

RACE UNITY DAY

HON. PETER DEUTSCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 1997

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, there can be no greater cause in the United States of America today than the promotion of unity among the races. Recognition of unity in diversity is the foundation for true and lasting peace in our great country. Race unity is the most challenging issue facing our Nation. Only by achieving it can we aspire to exert moral leadership for peace among Nations.

June 8, 1977 marks the 38th annual observance of Race Unity Day, inaugurated by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States. The purpose of Race Unity Day is to focus our attention on the oneness of humankind and to celebrate our unity amidst our diversity. With its diverse ethnic and racial make up, the State of Florida is an excellent location for a state-wide celebration of this day.

The Honorable Lawton Chiles, Governor of the State of Florida, has proclaimed Sunday, June 8, 1977 as Race Unity Day in Florida. Many county commissioners and mayors are signing similar proclamations across the Sunshine State.

We commend the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States for inaugurating Race Unity Day 38 years ago. We also commend Baha'i communities, throughout Florida and other groups like NAACP in Key West, and Multi-Ethnic Advisory Board of Broward County for initiating and cosponsoring State-wide celebrations of Race Unity Day.

The text of the Proclamation of the Honorable Governor:

Whereas, the United States was founded and peopled by individuals of many different ethnic and racial origins; and

Whereas, our nation's Declaration of Independence articulates the credo upon which our nation was built, that all men and women are created equal; and

Whereas, we live in a world that makes universal peace our first priority if civilization is to survive and advance; and

Whereas, the United States of America has sought to serve as an example to other nations of the world; and

Whereas, the state of Florida has a population which represents highly diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds; and

Whereas, a free people must remain vigilant and mindful of the goals of achieving peace and unity among all peoples; and

Whereas, every individual is like a flower in the garden of humanity;

Now, therefore, I, Lawton Chiles, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the state of Florida, do hereby proclaim June 8, 1997, as Race Unity Day in Florida with the fervent hope that Americans everywhere will take this time to accept and wholeheartedly celebrate unity in diversity.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE SEVENTH ANNUAL HALL OF FAME DINNER DANCE OF THE PORT WASHINGTON YOUTH ACTIVITIES

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 1997

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join with my constituents and the residents of Port Washington as they gather with the members of the Port Washington Youth Activities [PYA] in celebration of their Seventh Annual Hall of Fame Dinner Dance.

The PYA is a volunteer youth organization dedicated to supporting sports programs for youngsters between the ages of 6 and 14. The goal of the organization is to teach children the valuable lessons of leadership and good sportsmanship. Induction into the PYA's Hall of Fame is reserved for those unique and caring individuals who have given so much to the support to the program over the years.

Three most unique and dedicated individuals, Bob Busby, Jack Eaton, and Vinnie Sombrotto will be so honored by induction into the Port Washington Youth Activities Hall of Fame. Bob Busby has been a significant contributor through his service as wrestling coach, commissioner, and director for over 10 years. Jack Eaton has greatly distinguished himself in the role of officer, commissioner, and coach of the baseball and basketball teams. Vinnie Sombrotto is being cited for his athletic achievements in lacrosse at the collegiate and professional levels. Many of his skills and dedication were developed in his active days as a youth in PYA football and lacrosse programs.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House to join with me and rise to honor these community members for their individual and collective contributions to youth sports and all they embody. They are an excellent reflection upon themselves, their families, their community, and the volunteer spirit of American volunteer groups. They are most deserving of this great honor.

STATEMENT BY KAILEAH CHRISTIE, GAILER SCHOOL, MIDDLEBURY, VT REGARDING DEMOCRACY AND STUDENT PARTICIPATION

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 1997

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of my colleagues I would like to have printed in the RECORD this statement by a high school student from Gailer School in Vermont, who was speaking at my recent town meeting on issues facing young people:

Ms. CHRISTIE. Good afternoon, Mr. Sanders. There are many high school students in Vermont between the ages of 14 and 17 who are not receiving the leadership skills they require to become like insightful world citizens in our society. It is required that governments and communities do as much as they possibly can to enhance these skills so that when we do become adults we can be productive.

Our school is the Gailer School in Middlebury and we are a small private school. We have been a member of a group called the Coalition of essential Schools since 1994 and we are the only school in Vermont that is a member. This coalition encourages student leadership. In December I started writing grants on trying to send a group of students from Gailer out to the coalition because they value the student leadership and we have been working with others or we are attempting contacts to work with other schools, but we have not found other schools in Vermont.

Vermont has—I have not noticed in other schools major leadership opportunities available for students. The most leadership I have seen, I was in public school in 7th grade and there was a school government, but majority of the talk was about having more dances or like pizza on Fridays.

And I realize that the Student Congressional Town Meeting is a very good start, it is giving students a chance to come and voice their opinions and make sure they are heard and we need to include more, and I thank you for having this.

An option that I have thought of is there would be one student from each county who could stay in steady contact with you, and that student would talk to other students in their county about issues that are in-house, that affect students, like year-round schooling or drug legalization, any of those issues, and they would report back to you what students think of those issues so that way you would have a better idea of how to represent the issues that deal with students more than parents or more than adults, or so that you can know how to deal with issues that really only affect whomever they affect, as long as they affect students. And I would be willing to develop this idea further and put it into a formal proposal if it is something in which you are interested.

I realize that for many people 14 is a young age, but I am almost 15 and I will soon be an adult, I will be the age of 18. And when those adults are older and retired they are depending on me to be a productive citizen and how can I be a productive citizen if you try and restrain my abilities to succeed as much as I can no matter what my age is.

Our school has a decision-making body called the school forum. In our school forum there are six students, one from each grade, grades 7 through 9, and all of the teachers and faculty. In the forum students have an equal say as the teachers and in a sense we are running the school and it has worked out very well. Whenever there is basically curriculum change, a suggestion as to how we should deal with the disciplinary process to how we should make decisions in the forum, those students in that room at that time have the same say or power as the teachers and they are valued just as much.

I think if you encourage and help students develop those leadership skills then they can run the school with adults, not by themselves.

TRIBUTE TO DR. LESLIE SINGER

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 1997

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Dr. Leslie Singer on receiving the 1997 Indiana University-Northwest Chancellor's Distinguished Service Award. This award was presented to Dr. Singer earlier this spring in recognition of his lifetime of service to Indiana University-Northwest.

An economics professor at Indiana University-Northwest for 43 years, Dr. Singer has made numerous contributions to the fields of financial economics, regional and industrial economics, economic forecasting, and economics of art markets. His ground-breaking scholarly publications in the area of fine arts, for instance, have received world wide recognition and have been cited by numerous scholars. Such publications as *The Wall Street Journal* and *Business News* often quote Dr. Singer's opinions and forecast on the prices of fine art. In addition, Dr. Singer has written two economics text books, and has been published in several distinguished journals, including "The American Economic Review," "The Social Science Quarterly," "The Journal of Business Forecasting Systems and Methods," and "The Journal of Cultural Economics."

Through his extensive studies, Dr. Singer has also served to aid Northwest Indiana businesses, as well as Indiana governing bodies, in a variety of capacities. Throughout his career, he has written numerous articles pertaining to the local economy, with a specific emphasis on Northwest Indiana's steel industry. In addition, Dr. Singer participates in the Indiana Economic Outlook panel, which presents a forecast for the Northwest Indiana regional economy each year. Dr. Singer also served as an advisor to the budget committee of the Indiana General Assembly, as well as to the late U.S. Senator, Paul Douglass. Several major corporations and hundreds of local businesses have grown to rely upon Dr. Singer's expertise for location and market analysis.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commending Dr. Leslie Singer on his receipt of the 1997 Indiana University-Northwest Chancellor's Distinguished Service Award. His notable achievements in the field of economics have proven to be valuable assets to businesses within Indiana's First Congressional District and across the Nation.

TRIBUTE TO MRS. VATICE WALKER

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 1997

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, today I would like my colleagues here in the House of Representatives to join me in honoring the accomplishments of an exceptional person, Mrs. Vatrice Walker, on the occasion of her retirement.

Mrs. Vatrice Walker began her teaching career in Somerset County, MD in September 1959, serving the Maryland school system for 11 years.

Mrs. Walker continued to teach in Maryland until June 1970, at which time she moved to New Jersey. In the ensuing years she was employed as a teacher in New Brunswick and, in recognition of her outstanding ability, received tenure after her first year. Mrs. Walker served the New Brunswick school system for 2 more years, continuing her trend of noteworthy teaching.

Upon leaving New Brunswick, Mrs. Walker became employed by the East Orange School District, where she gave 24 years of dedicated service to the children of East Orange. Mrs.

Walker has been involved in a wealth of activities pertaining to staff development and the training of future teachers. Her efforts include, but are certainly not limited to, the demonstration of teaching lessons, peer coaching, and facilitating workshops in classroom management and conflict mediation. In addition, Mrs. Walker has served as mentor for student teachers.

Mrs. Walker has received many accolades during her career as result of her innovative teaching techniques. For 2 consecutive years she was voted Teacher of the Year by her colleagues.

Her love and dedication to the East Orange school system has, undoubtedly, touched the lives of many children. Mrs. Walker is a distinguished professional. I know my colleagues join me in offering our appreciation to Mrs. Walker for her exemplary public service and offer her our best wishes in the coming years.

INTRODUCTION OF THE VOTER EMPOWERMENT ACT

HON. DAVID DREIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 1997

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, exactly 1 month from today is the deadline imposed by President Clinton in his State of the Union address for Congress to vote on a campaign finance reform bill. But the reality is that the deadline will come and go with no action taken because the most widely debated proposals, which violate our constitutional right to free speech and protect incumbents by imposing campaign spending limits, are rapidly losing support with each passing day.

It is time to consider new ideas that will enhance, rather than undermine, voter participation in our Federal elections process, and restore public accountability in the campaign process. That is why I have introduced H.R. 1780, the Voter Empowerment Act. It takes a different approach to addressing the problems of our campaign finance system. It will enable voters to make more informed voting decisions by giving them greater access to more campaign information. To this end, the legislation requires all disclosure information to be made available on the Internet, and establishes a disclosure limit for issue advocacy and soft money expenditures.

It also requires the Federal Election Commission [FEC] to facilitate disclosure by mandating electronic filing for individual Federal candidates, PAC's and national parties within the next 2 years. After the implementation of electronic filing, the FEC would publish an expansive Internet site on the World Wide Web which would contain a separate page for every congressional and Presidential candidate, each PAC, and every national party. A congressional candidate's page, for example, would contain the aggregate contribution and expenditure amounts for the previous and current election cycle. If a candidate received money from a PAC, a link would be available to the PAC's page so that the public could learn more about their goals and beliefs. With the disclosure information freely available in an understandable format on the Internet, Americans will no longer need to rely on special interests and the media to interpret the

FEC data for them. And most important, the new information will allow voters to make more informed choices at the polls.

The Voter Empowerment Act will further increase the amount of information that is made available to the public by requiring persons or groups that spend more than \$100,000 on specific advertisement to disclose to the FEC within 24 hours the amount of money spent, the type of communication and where it was broadcast or distributed. In 1996, issue advocacy communications inundated the voting public through voter guides and radio/television advertisements. Regrettably, the public had no idea who paid for or published these communications.

During the 1996 election, many of the issue advocacy communications were paid for with soft money contributions, which are not subject to Federal disclosure regulations. Recognizing the need to facilitate disclosure without impeding the free speech rights of contributors, the Voter Empowerment Act contains a disclosure provision for individuals who contribute \$250,000 in soft money to national parties. The bill requires individuals who contribute more than a quarter of a million dollars to inform the FEC of that amount, and it requires national parties to disclose to the FEC where the soft money was spent or distributed.

Some of my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, may criticize these two disclosure provisions for either doing too much or too little. Some claim that increased disclosure provisions regarding soft money and issue advocacy communications will restrict an individual's free speech rights. However, the Supreme Court has upheld reasonable disclosure limitations on campaign expenditures. Furthermore, the limits have been set extraordinarily high so only the largest donors, not grassroots activists or small contributors, would be required to file with the FEC. On the other hand, some may argue that the advent of soft money marks the ruin of our campaign system, so it should be banned. According to the Supreme Court, independent expenditures and soft money must be considered as political speech and deserve to be protected under the first amendment. Therefore, efforts to ban soft money are blatantly unconstitutional.

In addition to facilitating disclosure, the Voter Empowerment Act encourages more individual participation in campaigns by indexing all Federal contribution limits to 1974 dollars. Established in the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1974, the current contribution limits were meant to lower the cost of campaigns and eliminate the advantages of incumbency. However, the opposite has occurred. Between 1974 and 1994, total campaign spending, in constant dollars, by House candidates has nearly tripled, and reelection rates for House incumbents hit an all time high in 1988. By raising the contribution limits, individuals will be able to exercise their right of free speech more effectively and candidates will not be forced to spend a large amount of their time raising campaign funds.

To further encourage increased participation by individuals, the Voter Empowerment Act reinstates the tax credit for individual contributions. Similar to the credit repealed in 1986, individuals would be able to claim a 50-percent tax credit up to \$200—\$400 for joint filers—if they contribute to a Federal candidate, PAC or national party. The credit would apply to the total contributions for the year.