

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING NANCY JOHNSON, A NATIVE OF DOWNERS GROVE, IL, ON WINNING THE FIRST GOLD MEDAL OF THE 2000 SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

HON. JUDY BIGGERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 22, 2000

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Nancy Johnson, a native of Downers Grove in the 13th Congressional District of Illinois, for making history this past weekend.

Nine years after being advised to retire due to nerve damage in her arms and legs, Nancy Johnson overcame the odds to win not just a gold medal, but the very first gold medal of the 2000 summer Olympic games in Sydney, Australia. Nancy struck gold in the women's 10 meter air rifle competition.

Like all Olympic events, the competition was tough and came down to the wire. In fact, it came down to the final 10 shots. Neither Nancy nor the 7 other final round competitors blinked, budged or crumbled under the pressure. But, when it was all over, Nancy had edged out Cho-Hyun Kang of Korea by two-tenths of a point.

But Nancy's story is even more impressive than her Olympic triumph. Her victory is the story of perseverance. Her medal-winning performance was the culmination of years of hard work, dedication, competitiveness and, most importantly, family.

Nancy first took up the sport of shooting as a teenager. She and her father, Ben Napolski, often shot together at the Downers Grove junior rifle club. Ben and Diane, Nancy's mom, also lent their support while she competed in numerous competitions, including the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta where she finished 36th in her sport. Tragically, Diane passed away before she could see her daughter's magnificent accomplishment. But Ben, and Nancy's husband Ken, were there in Sydney to provide support, advice and gold-winning embraces.

Nancy Johnson's Olympic performance and shooting achievements also have helped to raise the level of awareness and appreciation for women's sports throughout the United States. Her love for a sport not typically associated with women serves as an inspiration for all of us, regardless of age or gender, to participate in activities we might not otherwise. Her performance also reminds us that participation in sport provides women, as well as men, with a means to gain the experiences, self-confidence and skills that are needed to succeed in all other endeavors.

Nancy's gold medal-winning performance epitomizes the goals and ideals of the Olympics. These goals, which have not changed since antiquity, include a commitment to a goal, grace under pressure, unity, perseverance, fair play and good will toward fellow competitors. Most of all, her performance teaches us that Olympic competition is about the quest for excellence.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, Nancy Johnson has honored her family, her native home town of Downers Grove, her native state of Illinois and her country through her dedication to excellence and high achievement. More important,

this young woman has left her mark in history. I ask that my colleagues join me in saluting her achievement and all that for which it stands.

CONGRATULATING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF TEAM8 COMMUNITIES COALITION

HON. LYNN N. RIVERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 22, 2000

Ms. RIVERS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great enthusiasm that I rise today to commend a very special group from my district. The TEAM8 Communities Coalition, a community partnership comprised of the eight cities of Adrian, Albion, Belleville, Milan, Romulus, Saline, Sumpter, and Van Buren has made great advances in combating juvenile crime. These outstanding communities came together three years ago to build a model strategic defense against the escalation of drug-use and youth violence in the State of Michigan. Within that three year span, the communities have delivered prevention education services and youth development activities to more than 56,000 school children, reducing juvenile crime over 50 percent and in-school incidents by 75 percent.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that TEAM8 will continue to make great strides in the fight to rid our communities of juvenile crime. Again, I commend TEAM8 and I wish all the participants continued success in the future.

HONORING THE CITY OF GALVESTON, THE PORT OF GALVESTON, AND CARNIVAL CRUISE LINES

HON. NICK LAMPSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 22, 2000

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, today I honor the City of Galveston, the Port of Galveston, and Carnival Cruise Lines on a very historic occasion. On September 27, 2000, the Texas Cruise Ship terminal at Pier 25 on Galveston Island will be rededicated. This \$10.6 million renovation and refurbishment of the historic 73-year-old terminal will equip the facility to serve as a home port for Carnival Cruise Line's 1,486-passenger vessel *Celebration*.

From the end of World War I until the late 1930s, luxury passenger ships owned by the Mallory Lines regularly sailed twice a week between Galveston and New York. A commitment was made in the mid-1980's by City of Galveston officials to develop a cruise terminal on Galveston Island and market the city to major cruise lines once again. The *Celebration* will result in 20 ship port-of-calls in 2000 and 79 in 2001. It is estimated that the local economic impact will amount to approximately \$40 million annually from ship and passenger spending.

Mister Speaker, this is an exciting time to be a Galvestonian. I would like to applaud everyone throughout the community who made this dream a reality. When the first ship sets sail on September 30, it will usher in a new era of

Gulf Coast cruise operations out of the Port of Galveston.

H.R. 5109, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL ACT OF 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 21, 2000

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to advise that unfortunately because of an important scheduling conflict, I was unable to cast my vote yesterday during consideration of H.R. 5109, The Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Personnel Act of 2000. At the time of the vote, I was presenting a keynote speech in observance of Hispanic Heritage Month, where I highlighted veterans issues as part of a discussion of the important contributions of Hispanics in public service.

Had I been able to be present during consideration of the bill, I would have voted in support of the bill. This is a bill that I co-sponsored, strongly supported and voted in favor of being reported out of the House Veterans Affairs Committee for consideration on the House floor.

This is an important bill that would improve the personnel and administration systems of the Veterans Health Administration, allow for necessary construction, and require reports on the effectiveness of the Veterans health care system along with the various aspects of Post Traumatic Stress syndrome on Veterans.

The bill is important as it provides revised authority for pay adjustments for nurses employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and requires that nurses are consulted in formulating policy relating to the provision of patient care.

Also, as part of the full spectrum of health care for Veterans, I am pleased that the bill provides for special pay for dentists, and raises their salaries depending on their training and length of tenure.

Additionally, the bill provides an exemption for pharmacists from a ceiling on special salary rates, and authorizes the inclusion of a physician assistant to consult on the utilization and employment of physician assistants in VA medical centers.

Moreover, it is critical that our VA medical facility infrastructure is safe and meets the needs of our veterans. Therefore, I welcome the authorization in this bill for the construction of major medical facility projects across the nation.

In order to better serve our veterans, this bill also requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that a protocol is used in any clinical evaluation of a patient to identify pertinent military experiences and exposures that may contribute to the health status of the patient and ensures that information relating to the military history of patients are included in their medical records.

Most importantly, I commend the authors of this bill for developing a pilot program to allow Medicare-eligible veterans to receive care at non-VA facilities if they do not have easy access to VA hospitals. Accessibility of care is essential to truly meet our nation's healthcare commitments to our veterans. This carefully

tailored demonstration project ensures that care is made more easily available in remote locations, while recognizing that primary VA health care facilities and services should in no way be comprised.

Overall, this bill should provide added improvement in health care services and benefits to our veterans. With H.R. 5109, we are providing important changes and modifications to the VA health care system, in order to continually maintain and upgrade the provision of services and benefits to our veterans.

Our veterans have always answered the call to duty. Consequently, America must always work to match this dedication by fulfilling our commitments to these men and women who have worn the uniform. I therefore strongly support this legislation, and I am proud that my colleagues joined in unanimously passing this bill.

HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES NATIONAL HISTORICALLY BLACK AND UNI- VERSITY WEEK LANE COLLEGE

HON. JOHN S. TANNER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 22, 2000

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to acknowledge the tremendous contributions and individual success stories that have helped our communities grow out of the presence of Lane College in Jackson, Tennessee, the heart of the Eighth Congressional District.

Lane College is one of six Historically Black Universities and Colleges located in Tennessee that have helped set a standard for academic excellence.

Lane was founded in 1882 as the C.M.E. High School by the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church of America. But the seeds for this great institution were first planted four years earlier in 1878.

William Miles, the first Bishop of the C.M.E. Church of America presided over the Tennessee Annual Conference in 1878 accepted a resolution by the Rev. J.A. Daniels to establish a school.

Two years later, after the great yellow fever epidemic and the ascension of Bishop Isaac Lane to the head of the Tennessee Annual Conference, four acres of land were purchased for \$240 and in 1882 the school's doors were opened.

Bishop Lane's daughter, Miss Jennie Lane, was its first teacher.

In 1884 its name was changed to Lane Institute. Then, 12 years later a college department was organized and the Board of Trustees changed the school's name to Lane College.

Lane College is a small, private, co-educational, church-related institution with a liberal arts curriculum offering degrees in the Arts and Sciences.

Led by Dr. Wesley McClure, the College's ninth president, the school continues to play a critical role in Jackson and surrounding communities as an institution committed to academic excellence.

Lane College is one of 120 historically black universities and colleges located in 23 states across the nation. Lane is one of six located in Tennessee and the other five are Fisk Uni-

versity, Knoxville College, Meharry Medical College, Lemoine-Owen College, and Tennessee State University.

In 1997, 28 percent of African Americans who received a bachelors degree earned them from historically black universities and colleges.

Moreover, about 40 percent of African American undergraduates enrolled at historically black universities and colleges in 1996 were first-generation college students.

Over its first 118 years, Lane College has ensured its place in the community of academic institutions devoted to the growth and achievement of our young people.

So Mr. Speaker, we are quite certain it will build on that vision of community leadership and academic excellence well into the 21st Century.

Thank you for setting aside this time tonight so that we may recognize the important role historically black universities and colleges play in our country.

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY CELE- BRATES THE 55TH ANNIVERSARY OF FREEHOLD VFW POST #4374

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 22, 2000

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 55th Anniversary of Freehold VFW Post #4374. This organization has made lasting contributions through hard work and dedication to those in need.

The VFW is a patriotic organization devoted to serving the widows and orphans of the Veteran. The VFW promotes the institutions of freedom and democracy, to preserve and defend the constitution of the United States of America. The Veterans of Foreign Wars was formed after World War One and continues to maintain a strong presence today.

Freehold's VFW Post #4374 first opened its doors in 1945 under the watchful eye of its first elected Commander, Francis Vanderveer. Commander Vanderveer lead Post #4374 until 1947.

The VFW Post #4347 first held its gatherings for Freehold area veterans in a meeting hall space borrowed from the Knights of Columbus. Then, in the 1960's, construction began on the present Post Home on Waterworks Road, where they continue to serve the community.

Since its inception, Post #4347 members have canvassed the Freehold area for needy families during the holiday season. Last December, like many before it, they held a Christmas party for nearly 100 needy kids, kids who otherwise would have no holiday celebration.

As extraordinary as this effort was, it was just one of many times that VFW Post #4347 has worked on behalf of those in need. Throughout the years, VFW Post #4347 has gone the extra mile to take care of not only our veterans, but also our community.

Freehold VFW Post #4347 is a great asset to both Central New Jersey and our nation. I urge all my colleagues to join me today in recognizing its dedication to our veterans, community service and Central New Jersey.

ON THE INTRODUCTION OF A RES- OLUTION CALLING ON THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE TO IMPE- MENT A NATIONWIDE COHESIVE FUELS REDUCTION STRATEGY

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 22, 2000

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution. I do it on behalf of all the people who live near our National Forests and want to see a change in the way they are managed.

As of today, over six and half million acres have burned in the West. That's an area larger than the entire state of Maryland.

This is catastrophic fire—not the beneficial natural kind—but the catastrophic. It feeds on brush and trees. It climbs up the ladder of fuels into the crowns of the largest old-growth trees, burning everything. It kills a forest completely and sterilized the ground.

Besides the threat to people, these fires kill animals; destroy habitat; release huge amounts of air pollution; and leave barren dead zones. After the fires are extinguished, the exposed soil and debris washes into streams, polluting water and killing fish.

On Tuesday, a state of emergency was declared in one of the counties I represent. Tulare County, California, is now preparing for the massive erosion and mudslides that will come from the area of the Manter Fire. That fire burned 75,000 acres just east of the new Sequoia National Monument. It killed nearly every tree.

The Administration blames it all on Smokey the Bear. They say the problem is the 100-year-old policy of suppressing forest fires. But that's only half of the problem.

In this weekend's radio address, President Clinton blamed "extreme weather and lightning" that sparked too many fires this summer.

The Assistant Secretary for Land at the Department of Interior, Sylvia Baca, said that, "Nobody could have predicted the deadly combination of drought, wind and lightning in the West this year."

But that kind of backward logic ignores the fact that we did know about the accumulation of fuel. We know about the millions of acres of dying forest.

We knew there would be a dry spell in the West.

We knew that a deadly fire season would occur.

Last April, the General Accounting Office reported to Congress that over 39 million acres of our national forests were at high risk of catastrophic fire. Another 26 million acres were reported at risk due to disease and insect infestation.

Experts have tagged the overaccumulation of brush and trees as the biggest threat facing the western environment.

Let me say that again—The biggest threat to the western environment.

Now that biggest threat has become a tragic reality.

What has the Forest Service done about it? The answer, Mr. Speaker, is not much. The only real, aggressive strategy of this Administration has been one of deliberate neglect.

We have before us a roadless policy that will close fifty million acres of forest lands.