

EXPRESSING SUPPORT AND APPRECIATION FOR THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES PARTICIPATING IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

SPEECH OF

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 20, 2003

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, based on the misleading and erroneous statement made by the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. HOYER, I feel compelled to correct the record. In an effort to suggest inconsistencies in my historical support and commendation of the troops, Mr. HOYER stated that on December 13, 1995, I voted against a resolution regarding Armed Forces deployment to Bosnia that resolved, "That the House of Representatives unequivocally supports the men and women of the United States Armed Forces who are carrying out their mission in support of peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina with professional excellence, dedicated patriotism, and exemplary bravery." However, a simple examination of the record tells a different story.

What the gentleman from Maryland failed to note, is that on December 13, 1995, the House considered two competing resolutions on the deployment of the United States Armed Forces to Bosnia—House Resolution 302 sponsored by Mr. BUYER and House Resolution 306 sponsored by Mr. Hamilton. If the Hamilton resolution had consisted of only the resolved clause, which my colleague quoted, I would have supported it. However, H. Res. 306 was compiled mostly of whereas clauses that justified the deployment of our Armed Forces to the former Yugoslavia. Had my colleague thoroughly researched this, he might have noticed that, also on December 13, 1995, I opposed this deployment by voting for Mr. Dornan's bill, H.R. 2770, which would have prohibited federal funds from being used for peacekeeping operations or any implementation force in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I, instead, voted for the Buyer resolution, which expressed dissatisfaction with the President's policy of deployment and his disregard of the action taken by the House on two separate occasions to disallow the use of United States Armed Forces for these purposes. Nonetheless, this resolution also declared that the House of Representatives, "... is confident that the members of the United States Armed Forces, in whom it has the greatest pride and admiration, will perform their responsibilities with professional excellence, dedicated patriotism, and exemplary courage. . . ."

Incidentally, the Buyer resolution passed the House by a vote of 287 to 141, with one voting present. The resolution Mr. HOYER criticized me for voting against, the Hamilton resolution, failed by a vote of 190 to 237, also with one voting present.

It is truly unfortunate that Mr. HOYER made such a misleading statement and questioned my unfailing dedication to the young men and women of our Armed Forces.

HONORING SENATOR CHARLES POOCHIGIAN

HON. DEVIN NUNES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 31, 2003

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of an extraordinary Californian, whom I have the privilege of Representing in Congress, California State Senator Charles S. Poochigian. I am proud to have the opportunity to spend a few minutes of my time in the House to share with the people of the United States how wonderful Chuck is and what a great asset he is to the people he serves.

Chuck Poochigian is an outstanding public servant but more importantly, he is a wonderful husband, father and member of his community. Anywhere you go in Chuck's hometown, you will find adoring friends, supporters and, of course, the many members of his extended family. He and his wife, Debbie, have worked to achieve a balanced life of faith, family and community service and are blessed with three outstanding children, Mark, Kirk and Laura.

Chuck has been a member of the California State Senate for four years and had previously served in the California State Assembly. In addition, he spent time in the Administration's of two California Governors. However, the more important measure of his outstanding service can be found in his commitment to the people he represents and to his proud heritage as an Armenian American.

Chuck has managed to achieve the meritorious recognition of many prominent organizations, ranging from the California State Sheriff's Association to the California State Student's Association. Throughout his career in public service, Chuck Poochigian has tempered his political ambition with a strong belief in family, faith and an understanding of the founding principals of our democracy. Demonstrating the high esteem to which he is held, The California Journal commended Chuck for his integrity, intelligence and problem solving abilities rating him as "Rookie of the Year" during his freshman term in office. Mr. Speaker, these accolades could not have been bestowed on a more worthy public servant.

It is also fitting at this time to express how important Chuck has been to the cause of advocating the special concerns of the Armenian Community in the California Legislature and I wish to publicly commend him on his pending receipt of the Armenian National Committee of Central California's Man of the Year Award, which is to be presented on April 12th in Fresno, California.

INTRODUCING THE VOTER OUTREACH AND TURNOUT EXPANSION ACT OF 2003

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 31, 2003

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Voter Outreach and Turnout Expansion Act of 2003. The VOTE Act encompasses the best state voting practices in the country and is a progressive ap-

proach toward further reforming the way we run our elections.

Last year, in passing the Help America Vote Act, Congress made the historic statement that the federal government does in fact play a role in establishing minimum standards in federal elections. Today, as the fight to fund the Help America Vote Act continues in the 108th Congress, it is also appropriate for Congress to consider legislation that expands voting opportunities for all Americans far beyond those of current law.

Many states across the country have already taken steps to expand accessibility to the polls and encourage its citizens to vote. Now, riding the coattails of the Help America Vote Act, Congress must do the same.

To accomplish this important task, Mr. Speaker, the VOTE Act takes aim at combating voter apathy through same day voter registration, early voting, no excuse absentee voting, improved registration by mail procedures, the establishment of an Election Day holiday, and guaranteed leave on election day to allow employees to vote. Specifically, the legislation does the following:

The VOTE Act requires states to establish same-day voter registration procedures. Under the legislation, voters who have not previously registered to vote will be permitted to register on election day at the appropriate polling location and vote in that election. To address concerns over voter fraud that in the past so many of my colleagues have suggested occurs, voters are required to present proof of residence and written confirmation pursuant to the Help America Vote Act. Title I of the bill is linked to the enforcement provisions of the Help America Vote Act to ensure states' compliance.

Further, the VOTE Act requires local elections supervisors to establish early voting polling locations within the jurisdiction where registered voters will be able to vote prior to election day. Early voting must commence no less than 22 days, or three weeks, prior to election day and shall be made available to voters during normal business hours each weekday. Additionally, elections supervisors must make early voting available to voters on no less than two weekend days during the three weeks.

The bill also prohibits states and local supervisors from requiring voters to provide a reason for voting absentee. All too often, voters become discouraged from voting absentee, or just voting at all, because they are required to provide a reason. This is just plain wrong. Voting should not be a test where excuses are not permitted. On the contrary, absentee voting should be an option—and an easy one to take advantage of at that.

The VOTE Act also amends the Help America Vote Act to require that election supervisors provide voters with adequate time and opportunity to complete their mail-in voter registration form. In instances where the state registration deadline has already passed, supervisors are required to inform the voter of same-day voter registration opportunities that exist.

Further, my legislation requires that federal employees be given the day off on Election Day and encourages states to make Election Day a legal holiday and provide paid leave for state government employees.

Finally, the VOTE Act requires private companies with 25 or more employees to allow their staff to take up to 2 hours of paid or unpaid leave time to vote. Employees who live

more than 25 miles away from their workplace are allowed to take up to three hours of leave. Enforcement of these provisions is tied into the Family Medical Leave Act. By and large, Americans who do not vote cite employment as the top reason for not voting. The VOTE Act allows them to work and vote without the fear of losing their jobs in the process.

My legislation, Mr. Speaker, is not the silver bullet to improving our election system. However, it draws upon the best practices in the country in an effort to maximize voter turnout and participation in the democratic process. Congress cannot and will not drive up participation in elections without the progressive minded approach that is embedded in the VOTE Act.

If we do not make it easier for people to vote, then they just won't. Congress must provide voters with more opportunities to vote. If it does not, then national turnout percentages will rarely exceed 50 percent, and we will never be able to call ourselves a true democracy.

I urge my colleagues to support the VOTE Act and call on the Leadership to bring it to the floor for its immediate consideration.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ALBANY
STATE!

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 31, 2003

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate one of our country's truly great institutions of higher learning, Albany State University—which this year is celebrating its 100th birthday.

Albany State, located in Albany, Georgia in the heart of our state's Second Congressional District, opened its doors in 1903 as a privately funded institution as the Albany Bible and Manual Training Institute, serving young African American men and women in an area where few educational opportunities were then available.

Today, the university, now a part of the state system, serves an increasingly diverse student body while continuing to fulfill its historic mission in reaching out to our region's underserved populations.

Albany State's first job is to provide an excellent education to its students, offering a wide range of undergraduate and graduate degrees and a variety of non-degree educational programs.

But Albany State also does much more.

This highly committed, creative, vibrant educational complex has made, and is making, a major contribution to the growth of the whole community and region through its research, outreach and public service activities.

The history of Albany State is one of steady growth and success.

In the early years, the school provided much needed teacher and vocational training. In 1917, the school became a two-year state-supported college with a new name, the Georgia Normal and Agricultural College, with programs in teaching and agriculture. In 1943, the growing institution again acquired a new name, Albany State College. Over the ensuing years, Albany State added more and more undergraduate and eventually graduate degrees, and university status was granted in 1996.

Albany State has been blessed with outstanding leadership. Dr. Joseph Winthrop Holley was the first President, and he served in that capacity for 40 years. He was succeeded by Dr. Aaron Brown; Dr. William H. Dennis; Dr. Thomas Miller Jenkins; Dr. Charles L. Hayes, and Dr. Billy C. Black. Albany State's current president is among the country's leading educational figures, Dr. Portia Holmes Shields, whose sister is our own Eleanor Holmes Norton.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to place in the Record part of Albany State's Centennial Resolution, which says:

Whereas, Albany State University's tradition of excellence has been the result of dedicated service by faculty, staff, students and community;

Whereas, Albany State University is a progressive institution fostering the growth and development of the region, state and nation through teaching, research, creative expression and public service;

Whereas, Albany State University embraces the concept of 'students first' as a core institutional value, promotes global learning, and is committed to educational excellence with special emphasis on the underserved while continuing to serve the educational needs of an increasingly diverse student population;

Whereas, Albany State University celebrates throughout the year of our Lord two thousand and three the centennial theme, "A Glorious Past to Cherish, An Infinite Future to Fulfill";

Whereas, Albany State University is recognized for its unwavering commitment to graduating empowered leaders, building better communities and making the difference.

Now therefore be it *resolved* That April 4, 2003 is recognized as Albany State University Day in the City of Albany in recognition of the Centennial Founders Day celebration of Albany State University.

Happy Birthday, Albany State!

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 31, 2003

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, during rollcall vote No. 87 on H.R. 1104, Feeney of Florida amendment, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 31, 2003

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, the great issues of war and peace have rightfully dominated the news and the focus of our attention as a people and as a legislative body during the month of March. Nevertheless, other events must continue on.

March, of course, is Women's History Month. It is not designated Women's History Month because we may ignore the role and history of women for the other eleven months of the year. Quite the opposite. We have designated March as Women's History Month to highlight, for on-going consideration, the status, condition and progress of women.

The Congress established Women's History Week in 1981 and expanded it to Women's History Month in 1987. In that short period Women's History Month has become a time when men and women learn about the history of more than half of our population, much of which is not recorded in standard history books. The rediscovery of our "missing" history has been a beneficent thing for America.

As for the status of women, this year we note with satisfaction that women have made progress toward equality. At the same time, we remain deeply concerned about how far women need to go before they achieve what simple fairness and justice would demand: full equality.

Mr. Speaker, just a few numbers to highlight the current status of women:

The median earnings of women age 15 and older who worked full time, year around, after adjustment for inflation, increased 3.5 percent in 2001, the fifth consecutive increase. Women in this group earn \$0.76 for every dollar their male counterparts earn. This ratio represents an all-time high according to the census bureau.

The gap between men and women with college degrees has not closed completely, but the percentages are close: 25 percent of women age 25 and over now have a bachelor's degree or higher compared with 29 percent of men. For younger women, age 25 to 34, 33 percent hold a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 29 percent of their male counterparts of the same age. Young women also have a higher high school completion rate than young men: 89 percent v. 85 percent.

The percentage of women who cast a ballot in the last Presidential election was 61 percent compared with 58 percent of men. Women have voted at higher rates than men in every Presidential election since 1984.

There are now 10 million single mothers up from 3 million in 1970. Overall about 26 percent of all parent-child situations consist of a single mother and her own children up from 12 percent in 1970.

Women are far more likely than men to live in poverty, especially seniors. According to the census bureau 12 percent of women age 65 and older lived in poverty compared with 7 percent of men.

Nearly 16 percent of men age 15 and older who worked full time in 2001 earned \$75,000 per year compared with 6 percent of women. About 20 percent of men earned \$50,000 to \$75,000 compared to 12 percent of women.

Mr. Speaker, there are especially troubling increases in the number of women who are in prison and there remain significant disparities between men and women in health care and other vital social indices.

Mr. Speaker, women may not have had their history fully recorded, but they have always assumed their full share and more in the building of our nation, in creating and protecting America's families, in developing art, culture and science, public policy, health care, education and any other field one can name. However, it has required constant struggle on the part of women.

Thus, women have always played an important part in shaping public opinion but it was not until 1916 that Jeanette Rankin of Montana became the first woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and not until 1992 that Carol Moseley Braun became the first African American woman elected to the U.S. Senate.