

GREAT AFRICAN AMERICAN
LEADER IN AGRICULTURE

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Pearlie S. Reed, a native of Heth, Arkansas, attended the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, where he received a Bachelor of Science in Animal Husbandry in 1970. He then attended graduate school at American University in Washington, D.C., where he earned a degree in Public Administration-Finance in 1980.

Mr. Reed began his career with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Conservation Service in a temporary appointment in June 1968 as a Soil Conservationist Student Trainee. Thirty years later, in March 1998, he became the chief executive officer for USDA's Private Lands Conservation agency, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), formerly the Soil Conservation Service. He served NRCS in various positions and locations including District Conservationist, Budget and Accounting Officer, Administrative Officer for NRCS National Headquarters, Deputy State Conservationist in Wisconsin, State Conservationist in Maryland and California, Regional Conservationist, and the Associate Chief for the agency. Under the Clinton administration, Mr. Reed served as the Acting Assistant Secretary for Administration that led the most powerful USDA Civil Rights Action Team that developed the most comprehensive report ever written to document the status of Civil Rights in USDA.

As the Acting Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Administration, Mr. Reed provided leadership for USDA-wide offices and functions, such as the Office of Civil Rights, the Office of Human Resources Management, procurement, contracting, and facilities and property management, the Office of Small Business Utilization, the National Office of Outreach, the Board of Contract Appeals, the Office of Administrative Law Judges, and the Office of the Judicial Officer.

As the Team Leader for the Secretary's Civil Rights Action Team, Mr. Reed provided the leadership for recommendations to address civil rights problems in programs delivery and employment, and actions to ensure accountability and follow-through. The Secretary accepted the findings from that project, and committed to act on all 92 recommendations. The work of the Civil Rights Action Team is recognized as setting the direction for civil rights policy at USDA that semantically reformed a movement within USDA.

As the Chief of NRCS, Mr. Reed served as the executive officer for USDA's private lands conservation agency serving communities in all 50 states, the Pacific Basin, and the Caribbean area. He led a conservation partnership consisting of over 12,000 federal employees, 15,000 conservation district officials, 7,000 conservation district employees, 20,000 Earth Team volunteers, and 350 Resource Conservation and Development Councils. Mr. Reed served as a leader of several USDA-wide activities, such as the chair of the USDA/1990 Task Force, chair of the USDA Agricultural Air Quality Task Force, chair of the USDA National Food and Agriculture Council,

and the USDA representative on the United States Migratory Bird Conservation Commission.

As Associate Chief, Mr. Reed served as the chief operating official for NRCS. Under his leadership, NRCS initiated a workforce planning process that was recognized by the National Academy of Public Administration as a model for other agencies. He led the development and implementation of the most comprehensive reorganization of the agency in its 60-year history. With a strong commitment to customer service and conservation partnerships, he initiated the American Indian outreach effort for NRCS to work directly with tribes. He also provided leadership in the development and implementation of the Conservation Title of the 1996 Farm Bill.

Mark Rey, USDA Under Secretary for the Natural Resources and Environment said of Mr. Reed, "I believe that if you look up the term 'public service' in the dictionary, you'd likely see a picture of Pearlie Reed there next to it."

Mr. Reed has had a distinguished career, with 35 years of service which also included international conservation experience and service outside the continental United States. His contributions in South Africa, Australia, and with the International Soil Conservation Organization, exemplify his span of influence as a strong leader, visionary, and unquestionable natural resources conservation ethic.

Mr. Reed received numerous awards for outstanding sustained performance, including the Distinguished Presidential Rank Award—the highest award that can be bestowed upon a Career Senior Executive Service member. Another significant award included is the USDA Secretary's Honor Award for equal opportunity and civil rights that recognizes his vision and leadership in the most comprehensive reorganization in the history of NRCS.

Other recognitions he has received includes the Professional Service Award from the National Association of Conservation Districts, the Soil and Water Conservation Society Award, the George Washington Carver Public Service Hall of Fame Award, and the Distinguished Alumni Award, University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff. Another tribute to Mr. Reed was the naming of several campus buildings, including the Pearlie S. Reed/Robert Cole Smith Farm Outreach-Wetland Water Management Center by the University of Arkansas System's Board of Trustees.

Mr. Reed is a soft spoken man of few words; a visionary who is marked by foresight, and a person who has distinguished himself by making contributions to conservation in America that will never be forgotten. He is a dedicated man that has never wavered from his work ethic: "Each day I come to work, I think about what is important and how the NRCS can get more conservation on the ground."

TRIBUTE TO JESSE OWENS

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a very special person, athlete, and role model in African-American

history: Jesse Owens. Born "James Cleveland," Jesse Owens was the son of a sharecropper and the grandson of a slave. He was born into a modest household in Alabama, and moved to Cleveland, Ohio, with his family at the age of nine in hopes of finding better employment for his father. During his first day of school in Cleveland, his teacher mistook his name to be "Jesse"; and that nickname stayed with him for the rest of his life.

Jesse went on to attend East Technical High School in Cleveland, where his natural talent for running was immediately recognized by the school's track coach. Jesse was unable to attend after-school track practices because of the numerous jobs he held on the side, including delivering groceries, loading freight cars, and working in a shoe repair shop. Realizing Jesse's abilities, the track coach agreed to meet with Jesse before school. With the refining of his natural talent, Jesse was able to set world records in high school for the 100-yard dash, 220-yard dash, and broad jump.

After being aggressively recruited by top universities, Jesse chose to attend the Ohio State University to continue his athletic and academic career. As Ohio State did not give out track scholarships at this time, Jesse continued to work several part-time jobs to provide for his education, himself, and his wife, Ruth. He juggled his employment with his studies and an intense practice and competition schedule. Jesse continued to excel in track and field, despite the discrimination and segregation he faced on a daily basis. He was forced to live off-campus in housing designated for African-American athletes, and he was not allowed to eat with the rest of his teammates when they were on the road and ate at "whites only" restaurants.

Overcoming all of these obstacles, Jesse continued his record-setting career in his first year in college, as he set world records for the 220-yard dash, the 220-yard low hurdles, and the broad jump and tied the world record for the 100-yard dash. Prior to his record-breaking broad jump, Jesse boldly tied a handkerchief at the height of the previous world record and then confidently jumped an entire six inches above it.

Wanting to take his competitive skills to the next level, Jesse entered the 1936 Olympics, which were to be held in Berlin, Germany during the reign Adolf Hitler. Jesse was used to the discrimination he felt at home and was determined to show Hitler's Germany, and the world, that there was no such thing as a "dominant race." He did just that. Jesse swept the competition by winning the 100-meter dash, the 200-meter dash, and the broad jump. He was also a member of the gold medal-winning 400-meter relay team and set three world records during the competition. His performance placed him permanently in the history books as the first American to win four track and field gold medals in a single Olympics. Perhaps more importantly, Jesse's unprecedented performance caused many people around the world to reconsider their notions of race and capabilities.

Unfortunately, when Jesse arrived home to the United States, the racial barriers that he left were still in place. "I wasn't invited to shake hands with Hitler, but I wasn't invited to the White House to shake hands with the President, either," he said. Showing his grace and class, Jesse did not turn bitter, but rather

went on to become a public speaker and advocate for youth sports programs in disadvantaged neighborhoods. His humanitarian efforts were not carried out in vain, as he was awarded the Medal of Freedom from President Gerald Ford in 1976, the highest honor a U.S. civilian may receive.

On March 31, 1980, Jesse Owens passed away after a battle with lung cancer. He left behind his wife and three daughters, numerous world records, and a legendary performance in Germany that reshaped the world's notions of race. He gave America hope during a time when America gave him a seat in the "blacks only" restaurant and a place to stand on the bus. During this month in which we honor Black History and the significant achievements of African Americans, it is proper and fitting that we recognize Jesse Owens as a champion of track and field and, more importantly, humanity.

HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPACT OF THE US-VISIT PROGRAM ON SOUTH TEXAS COMMUNITIES

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight an issue of great importance to the communities of South Texas—the United States Visitor and Immigration Status Indicator Technology (US VISIT) program. I would like to thank the gentleman from Texas, Congressman JIM TURNER for his leadership on homeland security issues. He is a great advocate for improving our national security infrastructure at all levels.

We face many challenges in the homeland security area, from the need to improve our intelligence capabilities to providing more resources for local first responders. Without question, we need to continue efforts to improve our national security. But, we must do so in a way that does not undermine our economy. Security and commerce must go hand in hand.

Without a doubt, one of the goals of the September 11th terrorists was to damage our economy. We should not let them win by imposing security measures without the proper infrastructure and preparation needed to make them work smoothly. Texas is the gateway for trade between the United States and Mexico, one of our largest trading partners. Our ports along the border, from El Paso to Brownsville, handle the majority of land-based trade with Mexico. Laredo and El Paso are the two largest ports of entry and six out of the top 10 lands ports are in Texas.

I recently had the opportunity to visit the Port of Laredo with the Ranking Member, Mr. TURNER, to hear first hand about the impact of US-VISIT on our border communities. We met at the World Trade Bridge which, along with a sister bridge, accounts for roughly 40 percent of all overland trade between the United States and Mexico. The US-VISIT program, as currently designed, poses a great threat to our border and national economies. We clearly lack the infrastructure to handle the new requirements. Even without US-VISIT, our border infrastructure is inadequate to meet the current demands and future potential. We

need to improve our roads, build new bridges, and update our technology. With implementation of the US-VISIT program, we face the likelihood of greater delays, confusion, and a decrease in legitimate trade and tourist travel.

We must not tolerate any decrease in border trade. Our goal must be to expand it while improving our security. To do so requires more investment. To do so requires the development of new technologies that will protect us while allowing more people and goods to cross our borders.

We need to better understand how US-VISIT will impact us. For that reason, I have requested, through Ranking Member TURNER, that the GAO study the economic impact of US-VISIT on our land ports and to report on what infrastructure and technology we need in order to avoid an economic disaster. Once we have that information, and only then, can we decide how to properly carry out our border security measures.

And it's not just communities directly on the border that will suffer. Cities like San Antonio, a major trade gateway, will suffer similarly as trade becomes snarled at our ports and as trade literally moves elsewhere.

We must also address the unfairness of the existing border visa program. Currently, Mexican citizens can obtain a border laser visa, a secure document that allows them to enter the United States for 72 hours and travel no more than 25 miles from the port of entry. Obtaining a laser visa requires extensive background and security checks. Applicants are screened and checked. For that reason, we should also insist that holders of laser visas not be required to go through any duplicative requirements of US-VISIT, such as photographing and fingerprinting. Moreover, the 72-hour limit is unfair and if strictly enforced would devastate many border economies. We should allow laser visa holders to stay in the United States for up to six months.

These laser visa holders are an important part of our economy. Many of them have businesses, homes and family members in the United States. We must protect our security, but we must value our visitors who do not come to harm us, but rather to visit our country and contribute to our economy.

RECOGNIZING THE FAIRFAX COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2004 VALOR AWARD RECIPIENTS FROM THE FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, Mr. MORAN, Mr. WOLF, and I rise today to recognize an extraordinary group of men and women in Northern Virginia. Each year, the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce recognizes individuals who courageously have demonstrated selfless dedication to public safety. The hard work, dedication, and perseverance of the Fairfax County Police Department have earned several of its members the highest honor that Fairfax County bestows upon its public safety officials—The Valor Award.

There are several types of Valor Awards awarded to a public safety officer: The Life-

saving Award, the Certificate of Valor, or the Gold, Silver, or Bronze Medal of Valor. During the 26th Annual Awards Ceremony, 53 men and women from the Office of the Sheriff, Fire and Rescue Department, and the Police Department received one of the aforementioned honors for their bravery and heroism.

It is with great honor that we enter into the record the names of the recipients of the 2004 Valor Awards in the Fairfax County Police Department. Receiving the Lifesaving Award: PSCC Assistant Supervisor Jackie A. Ahrens, Police Officer First Class Garrett G. Broderick, Public Safety Communicator Gail M. Gibson, Police Officer First Class Daniel V. Johnson, Detective Thomas P. Lawn, Sergeant Shawn C. Martin, Police Officer First Class Weiss Rasool, Officer Stacy L. Sassano, Police Officer First Class Donna E. Shaw, and Detective James N. Sparks, III; the Certificate of Valor: Police Officer First Class William G. Brett, Senior Police Officer Robert A. Galpin Jr., Detective Matthew G. Payne, Detective Steven T. Pihonak, and Detective Gene M. Taitano; the Silver Medal of Honor: Police Officer First Class Timothy W. Cook; the Bronze Medal of Honor: Master Police Officer Bryan K. Cooke, Second Lieutenant Scott C. Durham, Master Police Officer Charles M. Haugan, Second Lieutenant Daniel P. Janickey, Police Officer First Class Ryan W. Morgan, Senior Sergeant John W. Orpin, Private First-Class David B. Patterson, Officer Randolph G. Philp, and Officer Frederick W. Von Meister.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all men and women who serve the Fairfax County Police Department. The events of September 11th serve as a reminder of the sacrifices our emergency service workers make for us each day. These individuals' continuous efforts on behalf of Fairfax County citizens are paramount to preserving security, law, and order throughout our community. Their selfless acts of heroism truly merit our highest praise. We ask our colleagues to join us in applauding this group of remarkable citizens.

IN RECOGNITION OF ASBAREZ, ARMENIAN DAILY NEWSPAPER'S 95TH ANNIVERSARY OF ESTABLISHMENT IN CALIFORNIA

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the bilingual daily newspaper, Asbarez, as it celebrates its 95th anniversary of establishment in California. Asbarez, which means 'arena' in English, was founded in August of 1908 in Fresno, California. At that time those who had come from Armenia looked to Armenia and Armenians for guidance, and the seven founding fathers, noticing the community's desire to preserve its heritage and identity, created Asbarez, with the hope of bringing the community and the homeland together.

Asbarez was born through the sacrifice of all those involved. In the words of Edward Megerdichian, who worked at Asbarez from 1956–1963, "[Asbarez] was ninety percent voluntary, and everyone had a sense of ownership, a sense of community—that this is our paper and our lives are described in this