

The Chamber of Commerce is a strong and independent leader of the business firms of Calumet region, and thus addresses issues that affect its members and the community. The Chamber has lent greatly to the development of this fine community over the years and should be recognized for its spirit of leadership and vision.

Currently, the Calumet City Chamber of Commerce provides many services to its residents. From initiating the area's ambulance program to attracting new business to the area, the Chamber has shown a devotion to continuing to build and revitalize the region. Community strength, in part, stems from those who are willing to give back to their patrons, the very community they serve. We all share a vision of good schools, safe streets, and a healthy commerce. The Chamber should be commended to their dedication toward achieving this goal.

The 60th anniversary of the Calumet City Chamber of Commerce will be celebrated this evening, Saturday, November 8. At this time the Calumet City Chamber will install its new officers for 1998 who include: Frank Orsini, president, Mike Sawicki, vice president, Don Todd, treasurer, Kenneth M. Tease, executive manager.

Board of Directors: Tom Cornwell, Harry Jones, Jeanette Sackol, Elaine Lane, Bob Sanders, George Karl, Tom Sanders, Ray Mika, Jerry Eurlley, Chris Martin, and Mike Gauthier.

It is truly fitting that this Chamber celebrate 60 years of history and progress. I extend my best wishes to the Chamber's membership, its present and incoming leaders for many more prosperous years to come.

THE NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT

HON. MARK E. SOUDER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, November 8, 1997

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the National Historic Preservation Act, which would establish a national historic light station preservation program. It has been introduced in the other body by the chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Senator FRANK MURKOWSKI of Alaska.

As you may know, Mr. Speaker, lighthouses have served as lifesaving navigational aids since before the turn of the century. However, many of these lighthouses have outlived their use to the Coast Guard as navigational aids. Thus, the Coast Guard is left with surplus lighthouses, and declares them excessed. The question then becomes, who cares for these lighthouses once they leave the Coast Guard's hands? If the land on which a particular lighthouse in question was first granted by a Presidential Order to the U.S. Lighthouse Establishment, it is considered to be public domain, and has to be first offered through the Bureau of Land Management [BLM] to the Interior Department. If the Interior Department does not claim the land, then the lighthouse is placed in the General Service Administration's [GSA] excessing process. If the property is not considered public domain, then the lighthouse is placed directly into the GSA excessing process.

Through the GSA process, priority is first granted to Federal agencies. This means that the lighthouse could be used for such things as an office for the Internal Revenue Service. If no Federal agency claims it, the property is then surveyed to see if it is suitable to qualify under the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, thereby allowing it to be transferred to those organizations that assist the homeless. Should neither of these categories claim the lighthouse, it is then offered to the State in which it is located, possibly to be used for recreation purposes. If the State does not claim it, then it is offered to the local government where the property is located. Finally, if the lighthouse is still available at the end of the GSA process, it is put up for public sale.

The real tragedy here, Mr. Speaker, is that many of these lighthouses have been protected and preserved over the years by nonprofit historical lighthouse societies, who have donated a great deal of time, money, and resources to lighthouse preservation. As you can see, in order to have the lighthouses conveyed to them, they must wait through the long process described above, and then must bid on them. This process basically requires these nonprofit organizations to compete financially with private groups that have greater access to funds, and that have, in many cases not made the same commitment to the lighthouse in the past. In addition, these private groups may have plans for the lighthouse that are inconsistent with the best interests of the community. Though these nonprofit groups can, in some specific cases, purchase the lighthouse directly from the BLM, they must pay half of its market value—a value that those particular groups helped to increase over the years through their hard work. Thus, the message we are sending here is that if you're going to provide a public service by preserving historical sites, you're going to have to pay for them in the end.

I should point out that another method for conveyance is for Congress to enact separate pieces of legislation to transfer a lighthouse to a specific group. As we know, this process can be very time consuming and cumbersome considering that there are hundreds of lighthouses that will be excessed in the near future.

My legislation would introduce fairness into the conveyance process for historic lighthouses by amending the National Historic Preservation Act to transfer this process to the National Parks Service, which would be able to work in conjunction with the State Historic Preservation Officer, to establish a national historical light station program. This new program would give priority to those Government agencies that have entered into a partnership agreement with a nonprofit organization whose primary mission is historical preservation of lighthouses, and would convey them at no cost. If no such applications are offered, or approved of, then the lighthouse would be put up for public sale. Thus, this legislation would help to ensure that in those cases where a nonprofit group has been active in a particular lighthouse's preservation, and wishes to continue in its work, that that group would be given a fair shot at claiming lighthouses when the Coast Guard excesses them.

Mr. Speaker, we need to recognize the very important role lighthouses have played in this country's history. By encouraging Government agencies to join with nonprofit groups to help

preserve lighthouses for the future, we will be providing a much fairer process to those who wish to continue their work in preserving these nationally historic structures.

HONORING MAYOR RAY BLEDSOE

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, November 8, 1997

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to rise today to pay tribute to Mayor Ray Bledsoe of Howe, TX, who last month received the national Hometown Leadership Award, given by the National Association of Small Cities. Only 300 officials in the country received this award, and I am so pleased that my good friend and outstanding civic leader, Ray Bledsoe, is one of those.

Ray is always at the center of community service in Howe. He has served Howe as mayor for the past 11 years. He has spearheaded economic development and was instrumental in obtaining a connector road from Highway 11 and U.S. Highway 75. He helped put together funds for a new community center and coordinated a joint effort between the city and school district to build two new baseball parks. He is the president of the Grayson County Fair, serves on a half-dozen boards, and works about 60 hours a week taking care of the city of Howe's business—all without pay.

Ray not only provides leadership and guidance for the citizens of Howe but also provides hands-on service. Last month, as reported by the Herald Democrat, he was at the Grayson County Fair unfolding chairs, moving extension cords, and setting up booths. Earlier he built a fence around a statue of Judge Jake Loy, then got on his hands and knees and landscaped around it. Ray is willing to help with any task—no matter how large or small—and he is respected and beloved by the citizens of Howe.

Mr. Speaker, in the small towns and cities of America, the mayor plays an indispensable role in the functioning of the community. Often, as in Howe, this is an unpaid position. Too often the mayor receives far more complaints than thanks. So as we adjourn today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize an outstanding civic leader of Howe and an outstanding American—Mayor Ray Bledsoe—and to thank him for a job well done.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL P. FORBES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, November 8, 1997

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, November 6, 1997, I appreciated being granted an excused absence for part of the day. Due to that absence, I missed several rollcall votes.

Had I not been absent for part of the day on June 6, I would have voted in the following manner:

"No" on rollcall No. 585—Motion to adjourn;

"No" on rollcall No. 586—Motion to adjourn;

"No" on rollcall No. 587—Ordering the previous question on H. Res 305;

"Yes" on rollcall No. 588—Motion to table the motion to reconsider the vote on the previous question;

"Yes" on rollcall No. 589—Agreeing to H. Res 305, waiving a requirement of clause 4(b) of rule XI with respect to consideration of certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules, and for other purposes;

"Yes" on rollcall No. 590—Motion to table the motion to reconsider H. Res 305;

"No" on rollcall No. 591—Motion to adjourn;

"Yes" on rollcall No. 592—Agreeing to H. Res 188, urging the executive branch to take action regarding the acquisition by Iran of C-802 cruise missiles;

"Yes" on rollcall No. 593—Motion to table the motion to reconsider H. Res 188;

"No" on rollcall No. 594—Motion to adjourn;

"Yes" on rollcall No. 595—On passage of H.R. 967 to prohibit the use of United States funds to provide for the participation of certain Chinese officials in international conferences, programs, and activities and to provide that certain Chinese officials shall be ineligible to receive visas and excluded from admission to the United States;

"Yes" on rollcall No. 596—Motion to table the motion to reconsider;

"No" on rollcall No. 597—Motion to adjourn.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2264,
DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR,
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,
AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. ESTEBAN EDWARD TORRES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, November 8, 1997

Mr. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support the fiscal year 2000 \$300 million advance funding level for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting contained in this bill. That is a \$50 million increase over the comparable appropriation for fiscal year 1999, an amount which only partially offsets the three consecutive years of rescission of public broadcasting funds. The American public has sent a clear message to Congress that it supports a public broadcasting system.

The House appropriations report concerning CPB funding specifically supports the commitment made by CPB in 1994 to formalize partnerships among the organizations of the National Minority Public Broadcasting Consortia, television stations, and other public broadcasting organizations to maximize resources to increase the amount of multicultural programming on public television. That 1994 agreement was over a year in the making, but unfortunately, it has never received any funding.

I trust that the \$50 million increase will make it possible to fund the Principles of Partnership Initiative, and would encourage CPB to see if they can find fiscal year 1998 and fiscal year 1999 funds to get this initiative of collaboration underway.

The Minority Consortia organizations—Pacific Islanders in Communications, National Black Programming Consortium, National Latino Communications Center, National Asian

American Telecommunications Association, Native American Public Telecommunications—have provided public broadcasting's program schedule hundreds of hours of programming addressing the cultural, social, and economic issues of the country's racial and ethnic communities. Additionally, each consortium has been engaged in cultivating ongoing relationships with the independent minority producers community by providing program funding, programming support, and distribution assistance. They also provide numerous hours of programming to individual public television and radio stations.

I would like to point out that the newest consortia member, Pacific Islanders in Communications, is headquartered in Hawaii and has already had major responsibility for several award winning public broadcast productions, notably Storytellers of the Pacific which was coproduced with Native American Public Telecommunications, and And Then There Were None.

I look forward to an increasingly productive partnership between public broadcasting and the National Minority Public Broadcasting organizations and the communities they represent.

A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE
LOAN CONSOLIDATION PROGRAM

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, November 8, 1997

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to report on the progress of the Department of Education's loan consolidation program. Because of the solid efforts of the Department and EDS, the program is on track to complete all the pending consolidation applications and to resume accepting new applications by December 1, 1997.

As of September 15, 1997, EDS had received 142,856 consolidation applications. Of that number, 84,078 were still pending. In less than 2 months, the outstanding inventory has been reduced by 81 percent; only 15,607 applications are still pending. As a result, the number of completed consolidations has increased by 64 percent since mid-September.

These updated figures show that the loan consolidation problems no longer exist. The Department's loan consolidation program streamlines the borrowing process, reduces financial costs, and improves access to education for students and their families. The Department and EDS are to be commended for their swift response to the situation and for putting this important program back on track.

HELPING EMPOWER LOW-INCOME
PARENTS [HELP] SCHOLARSHIPS
AMENDMENTS OF 1997

SPEECH OF

HON. MAX SANDLIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 1997

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose H.R. 2746, the HELP Scholarships Program. I am a strong advocate for public

schools and I believe we must work to ensure that all children, regardless of race, religion, income, or social status, have an opportunity to receive the best education possible in our public schools. We should not jeopardize that opportunity with an ill-conceived plan to provide tax dollars to private schools.

If we are to improve public education in this country, we must take positive steps. I believe the principles outlined in the Democratic plan provide the foundation for those steps. We have focused on six goals: First, early childhood development—basics by age six; second, well-trained teachers; third, relief for crumbling and overcrowded schools, and well-equipped classrooms; fourth, support for local plans to renew neighborhood public schools; fifth, efficient and coordinated use of resources; and sixth, parental choices for public schools.

These goals seem to be simple common sense. They provide the basis for a quality, public education for all students. If we, as Members of Congress, unite behind these goals, we can make great strides in our quest to improve public education. In our great country, everyone is guaranteed the right to a free, public education. It is our duty to ensure that a public education is consistently a quality education.

The increasing competitiveness of our global economy requires that our young people be better educated than ever before in our history. Our schools must provide adequate training in the basic skills needed to succeed in the current and future job market. We must ensure that all of our students have access to an education that prepares them to survive in a global economy. The Democratic plan places us firmly on that path.

Unfortunately, the bill we are considering today will help only a few children fortunate enough to meet the criteria to attend private schools. This bill provides no real choice to students or parents. It does nothing for the vast majority of the nation's students. Only a few lucky students could take advantage of the program given the low funding level for the title VI program under which the vouchers would be provided.

The Republican plan might provide more opportunity to a few select lower income students, but what about the rest? What about the students that private schools don't want? We cannot require private schools to admit all students. This bill affords no civil rights protections to the students in the voucher program. Schools accepting vouchers do not have to accept children who need high-cost education because they are disabled, have limited English proficiency, or are homeless. When we provide public funds to these schools, we resurrect the misguided concept of "separate but equal."

In addition to the problems presented by diverting public money into private schools, I believe it is important to point out that it is a clear violation of the first amendment doctrine of separation of church and state to provide public money to private, religious schools. This bill explicitly permits Federal funds to be used for sectarian activities. Such provisions are clearly contrary to the provision of the first amendment prohibiting the establishment of religion. The Supreme Court has consistently held that tax dollars cannot pay, directly or indirectly, for religious education or the religious mission of parochial schools. If we adopt this