Business School in May 1991. Following graduate school he reported to the Pentagon where he was the executive assistant to the Director of the Supply Programs and Policy Division, a Navy rear admiral, on the Chief of Naval Operations staff.

Commander Burton reported to the Navy Legislative Affairs Office in August 1993. During his tenure Chet has been considered the navy's procurement expert on Capitol Hill. In addition to handling literally thousands of inquiries relating to naval contracts, he has been responsible for organizing numerous government small business conferences in which many of our constituents have learned the basics about contracting with the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, Chet Burton, his wife Amy and their two children Douglas and Sarah, have made many sacrifices during his 16-year naval career. Serving on two submarines and a submarine tender, Chet has spent a significant amount of time underway away from his family to support the vital role our naval forces play in our national security. Commander Burton is a great credit to the U.S. Navy and the country he so proudly serves. As he now prepares to depart to yet another new challenge, I call upon my colleagues from both sides of the