

October 2, 2003

On behalf of Congress, I extend congratulations to Cole Wood for winning this essay contest and for reminding all public servants why we are here today.

MOBILE MACHINERY TAX  
FAIRNESS ACT

**HON. PAUL RYAN**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 2, 2003*

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, along with Congressman POMEROY and 79 original cosponsors from both sides of the aisle, to introduce the Mobile Machinery Tax Fairness Act. This legislation is designed to preserve the longstanding exemption of special mobile equipment, or "mobile machinery," from federal highway excise taxes.

Mr. Speaker, since the highway trust fund was originally created almost 50 years ago, it has been the policy of the federal government to exclude from taxation certain vehicles whose primary purpose is to perform an off-road function. Mobile machines, such as mobile cranes, concrete pumpers, and mobile drill rigs, bucket trucks, and digger derricks, only use the public highways to travel back and forth from the job site, and sometimes stay there for weeks or months at a time.

However, in June of 2002, with little debate and no input from Congress, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) proposed a complete elimination of the mobile machinery exemption.

If adopted, the IRS proposal would force businesses that use mobile machinery to pay the vehicle excise tax (12 percent of the chassis price) and, the motor fuel tax (18.4 cents per gallon on gas and 24.4 cents per gallon on diesel), as well as the tire excise tax and heavy vehicle use tax.

This change would cost the affected businesses tens of millions of dollars each year in increased taxes. Furthermore, a significant majority of the firms that would be paying this tax are smaller businesses in economically sensitive industries such as commercial and residential construction, oil and gas production, and timber harvesting.

Finally, the IRS proposal would undermine current economic policy by counteracting, and in some cases eliminating, the depreciation bonus for new equipment enacted by Congress as part of the "Post-9/11" economic stimulus package.

IRS has since delayed its regulatory proposal. However, it is now using two recent Federal court decisions to effectively deny nearly all claims for mobile machinery-related tax refunds.

Only Congress can head off IRS's actions and restore the exemption which has served industry for 26 years. My legislation simply preserves the current regulatory exemption in statutory form and I ask my colleagues to support this important legislation.

HONORING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF WARTRACE, TENNESSEE

**HON. BART GORDON**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 2, 2003*

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 150th anniversary of one of the friendliest towns you will ever find—Wartrace, Tennessee. Established as a railroad depot, the town was chartered by Bedford County on October 3, 1853.

Early frontier settlers endured fighting between British and French soldiers and attacks by hostile Indians. Legend even has it that the town was named after an old Cherokee Indian war trail. But as the frontier moved westward and the area became more civilized, industry and tourism flourished with the railroad.

Today the town has settled into a less hectic pace of life. Wartrace is now a small Middle Tennessee community with a strong sense of unity and a desirable quality of life. I congratulate its leaders and Mayor Donald Gallagher for developing Wartrace into a safe, neighborly community. May the town's next 150 years be as prosperous and successful as its first 150 years.

HONORING KERRY G. NEIS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY CIVILIAN FIREFIGHTER

**HON. TERRY EVERETT**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 2, 2003*

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to a hero from my congressional district in Alabama who gave his life in the line of duty. Kerry G. Neis of Enterprise died last December as a result of an accident during a training mission at Fort Rucker, Alabama.

Neis, a Department of the Army Civilian firefighter stationed at Fort Rucker, leaves behind a wife, Katherine, and their daughter, Sarah.

Neis' dedication to duty has earned him the respect of not only his comrades at Fort Rucker and across the Wiregrass, but among his peers around the nation. He will be honored along with America's other fallen firefighter heroes during the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation's Memorial Weekend conducted this October 4 and 5 in Washington, DC.

The following is an excerpt from a tribute to her late husband submitted by Katherine Neis for the Memorial Weekend ceremony.

At 31 years old, Kerry was shockingly taken from us on December 4, 2002 in a tragic accident, when his firetruck jumped out of gear and ran away. No one, not his crew, his captain, or fellow firefighters could have expected it, and it was over before any of them even knew what had happened. But even in death, Kerry's life of service and dreams of helping others in need continue. New training procedures have been implemented and new safety mechanisms have been installed on the trucks. Kerry is still working hard to ensure the happiness and security of us all.

On behalf of this House, I offer my condolences to Kerry Neis' family as we remember the life and sacrifice of one of America's heroes.

TRIBUTE TO IRA AND KATHY GRIBIN

**HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 2, 2003*

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to my good friends, Ira and Kathy Gribin, who are being honored by the Hope Through Housing Foundation with the prestigious Founder's Award. Their commitment to providing affordable housing for low-income families in Southern California has earned them this recognition.

I have had the privilege of working with Ira for many years and know first-hand of his strong work ethic and legendary accomplishments. Ira has been a leader in the real estate business since 1946 and has been an active member of numerous national and local realtor associations for many years. He served as President of the National Association of Realtors, the Realtors National Marketing Institute, the California Association of Realtors and the San Fernando Valley Board of Realtors. Additionally, he has served as a board member of many real estate and non-profit organizations and is co-founder of Gribin von Dyl, Realtors.

Ira's vast knowledge on issues related to real estate, financing and management has helped him become a renowned and sought after authority in these fields. He has taught at the University of Southern California and California State University Northridge, and has also served on the University of California President's Advisory Committee. The demand for Ira's talents has transcended the private sector into the public service arena as well. He served as Commissioner of Transportation and Commissioner of the Housing Authority for the City of Los Angeles.

I have known Kathy for many years, and can attest to her invaluable service and outstanding contributions to the Hope Through Housing Foundation. Prior to her arrival in California, she enjoyed a fruitful career as a school teacher. Once in California, she became a successful real estate broker. In 1992, she expanded her career, earning an M.A. in Marriage, Family and Child Counseling. Her education and experience made her keenly aware of the acute need for affordable housing in Southern California and prompted her to dedicate time, energy and resources to creating affordable housing for low-income children, seniors and families. She used her business acumen and extensive knowledge of the industry to positively impact numerous low-income families. Kathy is currently President of Desert Horizons Women's Club, a member of the Board of Directors of Desert Horizons Owners Association and an avid golfer.

On a personal note, both Ira and Kathy are wonderful human beings, delightful to be with and deeply committed to humanitarian ideals. I think it's particularly noteworthy that Ira—as a leader in the California Association of Realtors 39 years ago—played a decisive and public role in fighting an initiative designed to repeal California's Fair Housing law. It took great courage to take a view not widely held by his professional colleagues at that time, and he put himself into considerable potential risk to his business endeavors, but Ira nonetheless steadfastly affirmed his opposition to racism and his commitment to the American dream of affordable housing for all people.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating and thanking Ira and Kathy Gribin for their many outstanding contributions and to wish them continued success.

RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING  
THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS  
OF ALTHEA GIBSON, H. RES. 386

**HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 2, 2003*

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, it is with a profound sense of pride that I rise today in support of the Resolution, sponsored by Representative JUANITA MILLENDER-McDONALD, commemorating the life and achievements of the great African American tennis legend, Althea Gibson. This trailblazer died on Sunday, September 28, 2003 at the age of 76. I stand here today to pay tribute to her fighting spirit.

Mr. Speaker, long before there was a Venus or Serena Williams there was Althea Gibson. As we celebrate the impressive records accumulated by these two tennis stars we often forget that it was just a little over 50 years ago that tennis was an all-white sport.

Born on August 25, 1927 in Silver, South Carolina, this 5-foot-11 black woman boldly challenged the conventional wisdom of the day. Overcoming the depths of racism and adversity, Althea Gibson's pioneering efforts to integrate the sport paved the way for the likes of Arthur Ashe, Venus and Serena Williams, Tiger Woods, and future generations of aspiring African American athletes. America owes her a tremendous debt.

Her list of accomplishments is impressive. Breaking the color barrier in the 1950s, Althea Gibson became the first African American woman to compete at and win the Wimbledon and U.S. national tennis titles. She was also the first African American player on the Ladies Professional Golfers Association Tour. Between 1956 and 1958, Althea Gibson captured the Wimbledon and United States championships and won the French Open and three Wimbledon doubles titles. In 1957, she was the first African American to be voted by the Associated Press as its Female Athlete of the Year. She won that honor again in 1958.

Ms. Gibson attended Florida A&M University where she was initiated as a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated. She died as a "golden soror" of this elite organization after being a member of the sorority for over 50 years.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I leave you with words that are attributed to this great first lady of tennis— ". . . here stands before you a Negro woman, raised in Harlem, who went on to become a tennis player . . . and finally wound up being a world champion, in fact the first black woman champion of the world."

Mr. Speaker, again it is my honor and privilege to lend my wholehearted support to this important resolution—which honors and commemorates the life and achievements of this great African American woman. I urge all of my colleagues to support the Resolution, H. Res. 386, which honors the indomitable spirit of Althea Gibson.

SUPPORTING GOALS OF IMMI-  
GRANT WORKERS FREEDOM  
RIDE

**HON. BETTY McCOLLUM**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 2, 2003*

Mr. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, hundreds of immigrant workers all over the country converged in Washington on their way to New York City as part of the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride. They are here to raise awareness about the plight of immigrant workers.

Over the years, the United States has been called a nation of immigrants. The fact that we are a melting pot for so many different cultures, races and religions makes us unique in the world. It has helped mold our national character. For more than 300 years, various ethnic, cultural, and social groups have come to our shores to reunite with their loved ones, to seek economic opportunity, and to find a haven from religious and political persecution. They bring their hopes and dreams and in turn, contribute, enrich and energize America.

In my home state of Minnesota, immigrants have worked hard to establish a rich culture and strong economy.

Many immigrants in my state become American citizens. In 2002, over 5,400 immigrants became American citizens in Minnesota. Sixty-five percent of immigrants in my state who are eligible for naturalization become citizens.

These new Americans work hard, pay taxes and make indispensable contributions to our economy. Through their tax payments, they help finance the costs of schools, health care, roads, welfare payments, Social Security, and the nation's defense.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of a resolution introduced by my colleagues Representatives HILDA SOLIS and MIKE HONDA supporting the goals of the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride: to create a clear road to citizenship for all immigrant workers, allow workers to reunite their families, ensure immigrants' civil rights and liberties, and protect the rights of immigrants in the workplace.

Our country was founded on the strength of our immigrant communities. A strong immigration system is a sign of a confident and successful nation, and we should welcome those who, in that spirit, seek to make the United States their home.

IN HONOR OF DR. JOAN PATON  
ACOSTA

**HON. XAVIER BECERRA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 2, 2003*

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, it is with utmost pleasure and privilege that I rise today to recognize and pay tribute to Dr. Joan Paton Acosta, an outstanding educator, a passionate advocate for our youth, and a wonderful friend and confidant. Dr. Acosta will retire this Thursday, October 2, 2003, after 38 years of exceptional service to the students and families of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD).

A Los Angeles native, Joan is a product of the very school district to which she committed

her professional career. She is a proud alumna of 68th Elementary, Audubon Junior High, and Dorsey High School. Her public education served her well on the path toward achieving a masters from California State University at Los Angeles in 1968, and a doctorate from Claremont Graduate University in 1978.

Joan has become such an indispensable asset at LAUSD, with so many accomplishments, that her curriculum vitae is not stored on its computer database, but within the veteran microfiche files. She began her career with the school district on February 1, 1965, as a third grade teacher at Ford Boulevard Elementary School. Since that initial teaching position, Joan has worked as a special education teacher, an advisor and administrative coordinator at the Office of Legislation and Government Affairs, an administrator at the Office of Chief Advisor, and as an administrator in legislation and grants for the Division of Special Education. In 1984, Joan received the prestigious Theodore Bass Memorial Teacher in Politics Award, for her political activism and contribution to education.

Los Angeles families are forever indebted to Dr. Acosta for her instrumental role in the pursuit of an accurate Census for the year 2000. Her work organizing LAUSD's "We Count" outreach campaign targeting typically undercounted and highly mobile minority families ensured that thousands of Angelenos were counted, many for the first time.

Mr. Speaker, most of us wake up in the morning and, after subduing the regular aches and pains of life, move on to enjoy another day. We take for granted that simplicity of life. Joan Acosta understood how precious and complex living each and every "next day" could be, especially for our children. Joan leaves her work in Los Angeles and our nation's capitol, Washington D.C., as a true champion for disabled students. I am personal witness to—and willing victim of—her tenacious advocacy for increased funding for special education programs and reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities and Education Act.

In addition to her hard work and dedication to the students of LAUSD, Joan has also fought for the teachers of the Los Angeles Unified School District. Joan was one of the initial organizers of United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA), which today represents the 44,000 teachers, counselors, psychologists, and nurses in LAUSD. Widely recognized by the teaching community as a leader, Joan has been elected by her fellow educators to represent them on the Board of Directors of UTLA, all the way to the 2.7 million strong National Education Association (NEA), where she served as the alternate to the NEA Board of Directors from California, and as a member of the body's Resolutions Committee.

Regardless of what department or position Joan has served, she has always left a lasting mark, thanks to her professional demeanor, devotion to education, and cheerful disposition. Her smile is infectious, and I have never known her to start a day without it. Joan has rightfully earned her reputation as a dedicated public servant, committed educator, and advocate for the rights of all students and employees of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Joan's retirement marks the final chapter in a distinguished career in education that began and ends in Los Angeles. I wish her much luck and leisure in the days to come when she