

better understand the social, economic, legal, and political complexity of AI/AN realities, before related legislation is brought to the House floor for a vote. As congressional history demonstrates, the decisions to make as Representatives can either positively or negatively impact AI/AN people, and their nations, tribes, bands, villages, and communities.

For example, between 1887 and 1934, the U.S. Government took over 90 million acres of land from American Indians without compensation—including sacred lands. More recently, between 1945 and 1968, Congress decided that Federal recognition and assistance to more than 100 tribes should be terminated. This termination policy created economic disaster for many American Indians, and their nations, resulting in millions of acres of valuable natural resource land being lost through tax forfeiture sales. This is a primary reason why AI/AN families have the biggest poverty level of any group in the country, at a rate of 31 percent on some Indian reservations.

By holding hearings on the impact of legislation related to American Indians and Alaska Natives, Congress moved to rectify its prior decisions by passing self-determination and self-governance policies. As a result of such policies, AI/AN nations and villages have greater control over their lands and resources. They have made great strides toward reversing the economic blight that resulted from previous Federal policies, and have revived their unique cultures and nations.

Congress must withstand pressure from those individuals and groups that call for back tracking to old AI/AN policies, such as termination and reduction of AI/AN sovereign rights. We must acknowledge and learn from our mistakes, and not repeat them in the future because AI/AN nations and people are relying upon our commitments.

The United States Constitution recognizes that American Indian Nations are sovereign governments. Hundreds of treaties, the Supreme Court, the President, and the Congress have repeatedly affirmed that Indian nations retain their inherent powers of self-government. In addition, the U.S. Government is committed to a trustee relationship with the Indian nations. This trust relationship requires the Federal Government to exercise the highest degree of care with tribal and Indian lands and resources.

Sacred lands, and ceremonies associated with those lands, are a necessary expression of AI/AN spirituality, and often are key to individual and collective wellness. This necessity is situated deep in the ancient history of these Indian nations and maintains a prominent place in the fact-based stories hand down from one generation to another. Since the coming of the Europeans to these shores in the late 14th century, these sacred lands have been subject to intrusion and disturbance as settlers laid claim to lands of the AI/AN people.

In 1978, Congress passed the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, recognizing the necessity of upholding the protection of AI/AN spirituality within the ambit of the religious freedom guaranteed by the first amendment to the United States Constitution. Unfortunately, litigation in the courts since then to safeguard sacred lands, and the ceremonies associated with those lands, has for the most part been unsuccessful.

Rather than safeguard sacred lands, these cases have upheld multiple intrusions upon

them and maintained a history of subordination of AI/AN spirituality to the interests of dominating groups. Federal Government representatives, leaders of historic religions, and judiciary members must develop more tolerance and expand their definitions of what constitutes a proper sacred place.

Culture and legal scholar, Davis Mayberry-Lewis, writes:

American Indian religions consider the earth as sacred, whereas the secular culture that surrounds them considers the earth to be real estate. It is hard for the strong to give up their ingrained habit of overpowering the weak, but it is essential if we are to make multiethnic societies like our own work with a minimum of civility.

Anthropologist Elizabeth Brandt states:

The free practice of many Indian religions requires privacy and undisturbed access to culturally and religiously significant sites and their resources. It is irrevocably tied to specific places in the world which derive their power and sacred character from their natural undisturbed state.

Ultimately, how free are we, really, if the first religions of our great country cannot be protected? I also ask you, what if, despite your objections to the contrary, your spiritual place was being bulldozed for economic activity or spiked for scaling purposes? How would you feel, what would you think and what would you do?

Therefore I strongly support H.R. 2085, the Valley of Chiefs Native American Sacred Site Preservation Act, which would safeguard an area very sacred to a number of Indian tribes, and ask that my colleagues support this bill as well.

I also call for additional Sacred Land legislation to be developed in consultation with Indian Country. Furthermore, the establishment of a governmentwide, effective, and comprehensive procedure that safeguards the loss of further AI/AN sacred lands must be enacted. We must move swiftly in conjunction with AI/AN nations before more sacred lands, such as Mt. Shasta and Medicine Lake of California, Devil's Tower, and Black Hills of South Dakota, to name a few, are further desecrated and damaged.

IN HONOR OF DR. EUGENE CARL
STROBEL

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, the German-American Heritage Foundation International gathered for their 6th Annual Dinner and Musical Cabaret on April 6, 2002, to celebrate an evening of music, culture, and the life of Dr. Eugene Carl Strobel. Dr. Strobel was a man who touched the lives of so many in this community, who was devoted to his family and his community. Dr. Strobel's memory will continue to be remembered and cherished after his passing from this earth on November 21, 2001.

One of southeastern Michigan's unsung heroes, Dr. Strobel was always a leader and an activist in his community. As a family man, university teacher, administrator, and an activist in humanitarian causes his entire life, Dr. Strobel's contributions left an indelible impres-

sion on us all. As one of the founders of Detroit's Wayne County Community College, an administrator at both Eastern Michigan University and Lawrence Technological University, and a pioneer of televised credit courses on WTVS-TV, Dr. Strobel's dedication to education was unparalleled. A true civil rights advocate and activist for so many humanitarian causes, Dr. Strobel devoted his life to working for peace and equality in his community and beyond.

Finally, Dr. Strobel demonstrated outstanding commitment to his German heritage and worked tirelessly to bring together the German American community. As founding president of the German American Heritage Foundation International, Dr. Strobel worked tirelessly to organize programs and actively support several committees to promote German culture and traditions. Bringing together members of the German American community, Dr. Strobel was instrumental in coordinating projects with the German Consulate, the German American Chamber of Commerce, DaimlerChrysler, and many other businesses and corporations.

Dr. Strobel has always given 100 percent in every aspect of his life; his work, his community, his family, and his friends. Those who had the pleasure of knowing him and the benefit of working with him will continue to remember him as a dedicated, faithful friend. He will truly be missed.

I invite my colleagues to please join me in paying tribute to one of the most influential citizens of southeastern Michigan, and saluting him for his exemplary years of care and service.

TRIBUTE TO MADELEINE H.
BERMAN

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to rise today to recognize Madeleine H. Berman, as the Detroit Zoological Society establishes the Madeleine Berman Academy for Humane Education. The Academy has been established in recognition of both a generous grant from the Mandell L. and Madeleine H. Berman Support Foundation and Madeleine "Madge" Berman's lifelong commitment to the promotion of the Arts and Humanities.

Madge is a Detroit native, who has worked tirelessly on behalf of the Arts in Metro Detroit, the State of Michigan and, indeed, the Nation. She was a pioneer in the establishment of a number of activities and organizations, both locally and state-wide, now recognized as "institutions" of our art community. As a member of New Detroit's Arts Committee, she helped establish the first Detroit Arts Council and served as one of the seven original members of that board. She pioneered efforts for the Legendary WTVS Public Television Auction and she participated in creating the Friends of WDET, Detroit Public Radio. She served for almost a decade on the Michigan Council of the Arts.

In 1984, President Clinton appointed her to the President's Committee for the Arts and Humanities. In addition to many other boards,

she presently serves on the Board of the Michigan Humane Society where she works with public schools in humane educational work.

Madge's most recent endeavor wonderfully melds her concern for the animals that share our world, her focus on involving children in creative efforts, and her background in the Arts. The Madeleine Berman Academy for Humane Education seeks to provide a forum, through innovative educational programs and creative activities, where children can explore and learn to respect the intricate connections between animals and humans.

I know my colleagues join me in celebrating and honoring Madge's admirable endeavors. Her husband, Bill Berman, has been a bright beacon of community involvement and philanthropic work. Together, they have tremendously enriched our communities and the lives of countless children. We know that their work will endure for many years to come.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE AMERICA
IN BLOOM PROGRAM

HON. J. DENNIS HASTERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the important contribution of the America in Bloom program to communities across the nation.

America in Bloom is a national beautification contest that began last year with the participation of four cities across the United States. This unique program helps to foster community involvement, patriotism and civic pride through the challenge of a friendly competition between participating communities across the country. The contest is judged on the basis of eight categories, including tidiness, environmental awareness, heritage, urban forestry, landscaped area, floral displays, turf and ground cover areas and, most importantly, community involvement.

This year, the contest will again provide communities with a forum to increase civic pride and community involvement through the challenge of a national evaluation. The program has registered almost thirty communities to date, including Batavia, Illinois, which I am proud to represent.

It is my hope that more communities will take part in this program as it brings together citizens of all ages, municipal governments and local organizations to work collectively for the visual improvement of America's parks, neighborhoods, open spaces and streets. This can only encourage the preservation of our collective heritage and culture while creating a sense of unity and pride among citizens.

IN HONOR OF REVEREND DR. JOHN
L. PRATT, SR.

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Reverend Dr. John L. Pratt, Sr. in recognition of his 25th Pastoral Anniversary.

Reverend Dr. John L. Pratt, Sr. was born in Fredericksburg, Virginia. He graduated from Walker-Grant High School and attended Storer College in Harpers Ferry, WVA, where he majored in education. He went on to receive his graduate degree from the Bible Institute and American Divinity School also earning a B.A. Degree and Doctorate of Theology.

When Rev. Dr. Pratt was elected pastor of Zion Shiloh Baptist Church, he told the congregation, "I accept the challenge" and he continues to "accept the challenge" as he remains there to this day. Rev. Dr. Pratt will quickly tell you that his greatest reward is working for the Lord. Among his many accomplishments since arriving at the Church, he has led his congregation to a new church building.

In addition, to his work on behalf of the church, the wider church community has also recognized him. He is a past recording secretary for Progressive National Baptist Convention, past moderator of the New York Missionary Association, member of the Advisory Board of Community Board #2, member of Cumberland Community Board, past Secretary of Moderator's Department of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, member of the Hampton Ministers Conference Board, member of the Fort Greene Support and Rescue Group, Instructor for New York Missionary Baptist Association of Ministers and newly elected President of the Brooklyn Council of Churches and many others.

Rev. Dr. Pratt is married to Mrs. Gertrude Pratt. They are blessed with two sons; Leo C. Pratt and John L. Pratt, Jr.; a daughter in law, Michelle and a loving grandson, Leo Sterling Pratt.

Mr. Speaker, Rev. Dr. John L. Pratt, Sr. has been accepting the challenge as the pastor of Zion Shiloh Baptist Church for twenty-five years and is still telling everyone to "Keep Praying, Caring, Loving and . . ." for God answers all prayers. As such, he is more than worthy of receiving this recognition and I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring this truly remarkable man of God.

HONORING TONY J. SIRVELLO ON
HIS RETIREMENT

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on June 30, 2002, Harris County Elections Administrator Tony Sirvello will retire after overseeing the local electoral process for more than two decades. Tony has been a constant in the elections office for a majority of my political career, and I want to congratulate him on a job well done.

Tony has been a life-long resident of Houston. He graduated from St. Thomas High School and then earned a bachelor's degree and a law degree from the University of Houston. He also served in the United States Army and was awarded the Army Commendation Medal.

In June 1973, he began to work for Harris County, and in October 1980, he was promoted to the position of Supervisor of Elections. In a time in our nation's history when more and more Americans do not vote, Tony

has taken significant steps to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to vote.

He has had a distinguished career. He has attended every single Texas Secretary of State Seminar for Election Officials since the very first one. He is a member of the Federal Elections Commission Advisory Panel on Election Administration. He is a member of the International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers. He helped organize South African absentee voting in Houston. He helped organize Russian absentee voting in Houston. And, he was the first election official in the United States to email a ballot to a NASA Astronaut on the space station.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in honoring and congratulating Tony J. Sirvello on his retirement. Tony, we wish you well.

TRIBUTE TO THE PHILIPPINE
AMERICAN COMMUNITY CENTER
OF MICHIGAN

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the Philippine American community of Michigan, who celebrated the historic unveiling of "Philippine Street", the newly renamed home of the Philippine American Community Center on April 19, 2002.

As Michigan is home to a thriving Philippine American population and Asian American community, we have the opportunity to recognize the accomplishments and contributions of a fabulous people. They possess a focused vision of their future and will do all they feel is necessary to ensure prosperity.

Today, the United States is enriched by the many Philippine Americans who have made this country their home. As the second largest Asian group in the United States, Philippine Americans are making their mark, serving as actors and novelists, elected officials and boxing champions. They have made major contributions to nearly every facet of American society. The Philippine American community adds to the wonderful diverse American culture by sharing with us their customs, traditions and beliefs.

The renaming of the Northland Park Court as "Philippine Street" attests to the wealth of the culture we have developed here in Michigan. The spirit and enthusiasm of the Philippine American community of Southeastern Michigan has been such an invaluable asset to our great state, and has truly been the driving force in their success.

I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Philippine American community of Michigan on this landmark day, and I salute them all for their tremendous contributions and support.