

COMMENDING MEDGAR WILEY
EVERS AND MYRLIE EVERS-WIL-
LIAMS FOR THEIR LIVES AND
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 17, 2003

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to applaud Congressman BENNIE G. THOMPSON (D-MS) for introducing H. Con. Res. 220, a resolution to honor Medgar Evers and his wife Myrlie Evers-Williams for their accomplishments in fighting for equality in civil rights for African-Americans.

While many history books rightfully acknowledge the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X and Rosa Parks as central leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, Evers was also an initial pioneer in the fight for racial justice.

Born July 2, 1925 near Decatur, Mississippi, Evers received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College. In response to the 1954 landmark Supreme Court case, Brown, which declared segregation in educational institutions unconstitutional, Evers applied for admission to the formerly segregated University of Mississippi Law School. Despite the ruling, and despite being qualified, he was denied admission. Upon this denial, Evers began working for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) as the Mississippi Field Secretary in order to effect change. This position included registering people to vote in Mississippi, organizing students at nearby colleges, coordinating and leading protest marches, and challenging bus segregation. Despite his professional successes with the NAACP, Evers was never able to pursue an advanced degree before his death.

Like many other civil rights activists of the time, brutality was often brought upon Evers. In fact, he was arrested, beaten, and jailed for his unswerving efforts to combat prejudice and discrimination. Tragically, on June 12, 1963, Evers was violently shot and killed in front of his home. Since his death, his widow, Myrlie Evers-Williams continues to speak out against discrimination and injustice. In 1995, Myrlie Evers-Williams was elected as the first woman chair of the NAACP.

So, Mr. Speaker it is only fitting that we gather to remember Medgar Evers for his contribution as a remarkable civil rights leader and for making the ultimate sacrifice in fighting for civil rights—his life.

This resolution speaks volumes about the state of civil rights in this nation forty years after Evers' assassination. I support this resolution wholeheartedly and urge all of my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 220.

HONORING WESLEY UHLAND

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 17, 2003

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I stand before this body of Congress today to honor a man who has been wounded on the field of battle while in the service of his nation. Wesley Uhlund, a 26-year-old Army Specialist, is a

mechanic who received a bullet to the abdomen after an ambush by Iraqi soldiers. However, doctors have assured Wesley and his family that he will make a full recovery. As he recuperates, I would like to recognize his admirable service before this Congress and this nation today.

Wesley graduated from Canon City High School in 1994 and joined the Army in 2000. He was stationed out of Fort Carson and was deployed in Operation Iraqi freedom on April 11, 2003. As a mechanic, Wesley is responsible for the care and maintenance of tanks, Humvees, and Bradley Fighting Vehicles. During the ambush in which he was shot, four of Wesley's companions were also wounded, though all were lucky enough to survive the incident. Wesley is recuperating in an Iraqi hospital and is to be transferred to Germany before traveling home to Colorado.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot fully express the gratitude and respect I feel for Wesley Uhlund. Each generation must renew its commitment to defend our liberties. Today in Iraq, a new generation of young Americans is fighting bravely for the freedom of others. I know that those who seek the true meaning of duty, honor, and sacrifice will find it in dedicated servants like Wesley Uhlund. This Congress and all Americans should feel proud that we have soldiers like Wesley Uhlund defending our great Nation. Thank you, Wesley, for putting your life on the line to honorably serve our country.

TRIBUTE TO CHRIS IAVELLI OF
BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN, EX-
CEPTIONAL TEACHER

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 17, 2003

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Speaker, Education is the key for our Nation's future prosperity and security. The formidable responsibility of molding and inspiring young minds to the avenues of hope, opportunity and achievement rests partly in the hands of our teachers. Today I would like to recognize a teacher from Battle Creek, Michigan that most influenced and motivated exceptional students in academics and leadership that were winners of the LeGrand Smith scholarship.

Miss Chris Iavelli teaches English at Harper Creek High School in Battle Creek, Michigan. She is credited for instilling in students an enthusiasm for the subject and for life itself. In one student's own words, "Miss Iavelli has taught me to seek the deeper meaning in all things and has encouraged me to always follow my dreams." The respect and gratitude of her students speaks well of Miss Iavelli's ability to challenge young minds to stretch the mental muscles and strive to achieve the best that is in them.

Chris Iavelli's excellence in teaching challenges and inspires students to move beyond the teen-age tendency toward surface study and encourage deeper thought and connections to the real world. No profession is more important in its influence and daily interaction with the future leaders of our community and our country, and Chris Iavelli's impact on her students is certainly deserving of recognition.

On behalf of the Congress of the United States of America, I am proud to extend our

highest praise to Miss Chris Iavelli as a master teacher. We thank her for her continuing dedication to teaching and her willingness and ability to challenge and inspire students for leadership and success.

CLASS ACTION FAIRNESS ACT OF
2003

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2003

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill, (H.R. 1115) to amend the procedures that apply to consideration of interstate class actions to assure fairer outcomes for class members and defendants, to outlaw certain practices that provide inadequate settlements for class members, to assure that attorneys do not receive a disproportionate amount of settlements at the expense of class members, to provide for clearer and simpler information in class action settlement notices, to assure prompt consideration of interstate class actions, to amend title 28, United States Code, to allow the application of the principles of Federal diversity jurisdiction to interstate class actions, and for other purposes.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong opposition to H.R. 1115, the Class Action Fairness Act of 2003. This bill is the third piece of legislation in a succession of tort reform vehicles offered by the majority this Congress. In offering H.R. 1115 today, the majority again seeks to manipulate our judicial system for the benefit of corporate America.

The Administration also strongly supports this bill. Yet, while both the Administration and the majority espouse the virtues of federalism and states' rights, this bill would severely limit, if not automatically remove, state court jurisdiction in the majority of class action cases. The anticipated result of this reduction caused Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist, long-time a devout Federalist, and the Judicial Conference of the United States, to openly denounce this bill because it would increase the caseload of the already overcrowded federal courts. And, because federal courts must expedite criminal matters over civil matters, this bill would make a plaintiff's remedy more costly due to the increased amount of time their case is kept pending on the federal docket.

Furthermore, besides giving jurisdiction over most class action lawsuits to federal district courts, this bill would also be applied retroactively so that pending cases would be subjected to its provisions. This would effectively include cases pending against Enron Corp., Worldcom Inc., and Tyco International Ltd. At a time of heightened concern over corporate wrongdoing, now is not the time for Congress to make it more difficult for injured consumers to bring class-action lawsuits.

Considering the above, this legislation further illuminates the majority's willingness to erode an individual's protections from corporate wrongdoing through the manipulation of our judiciary systems. As a result, I oppose passage of this bill and urge my colleagues to do so as well.