

(AFSCME). She was at the forefront in leading AFSCME in Houston and Texas for two decades before her retirement.

Liz has also used her boundless energy over the years to become a stalwart in the Democratic Party. She has been a true activist, serving as a Precinct Judge, floor leader, block walker, an avid campaigner, and a successful recruiter. She has been a loyal and valuable member of the Democratic Party at the local, state, and national level for the last forty years.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Elizabeth Kimmel-Hieken for more than four decades of service to Texas and Harris County. Her contributions to the labor movement and politics will always be present, and her legacy shall endure.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SOUTHERN HIGH PLAINS GROUNDWATER RESOURCE CONSERVATION ACT

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce legislation which will bring focus to an issue that concerns the long-term economic viability of communities in much of America's heartland: the southern High plains stretching from the middle of Kansas, the Texas panhandle, Oklahoma, the eastern portion of Colorado, and the eastern counties of my home state of New Mexico.

Much of the area that I just described is farming country and much of its economy is linked to the Ogallala aquifer. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service recently determined that there are over six million acres of irrigated farmland overlying the southern Ogallala. These farms use between six and nine million acre-feet of water annually. The problem however, is that the aquifer is being depleted very quickly. In just seventeen years we have seen large areas of the southern aquifer experience a 10- to 20-foot drop in their water table. These decreased levels will negatively affect aquifers used for irrigation, and for municipal water on the southern High Plains.

The problems facing the groundwater resources on the southern High Plains is a multi-state issue with significant economic and social consequences for America. Ignoring the problem and continuing uses to go unabated invites tremendous economic dislocation for a large portion of our country.

To address this issue I am introducing the Southern High Plains Groundwater Resource Conservation Act. This bill recognizes that accurate scientific information about groundwater resources is necessary to make good decisions.

It calls upon the U.S. Geological Survey to develop mapping, modeling, and monitoring strategies for the Southern Ogallala, to provide a report to Congress and relevant states with maps and information, and to renew and update that report every year.

It also acknowledges that a sound water conservation plan must be developed on a multiyear goal. Conservation measures must be implemented over a large area in order to observe a long-term groundwater trend. This

bill would authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to provide planning assistance on a cost-share basis to states, tribes, counties, conservation districts, and other local government units to create water conservation plans designed to benefit their groundwater resource over at least 20 years.

Lastly, this bill will provide two primary forms of assistance for groundwater conservation on farms. They are a cost-share assistance program to upgrade the water use efficiency of farming equipment, and the creation of an Irrigated Land Reserve.

The cost-share program is based on the up-front costs frequently prohibitive for modern irrigation methods. It is estimated that an initial \$20,000 in Federal investment in equipment on a cost-share basis would save between 325 to nearly 490 acre-feet of water over a ten year period.

The Irrigated Land Reserve is designed to convert 10% or approximately 600,000 acres of irrigated farmland to dryland agriculture. Because dryland farming is less productive than irrigation, this bill would provide for a rental rate to farmers to ease the economic impact of changing over. When fully implemented this program can potentially save between 600,000 and 900,000 acre-feet of water per year at a cost of \$33 to \$50 per acre-foot.

There is a pressing need to conserve this valuable aquifer, we must acknowledge that this is a precious commodity that is worth saving. It's good for the southern High Plains and it's good for our Nation.

HOMER HICKAM: WEST VIRGINIA'S ROCKET BOY

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, a few years ago a blockbuster best-seller book, originally called "The Rocket Boys" was published, and shortly thereafter a movie was made based on the book, titled "October Surprise." It was a sell-out at bookstores and theaters across the Nation.

This story, written by former NASA engineer from McDowell County, West Virginia, was about a boy, his friends, and his weary but supportive parents, who was so taken by what he read about NASA's early rocket experiments commissioned by the United States Government, that he spent his childhood experimenting with homemade rockets.

His name was Homer Hickam, now a retired NASA engineer, who wrote "Rocket Boys."

On June 21, 2000 I received an official commitment from NASA detailing a long-term loan of a model of a U.S. Space Shuttle for exhibit in Coalwood, West Virginia, Homer Hickam's hometown.

I worked closely with NASA officials in this successful effort to obtain a display in recognition of the accomplishments and vision of Homer Hickam and the "Rocket Boys" from Coalwood.

The display of this U.S. Space Shuttle is a tribute to Homer Hickam, his remarkable talent, and his teenaged tenacity in making his dreams come true—not only to shoot his own rockets into space as a boy, but to take his talents and his dream to NASA itself as a grown man.

Homer Hickam is an inspiration to our youth—not only in West Virginia but the Nation—that their dreams can come true, and that they should reach for the stars.

The U.S. Space Shuttle model will come from the Marshall Space Flight Center in Alabama, and will be in place in time for the celebration of the Second Annual Rocket Boys Day Festival on June 24, 2000.

I believe, and the NASA Space officials agree, that this model is most appropriate to commemorate Mr. Hickam's work in propulsion, spacecraft design, and payload and crew training at the Marshall Center.

After the festival ends, the 13-foot scale model will be on long-term display across from the Country Corner Store on Route 16, in the heart of Coalwood, West Virginia, across the street from Homer Hickam's homeplace.

For those of you who read the book or saw the movie, you will understand the significance of placing this display across from Homer Hickam's old homeplace—the homeplace about which Mr. Hickam wrote, got a brand new furnace one day when Homer tossed a handful of unknown chemicals into the old furnace to see if they had enough explosive quality to thrust his next rocket high into the skies over McDowell County. They did, his mother got the new furnace she had always wanted, and the rest as they say is history.

RECOGNIZING BOB WILLIS

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of a dear friend and public servant who is stepping down after nearly thirty years with the U.S. Forest Service. Bob Willis has spent his life dedicated to the protection and conservation of several of our country's national forests.

Bob Willis began his career with the Forest Service in 1971 in the beautiful White River National Forest in Glenwood Springs, Colorado and in Monte Vista, Colorado in the magnificent Rio Grande National Forest. From there, Bill moved on to the Tongass National Forest in Alaska. Bob went on to "Big Sky" Country in 1976, with service in the Bitterroot and Lolo National Forests in Montana, and finally found a resting place in Rolla, Missouri in 1980 serving the Mark Twain National Forest.

Bob is the longest serving Staff Officer that Mark Twain has ever had, serving 19 years. Bob is married to Kris Swanson, also a Staff Officer on the Mark Twain National Forest. He has two daughters, Erin Willis, 22, Robin Wilson, 24, and a son-in-law, Tommy Wilson. In addition, Bob has two step-sons, Thomas England, 16, and Daniel England, 13. When he is not caring for the Mark Twain, he and his daughters show, breed, and raise Tennessee Walking Horses. Bob's responsibilities with the Mark Twain included managing the technical services within the forest, including computer systems, telecommunications, minerals and geology, special uses, land acquisitions, and real estate management.

In his retirement, Bob will remain committed to the outdoors with his favorite hobbies such as raising and caring for his horses, landscaping his new home, and playing tennis. He

is moving on to serve as a consultant in Government Relations and Environmental Management.

Bob's tenure with the Mark Twain covered the same amount of time that an Emerson has been in Congress and both Bill and I benefited by his work there. He helped us cut through the red-tape of government over the over again. Because of that help, we have been able to move projects forward that were, and are, beneficial to the people who live in the Eighth Congressional District of Missouri.

His pleasant personality often made it possible for people with very different opinions to get together and work toward common goals. That consensus building helped to make sure that the multiple-use concept for our national forests prevailed in the Mark Twain. He clearly understands that the wise use of our natural resources is not only good for local economies and jobs, but also is necessary for the health of a vibrant, growing forest.

We will miss Bob Willis. If more government employees were like him then the label "bureaucrats" would not fit! My office and I appreciate his years of service.

IN TRIBUTE TO RABBI SHIMON PASKOW

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Rabbi Shimon Paskow, who is retiring after 31 years of spiritual leadership of Temple Etz Chaim in Thousand Oaks, CA.

Although the temple is not physically in my district, many of my constituents have benefited from Rabbi Paskow's spiritual leadership and human compassion. Among his many volunteer efforts, he has served as the Jewish Chaplain at the Ventura School of the California Youth Authority in Camarillo, CA. In that capacity, Rabbi Paskow has ministered to some of our most troubled youth.

Rabbi Paskow was ordained in 1959. The next year, he joined the U.S. Army and served as a Jewish Chaplain in France and Germany. Immediately, he proved his dedication and was honored by the Commanding General of the Fourth Logistical Command and the National Jewish Welfare Board for his outstanding work. In 1985, Rabbi Paskow was promoted to the rank of colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve. In 1993, he was decorated with the Meritorious Service Award.

Prior to coming to Temple Etz Chaim, Rabbi Paskow served as an Associate Rabbi of the Valley Jewish Community Center and Temple (Adat Ari El), one of the largest Conservative congregations on the West Coast.

Under his leadership, Temple Etz Chaim has grown from a membership of less than 100 families to more than 700 families today. He has been instrumental in designating sections of local cemeteries for consecrated Jewish burials. Jewish Family Service established an office in Thousand Oaks' Community Conscience Services Center through his personal efforts.

While leading the Temple Etz Chaim congregation, Rabbi Paskow also has found time to lecture to numerous college groups and serve on the faculties of several institutes of

Jewish learning. He is a member of many religious organizations, in addition to his service on secular community committees. He has authored many popular and scholarly articles that have appeared in journals and newspapers throughout the country. Rabbi Paskow appears frequently on radio and television and is listed in various Who's Who directories.

Rabbi Paskow has earned many awards for his service. Among them: In 1993, he was presented with the Torch of Learning Award by the American Friends of the Hebrew University in recognition of his commitment to youth, education, Israel, and the Jewish people. With his wife, Carol, he established a scholarship fund at the Hebrew University for students needing financial assistance. The government of Israel has honored him for promoting tours to Israel.

Rabbi and Carol Paskow have one daughter, Michelle, who was ordained a Rabbi in 1991. The couple are the proud grandparents of Aaron Daniel and Jonathan Jay Cohen.

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues will join me in thanking Rabbi Paskow for his many decades of service to his religion and his community, congratulate him on his retirement, and wish him and his family many more years of fulfillment.

TRIBUTE TO BENARD KULIK,
SBA'S ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR
FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE

HON. JOHN J. LaFALCE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2000

Mr. LaFALCE. Mr. Speaker, all of us who are privileged to serve in the House work every day with senior managers in the Executive Branch, whether in connection with our oversight responsibilities, or in providing constituent services or because of federal offices or activities in our districts. Occasionally, we are fortunate enough to work with an individual who is so knowledgeable and effective in his or her area that it is difficult to imagine anyone else in their position. I rise today to report to the House the retirement of such a senior executive, Mr. Bernard Kulik, the longtime Associate Administrator for Disaster Assistance at the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Berky, as he is known to his many friends, began his long and distinguished career in public service more than forty years ago. After serving in the corporate finance division of the Securities and Exchange Commission, he joined SBA in 1964. Although Berky has held a variety of senior positions at SBA, including Director of Field Operations, Associate Administrator for Procurement Assistance, and Associate Administrator for the Office of Investment, he is without question best known for managing since 1981 the agency's Disaster Assistance Program. As Associate Administrator for Disaster Assistance, Berky oversees this vital program which provides low-interest loans to both individual and business victims of natural and other disasters throughout the United States and its possessions. These loans are indispensable for the quick recovery of both disaster victims themselves and the long-term health of their communities. SBA

has provided this assistance to homeowners and businesses in virtually every state in the Nation and all U.S. possessions.

Kulik is a native of New York City and holds degrees in economics and law from New York University. He is the recipient of numerous prestigious awards. He has twice been awarded the rank of Meritorious Executive, by President Carter in 1980 and by President Clinton in 1995. President Bush named him a Distinguished Executive in 1991. Berky has also received SBA's Gold Medal for distinguished service.

My experience in working with Berky and SBA's Disaster Loan Program goes back more than twenty years to when the Committee on Small Business, on which I served, spearheaded an effort to reorganize the program's delivery system and personnel authorities. Later, SBA located one of its four nationwide disaster bases or "Area Offices" in Niagara Falls, where I am proud to say that my constituents continue to serve disaster victims not only in their own Northeastern U.S. region, but also in other areas throughout the country, backing up their three sister offices as needed when unexpected major disasters require quick redeployment of resources.

It is no exaggeration to say that most of us here have experienced disasters of one type or another in our districts, and that we know how terrible their effects can be on our constituents. Hurricanes, floods, fires, tornadoes and other catastrophes strike quickly, often with little warning and devastating consequences. No matter how well we prepare, there will always be a need for us as a society to help our fellow citizens afflicted by disasters. Years ago, we here in Congress decided that it was wiser to have government disaster response programs ready in advance than to legislate anew with each unpredictable but inevitably recurrent catastrophe. Since the late 1970s, we have had such authorizations, programs and delivery systems in place before they were needed. SBA's Disaster Loan Program has been a key element in our response strategy and it has performed extremely well under Berky Kulik's leadership.

I recently wrote Berky that his accomplishments should be a source of great pride. He has led SBA's Disaster Loan Program through difficult reorganization and development phases, and in doing so has taken an inherently unpredictable and difficult to manage program and made it one of the best-managed in government. He has brought tremendous expertise and professionalism to difficult policy and budget deliberations in Washington. He has developed a skilled and dedicated management team and a core group of professional disaster specialists. But perhaps most important are the extraordinary numbers of people whose lives he has touched—during Berky's tenure, literally hundreds of thousands of disaster victims have received the help they desperately needed to rebuild homes and businesses ravaged by disasters of every sort.

Those of us who have worked closely with Berky on disaster issues will certainly miss that professional relationship, but all of us owe Berky our gratitude, not only for his efforts on behalf of our constituents, but for his exemplary dedication to the highest traditions of public service. I ask that all my colleagues join with me in wishing Berky the very best in his retirement after his long and distinguished career.