

BOTSWANA, ONE OF THE GREATEST SUCCESS STORIES IN AFRICA

HON. WILLIAM J. JEFFERSON

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. JEFFERSON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to the attention of my colleagues an excellent and informative television program that featured the country of Botswana as one of the greatest success stories in Africa. It was the Today Show on NBC on Monday, Feb. 9, during the series "Where in the World is Matt Lauer?"

Many Americans know Botswana from having seen or visited its wonderful game parks on safari, but this program told Botswana's complete story. We learned how the country protects its precious animals, how the country is courageously facing its problem with HIV and AIDS and how its diamonds are mined and secured.

Botswana's diamond industry, a global leader and innovator, was featured. Mr. Louis Nchindo, general manager of the Debswana Diamond Company, told Mr. Lauer how the country has insured that its clean diamonds are kept out of the world of illegitimate "conflict diamonds" by carefully managing the process from mining to export. He described the elaborate security measures including the requirements for licensed dealers throughout the process. I was proud to work with Mr. Nchindo in setting up a process for labeling diamonds to keep them out of the illicit trade. Debswana and Mr. Nchindo are to be commended for their efforts in this regard.

Mr. Lauer mentioned how Botswana is a stable democracy and "all-around wonderful place," with first class accommodations in the game parks and which rightly boasts a rich and welcoming culture.

I was pleased to see Botswana honored by NBC and commend the country, a good friend of the United States, to my colleagues.

PERMITTING USE OF ROTUNDA OF CAPITOL FOR CEREMONY TO AWARD CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO DR. DOROTHY HEIGHT

SPEECH OF

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2004

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, today's resolution regarding the award of the Congressional Gold Medal to Dr. Dorothy Height reminds us in this age of cynicism that one person can truly make a difference in our society. I was pleased to cosponsor the legislation to award Dr. Height with the Congressional Gold Medal, and I am pleased to support this measure today. I have great admiration for Dr. Height, a living legend and pioneer of civil rights, women's rights, and racial justice.

Beginning as a civil rights advocate in the 1930s, Dr. Height gained prominence through

her tireless efforts to promote interracial schooling, to register and educate voters, and to increase the visibility and status of women in our society.

One of her many contributions was establishing Wednesdays in Mississippi, a unique project that brought together northern and southern women to get to know one another and work side-by-side for racial justice in the segregated south. That project lives on in that, today, the Children's Defense Fund has adopted the Wednesdays in Mississippi model for its innovative Wednesdays in Washington and at Home program, which enables advocates for children—especially poor, minority, and disabled children—to make their voices heard here in the nation's capital and across the country.

As president of the National Council of Negro Women since 1957, she has helped establish model programs on issues ranging from teenage parenting to the eradication of hunger. She also established the Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune Museum and Archives for Black Women, the first institution devoted to the history of black women.

Her leadership in struggle for equality, social justice, and human rights for all peoples is an example for us all.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, due to inclement weather and travel delays from my district, I was unable to vote during the following rollcall votes. Had I been present, I would have voted as indicated below.

Rollcall No. 25, "yes"; rollcall No. 26, "yes"; rollcall No. 27, "yes."

BLACK HISTORY MONTH SPECIAL ORDER

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, today I want to celebrate Black History Month and the upcoming 50th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education.

In 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court stated that separate is inherently unequal. The Court concluded, "that in the field of public education, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." The Court found that the evils of racial segregation affected students' motivation and retarded educational and mental development.

Education is a right, not a privilege. The Court wrote: "... it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he (or she) is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms."

In the 11th Congressional District of Ohio, Barbara Byrd-Bennett, CEO of the Cleveland Municipal School District continues this legacy Brown v. Board of Education, championing the rights of our young people and working to ensure that they are afforded the best education possible. Six years ago, in 1998, the Cleveland Municipal School District ranked last among Ohio school systems, and was placed in academic emergency status. Under the direction of Ms. Byrd-Bennett the Cleveland Municipal School District now stands as one of Ohio's "most improved school districts."

Under Ms. Byrd-Bennett's leadership academic successes are clear.

Reading scores have increased by more than 30 percent.

Children have breakfast and lunch at school at no cost, and over 93 percent are immunized.

Graduation rates have increased by 10 percent and 74 percent of last year's graduates went on to college.

Suspensions are down nearly 45 percent, expulsions are down 9 percent and assaults on students are down 13 percent.

Reading results were up 19 percent and 28 percent, respectively, in one academic year, in the 4th and 6th grades.

Only 22 percent of 4th grade students passed the State reading test in 1998 compared to 59 percent passed, in 2003, an increase of 37 percent from 5 years ago. Reading performance at the 6th grade has improved by 32 percent.

I believe that education is the key to success. I am working on behalf of all the constituents of the 11th Congressional District in Ohio to make sure that public education remains the number one issue in America. I want for those who have a desire to go to college to be prepared and equipped with the tools necessary for success.

While highlighting successes and recognizing achievements, we must also focus on current realities to further aid us in shaping national education priorities. According to the National Education Association:

Poor and minority children risk doing poorly in school. Contributing factors include: rigorous curriculum, teacher preparation/experience/attendance, class size, technology-assisted instruction, school safety, parent participation, student mobility, birth weight, lead poisoning, and nutrition.

In 1994, 31 percent of black, 24 percent of Hispanic, and 35 percent of American Indian high school graduates took remedial courses, compared to 15 percent of whites and Asians.

Few minorities have access to or are enrolled in Advanced Placement courses.

Student achievement gap still wide.

Only 5 percent of African American 4th grade students and 4 percent of 8th grade students met national proficiency standards in 1996.

In addition, under the Bush budget \$9.4 billion less for education than was promised in the No Child Left Behind Act; this means that 2.4 million children will not get the help with reading and math they were promised. Under the Bush budget 56,000 teachers won't get training and 1.3 million children won't get the after school programs they were promised.

According to the National Education Association, the budget eliminates funds for 38 pro-

grams, including dropout prevention and gifted and talented education, and once again fails to increase Pell Grants for our nation's poorest college students. Yet, incredibly, the President wants \$50 million for a national experiment with school vouchers, which take away much needed resources from public schools, and

trillions more in tax cuts continue to flow to the wealthy.

We have come a long way; however, we still have a long way to go.

Today I rise to celebrate the anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education. I am proud to be an American. I salute African Americans

like Barbara Byrd-Bennett who believed in the fight for justice, believed in their dreams for equality and continue to pave the way for a better tomorrow.