

HONORING THE FALLEN SOLDIERS OF SOUTH TEXAS, DISTRICT 28

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 21, 2004

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to join with my colleagues in this, the People's House, to observe a moment of silence for those who have fallen on the battlefield in Iraq. These brave men and women answered the call to duty, set forth to foreign lands, and died in defense of our basic values. As they gave their lives to promote democracy, let's recommit ourselves here at home, in their memory, to promote liberty for all in this great land of ours and across the globe.

Our hearts go out to the families of those who have fallen, to their parents, children, spouses and friends. They made the ultimate sacrifice. We must never forget that sacrifice and that made by their loved ones.

Today, I recognize three fallen soldiers from my district in South Texas: SPC Jose Amancio Perez, III, U.S. Army, of San Diego, Texas; Lance Corporal Ruben Valdez, Jr., U.S. Marine Corps, of San Diego, Texas and Sergeant Michael Paul Barrera, U.S. Army, of Von Ormy, Texas.

They embodied the fighting spirit of Texas and their commitment to the United States of America will never be forgotten. I thank their families for allowing their sons to serve our great Nation and ask that they and their sons be remembered in thoughts and prayers.

RECOGNIZING PARTICIPANTS IN NATIONAL FORENSIC LEAGUE NATIONAL DEBATE TOUR- NAMENT

HON. ROB BISHOP

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 21, 2004

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, as the final day of competition for the National Forensic League National Debate Tournament concludes, I would like to recognize the students, coaches, and judges who have participated in this year's event. The Beehive Nationals Tournament is the culmination of a year-long effort in preparation, practice, and persistence. Every competitor at the event has already proven his or her superior debate and speech skills by their excellent performances at State and regional qualifying tournaments. Furthermore, while other high school students got an early start on summer jobs, vacationed, or celebrated the break from school, NFL students put in 12-hour days to compete in Student Congress, Lincoln-Douglas, Policy, International Public Forum Debates and other individual speech and drama competitions.

The National Forensic League was founded in 1925. The first national high school speech tournament was held in 1930; 49 schools from 17 States participated. The majority of the rules that governed the tournament in 1930 are still in effect today, providing one of the longest running national competitions for high school students. Approximately one million high school students have been members of the NFL since 1925, and over 30,000 high

school students participate in NFL-certified events every year.

As a former high school debate coach, I had the wonderful opportunity to participate in the National Forensic League with my students at several national debate tournaments. Also, I know what a massive undertaking it is to plan and carry out a national debate tournament. In 1981, I was on the host committee under D.L. Smith of East High School, which organized that year's National Tournament in Salt Lake City. I applaud this year's host committee for the time and effort they have given to make this event a success. I also congratulate the efforts of the National Forensics League for providing students with the opportunity to expand their vision of the world through the development of public communication skills. I would also like to congratulate the teachers who often work after-hours, weekends, holidays, and summertime to coach their students. Finally, I would like to thank the students and their parents who have dedicated themselves to the acquisition of such important, beneficial and life-long skills. I encourage students to continue their search to become effective communicators. Good communication is the essence of leadership.

AVIATION COMPETITION IN RURAL AREAS

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 21, 2004

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I read in this Saturday's Washington Post Business section an article entitled, "US Airways Cuts Fares at National, Dulles." The article explains that the airlines are launching a fare war out of the Washington, DC area, which will result in great savings and travel options for air travelers. I naturally read this article with great interest, Mr. Speaker, because US Airways is a very important carrier at airports located in the Congressional District that I represent in Southern West Virginia.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, the price reductions offered by US Airways and the other airlines are the result of competition. Unfortunately, these price reductions are not available to travelers who need them as much as—and maybe more than—any other air traveler. That is the air traveler in the rural areas and in the small cities. If the airlines had true competition in the rural areas and in the rural areas and in the small cities, ticket prices would be fairer. Instead, as is so often the case, the competition and the resulting discounts and travel options are only available in the large metropolitan areas.

As we recognized at the time of deregulation—and as we should recognize right now—we need to ensure that rural airports can continue to operate and provide much-needed air service and jobs. One primary program aimed at doing this is the Essential Air Service program (EAS). EAS is very important to rural airports, which have seen their air service and ridership fall dramatically over the years.

Recently, 2 airports in my district, Beckley and Bluefield, proved themselves eligible to receive EAS funding for the next 2 years. I can't overstate how badly this funding is needed to foster competition and ensure air service

in that part of my State. Ever since we deregulated the airlines, we have been moving the rural areas farther and farther out of the mainstream for air travel. Furthermore, every time Congress appropriates money to the airlines, or establishes assistance such as the Air Transportation Stabilization Board, it is the rural communities that get overlooked.

While small communities in over 25 States rely on this Federal funding to help them manage through this time of economic distress at the State and local levels, the Bush Administration has consistently proposed to cut the EAS program by more than half. Likewise, Republicans want to make many rural and small communities pay a local share to qualify for EAS funding. But, Mr. Speaker, I submit that doing these things would greatly harm many local economies. Rather than further strapping the rural areas and small towns with costs that will further inhibit competition, we need to push policies that will increase air competition and provide cost-savings to travelers.

CELEBRATING THE OPENING OF WALDENBOOKS ON THE SOUTH- SIDE OF SAN ANTONIO

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 21, 2004

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, we all stress the value of education and reading, yet we sometimes overlook the challenges some communities face in accessing books and reading materials. The Southside of San Antonio, a largely Hispanic neighborhood, did not have a single bookstore—until today. I am proud to announce that WaldenBooks has arrived on the Southside, changing the face of our community for the better.

For years, community leaders and lay people have worked to attract a bookstore, and for years we received lots of excuses. That has now changed, thanks to the vision of WaldenBooks and the cooperative efforts of the owners of South Park Mall, community leaders, youth in the schools and area residents.

I would especially like to mention Cesar Rodriguez, General Manager of South Park Mall, and Beth Riebschlager, Marketing Manager for South Park Mall, who have been great advocates and have pursued this issue aggressively. Councilman Richard Perez, Councilman Ron Segovia and Cindy Taylor, President of the South San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, have lent unwavering support to this project. Books in the Barrio, the grassroots organization created by Marissa Ramirez, Astro Musquiz, Vickie Grise, Tim Duda and Ed Sonnen, have kept this issue in the front and center of all of our minds by hosting events at South Park Mall, as well as having petition drives and letter writing campaigns. I would especially like to thank Ken Bostic, Regional Director for this new Waldenbooks location, and TJ Jenson, Real Estate Manager for Waldenbooks, without whom none of this would be possible. My thanks also to Cindy Wirz of my staff who worked with the community leaders and organizations to support this great endeavor with me.

For many years the Southside community has struggled to improve access to educational resources for its residents. The residents of the area signed petitions, wrote letters, and brought their case to the media in the hopes of bringing a bookstore to the Southside. Being a resident of the Southside myself, I too have dreamed of the day when I would not have to drive outside of my community to purchase books, and now that day has thankfully arrived.

Waldenbooks, a subsidiary of Borders Group, Inc., has chosen to open a location in

South Park Mall. Opened in 1968, South Park Mall has been a premiere shopping spot for South San Antonians. Now 95 percent occupied with both national and regional retailers, this is an ideal location for Waldenbooks, which will occupy 3,000 square feet and will offer over 20,000 books and periodical titles.

Having made the choice to locate to the Southside of San Antonio, Waldenbooks has chosen to invest in the residents of the area and the contiguous counties. Waldenbooks is determined to make an impact on the Southside and to be a good business partner by

working directly with South Park Mall to create a children's program and a program for seniors.

Today marks the beginning of what I hope will be a continuing trend in the Southside of San Antonio. Waldenbooks will provide a greater access to books and thereby, a greater access to learning. Waldenbooks has shown their willingness to take a chance on the Southside of San Antonio and I urge all Southsiders to return the favor by being loyal customers.