

already have competitive status. Instead, OPM instructed agencies to appoint these veterans to the excepted service under Schedule B. Many veterans fear that if they are appointed as excepted service employees, as OPM's guidance requires, they will, in effect, be placed in dead end jobs.

This fear is not unfounded. As excepted service employees, these veterans would not be eligible to compete for other agency jobs under internal agency promotion procedures. That is manifestly unfair and directly contrary to congressional intent. The access provision of the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act intended to open up employment opportunities for veterans and to provide those selected under it with the same rights as their co-workers. Any other result is totally unacceptable.

The men and women who have served our nation under arms should not be relegated to second-class status when hired into the civil service. Section 4 makes sure that they will not.

Mr. Speaker, this bill has strong support on both sides of the aisle. I want to thank the distinguished Ranking Member of the Civil Service Subcommittee, the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. CUMMINGS, for his strong support for this measure. I commend the majority and minority leaders of the Committee on Government Reform, Chairman DAN BURTON and Ranking Member HENRY WAXMAN, for expediting committee approval of H.R. 807 and for their support. I also want to express my appreciation to Mr. MICA, the distinguished gentleman from Virginia, Mr. DAVIS, the distinguished gentlelady from Maryland, Mrs. MORELLA, and the distinguished gentlelady from the District of Columbia, Ms. NORTON, for their strong support.

I urge all Members to support this bill.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CANTON MIGHTY EAGLE HIGH SCHOOL BAND

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the hard work, discipline and deserved achievements of the Canton High School Band—from my Fourth District in Texas. Besides numerous awards and recognitions, the Mighty Eagle Band has been chosen to represent the State of Texas, today, St. Patrick's Day, by performing in Dublin, Ireland—in that city's St. Patrick's Day Parade.

The young men and women of this band have participated in and won a multitude of competitions every year since 1993. More recently, the Canton Band was named the third overall band in the State of Texas. Along with this honor, came an invitation to perform in Dublin, Ireland, on St. Patrick's Day. As if the many hours of sacrifice and discipline exhibited by these young men and women—was not enough—they managed to raise an amazing \$200,000 in order to pay for their trip.

Mr. Speaker, as evidenced by their many achievements and awards, the Canton ISD music program emphasizes responsibility, accountability and service to others. Obviously, these youngsters have internalized these characteristics in their search for success. As we

adjourn today, let us do so in honor of the Canton Mighty Eagle Band and their numerous merited accolades.

EXPOSING RACISM

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, in my continuing efforts to document and expose racism in America. I submit the following articles into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

BLACK DOCTORS' ORGANIZATION PULLS CONVENTION FROM SEATTLE, CONSIDERS BALTIMORE

SEATTLE(AP).—A group representing 20,000 black physicians is withdrawing its 2001 convention from Seattle, citing the state's passage in November of an anti-affirmative action initiative.

"Such legislative enactment (of Initiative 200) is counter to the basic tenets upon which the National Medical Association was founded more than 100 years ago," NMA executive director Lorraine Cole said Tuesday in a statement.

The association, headquartered in Washington, D.C., will relocate its convention. It listed potential sites as Denver, Miami, Nashville, Orlando, Philadelphia, New York and Baltimore.

The convention was scheduled for the Washington State Convention Center July 27-Aug. 2, 2001. Between 8,000 and 10,000 people usually attend, said NMA spokeswoman Tomeka Rawlings.

"It's their loss," said John Carlson, of Bellevue, who headed the petition drive to put 1-200 on the ballot.

"Unless their organization was founded on the tenets of racial quotas and preferences, they are seriously misreading Initiative 200 because that's all that prohibits," he added.

Mayor Paul Schell plans to ask the association to reconsider, spokeswoman Vivian Phillips said.

"He feel it's quite unfortunate," Phillips said of the association's action. "Seattle did not vote in favor of 1-200. In fact, it was overwhelmingly defeated in Seattle."

The National Association of Black Journalists said before the election that passage of the initiative might be reason for a minority journalists' group to withdraw its conference, scheduled for Seattle this summer.

However, the group UNITY: Journalists of Color voted two days after the Nov. 3 election to keep the convention in Seattle, despite passage of 1-200. The UNITY '99 conference is scheduled July 7-11 at the Washington State Convention Center.

The group said in a news release that passage of 1-200 "cries out for the need to educate the public about affirmative action."

Besides the NABJ, the UNITY group includes the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, the Native American Journalists Association, and the Asian American Journalists Association. Their memberships total more than 6,000.

Initiative 200 was approved by nearly 60 percent of the state's voters, but a majority within the city voted no. It bars state and local governments from giving preferential treatment to women and minorities in contracts, jobs or public higher education.

WHAT IS THIS GROUP THAT HAS EMBROIDERED LOTT?

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP)—Behind a wooden partition in a back room of the Lizard's Thicket

restaurant, about 30 members of the Council of Conservative Citizens—many wearing Confederate battle flag pins and belt buckles hovered over plates of fried catfish and chocolate cream pie as Dennis Wheeler laid out the struggle before them.

Wheeler, a freelance writer from Atlanta opened last week's meeting with a reading from Revelation about the beast that "opened his mouth in blasphemies against God." Among those blasphemies, he told the group, is a "Yankee radicalism" known as equalitarianism.

"(I)t is exactly this philosophy that our Confederate forefathers fought against in the War Between the States," said Wheeler, head of a council chapter in Georgia. "The current mark of the beast is the equalitarian religion which names as sins racism, sexism, anti-Semitism and homophobia, among others, rather than the Ten Commandments."

The only blacks within earshot were the waitresses and busboys working the tables on the other side of the partition.

Just what is the Council of Conservative Citizens? It was formed 13 years ago, it claims 15,000 members and lately it's been in the news since Sen. Trent Lott and Rep. Bob Barr landed in hot water after it was revealed they had addressed the group.

But what else? Is it a reincarnation of the old White Citizens Councils, as some suggest? Is it a white supremacist group?

"We are not racists," insists South Carolina director Frances Bell, citing her American Indian background and noting the group has some Jewish members.

Is the council merely an organization so devoted to free speech and assembly that it refuses to silence racist or bigoted views?

The questions have sent Lott, R-Miss., and Barr, R-Ga., scurrying for cover. The chairman of the Republican National Committee has called on GOP members, including national committee member Buddy Witherspoon of Columbia, to quit the organization that calls itself the "active advocate for the no longer silent conservative majority."

Gordon Baum, the St. Louis attorney who runs the group, says attacks on the council—especially by people like law professor Alan Dershowitz—are liberal diversions to take the heat off President Bill Clinton. "It all has to do with protecting Billy's butt," he said.

"Why are they so afraid of us?" Baum said in a telephone interview last week, noting that the council is best known for opposing affirmative action and quotas and defending the Confederate battle flag against those who would remove it from public display.

He answered his own question: "Because these are all politically incorrect (stances), and they would prefer that we would not have a voice. I mean, neither the Republicans nor the Democrats will touch these issues, and they're afraid of the people out here's growing discontent with the parties."

But to the Rev. Joseph Lowery, who founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference along with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the group is "the Ku Klux Klan with a coat and tie."

"What they stand for sounds like just a recycled White Citizens Council," the Atlanta preacher said, "A cocklebur by any other name is just as thorny."

In fact, some of the group's original members came from the old Citizens Councils of America, a pro-segregation group formed as a response to the 1954 Supreme Court decision integrating public schools.

Baum was its Midwest field organizer and Robert "Tut" Patterson its founder. Patterson now writes a column for The Citizen Informer newsletter for Baum's group.

Mark Potok, a researcher for the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Ala.,

said the Council of Conservative Citizens is more dangerous than the KKK or neo-Nazis because it has been "successfully masquerading as a mainstream conservative organization."

"They're not going to produce a Timothy McVeigh; they are much more interested in genuine political power than in any kind of violence or terrorism," Potok said. "I mean, Timothy McVeigh can kill 168 people, but he is never going to be elected your senator or president or congressman. So, yeah, on a political level they're much more dangerous."

Indeed, the group claims as dues-paying members dozens of elected officials, from local school boards to state legislatures. It does not, however, claim ex-Klan leader and sometime GOP candidate David Duke, who caused Baum considerable discomfort in November by showing up at a national board meeting in Jackson, Miss.

The group's Web site welcomes visitors to "join the vast right-wing conspiracy!"—an ironic reference to Hillary Clinton's comment about who was behind the impeachment effort—and offers such publications as a pamphlet revealing "the ugly truth about Martin Luther King."

The South Carolina chapters have fought to keep the Confederate battle flag flying over the state capital and criticized The Citadel for not playing "Dixie" often enough during functions at the military college.

"Being pro-white is not equal to being anti-black," said Rebekah Sutherland, an executive committee member from Aiken who ran for state school superintendent last year. "It's OK to be white, isn't it? That's what this group is about. It's OK to be white."

Don MacDermott, a Birmingham, Ala., city councilman and Council of Conservative Citizens member, campaigned with his chapter last year against a proposed 1-cent sales tax that he felt would go to fund "just a bunch of wish lists for some local bureaucrats." He said he wouldn't belong to the organization if he felt it was racist.

"The chapter I belong to is definitely not," he said. "They're just some well-grounded beliefs in conservative values. Most of the group I'm involved with were Ronald Reagan supporters in 1976."

A.J. Parker, a siding contractor who is director of the group's North Carolina chapter, doesn't like being condemned for the views of a few members.

"Why should I pay for deeds that took place 100 years ago, or even 50 years ago?" he said during a break from burning brush in front of his Asheville home. "They've tried to identify us with David Duke and people like that, and anybody who speaks out against affirmative action and quotas and immigration, they're automatically tagged with that dirty brush."

But critics point to anti-Semitic postings on the group's Web site, and to *Informer* columns like this from Patterson last fall:

"Western civilization with all its might and glory would never have achieved its greatness without the directing hand of God and the creative genius of the white race. Any effort to destroy the race by a mixture of black blood is an effort to destroy Western civilization itself."

Baum noted that the *Informer* has a disclaimer, "like all newspapers."

"It was there; we can't lie. We did not endorse it," he said. "Our people don't walk in lock step. Organizing conservatives is like herding cats."

But Dick Harpootlian, chairman of the South Carolina Democratic Party, offered a different animal analogy: "Birds of a feather flock together."

"If David Duke and those kinds of folks are showing up at those meetings, they obviously have some interest in them," he said.

"There's a fight for the heart and soul of the Republican Party. Is it the party of Lincoln or the party of extremes? So far, the extreme's winning."

U.S. Rep. Robert Wexler, D-Fla., is calling on members of Congress to denounce the Council of Conservative Citizens. "They can hide behind whatever curtain they want to hide, but we know what they are," Wexler said in a telephone interview.

Baum said the debate has devolved into a kind of '90s McCarthyism, where guilt by association is the order of the day.

"Really, Trent Lott's involvement wasn't other than what he would do with any larger constituent group," Baum said. "I mean, to us it's sending a signal that any political figure should not meet with conservatives. I mean, they did this with the Christian Coalition; they did it with the pro-life movement. They've tried to demonize them."

The Council of Conservative Citizens meeting last Saturday in Columbia was supposed to be open. But when members learned an Associated Press reporter planned to attend, the executive board voted to close the partition.

"They're all afraid," Mrs. Bell said. "People are afraid they'll lose their job if their name comes out."

But Wheeler exhorted the back-room crowd to "look at our duty. . . ."

"The war for the hearts and the minds of the people must be won before the political war can be won."

DEFENDANTS DENY WOMAN'S CLAIM OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSE DEAL

INDIANOLA, MISS. (AP)—The defendants in a federal racial discrimination lawsuit have asked the U.S. District court to dismiss the case.

The suit, filed by Sunflower County assistant district attorney Felecia Lockhart, claims Community Bank of Indianola and others conspired in 1995 to prevent her from purchasing a home in a predominantly white neighborhood. Lockhart is black.

Defendants include Community Bancshares of Mississippi, which does business as Community Bank of Mississippi; Freddie J. Bagley, the bank's president in Indianola; Thomas Colbert and James T. Mood.

In documents filed this week, the defendants denied any wrongdoing and asked that the lawsuit seeking \$1.5 million in damages be dismissed. Lockhart brought the action following an unsuccessful attempt to purchase the house from Mood, an officer at the bank in Indianola, and his wife.

Lockhart claims Mood was coerced into breaching the contract to sell the house and that, specifically, "certain shareholders and/or directors" of the bank were objecting to the deal.

In seeking dismissal, the defendants said they had dealt with Lockhart at all times in a non-discriminatory manner.

They claim Lockhart wrote a letter to Mood wrongfully accusing him of breach of contract, demanding repairs he could not pay for and demanding he compensate her for more than \$2,800 of unspecified expenses in the sale contract.

Defendants also maintain that Mood was warned that "further steps" would be taken if he failed to hand over the more than \$2,800.

They also said none of Mood's superiors at the bank "ever said one word to him about attempting to get out of the sale, much less coerced or sought to pressure him."

STATEMENT ON THE PEACE PROCESS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

HON. RICK LAZIO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the ongoing peace process in Northern Ireland. For nearly a year now, we have walked down a path leading toward the permanent resolution of the more than 30 years of acrimony in Northern Ireland. The "Good Friday Peace Agreement" was hailed internationally as "the best chance in a generation for peace," and was passed last April with a remarkable 85 percent majority. As is often true with any worthwhile endeavor, the road to our ultimate goal may not always be smooth, nor direct. It is now, however, during this time of uncertainty and difficulty, when progress seems painstakingly slow and obstacles appear overwhelming, that our efforts should be redoubled. We should take heart in the accomplishments of this past year and weigh carefully the actual value of realizing a permanent peace before allowing any one stumbling block to derail this important process.

The recognition given to John Hume, head of the SDLP, and David Trimble, First Minister of the Northern Ireland Assembly, in receiving the Nobel Peace Prize was a reassuring step toward memorializing the extraordinary achievements made by the proponents of peace. We should not forget, however, the many other people, without whom this process would not have even been possible. Prime Ministers Bertie Ahern and Tony Blair, Gerry Adams of Sinn Féin, British Secretary Mo Mowlam and many others, on both sides of the issue, as well as the Atlantic, were instrumental in propelling the cause of peace in a region weary of constant strife. We should also remember the 3,200 people who have lost their lives during more than three decades of violence; for their memories will serve us well in motivating all people who are concerned, as I am, with enhancing the efforts to bring a lasting tranquility to Ireland. This Tranquility is of special concern to the people of New York, the State for which I hold the honor of representing, as we have one of the largest Irish populations outside of their homeland.

Unfortunately, along with this timely recognition of accomplishment, there must also be the increased vigil of those that would attempt to destroy the peace process that has been so carefully cultivated. We are reminded, yet again, of the cost of not succeeding by the tragedy which occurred just days ago, when Mrs. Rosemary Nelson was brutally murdered by a loyalist paramilitary group. Mrs. Nelson was an important participant in the peace process, an accomplished barrister, and a mother of young children. Her murder was a cowardly act that illustrates so clearly that the time has long passed for these last few violent thugs to heed the demands of the overwhelming majority of their countrymen and lay down their arms, once and for all.

The complexity of the discord in Northern Ireland that has proven so baffling to peace seekers for a generation, will not be solved by the mere signing of one document. It will only be realized by a thorough adherence to and completion of the measures outlined in the