

House Leaders reminded us that the ideals spelled out in these documents—collectively called our “Charters of Freedom”—are spreading unstopably beyond United States borders.

I couldn't agree more. On the same day, I delivered a speech to the Center for Democracy and Technology's Democracy Day reception. To the audience of young people just starting to get involved in national affairs, I made similar points as heard down at the National Archives. The Constitution, a remarkable document, is the result of numerous forces, among them the Age of Enlightenment and the doctrine of natural law. In the 18th century, despotism provided the rule of the day throughout much of Europe. In challenging the goals and powers of Europe's institutions, the men of the Enlightenment advocated the liberty of the individual, the right to property, and the freedom of expression.

Rousseau and others outlined the legal equality of man and the sovereignty of the governed. Those who met in Philadelphia were well acquainted with these thoughts and incorporated them in the American Enlightenment. These concepts are clearly reflected in the Declaration of Independence and in our Constitution. Several of the amendments to the Constitution expand political participation to those who had been shut out of the process. The 15th amendment adopted in 1870 recognizes the voting rights of former slaves; the 19th extends the franchise to women, and the 26th reduced the voting age to 18. These were all steps to open the political process to the powerless.

With our freedom comes responsibility—an obligation to participate. People in this Nation have fought, bled, and died to preserve our freedom; and they have fought, bled, and died for the right to vote and to hold office. Although we are free to not participate, it is an insult to these men and women, the martyrs for freedom, if apathy replaces activism. I believe that we have a duty to share our freedom, to extend the benefits of freedoms to others.

Technology provides us many powerful tools, including the means to advocate for liberty. The repressive regimes of the world share a fear of information, and take great strides to control what their people are told. We saw in Iraq, and in Yugoslavia, and we still see in China and elsewhere, a repression of the Internet. Nearly one in 10 persons in the world has the ability to go on line. The Internet poses a significant threat to the forces of tyranny and provides a strong medium for advocating freedom. New ideas are a tyrant's worst nightmare, and through the Internet we can give them many sleepless nights.

On the day after Democracy Day, three former presidents of Eastern European nations, who know tyranny, wrote a joint OpEd in the Washington Post entitled “Building a Free Cuba”. Vaclav Havel, former president of the Czech Republic, Arpad Gonez, former president of Hungary, and Lech Walesa, former president of Poland, resoundingly rebuked the Castro regime for imprisoning 75 representatives of the Cuban opposition, including coordinators of the Varela Project, journalists, and other pro-democracy leaders. They were subject to mock trials and jokes of prison terms. At the same time, the free-thinking Cubans are making more noise, and Castro and his regime know that their days are numbered.

Finally, the 3 former Presidents eloquently presented what we, the free, can all do to help the Cuban freedom-fighters. While the U.S. has chosen an economic embargo, our European friends have taken different, more lenient approaches. But, Havel, Goncz, and Walesa point out that while we disagree on this policy, we can agree on this: vocally support the dissidents. Provide encouragement and comfort for Cuban dissidents, prisoners of conscience, and their families. Use technology, like the powerful Internet, to spread words of freedom like our Constitutional amendments did to fellow Americans. Let's make it clear to Cuba that a dictator is not welcome to join free countries at the international table. I am grateful and proud of the heritage of the United States, and encourage my fellow Americans and fellow liberty-enjoying citizens of the world in continuing the flourishing of the flower of democracy.

TRIBUTE TO SACRAMENTO
REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT

HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2003

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in tribute to Sacramento Regional Transit District. On September 26, 2003, the Sacramento Regional Transit District will celebrate the grand opening of the South Line Light Rail Extension Project. As the people of Sacramento gather to commemorate this momentous occasion, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in welcoming one of the Capital Region's most important transportation projects.

The Sacramento Regional Transit District began operations on April 1, 1973. During its first decade of service, the Sacramento Regional Transit continued to expand bus service to the growing Sacramento region while a cooperative effort emerged among city, county and state government officials to develop a light rail system. In 1987 the 18.3-mile light rail system opened, linking the northeastern (Interstate 80) and eastern (Highway 50) corridors with Downtown Sacramento.

Today, the Sacramento Regional Transit District (RT) operates 77 bus routes and 20.6 miles of light rail covering a 418 square-mile service area. Buses and light rail run 365 days a year using 36 light rail vehicles, 152 buses powered by compressed natural gas (CNG) and 55 diesel buses. Passenger amenities include 31 light rail stops or stations, nine bus and light rail transfer centers and 10 free park-and-ride lots. RT also serves more than 3,800 bus stops throughout Sacramento County.

Annual ridership has steadily increased on both the bus and light rail systems from 14 million passengers in 1987 to more than 27 million passengers in fiscal year 2002. Weekday light rail ridership averages about 29,500, which accounts for approximately 30 percent of the total system ridership. Bus weekday ridership has reached an average of 62,500 passengers per day.

The South Line Light Rail Extension Project is a two-phased, 11.2-mile extension of the existing line to south. Phase I, which extends 6.3 miles from Broadway south to Meadowview Road, is expected to increase daily ridership by 15,000 passengers by 2015.

Grounded on extensive community outreach, each of the seven new stations has been individually created to reflect the character of the neighborhoods they serve.

The South Line Light Rail Extension Project comes at an important in the renaissance of the South Sacramento area. South Sacramento's population is expected to grow from 67,313 in 1998 to over 85,000 in 2022. The South Line Light Rail Extension Project will provide residents of the area with less traffic congestion, improve mobility in and around the downtown area, reduce parking demands and costs, and improve air quality. For these reasons, the South Line Light Rail Extension Project serves as a shining example of the great value of public transportation and the benefits of investing in local, state, and federal partnerships.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to welcome the South Line Light Rail Extension to the South Sacramento Community. I would like to thank all the people who, through their commitment and hard work, have made this project a reality. I am confident that this project will yield tremendous benefits for the people of Sacramento. I ask all my colleagues to join with me in wishing the Sacramento Regional Transit District continued success in all its future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE REV.
JAMES WASHINGTON STEPHERSON

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2003

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to one of our community's most remarkable leaders, the late Rev. James Washington Stepherson. He genuinely exuded the noble attributes that define the character of God's chosen steward in his role as the Good Shepherd of various churches throughout Georgia and Florida.

On Saturday, September 20, 2003, at 10 a.m., Commissioner Barbara Carey-Shuler, chairwoman of the Miami-Dade County Board of Commissioners, will lead elected and appointed officials and community leaders, at ceremonies that will name 2799 N.W. 46th Street as the Rev. J.W. Stepherson Street. This event will symbolically consign his countless deeds of good work to the lasting appreciation of our generation and generations more to come.

Born to the late Israel and Janie Hill Stepherson on September 22, 1914, in Jacksonville, GA, Rev. Stepherson preached his first sermon in 1946 at Kings Chapel Baptist Church in Abba, GA, and was subsequently ordained in that year by the late Rev. H.J. Walker.

Historic milestones characterized Reverend Stepherson's pastoral service. In 1959 he visited Miami, FL, and became enamored of the Antioch Missionary Baptist Church of Brownsville. After preaching at this church on two occasions, the Board of Deacons offered him an invitation to become the pastor of the church. He accepted this providential offer, and the rest was history. As a visionary, he ordained and licensed countless clergymen and deacons throughout the State and across the Nation. Under his leadership more than 5,000 souls were led to Christ, as he fervently persevered to deepen his insights and expand his

knowledge by enrolling at Bryant Theological Seminary in Georgia, Florida Memorial College and Barry University in Miami-Dade County.

The 17th Congressional District of Florida and its contiguous cities and neighborhoods will surely miss the dedication of this Man of God. The timeliness of his wisdom and the focus of his expertise guided us in committing ourselves to the well-being of the less fortunate, the voiceless and the underrepresented. By establishing the People United to Lead the Struggle for Equality (PULSE), he led the memberships of the Baptist Ministers Council, the Religious Leaders Coalition and the General State Convention to stand by and continue the mission of the civil rights movement.

He was often heard to define the role of the church in its stewardship over the voiceless and the disenfranchised members of society as something analogous to the role that the civil rights leaders played as they resiliently struggled through the harrowing challenges of racial equality and the demands for simple justice and equal opportunity.

I was truly privileged to enjoy the friendship of this quintessential Man of God in his understanding of and commitment to the less fortunate and downtrodden in our community. The sharpness of his mind, the timeliness of his common sense and the courage of his conviction served to strengthen and guide us when our community and the state of Florida needed someone to put in perspectives the agony and pain of disenfranchised African-Americans and other voiceless minorities yearning to belong and pursue the promise of the American dream.

We lost this giant of a leader when Reverend Stepherson died in the service of his God and his fellowmen on September 8, 1998. Indeed, he exemplified a calm but reasoned leadership whose stewardship and advocacy buttressed our hope for a brighter future. While he is sorely missed by our community, particularly the congregation of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church of Brownsville, we will once again be given the opportunity to thank God for uplifting our lives through the stewardship of Reverend Stepherson, who faithfully and religiously consecrated his noble efforts on our behalf.

This fitting but symbolic ceremony is but one small measure of our genuine acknowledgement for his remarkable contributions to the good name of our community. Our collective pride in sharing his friendship is only exceeded by our gratitude for all that he has sacrificed on our behalf. This is the legacy with which we will honor his memory.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF GARY T. PUMA

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2003

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the career of Gary T. Puma, the president and chief executive officer of Presbyterian Homes and Services of Princeton for his more than twenty-five years of service to New Jersey's senior citizens and their families.

Mr. Puma's dedication to meeting the needs of the elderly began when he was an under-

graduate at John Fisher College, where he was active in creating a gerontology department. His dream of helping the elderly led him to service on the N.J. State Department of Health and Senior Service—Assisted Living Task Force and the N.J. Housing Mortgage and Finance Authority—Assisted Living Financing Task Force. His expertise has also resulted in testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives and in assisting with the drafting of affordable housing regulations for New Jersey.

Mr. Puma's own Italian immigrant grandparents were his inspiration. Knowing how hard they worked to create a good life for his family here in America gave him a life-long determination to help other older people at a time when they were in need and deserved first-rate housing and care. Because of his grandparents, Mr. Puma has worked tirelessly to bring to life his vision of an organization with a wide spectrum of care and housing options to assist as many seniors as possible. Mr. Puma has refused to accept anything less than excellence in every aspect of the Presbyterian Homes and Services. Under his guidance, Presbyterian Homes and Services received the 1996 New Jersey Governor's Award for Excellence in Affordable Housing.

Wanting to help seniors age in place at home, Mr. Puma conceived of and championed the State's first subsidized assisted living program for seniors who lived in affordable housing. This innovative program has served as a model for other communities in New Jersey and throughout the country, and it has been recognized by AARP and the Assisted Living Federation of America.

As an inspiration to individuals in New Jersey and throughout the country, Gary T. Puma has contributed significantly to the quality of life of thousands of senior citizens regardless of their income or denomination. He has earned our heartfelt appreciation for his efforts. Please join me in congratulating him for his many years of service.

OPINION PIECE FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2003

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with my colleagues the following opinion piece from the New York Times on Sunday, September 21, 2003. Written by Mark L. Kimmey, a lieutenant colonel in the United States Army Reserve and a systems engineer in civilian life, this piece portrays Reservists' frustration with the Defense Department's recent decision to prolong their deployment.

BOOTS ON THE GROUND, FAMILY BACK HOME
(By Mark L. Kimmey)

The Army's decision to keep its Reserve forces in Iraq on duty for a full year from their arrival may have profound consequences for both the Army and the war in Iraq. While the Army will gain increased flexibility with its "boots on the ground," the long deployments may demoralize reservists. When mobilization and demobilization are included, 12 months on duty in Iraq will mean a 14- to 16-month separation from family and career for reservists.

"Fair doesn't mean equal," a battalion commander once told me. But the message

to reservists is unmistakable: the Army no longer takes into account sacrifices made to maintain two careers and lives. Many reservists will watch the regular soldiers with whom they came to Iraq go home before they do. The Army may not care about the disparity between the way the forces are treated, but those of us in the Reserve do.

Everyone knows that the regular and Reserve units of the Army are not equal. Regulars are better trained, better equipped and expected to execute their missions more professionally. That's the way it should be: it's their job—their only job.

Reservists have jobs in the civilian world. For a reservist, every day in uniform is a day away from what might be (or might have been) a promising career. Despite the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination against an employee because of military service, we understand that when a dispute with an employer arises, the reservist always loses—even if the employer is forced to take us back. What's more, many of us don't serve long enough to qualify for a military pension—and even if we do, it's not enough to compensate for opportunities missed while we were deployed.

Hardships on Reserve families have increased with longer and more frequent deployments. Reservists don't always have ready access to a military base and its support programs. Left to fend for themselves, Reserve families are becoming more vocal about their unhappiness with the situation. Politicians may not be listening to their complaints, but you can bet we husbands and wives overseas are hearing their pain.

The Army is fond of bragging about the advantages of the all-volunteer force. But reservists are volunteers, too. We sign up for the Reserve when we leave the Army because we want to continue to serve with people we respect. We sign up because we want to serve our country. We sign up for extra income or educational benefits. Some of us sign up to be part of history, for the possibility of adventure. But nobody signs up for occupation duty, especially occupation of a country that never officially surrendered.

It is not a question of performing our duty. I have served as a peacekeeper in the Balkans, a job that most of us found hard but acceptable. Even though most active-duty soldiers were deployed to Bosnia or Kosovo on 180-day assignments—90 days shorter than us reservists—my unit didn't suffer from a flood of resignations after Balkan duty. In fact, we laughed that reservists were providing more continuity there than the regulars.

The problem in Iraq is that the Army doesn't seem to know what to do with us. The Army has only one civil affairs battalion on active duty. Its job is to get in fast, stabilize the situation and then hand responsibilities to a mobilized Reserve unit as quickly as possible.

That's where my Reserve civil affairs brigade comes in. I am a communications officer in a unit filled with higher-ranking officers. Why so many senior soldiers in a civil affairs brigade? Because our knowledge, skills and experience, gained in the civilian world, make us valuable in rebuilding countries like Iraq and Afghanistan.

In the case of my brigade, we've had nothing to do for almost a month. We were originally deployed in support of the First Marine Expeditionary Force, but when it went south to Kuwait at the end of August to begin its journey home, we were left to cool our heels. Our three battalions were dispersed on far-flung assignments. One battalion was sent to Bosnia on a scheduled peacekeeping rotation; another was split, with half reinforcing the 101st Air Assault Division. The remaining soldiers are filling holes in my own unit.