

TRIBUTE TO LEXINGTON HIGH
SCHOOL

HON. FLOYD SPENCE

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 15, 1997

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to the attention of my colleagues an article that appeared in the March 20, 1997 edition of *The State*, concerning Lexington High School, in my hometown of Lexington, SC. As a graduate of Lexington High School, I am especially proud of it receiving the Carolina First Palmetto's Finest award.

[From *The State*, Mar. 20, 1997]

LEXINGTON HIGH NAMED BEST IN STATE

SCHOOL BECOMES FIRST SECONDARY
INSTITUTION TO WIN PALMETTO'S FINEST

(By Neil White)

A good year for Lexington High School got even better last week when it won the first-ever Carolina First Palmetto's Finest award given to a high school.

Strong programs in academics, athletics, arts and technology—highlighted by a pair of students who garnered perfect scores of 1,600 on the SAT and a basketball team that competed for its second-consecutive Class AAAA state championship—have kept the school in the forefront. Now this award adds to that.

"It's an exciting time for students, teachers and parents," Principal Allan Whitacre said. "Being the first high school, we feel very proud about that, too."

The Palmetto's Finest awards, coordinated by the S.C. Association of School Administrators, are in their 19th year, but this year, the program was expanded to include a secondary school. Irmo Elementary School was named in the elementary school category.

In addition to academic achievement and student leadership, a point system is used to rate school personnel, programs and curriculum, community involvement, physical maintenance of facilities, safety and communications. Nominations are received in the fall. The winners are chosen by a committee based upon the results of a comprehensive application process and two school visits.

"Receiving the Carolina First Palmetto's Finest award presents hard work, perseverance, cooperation and a commitment to excellence by our entire school community. Our school board and district office have supported that commitment," said Whitacre. "Everything we do, from the curriculum to the extra-curricular activities, is focused on giving students the best possible preparation we can provide to help them become productive, well-rounded citizens."

Since 1985 the school has received Department of Education incentive award money, which rewards the state's highest-ranked schools.

Following graduation, 79 percent of the students plan to attend college. Graduates in the class of 1996 received scholarship offers valued at more than \$4 million.

"There's a lot of pride for the student body in the whole thing," Whitacre said.

Lexington's High serves approximately 1,850 students in grades 10-12, and steady growth in the district keeps new students coming through the doors.

THE RON BROWN TORT EQUALITY
ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 15, 1997

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, the bill I introduce today broadens the rights of Federal employees and other Americans by amending the Federal Tort Claims Act. The need for this bill has been demonstrated in the aftermath of the tragic and needless accident which killed Secretary Ron Brown and 34 other Americans when their plane, piloted by the U.S. Air Force, crashed into a Croatian mountainside on April 3, 1996. I introduce this bill this month in memory of the Americans who died in Croatia to allow fair compensation to their relatives for their irretrievable losses and to deter similar accidents in the future.

News reports and constituent calls to my office have made clear the need for this bill. Some victims' families have faced financial hardship, in some instances, due to the minimal Government benefit payments. If a private plane had been responsible for this accident, the victims' families would have been entitled to recover no less than \$75,000, and if willful misconduct were shown, the amount recoverable would have been unlimited. The bill I introduce today increases the damages available to the victims of tragedies caused by the Federal Government and covers accidents occurring on or after April 3, 1996.

My bill will not unfairly open the United States to lawsuits by increasing its exposure in large numbers of accidents. The bill is limited to accidents in which the burden would be on the plaintiff to prove gross negligence, which the record shows to be a small number.

The official Air Force investigation found three independent causes, any one of which, had it not existed, would have prevented the accident. Surely, in the unusual circumstances of gross and preventable negligence, the country has an obligation to do more than mourn the victims and offer minimal damages.

My bill addresses two problems. The first affects only Federal employees. Under current law, the sole source of recovery for an injured Federal employee is the Federal Employees Compensation Act [FECA]. The act provides compensation benefits to U.S. employees for disabilities due to personal injury incurred while working. Although the FECA applies to injuries that occur here in this country and those that occur overseas, a Federal employee cannot sue for gross negligence. And if that Federal employee dies and has no dependents, the recoverable damages under FECA are practically nonexistent. My bill remedies this by allowing Federal employees to sue the United States for gross negligence, notwithstanding any compensation they would receive under the Federal Employees Compensation Act.

My bill addresses a second problem as well. This problem is that nonfederal employees who are injured overseas have no right of recovery against the Federal Government. Currently, under the Federal Tort Claims Act [FTCA], an individual may bring a tort suit against the Federal Government for injuries caused by the negligent or wrongful act or omission of any Federal employee acting within the scope of his employment. Under the

FTCA, an individual has 2 years to present a claim to the Federal agency involved, and if the agency denies the claim, then that person has the right to sue in Federal district court. Although this right exists for people who are injured in the United States, the individual who is injured overseas has absolutely no right of recovery under the Federal Tort Claims Act for the negligent conduct of the Federal Government. My bill remedies this problem by providing a cause of action.

The accident in Croatia pointed up in the most tragic way the need for this bill. The Air Force Accident Investigation Board revealed raw negligence from takeoff to landing. The Board found that the command gave authorization to fly certain procedures that had not been reviewed and properly approved, that the aircrew made errors in planning and executing the flight, that the approach to the airport was improperly designed, and that inadequate training was a substantially contributing factor. As a result of the investigation, 2 officers were disciplined under article 15 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice—the most serious form of military punishment short of a court-martial—2 received letters of reprimand, and actions were taken against 12 others.

We owe the families of those left behind after last year's accident in Croatia more than our continuing sympathy. We owe them just compensation and assurance that Federal tort law will deter such tragedies in the future. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

PRIVACY IN SOCIAL SECURITY

HON. BARBARA B. KENNELLY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 15, 1997

Mrs. KENNELLY. Mr. Speaker. On March 5, 1997, the Social Security Administration [SSA] initiated online access to individual Social Security earnings data and projected benefits via the Internet. Because this access raised a number of serious privacy and security concerns, I recommended that The Social Security Subcommittee hold hearings on this issue and asked the General Accounting Office to review SSA's actions. Subsequently, SSA suspended its Internet access to these records, pending nationwide hearings to obtain public comment on the desirability of electronic access to individual data.

I am today introducing legislation to require the Social Security Administration to consult experts at the cutting edge of computer technology regarding the security and privacy of online Social Security files. I believe such consultation is necessary to assure the public that the Social Security Administration has used the most advanced technology available to protect individual Social Security earnings information.

The legislation would require the Commissioner to assemble a panel of experts to advise him on issues such as the confidentiality, security, and authenticity of online transmission of records. In addition, the Commissioner would receive advice on appropriate techniques for authenticating the identity of the person requesting the information and procedures for detecting unauthorized access to individual records. Such action should help to assure the public that, if these records are offered via the Internet, they have been protected by the most advanced means available.

The Social Security Subcommittee intends to move forward with a May hearing. In addition, SSA will be holding its field hearings in the next 60 days. With the addition of expert consultations, as proposed in this legislation, the public should have some degree of confidence that an appropriate balance has been struck between efficient access to personal Social Security records and the privacy and security of that data.

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH A. LeFANTE,
FORMER MEMBER OF CONGRESS

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 15, 1997

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a dedicated public servant, Joseph A. LaFante of Bayonne. Congressman LeFante's death at age 68 was a loss for the State of the New Jersey and its residents.

Joseph A. LaFante grew up in his beloved Bayonne. When he turned 16, he started to work full-time at a manufacturing plant. As a young man, he became involved with unions and attended a 3-year study program at St. Peter's Institute of Industrial Relations. He graduated from the New Jersey Real Estate Institute in 1957.

Congressman LeFante had an exemplary devotion to the Bayonne community. In his first experience with politics, he served as Bayonne Charter Commissioner. Then he went on to the city council and the local board of school estimate. He was elected to the New Jersey State Assembly in 1969 and served 7 years, culminating in his being elected speaker of the assembly. In 1976, he was elected to become a Member of the 95th Congress. After his service in the House of Representatives, he returned to politics in New Jersey as Gov. Brendan Byrne's commissioner of community affairs. Although he had an unsuccessful run in the Democratic primary for U.S. Senate in 1982, he continued to serve the citizens of New Jersey in the administrations of Governor Kean and Governor Florio. Throughout this time, he operated Public Service Furniture, a furniture store in Bayonne. In the past few years, he worked on his furniture businesses before his retirement.

Joe LeFante never forgot where he came from, was a man of good ethics, kept his word and was a man of principle. He had a passion for using government to help others, and he used that passion to improve the lives of the people he represented.

Mr. Speaker, it is honor to have had such a distinguished public servant living in my district. He always kept the best interests of the residents of Bayonne, his district, the State of New Jersey, and the Nation in mind when serving in his numerous offices. And he served those he represented with distinction.

TRIBUTE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA

HON. FLOYD SPENCE

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 15, 1997

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring to the attention of my colleagues an article that

appeared in the March 9, 1997, edition of the State, highlighting the national honors that have been achieved recently by the University of South Carolina. The University is attaining prominence in a variety of areas of national and international importance. I would like to commend the faculty and students of the University of South Carolina on their commitment to excellence.

The article follows:

[From the State, Mar. 9, 1997]

USC RANKINGS SHOWCASE S.C.

(By Fred Monk)

The University of South Carolina basketball team is drawing national attention to the university and Columbia.

The impact of its performance isn't lost on USC professors, who are citing with pride the basketball team's achievement in discussions on academic excellence.

While USC's No. 4 basketball ranking has fans in a frenzy, other rankings are noteworthy.

The blend of academic and athletic performance is lifting USC's stature internationally.

Recently, USC received two important recognitions.

Its graduate international business programs were rated No. 2 in the nation by a U.S. News & World Report poll.

Since the poll's inception, USC has ranked No. 1 or No. 2.

This is no small feat, even though USC was knocked off the top spot by the inclusion last year of the American Graduate School of International Management, also known as the Thunderbird school, whose sole focus is international business.

USC is the only public institution in the top five. It leads Columbia University, the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard.

In February, USC received another Top Five national honor—one equal in university circles to the basketball team's national ranking, said Don Greiner, USC's interim provost.

For the second consecutive year, USC was awarded the Hesburgh Certificate of Excellence, this time for its faculty/student development program.

Father Hesburgh's name is synonymous with Notre Dame, a university known for its athletic and academic excellence.

Other recent national honors USC has received included:

No. 1 ranking in the Southeast and Top Five nationally by professional journals of the geography department's programs.

A Top Five national ranking for the pharmacy department.

The college of journalism's public relations and advertising programs are ranked 12th and 13th in the nation by U.S. News.

U.S. News also ranks USC's psychology doctoral program as third best in the nation.

USC's Naval ROTC program received the nation's highest academic ranking by the Naval Education and Training Command.

The college of business was cited by Success magazine as one of the 25 best in the nation for producing entrepreneurs.

These are a few of many significant achievements USC has been cited for recently.

But there's another important aspect to recognition.

Coach Eddie Fogler crafted a basketball team around South Carolina Talent—nine of the 11 players are from South Carolina.

In academics as well as athletics, USC is trying to keep the best and the brightest at home, Greiner said.

Through its Carolina Scholars and Honors College program, USC is going after the best students in the state.

And it has scored well. The 1996 average Carolina Scholars SAT score was 1488.

But competition for South Carolina's best—in academics and athletics—is keen.

Some South Carolina high schools don't even include USC when recommending universities for their top students.

With a continued focus on an investment in academic as well as athletic excellence, USC's recognition will grow. And so will its ability to recruit talent.

Most important, the impact will be felt across South Carolina.

HONORING THE TRICKLE UP PROGRAM

HON. CHARLES E. SCHUMER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 15, 1997

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. Speaker, I ask my congressional colleagues to join me in honoring the Trickle Up Program for the outstanding job they have done to increase the possibility and opportunity for self-sufficiency amid the world's poorest populations. I hereby submit for inclusion into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the 1996 annual report.

The Trickle Up Program offers low-income people opportunity for income and self employment through entrepreneurship. In the past 18 years, more than 58,000 micro-enterprises have been started or expanded in 114 countries with support from Trickle Up. In 1996, 6,738 businesses were launched or expanded in 51 countries, benefiting 24,899 entrepreneurs and over 100,000 dependents. Eighty-two percent of the enterprises begun in 1996 are family owned, and 80% are the entrepreneurs' main source of income. Fifty-nine percent of the entrepreneurs are women.

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Africa: 2,314 micro-enterprises in 26 countries. In partnership with 126 local partners, Trickle Up helped start or expand businesses among the very poor, including refugees in Sierra Leone, displaced people in Liberia, people living with HIV/AIDS in Uganda, and families of streetchildren in Ethiopia. An exciting new partnership with the United Nations Volunteers was launched in Mozambique. The Peace Corps was an active partner in Africa, helping to start micro-enterprises in Mali, Benin, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Sao Tome, and Togo. Many low-income entrepreneurs were reached by community-based organizations in Zaire, Tanzania, and Madagascar.

Asia: 2,970 micro-enterprises in 12 countries. Trickle Up continued to work in the poorest countries as well as those recovering from war or confronted with political dissent. In India the program was focused on isolated rural communities in Bihar and urban slum dwellers in Calcutta. Families in the far western region of Nepal were helped by UN Volunteers. In Bangladesh Trickle Up worked with women's organizations and tribal groups, and in China pursued initiatives linking environmental conservation with sustainable development. A new partnership was forged in Afghanistan with the World Food Programme, a UN agency.

Americas: 1,442 businesses in 9 countries. Micro-enterprises were started by single mothers and disabled people in Guatemala, mothers of malnourished children in Haiti, teenagers in Peruvian shantytowns, and Bolivian families in the Andes. Trickle Up often serves as the first step to business development among the poorest: 25% of one-