

How can I serve America? Exercising my right to vote is a responsibility of being an American citizen. When electing politicians, people should expect that their voice will be represented with honor and dignity. My one vote is just one step in the stairway to better America.

How else can I serve America? Personally, I would love to become a politician. A great honor for me would be standing up and speaking out for what I believe in. I might become the first woman President of the United States of America or maybe just the president of the PTA. No matter what I become, I know that I will carry with me the same honor, loyalty, and respect portrayed by my forefathers for their country.

I may never understand how my uncle felt that dreadful day and I probably never will. I do know that sitting through a movie that portrays war that real has changed the way I feel for him, and the many other veterans. The respect I feel for my flag has also been enhanced. It was increased when I attended an FFA camp. I had the honor of being selected as a speaker for the flag lowering ceremony.

The small part I said made me realize what our flag really means. It stands for the freedom, the happiness, and the sadness for which our country stands. I realized that putting my hand over my heart and saying the Pledge of Allegiance is not a chore, but an honor. Our flag is a precious symbol for America, and it is my duty always to be proud of it.

I hope one day I can stand up and speak to thousands of people all over the world. I know that I cannot help everyone, but if I can help at least one person my dream will be fulfilled. I would also love to speak with teenagers and let them know that our nation does care for them and believe in them. People may think that this is a big dream for such a young woman, but I say dreams are limitless. I also believe with the Lord's power and his will behind me, and the encouragement of my church and family members, the sky is the limit.

I may never stand on the field of honor as my uncle did and receive a bronze star, but if my service to America or my community can make a difference in one persons' life, then my responsibility for serving my country will have begun.

TRIBUTE TO KEN STRAIN

HON. ROBIN HAYES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 1999

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Ken Strain, a man dedicated to serve his community.

Mr. Strain passed away this week while serving the community of Hemby Bridge, North Carolina as a volunteer fireman. His fire truck flipped while Mr. Strain was returning from a rescue call.

Mr. Strain comes from a long line of firefighters. His father Bill and his youngest brother Darren both have served as firefighters in North Carolina.

Mr. Strain is survived by his wife, Sharon and their 18-month-old son Kristopher. Mr. Strain kept a picture of his son in his tool box and often visited the fire station with Kristopher.

Mr. Strain will be deeply missed as a member of the Hemby Bridge business community. He along with his colleague, close friend and

fellow firefighter, Paul Ramsey, were partners at their business, Neighborhood Automotive.

While Ken's death is tragic, I must commend his partners at the Union County Volunteer Fire Department for their exemplary record of safety and reliability. This is the first death the department has suffered in 30 years.

Mr. Speaker, I want to express my deep remorse to the family and friends of Mr. Ken Strain, but also honor him for his selfless service to his community. Mr. Strain was dedicated to his family, his job and his community and will be missed by all.

WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC) PROGRAM CONTINUES TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH CARE OF MILLIONS

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 1999

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, as a cochair of the Congressional Prevention Coalition, I stand in strong support today of a program that makes a tremendous contribution to disease prevention and health promotion. The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program has been educating woman and children about basic nutrition that can help them lead healthier, and therefore happier lives. Chronic disease is the cause of 70 percent of deaths in the United States and nutrition is a primary form of prevention for chronic disease.

Nutrition education can start very early in life. WIC educators help expectant mothers to give their babies good nutrition, even before they are born, through prenatal counseling and care. After the baby is born, WIC educators continue to serve low income women, infants and children with pediatric health care services and nutrition education. WIC educators help babies get a healthy start on life through breastfeeding education and support. The first food a baby gets could be the most important. Breastfeeding is almost always the best form of nutrition for a baby and WIC educators help mothers to learn the wide benefits of breastfeeding including its nutrition and excellent source of antibodies that protect against infection.

The preventive care that WIC provides saves us money in the long run. the National Association of WIC Directors estimates that for every dollar spent on pregnant women in the WIC program, we save \$1.92 to \$4.21 in Medicaid costs. For every low birth weight prevented as a result of WIC's prenatal program, Medicaid costs are reduced \$12,000 to \$15,000 per infant.

More importantly, WIC works in helping low-income mothers and children to live healthy lives. For example, according to CDC, WIC children showed a 16-percent decrease in the anemia rate at their 6-month recertification screening than in their initial screening. WIC babies have fewer low birth weight babies and fewer fetal and infant deaths. WIC also helps spur normal childhood growth, increases immunization rates, improves access to pediatric health care and readies children to learn with proven higher test scores.

I want to thank the National Association of WIC directors and all of those at WIC who do

so much in improving the health care needs of the millions of women, infants, and children who participate in this lifesaving program. Thank you for 25 years of vital work and service.

WHY WE NEED CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

HON. JAY INSLEE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 1999

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, the faith of the American people in their elected government is slowly slipping away. The cause of this malaise is our defective, broken campaign finance system. The astronomical costs of Federal campaigns are having extremely detrimental effects on our democracy; qualified candidates are discouraged from running, and special interest dollars continues to drown out the voice of the average citizen. This outrage is evident to everyone, except, members of the leadership.

The shortest route between our campaign finance system and reform is the opportunity to vote on the bi-partisan Campaign Finance Reform Act, otherwise known as the Shays-Meehan bill. We have garnered over 188 signatures on our campaign finance discharge petition. We mean it when we say we want reform and we want it soon. If we can't get a scheduled vote from the Republican Leadership, we reform-minded Members will force a vote through this petition.

Mr. Speaker, this is a truly modest proposal, but its impact could be nothing short of extraordinary. First, this legislation will finally ban "soft money." With this past election cycle, we saw "soft money" contributions more than double since the last off-year election, totaling over \$220 million.

Second, this legislation also includes the Campaign Ad Fairness Provision, reigning in the unregulated "issue campaigns" to require them to play by the same finance laws as federal campaigns.

Third, this legislation gives teeth to the FEC and provides greater, timelier public disclosure of individuals contributing to campaigns.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is not an infringement of free speech, but a restoration of the public trust. American people are tired of watching Congress sit back and do nothing as the amount spent in elections grows higher and higher, and trust in the system sinks lower and lower. We need to get big money out of the electoral process, and give power back to the people.

I know that the people of the 1st congressional district of Washington want real, meaningful reform, and I urge you to support the Bi-partisan Campaign Finance Reform Act.

STAMP OUT HUNGER

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 1999

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the National Association of Letter Carriers and Anthony B. Morell Branch 737 in

Santa Ana as they prepare for their "Stamp Out Hunger" food drive. This event will take place on Saturday, May 8. The letter carriers have asked area residents to donate non-perishable food by leaving the donations outside their mailboxes on May 8. Letter carriers will collect the food during their normally scheduled mail routes. The food collected will benefit CDC's Orange County Food Bank and the Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County. These two food banks serve over 240,000 people each month.

"Stamp Out Hunger" is the largest one day food drive in the nation. This is the seventh year of participation by Branch 737 of the Santa Ana letter carriers. Last year letter carriers around the nation collected more than 52 million pounds of food. All went to local food banks in their communities. In the Santa Ana district alone, 69,000 pounds of food was collected for the Second Harvest Food Bank and the Community Development Council, the two food banks in our region.

Unfortunately, hunger continues to be a problem in Orange County. There are still over 30,000 men, women, children and senior citizens who go hungry every night. We are hoping to reduce that number as much as possible, by getting every citizen involved in the food drive.

I commend Branch 737 of the National Association of Letter Carriers for their valiant efforts to make a difference in our community and to stamp out hunger.

LUBBOCK LETTER CARRIERS PARTICIPATE IN FOOD DRIVE FOR NATION'S NEEDY

HON. LARRY COMBEST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 1999

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the National Association of Letter Carriers for their tremendous efforts to help the hungry in communities across the nation. On May 8th, 1999, local branches of the Letter Carriers, in conjunction with the United Way and the United States Postal Service, will participate in a drive to collect non-perishable food and other needed items to stock the shelves of local food pantries. This endeavor will fill pantry shelves for the coming summer months in more than 10,000 hometowns in every corner of the United States.

This worthwhile event has taken place for countless years in the past, and this year's drive promises to be one of the most successful. The Lubbock, Texas branch of the Letter Carriers is rolling up its sleeves and preparing for a first-class turnout on May 8th. I am confident that the good citizens of Lubbock will rise to the challenge to ensure that this year's drive is an overwhelming success.

The Lubbock branch of the National Association of Letter Carriers is deserving of our full support and praise for their work in the fight against hunger in the 19th District of Texas. Their efforts truly exemplify the spirit of service and giving that draws our community together. With a little help from us all, the May 8th food drive can touch the lives of the many West Texans who are in need.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 1999

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, on May 4, I was unavoidably detained back in my congressional district due to the devastating tornado storm and missed roll call vote numbers 105 (H. Con. Res. 84), 106 (H. Con. Res. 88) and 107 (H. Res. 157). Had I been present I would have voted yes on passage on each of the three bills.

TRIBUTE TO THE CONABLE FAMILY

HON. THOMAS M. REYNOLDS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 1999

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the occasion of the dedication of the Wyoming County Courthouse in Warsaw, New York, in the name of the Conable family, whose members have a long and proud history of dedication to public service.

Family patriarch Barber Conable served as Wyoming County judge from 1924–1951. Following his retirement, his son, John Conable assumed the judgeship from 1952–1983. John's brother, Barber Conable, Jr., went from practicing law in nearby Batavia to this House of Representatives, where he served for 20 years as a Member of Congress. Following his service in the House of Representatives, Barber Conable, Jr. served as President of the World Bank, from which he retired several years ago.

As we noted at the building's dedication ceremony on April 27th, no other family in Wyoming County's history has come close to the level and commitment of public service as the Conables.

Mr. Chairman, I ask that this House of Representatives join me in saluting the Conable family for their tremendous dedication to public service, and to salute all the residents of Wyoming County on the occasion of the dedication of the Wyoming County Courthouse.

TRIBUTE TO MRS. MARY JANE RODGES

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 1999

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a life long resident of Cleveland, Mississippi and my constituent, Mrs. Mary Jane Rodges. Mrs. Rodges will celebrate her 85th birthday on May 22, 1999. Mrs. Rodges, a devoted mother, dedicated church woman, and retired educator of local acclaim has much to be thankful for and is well deserving of our high praise. She taught in the Mississippi public school system for 40 years, helping to prepare thousands of young people for a brighter future. Mrs. Rodges was just as devoted to her church as she was to building the minds of others. She shared her

talents and uplifted the congregation of St. Paul Baptist Church in Shaw, Mississippi, as its musician, for more than 50 years.

Mrs. Rodges' greatest accomplishment though has to be the five children she raised—who all became valuable and productive citizens of our country. One of her daughters, Mrs. Bobbie L. Steele, who is a Commissioner for Cook County in Chicago, Illinois, is planning a grand celebration for her mother. This is a well-deserved event for an exceptional woman and I stand here on the floor of the House of Representatives today and ask all to join me in wishing Mrs. Mary Jane Rodges "Happy 85th birthday".

WIC: 25 YEARS OF BUILDING A HEALTHIER AMERICA

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for WIC, the special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children. It is vital that, in order to ensure that people grow up and live healthy lives, they receive proper nutrition.

WIC is an indispensable organization that serves over 7.4 million pregnant women, new mothers, infants, and preschool children in over 10,000 clinics nationwide. Thankfully, WIC is designed to aid those who regrettably have an income level of 185 percent of poverty or less, are enrolled in Medicaid or have been recommended by a health professional. It is essential that we ensure healthy children and adults by making sure that mothers receive proper nutrition long before their children are born and during their early years of development. Children will perform better in school and lead more productive lives when they receive the proper nutrition from the very beginning.

A common theme in all branches of government today is that of the importance of the family. WIC strengthens families by providing low-cost services to families who are at risk due to low income and nutritionally related health conditions. Because two-thirds of all WIC families live below the poverty level, the services they provide are essential in making sure that these families stay together.

The strength of any nation comes from the strength of its people. In order for us to assure that the United States remains strong we must be sure that all of our citizens are healthy, starting from the time when they are very young. WIC is a program that ensures just that. Accordingly, I urge all of my colleagues to support it.

EXPOSING RACISM

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 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.