

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. 105-276 (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 unserved 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,

there is no land available in southeast Alaska because it either is within the Tongass National Forest or has been selected or conveyed to the State of Alaska or ANCSA Native Corporations. In addition, vast areas of land in Alaska were withdrawn before most Alaska Native Vietnam veterans could have made qualifying use of the land. In contrast, federally owned "vacant" land is still available throughout Alaska and should be made available for Alaska Native Vietnam veteran allotments.

My legislation will also expand the military service dates to the dates that coincide with the entire Vietnam era conflict: beginning August 5, 1964 and ending on May 7, 1975. The expansion of military service dates to include all Alaska Native Vietnam veterans who served in the military during the Vietnam conflict is consistent with the federal government's policy of providing benefits to all veterans of the Vietnam conflict and not just to some of those veterans. This provision also fulfills the trust obligation to Alaska Natives. The limited military service dates have excluded many Alaska Native Vietnam veterans who bravely served during the Vietnam conflict. Never before has the United States given veteran land benefits to only a portion of those who served their country. The federal government has given public land benefits to all veterans (or their widows or heirs) of every war beginning with the Indian Wars of 1790 and ending with the Korean conflict in 1955. As Members will recall, Alaska Native veterans were not eligible for these public land benefits until 1924 because the courts had determined Alaska Natives were not United States citizens.

My legislation will also replace existing use and occupancy requirements with legislative approval of allotment applications. The provision assures the legislative approval process affords due process protections of valid existing interests in the land a veteran claims. The use and occupancy requirements would be replaced with legislative approval for several reasons. First, Congress has made legislative approval available to all other allotment applicants under 43 U.S.C. Section 1634(a)(1)(A)—[Section 905 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) which extends the legislative approval of Native allotments that were pending at the time of passage of ANILCA]. Second, legislative approvals of allotments prevent costly and lengthy adjudication of use and occupancy issues. Legislative approval also prevents lengthy delays that will impede many Alaska Native Vietnam veteran applicants from ever receiving land during their lifetime. Third, there are many Alaska Native Vietnam veterans that could not meet use and occupancy requirements as a result of their service to their country. One example that illustrates this point is that a deserving Alaska Native Vietnam veteran who was paralyzed during the Vietnam conflict would be rejected if that veteran was unable to complete the five years of use of the claimed land and had not used the land for five years before the Vietnam conflict.

My legislation addresses the formidable barriers that deserving Alaska Native Vietnam

veterans face when applying for a Native allotment under P.L. 105-267. For many years, Alaska Natives have had a unique legal relationship with the United States. Because of this unique relationship, Alaska Natives have steadfastly answered a call to duty when the United States called during a conflict or an act of war. Alaska Natives did so in disproportionately high numbers during the Vietnam conflict. Those who answered the call during the entire Vietnam conflict should not be penalized for their service to their country.

My proposed legislation will correct those inequities imposed by the last Administration in allowing all of the Alaska Native Vietnam veterans to apply for their Native allotment under the Native Allotment Act. I urge America's support of this legislation and of the Alaska Native Vietnam veterans who bravely served this great country during the Vietnam conflict. Fulfill our promise to all Alaska Native Vietnam veterans and allow them to obtain their Native allotment under the Native Allotment Act.

IMPORTANCE OF BINATIONAL HEALTH WEEK

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House today to highlight the importance of Binational Health Week, BHW, as proclaimed by the Fresno California County Board of Supervisors. Binational Health Week takes place this week, October 12-19, and it marks the beginning of the California-Mexico Health Initiative (CMHI) action plan. The CMHI is a cooperative working group between a number of local organizations in the Central Valley, and it works as a cultural bridge between migrants' health needs and available health care services in selected Mexican states as well as selected regions of California.

The Binational Health Week promotes and reinforces healthy behavior among migrant families. It will reinforce California's vaccination campaigns by specifically targeting migrant families, and reinforce Mexican vaccination efforts. BHW will promote flu vaccination among high-risk migrant adults and provide migrant families with information on health resources and services available in selected counties in California. Finally, healthcare providers will be given an updated directory containing information on migrant health resources in California and Mexico and disseminate current research on migrant health issues by promoting bilateral collaboration among researchers, health care providers and administrators to address service gaps and unmet needs.

This first Binational Health Week in California is conceived as a demonstration project to improve health care for migrants and will serve as the basis for future bilateral efforts. I certainly extend my support for Binational

Health Week in California and urge members to become familiar of the cutting edge bilateral working group, the California-Mexico Health Initiative.

DOUGLAS H. PIERSON, RHODE ISLAND'S PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Douglas Pierson, principal of North Kingstown's Hamilton Elementary School who was recently named a National Distinguished Principal by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

Mr. Pierson was selected for this honor for his outstanding leadership, and inter-personal and management skills. Throughout his tenure at Hamilton Elementary, Mr. Pierson has created a trusting environment where students, teachers, staff, and parents are encouraged to reflect, learn from their mistakes, and be thoughtful and creative about every aspect of their educational experience.

While Federal officials are just beginning to fully recognize the value of continuous learning for teachers and staff, Mr. Pierson has been encouraging it among his faculty for years. By modeling teaching strategies and disseminating research on innovative education practices, Mr. Pierson has improved instruction for each and every student at Hamilton. It was Mr. Pierson's leadership that led Hamilton Elementary to conduct a study of its effectiveness, and it is his guidance that allows time for each teacher to consider his or her instructional methods in light of the study's conclusions.

In addition to being an outstanding administrator, Mr. Pierson is an extraordinary teacher. From playing the ukulele to demonstrating mime to first-graders to dressing up as "Zero the Hero," complete with tights, a cape and hood, Mr. Pierson shows that he values students above all else.

Mr. Pierson was selected for this honor from among nominees of schools all over the State. U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige will recognize him at a ceremony here in Washington on October 19. I am very much looking forward to welcoming Mr. Pierson to our Nation's Capitol and congratulating him on this impressive honor in person.

Mr. Speaker, we all know the immense challenges associated with true leadership. True leadership inspires people to be their best, to collaborate, and to work together toward long-term and often intangible goals. Mr. Douglas Pierson consistently displays true leadership, and, on behalf of the Second Congressional District of Rhode Island, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you for his efforts.