

A TRIBUTE TO ANTHONY VACCO
ON RECEIVING THE VILLAGE OF
BEDFORD PARK COMMITTEE'S
MAN OF THE YEAR

HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 3, 1999

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a truly remarkable public servant, Anthony (Tony) Vacco, who was recently selected to receive the village of Bedford Park, Illinois' 1998 Man of the Year award.

Mr. Vacco was appointed Mayor and Village President of Evergreen Park, Illinois on October of 1968 to fill a vacancy. He was so good at his job, that he was elected in 1969 and has been re-elected for each term ever since, and will again be a candidate for that office this spring.

Mr. Vacco serves his community in every aspect of his life. He supports and/or is a member of numerous local charities, civic, fraternal, service, educational and religious organizations. Among his charitable events is the Evergreen Park Cancer Society "Love Lights A Tree" program at Christmas. Through his efforts, the Evergreen Park Cancer Society unit is the most prosperous fundraising unit in all of Illinois. Mr. Vacco has taken on numerous leadership roles, including serving as President of the Southwest Council of Mayors since 1976.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Mr. Vacco on receiving this prestigious award, and extend to him my best wishes for continued service to the community.

ABSALOM JONES DAY CELEBRATION
BENEFITS BLACK EPISCOPAL
SCHOLARSHIP AND ENDOWMENT FUNDS

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 3, 1999

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask the House to join me in a tribute to the legacy and spirit of Absalom Jones, an 18th century slave and join the 1999 Absalom Jones Day Celebration presented by the Washington Chapter of the Union of Black Episcopalians. "Standing Firm in Faith: Accepting the Challenge" is the theme of the celebration.

Mr. Speaker, Absalom Jones, a house slave, was born in 1746 in Delaware. He taught himself to read from the New Testament and other books. At the age of sixteen, he was sold to a store owner in Philadelphia where he attended a night school for Blacks that was operated by the Quakers. At the age of twenty, he married another slave and purchased her freedom with his earnings. Absalom Jones bought his own freedom in 1784.

At St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church, he served as lay minister for its Black membership. Jones's active evangelism, and that of his friend Richard Allen, greatly increased Black membership at St. George's. The alarmed vestry decided to segregate Blacks into an upstairs gallery without notifying them. During a Sunday service when ushers

attempted to remove them, the Black parishioners walked out in a body.

In 1787, Black Christians organized the Free African Society, the first African-American society Absalom Jones and Richard Allen were elected overseers. Members of the Society paid monthly dues for the benefit of those in need, and established communication with similar Black groups in other cities. In 1792, the Society began to build a church which was dedicated on July 17, 1794.

The African Church applied for membership in the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania with the following conditions: 1. That they be received as an organized body; 2. That they have control over their local affairs; and 3. That Absalom Jones be licensed as a layreader and, if qualified, be ordained as minister. In October 1794, it was admitted as St. Thomas African Episcopal Church. Absalom Jones was ordained as a deacon in 1795 and as a priest on September 21, 1802. The Reverend Absalom Jones was the first Black priest in the Episcopal Church.

Reverend Jones was an earnest preacher who denounced slavery. His constant visiting and mild manner made him beloved by his own flock and by the community. St. Thomas Church grew to more than 500 members during its first year. Known as the "Black Bishop of the Episcopal Church", Reverend Jones was an example of persistent faith in God and in the Church as God's instrument.

Mr. Speaker, the Washington Chapter of the Union of Black Episcopalians uses its Absalom Jones Day Celebration in two significant ways. First, the proceeds which are generated will be used for the benefit of the Black Episcopal College scholarship and endowment funds. Scholarship recipients include Saint Augustine's College which was founded in 1867 and is affiliated with the Protestant Episcopal Church. The college is committed to teaching the importance of achievement, leadership and community service. Saint Paul's College was founded in 1888 as Saint Paul's Normal and Industrial School, and became Saint Paul's Polytechnic Institute in 1941. It received authority to offer a four-year degree program in 1941, and the name was changed to St. Paul's College in 1957. Its liberal arts, career-oriented, and teacher education programs prepare graduates for effective participation in various aspects of human endeavor. Voorhees College stands as testimony to the faith and determination of its founder, Elizabeth Evelyn Wright. A former student of Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee, Miss Wright, at 23, dreamed the seemingly impossible dream of starting a school for Black youth in Denmark, South Carolina. From its founding in 1897 as Denmark Industrial School, Voorhees has evolved into a leading four-year, liberal arts college—the first historically Black institution in the state of South Carolina to achieve full accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Secondly, the celebration will include recognition of a person whose life and work in the church and community exemplifies the legacy and spirit of the Reverend Absalom Jones. Mr. Speaker, I ask this body to join this tribute to the legacy and spirit of Absalom Jones and salute the honoree of the evening.

REINTRODUCTION OF SLUSH FUND
ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 3, 1999

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, in the 105th Congress the Republican majority changed House rules to allow the creation of a nearly \$8 million "reserve fund" for unanticipated committee expenses.

With the advent of biennial committee funding, setting aside resources for unforeseeable contingencies makes sense.

No one can know with certainty 2 years in advance what demands House committees may face. If contingencies do not arise, and the funds are not needed, they can be used to reduce the public debt.

But somewhere a good idea went awry. Republican leaders used the reserve not as a rainy-day fund for unforeseen contingencies, but as a slush fund for their partisan projects.

Most of the nearly \$8 million was eventually disbursed, not for committee expenses a reasonable person would consider unforeseeable, but instead for political investigations of the administration and the working men and women of organized labor.

And under procedures established by the Republican leadership, these millions were disbursed without any vote of the House. Committees devised their plans for partisan investigations, often without even informing the minority. If Speaker Gingrich approved of a plan, the majority of the House Oversight Committee rubber stamped it in a "ministerial" act, and the money flowed.

There was no floor debate, vote, or accountability to the American people for how millions of dollars were to be spent.

To improve accountability and bring the process into the open, last March I introduced House Resolution 387, to require a House vote before any disbursements could be made from the reserve fund.

Unfortunately, the Rules Committee did not approve this reform. Today, I reintroduce it with the cosponsorship of the ranking Democrat on every legislative committee of this House.

I had hoped that with a new Speaker who spoke so eloquently on opening day about bipartisanship and meeting the Democratic minority half way, reintroducing this resolution might be unnecessary.

But the rules adopted by the majority that same day again permit creation of a slush fund, from which disbursements may be made without a floor vote, thereby signaling the majority's intention to proceed as before.

Until it is clear that the reserve fund will be used solely as a hedge against unforeseen contingencies, rather than as petty cash for political sideshows, then the House should debate and vote on how those funds will be used.

When Democrats controlled this House, the only way committees could get more funds for unanticipated needs was through debate and approval of a supplemental expense resolution on this floor. That is the time-honored, open process that lets the public see what's going on and know whom to hold accountable.

By contrast, under Republican control, committees can get more money through a process essentially hidden from public view and for which most Members are not accountable.

The lack of openness and scrutiny creates an opportunity for partisan mischief, and the majority yielded to temptation in the last Congress.

In this new Congress, let's not repeat our mistake. Let's following through on the Speaker's promise of bipartisanship and cooperation.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 3, 1999

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill to eliminate the preemption of State prescription drug benefit laws in connection with Medicare+Choice plans. I am pleased to be joined in this endeavor by every member of the Massachusetts congressional delegation.

Mr. Speaker, on January 1, 1999 many seniors in Massachusetts lost the unlimited prescription drug benefit available from their Medicare HMO due to a provision in federal law that was interpreted by a court to override Massachusetts state law. Massachusetts is the only state which had a law of this kind—one which required Medicare+Choice plans doing business in the state to provide an unlimited prescription drug benefit to seniors. Despite the efforts of the entire Massachusetts congressional delegation, the Administration, and the Governor of Massachusetts to find a legislative or administrative fix at the end of last year, which included making it possible for the HMOs to do the right thing and extend the benefit, the HMOs refused to provide the unlimited benefit. This vital benefit must be restored, and the legislation I am filing today will restore the coverage this year.

Mr. Speaker, my Massachusetts colleagues and I believe that Congress did not intend to pre-empt the Massachusetts prescription drug benefit law and force seniors in Massachusetts to choose between prescription drugs and food or other necessities when it passed the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. Congress can clarify its intent by passing the bill we are introducing today, and correct the gross injustice perpetrated upon Massachusetts seniors enrolled in these plans.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 520—THE DEVIL'S SLIDE TUNNEL ACT

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 3, 1999

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, we on the Pacific Coast of our nation face the periodic wrath of nature when the El Niño storms lash our coast. We faced that last year. We faced a similar series of El Niño winter storms in 1983 which wreaked havoc with our coast. I am sure my colleagues remember the images of Pacifica, California, in my Congressional District of homes sliding down cliffs into the pounding surf below.

One of the most serious concerns along the Pacific Coast 12 miles south of San Francisco is the impact of these periodic storms upon a section of the Coast Highway, Highway 1,

which is known locally as Devil's Slide. This part of the highway precariously hugs a cliff high above the pounding surf of the Pacific Ocean 600 feet below.

In 1983, the winter storms forced the closure of Highway 1 at Devil's Slide for six months after a section of the roadway slipped into the ocean. In the winter of 1998 another series of winter storms resulted in the closure of the highway for several weeks.

The closure of the highway at Devil's Slide has left residents and businesses dangerously isolated. Perennial closures of Devil's Slide have had a devastating effect on coastal communities and residents. Residents have endured unbearable commutes; access to emergency medical care and other services have been threatened; businesses have lost thousands of customers; and some businesses have failed as a result of the closure of the highway. For residents and businesses along the San Mateo County coast, it is vital to maintain the integrity of Highway 1 in this area.

Mr. Speaker, 16 years ago, in 1983, heavy winter rains left a 250-foot-long crevice in the road which made the road impassable for 4 months. Then Chairman of the Surface Transportation Subcommittee, Glenn Anderson, held a series of field hearings in Half Moon Bay and Pacifica, CA, and committee members carefully surveyed the unstable roadway which was sliding into the sea at a rate of 3 inches a day. Committee members viewed 8-foot-deep cracks and fissures in the roadbed and determined that this vital transportation link was eligible for emergency Federal funds. At my request, the Congress provided funding for the permanent repair of Highway 1 at Devil's Slide.

The California Department of Transportation [CALTRANS] made temporary repairs to the roadway and proposed building a controversial 4.5 mile long bypass around Devil's Slide as the permanent repair. Many of the residents opposed the bypass on environmental and other grounds, and construction was delayed in the courts for over a decade. More recently, a false sense of security, brought on by 10 years of drought, ended in January 1995, when heavy rains again closed Devil's Slide for extended periods, disrupting the lives and livelihoods of tens of thousands of residents and businesses.

Mr. Speaker, after public debate and lengthy lawsuits, the voters of San Mateo County resolved the conflict in a referendum in which the voters decided overwhelmingly in favor of the construction of a mile-long tunnel at Devil's Slide rather than the earlier proposal for a bypass which would involve extensive cutting and filling of Montara Mountain. The referendum amends the local coastal plan, substituting a tunnel as the preferred permanent repair alternative for Highway 1 at Devil's Slide, and prohibits any other alternative unless approved by the voters. Following the release of a Federal Highway Administration sponsored study which found that the tunnel is environmentally feasible and its costs would not differ significantly from the costs of a bypass, CALTRANS reversed its opposition to a tunnel at Devil's Slide.

Mr. Speaker, today I have introduced H.R. 520, the Devil's Slide Tunnel Act, to ensure that funds already appropriated and obligated for Devil's Slide will remain available to CALTRANS to build the tunnel at Devil's Slide.

This legislation will provide greater flexibility to State transportation officials to use Federal funds already appropriated by Congress to fix this vital transportation link.

Joining me as cosponsors of this legislation are bipartisan members of the Bay Area congressional delegation whose constituents are most affected by the Devil's Slide highway problem—my colleagues, Tom Campbell of San Jose, Anna Eshoo of Atherton, and Nancy Pelosi of San Francisco.

Mr. Speaker, if local and state agencies and the citizens of a region determine that a better transportation alternative exists than the alternative for which funds have been obligated, as was the case for Highway 1 at Devil's Slide, then the Federal Government should provide greater funding flexibility, as long as all other Federal laws are complied with. It is important that we not permit these funds to lapse. The rebuilding of a severely damaged highway in its existing location may no longer be feasible, and in such cases funds already available to a community should continue to be available.

History tells us that Devil's Slide will wash out again—it is only a matter of time. It is my hope that swift enactment of this legislation will ensure a permanent solution to the residents of the San Mateo County Coastside. I urge my colleagues to support the "Devil's Slide Tunnel Act."

TRIBUTE TO MARCY TUBLISKY

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 3, 1999

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Marcy Tublisky, Executive Director of the Hauppauge Industrial Association, who is being honored on February 9, 1999, by the members of the HIA on the occasion of her 10th year of service to them.

Marcy's career is reminiscent of many success stories in the manner of our great American tradition.

Marcy Tublisky began her working life as an Elementary School Teacher in the Bronx, but she did not rest when the school bell rang to end the day. Through her extensive years as a volunteer, she served the PTA as its President, gave her time as Pink Lady at St. John's Hospital, and was appointed to the Small Business Advisory Council. Marcy is an alumna of the Citizens Police Academy, and a member of the Suffolk County Police Reserves. In addition, she has received the Distinguished Business Leaders Award from the March of Dimes.

Since 1989, she embraced the challenge of Executive Director for the Hauppauge Industrial Association. Under her tenacious, caring and committed leadership, the membership has more than doubled.

She has led this organization and its members into partnerships with outside agencies to establish programs that not only have proven beneficial to the HIA membership and their families, but also have enabled them to expand their companies nationally and globally. She is very proud of her membership involvement in HIA's 17 active committees and partnerships with schools, police departments, ambulance corps, and charitable organizations.