

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN HONOR OF THE NEW YORK CITY FIREMEN

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the New York City Firemen, and to submit for the record a brief article written by one of my constituents, Mr. Matthew T. Fitzsimmons. Mr. Fitzsimmons truly captures the selfless nature of the hundreds of firemen that have risked their lives since September 11th, and those that continue to put themselves in harm's way. It is my hope that this article inspires you to realize the true American spirit embodied by "New York's Bravest."

CLIMBING A STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

(By Matthew T. Fitzsimmons)

I have always been proud to be the son of a retired New York City fireman (Marine Co. 9) and brother of a current New York City fireman (Ladder Co. 77). I was born and raised in the tradition and culture of the New York City Fire Department. I am now a lawyer in Cleveland.

Last Tuesday morning at the World Trade Center, New York City firefighters demonstrated to the world, in the most graphic manner imaginable, why they are called New York's Bravest. As tens of thousands evacuated the Twin Towers in mass hysteria, the firefighters, with complete and utter disregard for their own safety, ran into and up the buildings to rescue the injured and others in need of help. It was an extraordinary act of bravery.

Up thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy floors, and higher, with full gear. A height at which you could almost reach out and touch the face of God. Unbeknownst to them, they were climbing a stairway to heaven.

There have been many words used to describe last week's attack on our country: horrific, horrendous, barbaric, tragic, and surreal. For me, there was nothing more horrific, horrendous, barbaric, tragic, surreal—and sickening—than Tuesday's TV graphic that approximately three hundred New York City firefighters were missing, and presumed dead. It is a number that is beyond comprehension—beyond comprehension. It is numbing. Three hundred firefighters—about fifty companies—are significantly more than are on duty in the entire City of Cleveland on any given day.

My thoughts this past week have not been on the faraway lands of Afghanistan, Pakistan, or the Middle East, but on the neighborhoods of Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and the closer in suburbs of Long Island, where families of many firefighters live. The sense of loss and grief in those neighborhoods must be unbearable and unspeakable. I am very sorry for their loss, and mourn with them. To paraphrase Will Rogers' eulogy of President Woodrow Wilson, last Tuesday the world lost three hundred of its greatest friends. Tellingly, it now appears that about ten percent of those who died at the World Trade Center died trying to rescue others.

Firefighters in all cities share many admirable qualities. They are, for the most part, good family men and women. They love kids, and are good with, and make time for, them. They make great Little League coaches, pee-wee football coaches, and CYO basketball coaches—much more so than doctors, lawyers, investment bankers, and the dotcom crowd. Because they face death with the ring of every alarm bell, they appreciate how valuable and precious life is—each life. Above all else, they are extraordinarily brave.

When my father died in 1996, a reporter from one of the New York newspapers asked if he could deliver the eulogy at his funeral Mass. In the early 1970's, this reporter had witnessed my father, then the pilot of the Firefighter (the world's largest and most powerful fireboat), make a rescue in New York Harbor after a freighter and a container cargo ship collided near the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. Scores of people were incinerated in the collision. My father had maneuvered the Firefighter between the two burning ships and rescued about twenty-five crewmen, who were trapped and jumping overboard. The heat was so intense that it melted the paint off the Firefighter's decks. The reporter, a safe distance away on a tugboat, thought the Firefighter was going to catch on fire, explode, and sink. The reporter recounted this rescue in the eulogy, and concluded by saying: "Your father was the bravest man I ever knew." My brothers and sisters and I were very proud to hear this tribute to our father.

In the upcoming days and weeks, there will be funeral Masses and services for all of these fallen heroes. I hope that at these Masses and services someone will tell the children of each one of these deceased firefighters that their father or mother "was the bravest person I ever knew."

Although America can be, at times, a country with a short memory, I am sure that America—indeed the entire world—will never, ever forget the bravery which the men and women of the New York City Fire Department displayed last Tuesday. I am confident that when those firefighters reached the top of that stairway to heaven, Our Lord and St. Peter were likewise in awe of their bravery.

100th ANNIVERSARY OF SS. PETER AND PAUL UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AUBURN, NY

HON. JAMES T. WALSH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 100th anniversary of SS. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church in Auburn, NY. The congregation gathered to recognize this important milestone during a Centennial Jubilee celebration on Sunday, September 30, 2001.

It was during the pontificate of Pope St. Pius X that the first Ukrainian Catholic Bishop was appointed in the United States. An occa-

sion such as the Centennial Jubilee was an appropriate time for the parish to reaffirm their loyalty to the currently reigning Pope Paul VI.

Many Ukrainian Catholic priests served the Parish during the past 100 years as visitors, pastors/administrators, assistant pastors, missionaries, and substitutes. There were also many parochial projects that the pastors directed throughout the years.

This celebration was a time for reflecting on the love and dedication by members of the parish. Gratitude was given to those who devoted time and effort toward the well-being of the parish and also those who used their talents in special fields for the benefit of the parish.

On the occasion of its 100th anniversary, it is my honor to recognize the people of SS. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church and to extend best wishes for many more successful years of faith-based ministry to follow.

PATRIOT ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 12, 2001

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I have been proud to serve as a member of the House Judiciary Committee over the past month. In the past, our committee has had a reputation for confrontation—not consensus. But when terrorists destroyed the World Trade Center and assaulted the Pentagon, the Judiciary Committee beat its swords into plowshares.

Under the leadership of JIM SENENBRENNER and JOHN CONYERS, we came together to produce a bipartisan bill that updates law enforcement's arsenal against terrorism without casting aside our fundamental liberties.

Our efforts produced a balanced bill that received a unanimous vote—a historic accomplishment. I wish it were the Judiciary Committee bill on the floor today.

Unfortunately, today's floor debate has tainted that accomplishment. The short-circuiting of the regular order clouds what should have been a day of unanimity.

Nonetheless, I rise in support of the antiterrorism legislation before us. While the bill is not perfect, it does maintain an acceptable balance between bolstering law enforcement powers and protecting our civil liberties.

In fact, when I read the Senate bill, I see much of the House Judiciary Committee's work reflected in that product.

Since our surveillance laws were first enacted, the terrorists have gotten smarter, faster, and richer. The technology that brings us unprecedented convenience has brought them unprecedented opportunities to wreak havoc. It's time for law enforcement to catch up.

I only regret that today's action won't have quite the bipartisan shine it should.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

TRIBUTE TO CELIA CRUZ

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Ms. Celia Cruz, known as the “Queen of Salsa,” who is being presented with the James Smithson Bicentennial Medal for her countless contributions to American culture and music for more than 40 years. I would also like to thank Ms. Cruz for her generous donation of a marvelous gown to the National Museum of American History which will be included in the exhibit “Moda y Musica: Stage, Fashion and Style” in commemoration of Hispanic Heritage Month.

Throughout her childhood in Havana, Cuba, Ms. Cruz’s passion for music was well-known. As a young adult she became more serious about this passion. Already noted for her pregón singing (a vocal style which evolved from the calls, chants, and cries of street vendors) and various songs that had earned her local fame, Cruz enrolled at the Conservatory of Music to study voice and theory. Ms. Cruz has always appreciated the power of music, particularly the power of salsa and other forms of Hispanic music. Salsa music is the pulse of many Hispanic cultures and has in recent years been discovered and revered by people throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Cruz left Cuba in 1960 and began recording with the legendary Tito Puente and his band in the United States, where they brought the heat and rhythm of Cuba and Puerto Rico to the streets of New York City, Puente’s birth city. Ms. Cruz went on to marry her long-time friend and colleague Pedro Knight on July 14, 1962. Knight was the first trumpeter of Cruz’s famed orchestra, La Sonora Matancera, and had known the singer for over 14 years. Knight has served as Cruz’s protector, manager, and musical director ever since and gave her the golden “Salsa” engraved earrings she still wears.

Throughout Ms. Cruz’s illustrious career, she has toured the world and appeared in numerous films, most notably the 1992 release, “Mambo Kings.” She also played the role of La Gracia Divina in the groundbreaking opera “Hommy” at Carnegie Hall in 1973. Ms. Cruz has recorded over 70 albums. Many fans say that while her albums are among their most treasured, nothing compares to hearing the singer live in concert. Critics around the world have noted that she electrifies the stage. These accomplishments have earned Ms. Cruz the prestigious James Smithson Bicentennial Medal, awarded under the authorization of the Secretary of the Smithsonian to people who have made distinguished contributions to the advancement of society and culture.

After nearly half a century of high-energy concerts, album recordings, interviews and other speaking engagements, Ms. Cruz is still in high demand. To illustrate that fact, Mr. Speaker, I should mention that Ms. Cruz took home the 2000 Latin Grammy award for Best Salsa Performance. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Celia Cruz on earning the James Smithson Bicentennial Medal and in thanking her for decades of legendary music and for her terrific spirit.

TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS TO YASSER ARAFAT—UTTERLY UN-ACCEPTABLE

HON. ERIC CANTOR

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in response to a series of recent news reports indicating that the State Department is developing a plan to pressure Israel to make territorial concessions to Yasser Arafat. The latest indications point to Israel even having to give up part of Jerusalem.

Mr. Speaker, such a proposal is utterly unacceptable.

I find it hard to believe that anyone would choose now as the time to put pressure on our only democratic friend in the Middle East, a friend that has been at the mercy of terrorists for decades.

According to a recent poll, the vast majority of Palestinians oppose the American air strikes against Afghanistan, and one in four believes terrorism against the United States is okay.

Terrorism is terrorism wherever it occurs: New York, Washington, Jerusalem, or Tel Aviv. Until Yasser Arafat rids himself of his ties to terrorism, he should not be rewarded with statehood.

INTRODUCTION OF THE “VIETNAM VETERANS BILL FOR ALASKA NATIVES”

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce legislation to provide for the equitable treatment of Alaska Native Vietnam veterans. My bill will amend Section 41 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). This section applies to the Native Allotments for Alaska Native Vietnam veterans.

In 1998, P.L. 105-276 (Section 432) amended the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) to provide Alaska Native Vietnam veterans an opportunity to obtain an allotment of up to 160 acres of land under the Native Allotment Act. There are approximately 2,800 Alaska Natives who served in the military during the Vietnam conflict who did not have an opportunity to apply for their Native allotment. When P.L. 105-276 became law, many Alaska Native Vietnam veterans were encouraged with the belief that they would finally receive recognition for their military service to the United States. Many Alaska Native Vietnam veterans saw this as their last opportunity to obtain land which had been used by their families for generations for subsistence purposes. That opportunity was lost to 1,700 Alaska Native Vietnam veterans who were excluded by the terms of P.L. 150-276 (which was harshly enforced by the previous Administration).

P.L. 105-276 contains three major obstacles which prohibit Alaska Native Vietnam veterans an opportunity to select and obtain their Native allotment. These obstacles are so for-

midable that 48% of the total Alaska Native Vietnam veteran allotment applications which have been filed (as of September 27, 2001) have been rejected [according to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM)]. The BLM also reports that only 116 applications for Alaska Native Vietnam veterans’ allotments have been filed and 56 of those applications have been rejected. The reasons for all but 16 of the rejections are for one of the following reasons: (1) the land applied for is not available; and/or (2) the dates that the Alaska Native Vietnam veteran served during the Vietnam conflict did not coincide with those required under P.L. 105-276.

P.L. 105-276’s first obstacle is: Alaska Native Vietnam veterans can only apply for land that was vacant, unappropriated, and unreserved when their use of the land first began. Land that is available to Alaska Native Vietnam veterans for allotments is extremely limited or non-existent. For example, out of the 116 applications filed thus far, 36% have been rejected because the land applied for is not available under P.L. 105-276. Most land in Alaska is out of reach for Alaska Native Vietnam veteran allotments. Lands that are expressly not available for allotments are lands in a National Forest, selected by the State of Alaska or Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act Native Corporations or under a public land law, camping sites, designated wilderness, and acquired by the federal government through gift, purchase, or exchange.

The second obstacle is: Alaska Native Vietnam veterans can only apply if they served in active military duty from January 1, 1969 to December 31, 1971 (even though the Vietnam conflict began August 5, 1964 and ended May 7, 1975). The dates of January 1969 to December 1971 were adamantly required by the previous Administration because they did not want to give up any additional federal lands in Alaska. Approximately 1,700 Alaska Native Vietnam veterans who served during the Vietnam conflict are not eligible for an allotment under existing law because they do not meet the military service date’s requirement. Many of those 1,700 veterans did not even apply, but those who did have been rejected. Of all of the applications rejected, 13% were rejected because the Alaska Native Vietnam veteran’s military service dates did not meet the existing requirements.

The third obstacle is: Alaska Native Vietnam veterans must prove they used the land (applied for in their native allotment application) in a substantially continuous and independent manner, at least potentially exclusive of others, for five or more years. This requirement was not in the original Native Allotment Act, nor has it been required of other Alaska Native allotment applicants. This requirement further penalizes our Alaska Native Vietnam veterans and will certainly cause many applications to be rejected. Further, adjudication of use and occupancy issues will take years and will be very costly.

My proposed legislation will increase the available land by authorizing Alaska Native Vietnam veterans to apply for land that is federally owned and vacant. The lack of available land under existing law nullifies the very purpose of granting Alaska Native Vietnam veterans an allotment benefit. This is true because most land in Alaska is not available for Alaska Native Vietnam veteran allotment applications under existing laws. For example,