

Reverend Marsach has been a fixture in our community for many years and we owe him a great debt of gratitude for the multitude of contributions he has made that have enriched all of our lives. As a spiritual guide at the Star of Jacob Christian Church in New Haven, he has nourished the souls of many—often providing much needed comfort in the hardest of personal trials. I would be remiss if I did not personally thank him for the wonderful tribute that he made to Maria Perez—a member of my staff who passed away just over two years ago. He shared a unique friendship with Maria and his words were of great comfort to her family and my staff during a most difficult time.

Through his hard work and unparalleled dedication, Reverend Marsach has left an indelible mark on the New Haven community and a legacy that will inspire generations to come. For his innumerable contributions and selfless dedication, I am proud to stand today to extend my deepest thanks and sincerest appreciation. It gives me great pleasure to join his wife, Margarita, his three daughters, family, friends, and the New Haven community in congratulating Reverend Abraham Marsach as he celebrates his retirement. My very best wishes for many more years of health and happiness.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT THE PRESIDENT POSTHUMOUSLY AWARD THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM TO HARRY W. COLMERY

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY E. BROWN, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 6, 2004

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as chairman of the Subcommittee on Benefits of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I am honored to speak in strong support of H. Con. Res. 257 considered by this body on July 6, expressing the sense of Congress that the President posthumously award the Medal of Freedom to Harry W. Colmery.

President Truman established the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1945 to recognize notable service during war. In 1963, President Kennedy reinstated the medal to honor the achievement of civilians during peacetime. The Medal of Freedom may be awarded to any person who has made an especially meritorious contribution to (1) "the security or national interest of the United States, or (2) world peace, or (3) other significant public or private endeavors." As I share with you today the remarkable wisdom and foresight of Mr. Colmery, I believe my colleagues will agree he is highly deserving of this prestigious award.

The book *The G.I. Bill and the Making of Modern America*, and domestic policy experts, economists, business leaders, and educators acknowledge Mr. Colmery as the visionary who drafted the far-reaching legislation that made the United States the first overwhelmingly middle-class nation in the world.

Mr. Colmery's roots were in Braddock, Pennsylvania, and he worked his way through the University of Pittsburgh Law School graduating while teaching at Carnegie Tech (now Carnegie Mellon University). During World

War I, he joined the fledgling Army Air Corps as a pilot instructor.

A lawyer who earlier argued two cases successfully before the U.S. Supreme Court, during his term as National Commander of The American Legion, Mr. Colmery drafted in long-hand over Christmas and New Year's of 1943–44, the legislation that became the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly known as the G.I. Bill of Rights. He drafted this comprehensive bill a full six months before D-Day. President Roosevelt signed Mr. Colmery's vision into law on June 22, 1944, 16 days after the Normandy Invasion. Colmery was already anticipating the needs of America's 15 million sons and daughters who would wear the military uniform during the war.

Harry Colmery knew from his own military service that ordinary Americans can do extraordinary things. He didn't want World War II veterans to stand in the unemployment lines or sell apples on street corners, as was often the case after World War I. Indeed he was determined not to allow impoverishment to define World War II veterans after the cessation of hostilities: "The burden of war falls on the citizen soldier who has gone forth, overnight, to become the armored hope of humanity. Never again, do we want to see the honor and glory of our nation fade to the extent that her men of arms, with despondent heart and palsied limb, totter from door to door, bowing their souls to the frozen bosom of reluctant charity."

Indeed Colmery, too, likely was familiar with data cited by Keith W. Olson, Ph.D., in the book *The G.I. Bill, the Veterans, and the Colleges* (University of Kentucky Press, 1974): "Within the first year of the demobilization process there will exist the likelihood, if not the certainty, of a large volume of unemployed, involving as many as 8 or 9 million [American former servicemen and women]." Final Report of the Conference on Post-War Adjustment of Civilian and Military Personnel, June 1943. Undoubtedly these data steered Colmery's commitment and resolve. I would note for the Record, as well, that Dr. Olson later recounted the effects of Colmery's policy goals for the bill in *The Astonishing Story: Veterans Make Good on the Nation's Promise* in the *Educational Record*, Fall 1994.

Mr. Colmery drafted legislation that the late author Michael J. Bennett observed "allowed veterans to achieve the American Dream—an education, a home, a stable and profitable career, and ownership of their own business."

Mr. Speaker, I'll cite Mr. Bennett's insights often today because he is the recognized authority on how Colmery's wisdom produced an enormously successful program that changed America forever.

Said Mr. Bennett, "more than any other law, the GI Bill was responsible for the post-World War II explosion in college graduates, the education of leaders of the civil rights movement, the growth and dominance of the suburbs, and the proliferation of interstate highways, supermarkets, and franchise stores and restaurants. Quite literally, the GI Bill changed the way we live, the way we house ourselves, the way we are educated, how we work and at what, even how we eat and transport ourselves."

Mr. Speaker, at this point I think it very fair to ask how Mr. Colmery's unwavering vision would have such a profound and far-reaching impact—not only for veterans but for America. Some 7.8 million veterans went to college and

other types of training on the G.I. Bill. Mr. Colmery held the view that World War II veterans wouldn't just pass through higher education, but as adult-learners (the average combatant was about 26 years) would be anxious to make up for lost time. He also probably knew from his own military experience that those who defend our free-enterprise system in war would be anxious to equip themselves to participate in that system when the mills of war stop grinding.

Mr. Bennett's 2003 paper titled "A GI Bill for the 21st Century: Continuing an American Way of Life," points out that "in the peak year of 1947, veterans accounted for 49 percent of enrollment. Of a veteran population of 15.4 million, some 7.8 million received skill training, including 2.2 million in college, 3.5 million in other schools, 1.4 million in on job training and 690,000 in farm training. Millions who would have flooded the labor market instead opted for education, which reduced joblessness during the demobilization period. When they did enter the labor market, most were better prepared to contribute to the support of their families and society."

In 1965, the then-Veterans Administration found that due to the increased earning power of GI Bill college graduates, federal government income tax revenues increased by more than a billion dollars annually. It also concluded that in 20 years, the \$14 billion cost of the G.I. Bill—as conceived by Harry Colmery—had paid for itself.

Current Secretary of Veterans Affairs and former chairman of the 1997 bipartisan Congressional Commission on Servicemembers and Veterans Transition Assistance, Anthony J. Principi observed, "they [WWII veterans] excelled in the classroom, ran the student governments, challenged professors, refused to wear freshman beanie caps, began raising families, and some veterans did something that was seen as unusual—they went to school year round."

Not surprisingly, Colmery's vision applies today, as well. A 2000 Joint Economic Committee of the Congress study titled "Investment in Education—Public and Private Returns" found that in 1998 the average college graduate made \$46,285, while the average high school graduate only earned \$26,592. Workforce training counts.

I note for my colleagues that few in our society attended college prior to World War II and Colmery's notion of large federal investment in same—given our massive war debt—constituted a legitimate argument against his largely unproven, macro-ideas. Robert M. Hutchins, President of the University of Chicago, argued in December 1944 that "colleges and universities will find themselves converted into educational hobo jungles. And veterans, unable to get work and equally unable to resist putting pressure on the colleges and universities, will find themselves educational hobos . . . education is not a device for coping with mass employment."

James Conant of Harvard, an advocate of IQ testing for college entrance, argued that the bill would benefit "the least qualified of the wartime generation." Later Dr. Conant would admit "the GI's were the best students Harvard ever had" though Harvard Professor Seymour E. Harris argued in 1947 that "the GI Bill carried the principle of democratization too far."

In fact, I note for my colleagues that during debate on Colmery's bill some in this body opposed Colmery's plan, as evidenced by the view of Representative Dewey Short of Missouri, for example:

"Have we gone completely crazy? Have we lost all sense of proportion? Who will have to pay for this bill? You think you are going to bribe the veterans and buy this vote, you who think you can win his support by coddling him and being a sob sister with a lot of silly, slushy sentimentality are going to have a sad awakening."

With all due respect to then-Representative Short, the "awakening" associated with Colmery's bold, multi-faceted vision emerged in our robust post-war economy, which I'll discuss in a moment.

Colmery's foresight wasn't limited to job training and education. Before the GI Bill of Rights, the great majority of Americans were renters. Colmery believed those who fought in war should be able to buy their own home, so the GI Bill provided access to low interest mortgages.

Author Bennett noted that based on Colmery's wisdom, "to house these veterans and their children born during the post-war baby boom, the idea of the affordable house in the suburbs was born. Families moved into their new homes by the millions and became proud members of the middle class." Indeed, the GI Bill largely made the United States the first overwhelmingly middle-class nation in the world, but it also is credited with starting the suburbs, a word not spoken in the American vernacular until after the GI Bill took effect.

Colmery's vision cascaded beyond the housing industry. Here's author Bennett's explanation why: "The GI Bill produced a social revolution even greater than Henry Ford's. Whereas Ford put millions of cars on the road and spawned one of the nation's biggest industries, William Levitt (creator of pre-fabricated houses) put people in homes and spawned an even bigger one, while indirectly spawning ancillary industries in furniture and appliance making and sales, supermarketing of food, franchising of restaurants for young families, even expansion of schools."

"The results were quickly apparent. One year after President Truman announced Japan's surrender, 11 million World War II veterans had been discharged, leaving less than one million in service. Seventy percent of the veterans were employed, the majority in jobs other than those they held before the war. Almost one million veterans were in school, another one million drawing checks to supplement farm work, 403,000 employed in on-the-job training, and 318,000 being helped to establish businesses or professional practices."

As of September 1946, only 13 percent were drawing unemployment benefits. During the previous year, 4.9 million had collected unemployment, but, of those, 86 percent were on unemployment for less than 20 weeks. One percent had exhausted the 52 weeks of benefits they were entitled to. Of the remainder, 396,000 were on vacation, taking rehabilitation training, or just resting up, and 86,000 were hospitalized. These data are cited from "What GI's Are Doing Now," US News and World Report, September 20, 1946.

Mr. Speaker, Colmery's GI Bill investment paid off—and kept paying off. Colmery's legacy endures in today's Montgomery GI Bill and ongoing VA and Small Business Adminis-

tration programs for veterans to participate in our economic system their service has sustained.

On June 18, 2004, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Principi cited data that I believe speaks volumes as to why the President—on behalf of a grateful Nation—should posthumously award Harry W. Colmery the Medal of Freedom: "The GI Bill made home ownership and a college education available to millions of Americans. By harnessing the talent and drive of America's veterans, it created six decades of opportunity for the men and women who serve in uniform. About 21 million veterans, servicemembers and family members, have received more than \$77 billion in GI Bill benefits for education and training since 1944. The GI Bill's home loan program has been used by \$17.5 million people for loans totaling \$830 billion."

Mr. Speaker, I earnestly encourage my colleagues to support the Medal of Freedom for Harry W. Colmery.

#### CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VALLEY CENTER MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

**HON. DARRELL E. ISSA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 12, 2004*

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Valley Center Municipal Water District, which meets the water and wastewater needs of Valley Center and its 23,000 residents.

Fifty years ago, on July 12, 1954, a group of citizens formed an agency to build a water storage and transport system to access the water resources of the San Diego County Water Authority and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. At the time, securing these sources was imperative for continued community growth in a region that had only limited rainfall.

Today, in addition to providing water supply and sanitation services to their customers, the Valley Center Municipal Water District has promoted water conservation through incentives such as vouchers for ultra low flush toilets and high efficiency washing machines, residential landscape assistance, and providing water conservation guidelines for their customers.

Mr. Speaker, the Valley Center Municipal Water District has provided an invaluable service to the community it serves. This agency continues to fulfill its mission of ensuring customer satisfaction through quality service at the lowest possible price. I would like to thank the water district and its current and past employees for their hard work in meeting the water needs of the residents and businesses it serves. Their efforts have allowed a community to flourish in one of Southern California's most scenic and unique locations.

#### HONORING CADET JUSTIN B. COPE

**HON. MARTIN FROST**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 12, 2004*

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Cadet Justin B. Cope for his recent ap-

pointment as a Chief Petty Officer of the United States Naval Sea Cadet Corps. The United States Naval Sea Cadet Corps was first established in 1958 in order to develop a greater appreciation of the United States' naval history, traditions, customs, and significant role in defense. With only about one half of one percent of Naval Sea Cadets receiving the recognition and honor of being appointed as a Chief Petty Officer, Cadet Cope's ascension to the rank of Chief Petty Officer clearly reflects his superior qualities in leadership, expertise in seamanship, and patriotic character.

Again, I congratulate Chief Petty Officer Justin B. Cope's great achievement and wish him all the greatest success in the future.

#### MOURNING THE DEATH OF C. MICHAEL SAVAGE

**HON. JESSE L. JACKSON, JR.**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, July 12, 2004*

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to pay tribute to the life of Clarence Michael Savage, a model of compassion, commitment, and community service, who passed away on June 24. Mike was a man of strong personal faith, and a devout advocate of social justice.

A graduate of St. Louis University, Mike began his career of service working on behalf of lower-income neighborhoods in St. Louis and migrant farm workers throughout the country. Mike was known as a champion for the rights of people marginalized in our society. He served as the CEO of the Access Community Health Network in Chicago from 1994 until his tragic death last month. Mike was innovative in his approach to serving the working poor, uninsured and medically underserved. During his tenure at Access, Mike led the organization through unprecedented change as the organization grew from nine to forty-one health centers serving more than 160,000 patients annually.

Throughout his career, Mike was unyielding in his pursuit of justice. Before joining Access, Mike served as Executive Director of Fenway Community Health Center in Boston. He also worked for Heartland Alliance Travelers & Immigrants Aid and United Neighborhood Organization of Near Southwest Chicago. Mike was also active in many organizations nationally and locally, including National Healthy Start Association, United Power for Action and Justice, and the Chicago Chapter of Dignity USA.

Those of us who were privileged to have known him, will remember his incredible passion for addressing the underserved and his commitment to those in the fight with him. He was a visionary, he was a leader, and he was a friend. I extend my deepest condolences to Andy Swan, his partner, his family, and all those who join me in treasuring Mike's memory.