

considering real tax reform, it is more important now than ever that the House pass this bill again to demonstrate consistent support for bringing common sense to our tax system. As I retire from Congress to run for Governor of Oklahoma, it is my hope that this legislation will be passed again, and to that end I am turning over sponsorship of this bill to a long-standing activist for tax reform, Representative JIM DEMINT. I urge all reformers to join with Representative DEMINT in advancing the cause of reform by working to pass this bill.

TRIBUTE TO MR. JOHN BRIGANCE

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2002

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, after over 61 years of federal service, an icon of an exemplary, dedicated civil service has just retired. Mr. John Brigance, the former Director of Contracting for all of Southwestern Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, known as "Mr. Procurement" for his valued expertise in contracting, was recognized throughout the Corps. Underlining his commitment is the fact that in addition to his 61 years of federal service, he retired with over 5,100 hours of unused sick leave, about two and a half years' worth.

During his career, Mr. Brigance has been called upon to accomplish many significant projects for the Corps of Engineers. A former Chief of Engineers dubbed him "Mr. Procurement" because he said Brigance quite literally wrote the book on contracting. That is a true statement. Between 1982 and 1995, he chaired a Headquarters task force and penned many of the regulations governing Corps contract procurement procedures. He has risen from an under clerk typist in the Corps' Galveston District, when he started on January 6, 1941, to a GS 14 in charge of all contracting for the Southwestern Division. In the late 1970s, he was a guest lecturer on small business contract administration at Syracuse University. In that same time frame, because of his reputation in emergency contracting procedures, he also prepared and taught the first-ever Corps contracting course on emergency management operations. Called to duty on November 27, 1942, Brigance served 3 years with the Army—18 months Stateside in training, and 18 months in the Pacific Theater working with an engineer parts supply outfit.

Mr. Brigance has also been noted as a wonderful coworker and fellow human being. A former colleague called him "a role model for courtesy, civility, and professionalism. He is, quite simply, the most decent man I have met in my career, and a living example of what has made the Corps of Engineers a great organization." Col. Carla Coulson, former Deputy Division Commander, called Brigance's career "a lifetime of selfless service," commended his personal courage and commitment, and acclaimed him as "a dedicated professional with wisdom to spare." Former coworker Hector Vela, retired Division Counsel said, "I've never known John to lie about anything, even his golf game." Vela described Brigance as one who "never speaks bad about anybody" and added, "John made working for the Corps a pleasure." Brigance has been called a "whirlwind" for fast action and

for wearing multiple hats—contracting, small business advisor, inspector general and equal employment opportunity officer. Those people he has mentored have echoed the same sentiments. All speak admiringly of John Brigance.

His life has been well rounded by the many avocations he enjoys—from a love of golf, to annual deer hunts in the Texas hill country, collecting stamps, coins and proof sets, and dancing with his wife of 60 years, Peggy. He shows enthusiasm for each and every activity he pursues, his pronounced activity inspiring others to greater accomplishments.

For his farewell luncheon, his friends and colleagues recognized him with numerous awards and mementos. Among those were the congratulatory letter from President Bush and a presentation by Texas Governor Rick Perry making Brigance an "Admiral of the Texas Navy," an honorary position to recognize his contributions. Perry also named Peggy Brigance a "Yellow Rose of Texas," an honor bestowed only on native Texans.

None of that outdid what the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers gave Brigance after 61 years of service. The Corps' Principal Assistant Responsible for Contracting made the first-ever presentation of the highest Corps award for contracting, the A-F-I-R-E, which stands for "Adaptive, Flexible, Innovative, Responsive and Effective/Efficient", to Brigance. Brig. Gen. David F. Melcher, Southwestern Division commander, also hung the U.S. Army Engineer Regiment Silver Order of the de Fleury medal around Brigance's neck. Honoring John as the 35th inductee into Southwest Division Gallery of Distinguished Civilians rounded out the retirement accolades made in recognition of his commitment, leadership and esteem.

Other awards he received throughout his career include the Decoration for Exceptional Civilian Service award granted by the Secretary of the Army, the Meritorious Civilian Service Award, the Assistant Secretary of the Army Coin and others much too numerous to mention.

Mr. John Brigance and his daily contributions to the United States as a loyal, outstanding and dedicated federal civil servant serve as an inspiration to us all.

EXEMPLARY HONORS FOR SOUTH TEXAS SCHOOLS

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2002

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I want to share with my colleagues the incredible pride in my heart, pride for two schools in my hometown of Robstown, TX, the biggest little town in Texas.

The Solomon P. Ortiz Intermediate School and the San Pedro Elementary School in the Robstown Independent School District were chosen by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) as "Exemplary" schools under the State analysis of individual schools in each school district in the state.

Each year, the TEA ranks the state's schools as: low-performing, acceptable, recognized, or exemplary—based on performance on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS, the test given to students in Texas) and on attendance and dropout rates.

Both the Ortiz Intermediate School and San Pedro Elementary are schools with large Hispanic student populations. Since largely Hispanic schools often have to do more with less money, their challenge is greater to compete on a more difficult playing field.

These two schools have found the secret to success. They know that students cannot just up and pass a difficult test—it takes the whole effort of every person who works at each school. It takes teachers, counselors, cafeteria workers, teacher's aids, and school administrators to make the very most of a child's educational experience.

I want to thank each and every staff member for their vision on helping students on their journey to higher education.

These schools capitalized on every single opportunity, every strength, they had to build a team that helped the children of Robstown find the very best in them. Let's not underestimate the stress associated with the TAAS. There is great pressure on the children, on the schools, on the employees—judgements on the school staff is based on the results young people achieve on TAAS.

Teaching children what they need to know to pass the tests, inspiring them to come to school every day, inspiring them to stay in school when they despair, is a monumental task. So the House of Representatives should know that these schools have achieved a great deal.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in commending the Ortiz Intermediate School and San Pedro Elementary School of Robstown, TX, for excellence in education.

TRIBUTE TO SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2002

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of the finest universities in the great State of California as it celebrates its 40th anniversary.

Located in the heart of the Wine Country, Sonoma State University has over 7,500 students and 1,600 faculty and staff members. Originally established in 1956 as a satellite teaching campus of San Francisco State University, SSU became a member of the California State College System in 1961 and attained University status in 1978. The idyllic campus, set at the base of Sonoma Mountain, now offers over 41 baccalaureate and 14 master's degree programs.

The small liberal arts university has made Sonoma County proud many times over the years. It has been home to Mario Savio, a leader of the Free Speech Movement in Berkeley and a professor in the Physics Department until he passed on in 1996. For the past 25 years, Project Censored, the yearly publication that covers the top underreported news stories of the year, has brought national acclaim to SSU's Sociology department. Most recently, the unveiling of the Environmental Technology Center brought international praise. "The Building That Teaches" combines state-of-the-art energy efficiency and environmental responsibility and is one of only a few like it in the world.

Mr. Speaker, these are only a few of the reasons that I am pleased to pay tribute to Sonoma State University. The most notable reason, however, is the pride I take in the students and the contribution they will make to our future.

Congratulations Sonoma State University on your 40 years and best wishes for many, many more.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PENSION SECURITY ACT

HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2002

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I am joined today my many of my colleagues in the introduction of the Pension Security Act. President Bush has sent a clear message to Congress that he is committed to addressing the Enron collapse by calling for new safeguards to help workers preserve and enhance their retirement savings. I am pleased to introduce his proposal today.

One of the tragic realities of the Enron collapse is that it has rattled the confidence of American workers in the country's pension system—a system that by and large has served employees and their families well. Even more tragic is the possibility that much of it could have been avoided. At least some of Enron's workers might have been able to preserve their nest eggs if Washington had taken some basic steps to update our nation's pension laws. For example, many Enron workers might have had access to a professional investment advisor who could have warned them they had too many eggs in one basket. Current law, enacted more than a quarter-century ago before the advent of 401(k) accounts, denies workers this opportunity.

That is why today, my colleague SAM JOHNSON, chairman of the Employer-Employee Relations Subcommittee, and I are introducing the President's proposal as the first step toward a consensus product that can be signed into law on behalf of America's workers. Workers must be fully protected and fully prepared with the tools they need to protect and enhance their retirement savings.

Specifically, the Pension Security Act includes new measures that give employees the freedom to diversify their portfolio and better information about their pensions. Under the bill, employees may sell company stocks and diversity into other investment options after they have participated in a 401(k) plan for three years. In addition, it requires companies to give workers quarterly benefit statements that include information about accounts, including the value of their assets, their right to diversify, and the importance of maintaining a diverse portfolio.

In addition, as part of his proposal, President Bush has called upon the Senate to pass the Retirement Security Advice Act (H.R. 2269), which passed the House last November with a large bipartisan vote. The bill encourages employers to make investment advice available to their employees and allows qualified financial advisors to offer investment advice only if they agree to act solely in the interests of the workers they advise. The Senate has yet to act on this legislation, though it

passed the House with the support of 64 Democrats.

Current law continues to needlessly deny rank-and-file workers access to quality investment advisers to help them make sound investment decisions. Some of Enron's employees could have preserved their retirement savings if they had access to a qualified adviser who would have warned them in advance that they needed to diversify their investment portfolio.

When senior executives face no restrictions on selling stock held outside the 401(k), it is likewise unfair for workers to be denied the same authority to sell company stock in their 401(k) accounts during blackout periods. The Pension Security Act ensures parity between senior corporate executives and rank-and-file workers by prohibiting executives from selling company stock during "blackout" periods when workers are unable to change investments in their plans. The bill also requires companies to give 30-days' notice before a blackout period begins.

Lastly, the bill clarifies that companies have a fiduciary responsibility for workers' investments during a blackout period. Under current law, employers are not responsible for the results of workers' investment decisions. This "safe harbor" from liability will no longer apply during a blackout period. Under the Pension Security Act, employers will be responsible for the consequences of the workers' inability to control their investments if they violate their fiduciary duty to act in the interests of the workers during blackout periods.

Congress has taken some positive steps in the recent past to update our nation's pension laws, and this committee has been central to those efforts. We passed the landmark reforms authored by my friend and colleague, Representative ROB PORTMAN, that gave workers more pension portability, faster vesting, and a host of other needed changes. We passed the Retirement Security Advice Act to give rank-and-file workers the same access to professional investment advice that wealthy executives have. But in spite of these efforts, a lot of work still lies ahead. And in the aftermath of Enron, Congress must now confront this modernization effort with a new urgency.

I am optimistic that common ground can be reached with Democrats because there is bipartisan support in Congress for the reforms I have just outlined. All are key elements of President Bush's proposal. The nation's private pension system is essential to the security of American workers, retirees, and their families. Congress should more decisively to restore worker confidence in the nation's retirement security and pension system, and President Bush's reform proposal will do just that. I urge my colleagues to respond to the needs of America's workers by supporting the Pension Security Act.

RECOGNITION FOR THE FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN FIREFIGHTER, CLARENCE "GATOR" JONES

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2002

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate the service of Clar-

ence "Gator" Jones on recently being honored as Dania Beach, Florida's first African-American firefighter. Mr. Jones became the first African-American firefighter in Dania Beach in 1975 and continued to serve this city for more than two decades. Of course, serving as Dania's first African-American firefighter was no easy task. During his tenure, Clarence Jones braved a burden that few would accept and less would bear. A bitter sweet burden of disparities and degradation, while simultaneously becoming a trailblazer in his craft, establishing the standard for all firefighters to follow.

While serving the city of Dania Beach, Mr. Jones received many accolades, some of which include a Medal of Honor and the prestigious Firefighter of the Year Award. Mr. Jones was also recognized for the care and compassion he exhibited when performing rescue calls, working above and beyond the call of duty, and participating in charitable activities. I am sure that when Mr. Jones became a firefighter at the age of 21, he simply saw this as a way to sustain his livelihood after serving in the Navy during the Vietnam War. Not realizing that by doing this, he did so much more, he saved lives. He became a hero.

Most people take for granted those brave few that walk amongst us. The brave few that put concern for others before themselves. It is these few people that we must honor and celebrate for they are the ones that truly make the difference. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my appreciation and respect for Clarence Jones' commitment to the community of Dania Beach, FL. Mr. Jones has served the noble profession of fire rescue for 26 years. Twenty-six years of fortitude and selfless sacrifice that the Dania Beach community and I will always remember.

IWAKURA MISSION

HON. JIM MATHESON

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2002

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Speaker, I had a wonderful opportunity to be present at an event honoring the 130-year friendship between the State of Utah and Japan. As many know, during the Meiji Revolution in the 1870's, the Japanese government sent the Iwakura Mission throughout the United States to gather information and ideas for use in modernizing Japan.

One of the less well-known stories of the Iwakura Mission took place in Utah. While unexpectedly stranded while awaiting the melt of a heavy winter snow, the 111-person delegation stayed in Salt Lake City, UT. They met the people, learned the culture, and experienced the American West. On February 10, I was able to celebrate that 1872 winter with Japanese Consul-General Koichiro Seki, members of his staff, officials from the State of Utah, and historians. At the conclusion of the program a memorial plaque, which will be hung at the place where the Japanese entered the city, was unveiled.

Although the Iwakura Mission moved on to Washington, DC after the snows melted in 1872, its member's presence was felt long after they left. The Japanese toured Utah