

the need for public policies addressing consumer credit education and minority savings and wealth development.

The housing finance system needs more answers to questions such as this. To further explore these issues, next month Fannie Mae is hosting a conference titled "The Role of Automated Underwriting in Expanding Minority Homeownership." We're bringing together a range of advocates, academics, regulators and lenders to engage in a meaningful dialogue concerning automated underwriting systems and their role in expanding homeownership and promoting fair lending. I am personally committed to working every day to make sure that these systems are the best they can possibly be.

All in all, the housing finance system—through inspiration, perspiration and a little luck—has grown into the most successful system in the world. It is worth protecting and defending. We must never allow the system to be damaged by those who would place their narrow financial interests ahead of those of the industry as a whole and—most importantly—ahead of the consumers we serve.

This being a national election year, it is a good time to discuss and debate our national priorities, and certainly homeownership is high among them. Few ideals unite us more than owning a home to raise your family, invest your income, become part of a community and have something to show for it. There are many ways to go about improving the housing finance system to make it better, more affordable and more inclusive. As we pursue these efforts, we need to keep our eyes on the prize and ask the most important question, "does this proposal help or hurt home buyers?"

Thank you.

CONSERVATION AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 11, 2000

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 701) to provide Outer Continental Shelf Impact Assistance to State and local governments, to amend the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Act of 1978, and the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (commonly referred to as the Pittman-Robertson Act) to establish a fund to meet the outdoor conservation and recreation needs of the American people, and for other purposes:

Mr. HOYER Mr. Chairman, I regrettably oppose H.R. 701. I say regrettably, Mr. Chairman, because there is much in this measure that I strongly support. The Land and Water Conservation Fund, Wildlife Conservation, Urban Parks, Historic Preservation, and Conservation Easements are objectives that I have supported throughout my career.

Unfortunately, H.R. 701 funds these measures by making approximately \$2.8 billion in discretionary spending mandatory spending. As mandatory spending it is not subject to the annual appropriations process. I know that for some this is a positive thing but as a member of the Appropriations Committee, I simply cannot support this.

In the past I have opposed similar efforts to make highway and aviation spending manda-

tory. Not necessarily because I opposed the objective, but because I disagreed with the precedent.

My friends, since coming to Congress I have seen discretionary spending squeezed harder and harder every year as the mandatory spending components of the budget have grown. Thirty years ago discretionary spending accounted for 61.5% of the budget with the remaining 38.5% reserved for mandatory spending. By 1980 discretionary spending had declined to 46.7% of the budget. By 1990 this figure fell even further to 39.9% and this year the estimate is that discretionary spending will account for only 34.5% of the budget.

The remaining 65% percent of the budget next year will be consumed by mandatory spending and interest on the national debt. And, we are here today taking about moving another \$2.8 billion from discretionary spending over to the mandatory side.

If we pass this bill, we are going to squeeze Head Start, student loans, cancer research, law enforcement, defense and every other discretionary spending priority you can think of even further.

As I said at the beginning, I support the items contained in this legislation. What I cannot support is putting land acquisition and historic preservation ahead of defense, cancer research, and education. Governing is about making choices—sometimes difficult ones. This legislation is another step toward putting as county's spending decisions on autopilot. I urge all my colleagues to reject it.

A POEM

HON. JOHN COOKSEY

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 16, 2000

Mr. COOKSEY. Mr. Speaker, attached is a poem by Jean McGivney Boese, Poet Laureate of Louisiana, which I would like to submit and share with my colleagues.

MILLENNIUM 2000

Our time is measured from the day that Jesus came to earth.

The thoughts we think are framed by his extraordinary birth.

He taught us how to live our lives, He taught us what is true.

If we have failed, it is because of what we failed to do.

It soon will be 2000 years since Jesus lived as Man.

As we reach this Millennium we look back on a span

Of awesome things and awful things that filled the Centuries,

And thank God that the brave and good outnumber cruelties.

For those who think there is no God, the future is a void.

Their lives are aimless as a fleeting, pointless asteroid.

We have a way to follow, and the free will to decide,

This new Millennium can be where joy and peace abide.

LANDRUM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 16, 2000

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to a school in San Benito, Texas, that is beating the odds in today's public education system. At a time when our resources are terribly over-burdened, for the second year in a row Landrum Elementary School has been chosen as a winner of the "Set A Good Example" competition, sponsored by the Concerned Businessmen of America.

These awards, launched in 1982, recognize schools which have a student-oriented program to influence their peers in a positive way by promoting simple human moral values such as honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, competence and fairness. The Concerned Businessmen of America is a not-for-profit charitable educational organization which incorporates successful business strategies to combat social ills and problems that face young people.

At a time when parents and community leaders are watching our young people with new eyes, wondering what is going on inside their minds and what motivates them, this recognition is concrete proof that the community surrounding Landrum Elementary School—educators, counselors, parents, business people, and most importantly, students themselves—is working together to ward off the problems that have plagued other schools and other young people. The winning ingredient here is the active involvement of the students; the best messenger for young people is other young people.

We have enormous challenges before us in education, and with regard to public policy in our public schools. There will never be one single answer to preparing young people to withstand the complex social issues that our children encounter each day. But the best way to prepare our children to deal with the society in which we live is to teach them, from very early on, simple moral guidelines to apply to their lives. The "Set a Good Example" program follows up as encouragement and reinforcement to these lessons.

I ask my colleagues to join me in commending Landrum Elementary School for their efforts to be part of a solution, which is the first step toward solving the problem. I thank the young people there for leading the way to better grades and healthier attitudes.

HONORING THE HONORABLE LINDEN FORBES SAMPSON BURNHAM

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 16, 2000

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, on this the 34th anniversary of the independence of Guyana, I rise to honor the memory and celebrate the achievements of the Honorable Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham, the former President of Guyana, and one of the most charismatic political personalities in the Caribbean region and in the Third World community. The Hon.

Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham, like his contemporary and compatriot, Cheddie Jagan, enjoyed a political career that was unique and unparalleled.

Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham was born on February 20, 1923, in the village of Kitty, in the County of Demerara, in the nation of Guyana. He was the son of James Burnham, a Headmaster and Rachael Sampson, a housewife. From his parents, he inherited a profound love of learning and an intimate knowledge of the Bible.

Forbes Burnham was educated at Queens College in Guyana, London University and Gray's Inn in London, England. Upon his return from London, he embarked upon a political career that was nothing short of remarkable. He was a co-founder of the People's Progressive Party and was appointed Minister of Education in the first democratically elected government in Guyana. After the split with the People's Progressive Party, he founded the People's National Congress and became Leader of the Opposition in 1957. In 1966, he became Prime Minister of an independent Guyana and, in 1980, became the first President of the Republic of Guyana.

From his early years, Forbes Burnham had exhibited signs of academic brilliance. His keen intellect, sharp wit, photographic memory and awesome gift of public speaking, made Forbes Burnham a formidable political figure in Guyana, in the Caribbean and in the Third World. Forbes Burnham was in many respects a larger than life figure—a voracious reader of books, a passionate lover of the arts, a connoisseur of fine food, exotic wines and expensive cigars. He was in many respects the Caribbean Renaissance Man.

However, Forbes Burnham was more than a Renaissance Man. He was a Guyanese nationalist committed to the political and economic empowerment of his nation. He remained a dedicated advocate for the working class and remained President of the Guyan Labor Union for most of his career. He was a passionate supporter of Caribbean integration and Third World empowerment. Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham remains one of the most remarkable political personalities in the history of the Caribbean.

HONORING DR. JOE SAMUEL RATLIFF FOR HIS 30TH YEAR IN THE MINISTRY

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 16, 2000

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me to rise before you today to recognize the achievements of Dr. Joe Samuel Ratliff, of Brentwood Baptist Church. Tomorrow, on Wednesday, May 17, 2000, the congregation of Brentwood Baptist Church will honor Pastor Ratliff for the many contributions he has made over the last 30 years in the name of the Lord.

Dr. Joe Samuel Ratliff, a native of Lumberton, North Carolina, received his Bachelor of Arts in History, from Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia. He received both the Doctorate of Ministry and Doctorate of Divinity degrees from the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia. He has

done post-doctoral work at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

It is difficult to imagine what the Houston community would be like today had Dr. Ratliff not been called to become Pastor of Brentwood in 1980. We have been truly blessed to have a man with his sense of dedication and selflessness among us. In 1993, Dr. Ratliff co-authored the book, *Church Planting in the African-American Community* (Broadman Press). He was named the first African-American Moderator of the Union Baptist Association . . . the nation's largest urban Southern Baptist body, consisting of 250,000 members in 1994. In March of 1997, his portrait was hung in the Hall of Fame in the Martin Luther King, Jr. International Chapel on the Morehouse College Campus. Under Pastor Ratliff's leadership, the Brentwood family has grown to 10,000 strong over the last 30 years.

Pastor Ratliff's time with the ministry has allowed him to develop a strong support network that extends outside the church. Dr. Ratliff currently serves as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Morehouse School of Religion and Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Interdenominational Theological Center. Dr. Ratliff is a life member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. He is married to Mrs. Doris Gardner Ratliff.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I ask you and my fellow members of the 106th Congress to join me in saluting Pastor Joe Samuel Ratliff. Self-evident is his lifelong journey to enhancing the dignity and nurturing the spirits of all people. I am grateful that there are people like that who serve as examples of what we all should strive to be.

REGARDING THE PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION IN TAIWAN

HON. JOE SCARBOROUGH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 16, 2000

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, this coming Saturday, Taiwan will inaugurate a new democratically elected president and vice president. Mr. Chen Shuibian and his partner, Ms. Annette Lu, were elected president and vice president of Taiwan on March 18, 2000. Their historic victory marked only the second time that a direct presidential election was held on Chinese soil, and the first time in China's modern history that the opposition party candidates won. Together, Chen and Lu will relieve the ruling Nationalist party of its executive power.

This stunning victory directly resulted from Taiwan's unwavering progress toward democratization during the past fifteen years. Today, Taiwan validates itself as a mature, successful democracy. We should be proud of its political transformation, and wish Taiwan well in its future.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to send Chen and Lu our congratulations, and would like to reaffirm the United States' pledge of support for the democratic ideals bravely achieved by the Taiwanese people.

INTRODUCTION OF THE INTERNET TAX SIMPLIFICATION ACT OF 2000

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 16, 2000

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join with Chairman HYDE, Administrative and Commercial Law Subcommittee Chairman GEKAS and Ranking Member NADLER in introducing the "Internet Tax Simplification Act of 2000." We are introducing this legislation at the request of a group of Advisory Commission on Commerce Members led by Utah Governor Micahel Leavitt. Several weeks ago we introduced H.R. 4267 at the request of a group of Advisory Commissioners led by Virginia Governor James Gilmore.

This bill would amend the Internet Tax Freedom Act to extend by five years the moratorium on State and local taxes on Internet access and extend for two years the moratorium on multiple and discriminatory taxes on electronic commerce. It encourages the States to work cooperatively with the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws to develop a simplified and uniform sales and use tax. The legislation also authorizes an interstate sales and use tax compact providing for a uniform sales and use tax system, authorizes the States to simplify their use tax rates, and authorizes those States which enter into the compact to collect use taxes on remote sales. Finally, the bill encourages States to work cooperatively with the telecommunications industry and other relevant groups to reduce the complexity of complying with State and local telecommunications taxes.

We will be holding hearings on this bill and H.R. 4460 tomorrow, and it is my hope and expectation that we can quickly move to markup and legislative action. There are few economic issues before our committee which are more important than simplifying the sales tax and failure to act on this issue will harm all interested parties—retailers (both electronic and otherwise), State and local governments and consumers.

The problems with the present system are several fold. First, the complexity of the system is daunting. There are presently over 6,500 taxing jurisdictions in the United States, when all State, county and municipal authorities are included. Needless to say, any retailer with a physical nexus to a State (and therefore subject to state tax jurisdiction under the 1992 Quill decision) is subject to a myriad of confusing and complex State and Local taxes.

Second, the current disparate tax treatment as between traditional "bricks and mortar" retailers (which are subject to state tax) and remote sellers (which are not) has the potential to cause continuing economic distortion. As the New York Times editorial board has written, "[a]n elementary principle of taxation says that taxes should distort purchasing decisions as little as possible. It is not the role of a tax code to determine whether customers shop in stores, online, or by mail order.

With regard to the impact on State and local governments, maintenance of the current system carries with it the potential for significant financial loss. Sales taxes constitute the most important State and local revenue source, far greater than income and property taxes, with the Census Bureau estimating the 47.9% of