

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF AGNES
FLOOD COMMEMORATEDHON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI
OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 21, 2002

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call the attention of the House of Representatives to the 30th anniversary of Hurricane Agnes. I would also like to bring attention to the approaching completion of the landmark Wyoming Valley Levee Raising Project in my district to provide protection to the people of the valley in the event of another flood of that magnitude.

On June 23, 1972, sirens sounded across much of my district in Pennsylvania, warning that the valiant effort to contain the surging Susquehanna River had been lost.

Agnes poured 14 trillion gallons of water onto Northeastern Pennsylvania, causing the Susquehanna River to break from its boundaries and spread a layer of flood water 40 feet deep and 2 miles wide across a densely populated region in the Wyoming Valley. The damage caused by the unyielding rush of water was immense. Twenty-six thousand homes and more than 3,000 small businesses and factories were heavily damaged by flood waters and 3,500 families lost their homes completely. In all, 72,000 people were forced from their homes. Nearly 15,000 Wyoming Valley families lived in trailers provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, many of them for the better part of a year.

Luzerne County, located in the heart of northeastern Pennsylvania, suffered 69 percent of the total damage that Agnes caused in Pennsylvania. Property damage amounted to \$1.3 billion, or more than \$4 billion in today's dollars, and another \$300 million in road and bridge damage was incurred. Communities were faced with the prospect of rebuilding entire commercial and residential areas.

In the wake of this disaster, one of the worst natural disasters in the Nation's history, a determined populace emerged. Residents of this region found courage among the ruins and forged ahead with an undying spirit to rebuild their communities. Agnes may have laid waste to their homes and businesses, but it could not extinguish their desire to live and raise their families in the "Valley with a Heart."

The Red Cross and Salvation Army played a crucial role in providing emergency shelter and meals, not just in the first hours of the crisis but for weeks and months afterward. For example, that summer, the Red Cross spent \$13 million locally on food, supplies and personnel, and the Salvation Army provided more than 4 million meals.

Meeting the challenge of recovery were several citizen action groups such as the Flood Victims Action Council under the leadership of Min Matheson, and the Flood Recovery Task Force, which was chaired by Judge Max Rosenn. These groups were instrumental in the economic and social resurgence of the areas most damaged by the Agnes flood.

I had the honor of contributing to this effort as the volunteer legal counsel to the Flood Victims Action Council over a period of almost two years. While the hard work and determination of local community groups and area citizens played a role in this historic rebuilding

of northeastern Pennsylvania, the recovery assistance provided by the Federal Government was truly phenomenal.

Through the cooperative efforts of Congressman Dan Flood, State Senator Frank O'Connell, Bill Wilcox, Secretary of the state Department of Community Affairs working on behalf of Governor Shapp, and Frank Carlucci acting on behalf of President Nixon, the Government rushed approximately \$1 billion in aid to the communities of the Wyoming Valley. When critics disparage the ability of government to do things for citizens, I recall that moment when the Federal Government made an enormous difference for the better for the people of Pennsylvania, and look forward to the completion of the landmark project that will protect the people of the Wyoming Valley in the event of another Agnes-level flood.

In 2002, the people of the valley have something they did not have 30 years ago—the nearly complete \$175 million Wyoming Valley Levee Raising Project that includes more than 50 communities and 5 counties along a 60-mile stretch of the river. The structural components of the levee system are scheduled to be completed by the end of this year.

In 1972, the existing levees were overtopped by several feet during the Agnes flood. In 1986, during my first term, Congress authorized the Wyoming Valley Levee Raising Project to modify the existing flood control projects to protect against a new flood of the same magnitude. We had a disturbing reminder of the need for the levee raising project during the January 1996 flood. At that time, the rapidly rising Susquehanna River prompted officials to order the evacuation of approximately 100,000 people living in the City of Wilkes-Barre and its neighboring communities in the Wyoming Valley. While the river peaked at nearly 13 feet above flood stage, it remained within the banks of the levees and caused relatively minor damage.

From my first term in Congress, I have made it one of my top priorities to provide Agnes-level flood protection to the Wyoming Valley, and it is heartening to see that day approaching.

Completion of the levee raising project will be a major step forward in transforming the Susquehanna River from a liability into an asset. One of the steps forward that we have already taken is the 1997 designation of the Upper Susquehanna-Lackawanna watershed as one of just 14 American Heritage Rivers in the nation.

In the years ahead, I hope that we will continue our progress toward a cleaner Susquehanna that will provide recreation and an enhanced quality of life, not only for present-day residents but also for our children and grandchildren.

IN HONOR OF THE COLOMBIAN RALLY IN SUPPORT OF TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE AND STATUS

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 21, 2002

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the historic sacrifices and the noble

struggle for peace that the people of Colombia are engaged in today. I rise in strong support of Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for the Colombians who reside in the United States and in the 13th Congressional District.

The Colombians who reside here have made, and continue to make, enormous sacrifices for the safety and well-being of their families. I know this because I know them. We look forward to the day, when their beautiful country, our historic friend and neighbor, Colombia, once again stands as the proud nation we know it to be—a peaceful nation, a nation free of conflict, free of the scourge of narcotics, and free to live in peace.

We admire the great spirit of the Colombian people. They are very generous and hospitable people, they are a gifted people with a great culture, and they are among the very best friends of the United States in this Hemisphere.

On the occasion of the Colombian rally in support of TPS on June 21, 2002 in Elizabeth, New Jersey, I want to say to directly to my Colombian friends: "Mis queridos amigos Colombianos: Conocemos bien su situación. La persecución, la violencia, los secuestros, el desplazamiento. Ayer, estuvo su presidente-electo, Alvaro Uribe Velez visitando el Congreso. Juntos con él, apoyamos al TPS para Colombia. Que viva Colombia. Que viva los Estados Unidos. Y que viva la amistad de nuestros pueblos."

The crisis of violence and economic strife in Colombia has caused tens of thousands of Colombians to flee their homes and seek out a safe haven elsewhere, including in the United States. Most are not so lucky. There are more than one million displaced Colombians inside of Colombia alone. As long as danger and conflict persists in Colombia, Temporary Protective Status would provide Colombians who are here a safe refuge in America.

I want also to congratulate the Colombian people for the free and fair election of President-Elect Alvaro Uribe Velez, and Vice President-Elect, Francisco Santos Calderon. I, along with all Colombians in the United States, expect and hope that President-Elect Uribe will request Temporary Protective Status for Colombians in the US. I have faith that the situation in Colombia will change for the better. In the meantime, let TPS become a reality for Colombians, let us extend to Colombians the American hand of friendship and of humanity so that they may live without fear for their lives and those of their loved ones.

Today, I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing the need for TPS for Colombians. Let us grant Temporary Protective Service to those in need, and let those fleeing Colombians have refuge in the United States.

CONGRESSIONAL WEB ACCESSIBILITY DAY: CELEBRATING THE ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF SECTION 508

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 21, 2002

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the one-year anniversary of Section 508.

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act requires federal agencies' electronic and information technology (IT) to be accessible to individuals with disabilities. It specifically requires that when federal agencies develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology, they ensure that it is accessible, unless it would pose an undue burden to do so.

But the regulations do not apply to the legislative and judicial branches, state and local governments, or the private sector. If we truly are a government of, for and by the people, then every American must have access to it. Today, the Bipartisan Disabilities Caucus and the Congressional Internet Caucus teamed up with the American Foundation for the Blind, HIR, Microsoft, Adobe and Freedom Scientific to demonstrate how easy it is to comply with Section 508 in making websites accessible.

Today's "Congressional Web Accessibility Day" educated Members' staff and the American public on Section 508 and the importance of making government accessible. Through one-on-one sessions with HIR web experts and hands-on, interactive learning, this event was an important first step toward making government accessible.

Web accessibility is not just for the 54 million individuals with disabilities or for the millions of elderly Americans with diminished vision, hearing and other senses, but for any one of us who might one day need this technology. It also provides more options for a typical user who may prefer text over fancy graphics. With 68 million American adults using government agency websites, this typical user is evolving into a powerful "e-citizen."

I hope that today's event marks the beginning of some exciting, new changes in Congress.

The time has come for us to make our websites accessible to our growing e-citizenry. The progress has begun in the federal agencies, and now Congress needs to follow suit.

CELEBRATING THE 30TH
ANNIVERSARY OF TITLE IX

SPEECH OF

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 19, 2002

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 30th anniversary of the enactment of Title IX. Prior to the enactment of Title IX, educational and career opportunities were extremely limited for women. In 1971, less than 300,000 girls participated in high school sports compared to 3.6 million male athletes the same year. Today, this number has risen to over 2.4 million female athletes. Women have continued to demonstrate that, when given the opportunity, they, too, are fully qualified to be successful participants in athletics and education.

In the past 30 years, women have gained numerous other advantages from the passage of this historic legislation. Scholarships provided to women in increased numbers since passage of Title IX have opened doors that were otherwise closed to women. In 1971, only 18% of women finished four years of college; today more female students than male successfully complete a four-year college edu-

cation and go on to obtain a Master's degree. It is because of historic Title IX, which prohibits gender discrimination in federally funded schools, that women have been able to overcome these barriers.

While much has been accomplished since the enactment of this legislation, much still remains to be done. We need to be vigilant in our enforcement of Title IX and provide the funding needed to help our schools fully comply with the law. We need to fight for the passage of legislation that will ensure equality for women once they enter the workforce. Although today the majority of students are women, as is the majority of the U.S. population, women face continued inequalities in the workplace. In my home state of Michigan where pay inequity is at its worst, women make just 67 cents for every dollar men earn. This is inexcusable, and it has to stop. We should view Title IX not as a completed effort, but as a first step in ensuring equality for women.

With the passage of Title IX, our Nation declared that it is in our best interest to allow all men and women an equal chance to excel in any field or activity to which they commit themselves. It was pledged that all individuals should be given the same opportunities to realize their potential throughout their education and professional lives. We need to work harder to ensure that no American suffers discrimination on the basis of gender. We cannot rest until all women, all Americans, receive the opportunities they deserve. In my 26 years in Congress, I have committed myself to working toward the ideals of justice and equality for women, and I will continue to make this effort among my top priorities.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNITED
STATES ARMY SPECIAL FORCES

SPEECH OF

HON. GARY G. MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 18, 2002

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the United States Army Special Forces and honor a great American hero and "Father of the Green Berets," Colonel Aaron Bank.

Perhaps more than ever, our generation appreciates the unique and vital mission of the U.S. Special Forces. They are the elite, unconventional warfare arm of the United States military and our Nation is at a place in history where our greatest threat is from the unpredictable foes they are trained to fight.

In a time when many of us have fears and doubts about the vulnerability of our Nation to future attacks, we can continue to have hope in the shield provided to us by the Special Forces. In valor, courage, and fidelity, the Special Forces are the world's finest fighting force and I am thankful that they are in the business of protecting the United States of America and its citizens.

Due to the covert nature of many of their missions, both the measure of their sacrifice and their contribution to freedom here and abroad may never be known. However, today, I hope all Americans will join me in celebrating their 50th anniversary and thanking them for giving more to this country than could ever be repaid and perhaps, could ever be measured.

I wish to especially extend my appreciation to Colonel Aaron Bank, the founder and first commander of the Special Forces. As an operative in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during World War II, he led his team on missions to hunt down high-ranking Nazi leaders, search for missing allied prisoners in Indochina and lead a counter-intelligence cell in Germany. It was clear there was a place for such operations using highly trained unconventional forces. So, when the OSS was disbanded after World War II, Colonel Bank began working to convince the U.S. Army to adopt a permanent unconventional warfare force. After tireless efforts, the U.S. Army launched its first Special Forces unit, the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) with Colonel Bank, appropriately, as its first commander.

Since then, the U.S. Army Special Forces has spawned special operations units from the other military branches such as the Navy SEALS, Air Force Combat Controllers, and the Marines' Force Recon. We have Colonel Bank to thank for emphasizing the strategic and tactical importance of such units, which he modeled in designing, implementing and commanding the Army's first Special Forces unit.

In passing H. Con. Res. 364, Congress not only recognizes the 50th anniversary of the Special Forces, but also acknowledges the invaluable contribution of a great American and outstanding soldier, Colonel Aaron Bank. At age ninety-nine, he is a living legend and I consider it an honor and privilege to participate in recognizing both his contribution and the legacy of his vision and foresight, the United States Special Forces.

My most sincere gratitude goes out to Colonel Bank and his fellow Green Berets as they celebrate the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Army Special Forces.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MISSOURI
OFFICERS ASSOCIATION ON 70TH
ANNIVERSARY

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 21, 2002

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding work of The Missouri Officers Association, which represents over 900 Federal, State, and local police officers.

I would like to honor this organization in this, their 70th year, for their charitable work and dedication to scholarship and community. The primary focus of the officer's association is to provide low cost training to police agencies across the State of Missouri. Another very notable deed is the provision of an immediate \$1000 death benefit to families of fallen officers.

Beyond their efforts in the law enforcement community, the association organizes two scholarship programs. The first is a yearly college scholarship that awards \$1000 to five Missouri students and the second is an essay contest for eighth grade students, which awards six students cash awards totaling \$1200.

The philanthropic work of this organization also extends to the community through a variety of donations to groups such as Concern of Police Survivors, Ronald McDonald House,