

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

FREEDOM FOR RICARDO SEVERINO
GONZALEZ ALFONSO

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 28, 2004

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Ricardo Severino Gonzalez Alfonso, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Gonzalez is the president of the Manuel Marquez Sterling Journalists Society and an independent reporter in totalitarian Cuba. Mr. Gonzalez works and writes to inform the world about the gross human rights abuses that occur every day under the repressive regime of the Cuban dictator.

Unfortunately, writing and reporting the truth is not allowed under Castro's tyrannical dictatorship. All attempts to portray the absolute lack of freedom in totalitarian Cuba are viciously condemned and their authors are imprisoned or exiled. Mr. Gonzalez has been harassed by Castro's thugs since 1997, and on March 18, 2003, he was arrested for his insistence on publishing the truth about Castro's totalitarian Cuba.

The sham trial verdict that sentenced Mr. Gonzalez to 20 years in the Cuban gulag read:

"... he managed to get his articles, which were subversive and misleading in nature with regard to the Cuban system, published in various newspapers and magazines such as *Reporters Without Borders*."

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Gonzalez was 53 years old when he was condemned to 20 years in Castro's gulag. The conditions in the Cuban totalitarian gulag are so atrocious as to almost guarantee that Mr. Gonzalez will not walk out if he were to have to serve the entirety of his sham sentence. Let me be very clear, Mr. Gonzalez has been sentenced to die in the gulag by the Cuban tyrant for writing the truth about Castro's brutal, repressive regime. It is imperative that Cuba be free as soon as possible, so that Mr. Gonzalez and all the political prisoners can also live in the freedom and dignity that they deserve.

My colleagues, we must cry out for the release of all those who languish in dungeons because they believe in human rights and freedom. We must demand the immediate release of Ricardo Gonzalez Alfonso and every political prisoner.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM DeMINT

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 28, 2004

Mr. DeMINT. Mr. Speaker, I was absent during roll call vote 6; had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

HONORING THE STUDENTS OF
POLK CREEK ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL

HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 28, 2004

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the fourth grade class at Polk Creek Elementary School in Weston, West Virginia. These students in Mrs. Mary Wagoner's class recorded a CD entitled "Thinking of You" for distribution to the 100 Lewis County, West Virginia, residents serving our country in Iraq.

The students performed the songs "Thinking of You," "Allegiance Rap," "You Are Our Heroes," "The West Virginia Hills," "American Tears" and "Mighty United" for our soldiers.

All of us in this House share the sentiments expressed by these students. The men and women serving our country in Iraq are in the thoughts and prayers of us all. Hearing from these school children will improve the morale of our troops and show them they are in the thoughts of people back home.

I would like to thank Principal Thomas Garrett, Teacher Mary Wagoner, along with Whitney Ballard and Shaun Davis, for their hard work with the students at Polk Creek Elementary on this project. I am honored to represent the Lewis County community and thank Polk Creek Elementary for their efforts to honor our military personnel.

THE ROBERT J. DOLE COMMUNITY
CENTER

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 28, 2004

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing legislation to authorize the Secretary of the Air Force to rename the community center at McConnell Air Force Base, currently known as "Emerald City," as "The Robert J. Dole Community Center." I would like to thank my colleagues from Kansas, Mr. Ryun, Mr. Moran and Mr. Moore, for agreeing to join as original cosponsors of the bill.

Senator Dole once said that his life "is proof that America is a land without limits." He was born in Russell, Kansas, on July 22, 1923, the eldest son of Doran R. and Bina Talbott Dole. He graduated from Russell public schools and attended the University of Kansas, Lawrence, entering in the fall of 1941. He received an A.B. and LL.B from Washburn Municipal University in 1952.

Senator Dole entered active duty in the U.S. Army in June 1943 after completing his sophomore year at the University of Kansas. He served 5½ years in World War II and was a 10th Mountain Division platoon leader in the Allied liberation of Northern Italy. During this time, he was twice wounded and twice deco-

rated for "heroic achievement," and was discharged with the rank of Captain in July 1948, having convalesced for 3 years from grave wounds sustained in combat.

In 1950, he was elected to the Kansas Legislature and served for 2 years before being elected Russell County Attorney, a position he served in for 8 years. In 1960, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and reelected in 1962, 1964 and 1966. He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1968 and was reelected in 1974, 1980, 1986 and 1992.

One of the many lasting contributions that Bob Dole made to the State of Kansas and to the American people was the manner in which he worked to strengthen McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita over the course of his nearly 4 decades of service in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.

Due largely to his efforts, infrastructure improvements at the base have included a base hospital, housing for single officers and enlisted personnel, and a multifaceted community center, "Emerald City," which contains a bowling center, officer and enlisted clubs, a fitness center and a cafeteria.

In honor of Senator Dole's service to Kansas and to the men and women who have called McConnell Air Force Base home, I am pleased to introduce this legislation, which authorizes the Secretary of the Air Force to rename the community center at McConnell Air Force Base, currently known as "Emerald City," as "The Robert J. Dole Community Center."

HONORING THE LIFE OF BILL L.
KRATZ

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 28, 2004

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I have the honor today to recognize the life of Bill L. Kratz, who unexpectedly passed away on January 25, 2004. As a husband, father, Christian, and public servant, Mr. Kratz will be missed by many.

A life-long resident of Missouri, Bill Kratz was born on May 12, 1938, in Shelbyville, Missouri. On September 17, 1961, Bill married Patricia Lohman, and they settled in Independence, Missouri. They had two children, Dana and Keith, and eight grandchildren. Mr. Kratz served in the National Guard from 1961 to 1966 and was also employed by General Motors, from which he retired in 1989. After retirement, Mr. Kratz took an active role in the community by serving on the planning commission for the city of Independence since 2000 and assisted in the 2000 census.

Mr. Kratz was also active in his church, Messiah Lutheran Church, serving as an elder, chairman of the Adult and Family Board, chairman of the Board of Social Ministry, vice president of the congregation, and president of the congregation.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

I offer my condolences to his wife, Patricia; children, Dana and Keith; and their families. In this time of sorrow, may the thoughts and prayers of friends and family comfort them and may his memory bring them peace.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 28, 2004

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, due to the ice and snow storm in the Washington, D.C. area last night, my flight, American Airlines No. 1548 from Chicago's O'Hare International Airport to Washington, D.C.'s Ronald Reagan National Airport, was significantly delayed by 3½ hours. I therefore missed the two votes for the evening, Roll Call Nos. 6 and 7. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on H.R. 1385, an act authorizing the United States Postal Service to issue a special stamp to benefit breast cancer research; and I would also have voted "yea" on H.R. 3493, the Medical Devices Technical Corrections Act.

HONORING MARY LEIBHAM

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 28, 2004

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mary Leibham for 33 years of dedicated public service. Ms. Leibham will retire from the District Attorney Compliance and Closure Unit in early February. On Saturday, January 24, she will be honored at an event held at the SOS Club in Modesto, California.

Mary was born in North Dakota, but was raised in Sacramento, California. For the past 25 years, she has lived in Modesto, California. In 1971, Mary's extensive career in the Department of Social Services began as she transferred to the District Attorney Family Support Division as a family support officer. She returned to the Department of Social Services as a welfare fraud investigator in 1979. Less than a year later, Mary went back to the District Attorney Family Support Division as a family support officer and has since served as a senior family support officer, Family Support Program analyst, and is currently serving as Manager II, supervising the Compliance and Case Closure Unit (formerly District Attorney Family Support Division).

Ms. Leibham has had numerous accomplishments and has been involved with many noteworthy projects. She is the recipient of the 2001–2002 California Family Support Council Director's Award, as well as the 2001–2002 California Family Support Council Contribution in Training. Mary has participated in the Welfare Reform Task Force, the CDDA FSO College Committee, and the Stanislaus County Employee Mentoring Program-AIM Project for Everett Elementary and Chrysler Schools.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mary Leibham upon her retirement from public service. Although her career in public service has ended, her contributions will be felt for generations to come. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Mary a fulfilling retirement.

CELEBRATING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SAN ANTONIO HISPANIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 28, 2004

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, seventy-five years ago, in 1929, the consul general of Mexico in San Antonio, then as today a center for trade between the United States and Mexico, formed what was to become the highly successful San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. This week the Hispanic Chamber celebrates its 75th anniversary with pride in its past accomplishments and optimism for its future successes.

As the oldest organization of its kind, the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce continues to be a leading advocate for Hispanic, minority, and woman-owned businesses in San Antonio through individual business advice, networking, and advocacy. Widely respected today as a positive force in the business life of our community, the Hispanic Chamber, like its membership, had to overcome social and economic barriers on the path to success.

Chartered in 1929 by Don Enrique Santibanez, the chamber focused on improving political and economic ties between the United States and Mexico. That mission remains central to the 21st Century Hispanic Chamber, which plays a lead role in promoting trade between the United States and our neighbors to the south in Latin America. The San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has helped make San Antonio the gateway to the Americas.

Facing active discrimination, the early chamber had to do more than the typical chamber of commerce. Not only did it seek to promote business growth, it sought to develop Hispanic civic participation in the power centers of our community. As we continue to the battle against negative stereotypes the chamber continues its mission of training its members to become community leaders.

And it has met with great success. For those of us in Congress, the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce serves as a great resource and source of inspiration. Locally, the Hispanic Chamber provides leadership, expertise, and encouragement to the vibrant and growing Hispanic business community. Their success is our success.

I would like to commend Chairman Leo Gomez and the 2003 Board of Directors for their leadership over the past year. They have continued the Chamber's tradition of molding Hispanic community leaders and advancing minority business interests. I know that the chamber's new chair, Elaine Mendoza, will take the chamber to new levels of success. Of course, the Hispanic Chamber's achievements reflect the hard work, dedication, and leadership of its staff, headed by chamber president Rita Elizondo. Our thanks to all of you for what you give to our community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to recognize the achievements of the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce as it marks 75 years of progress.

RECOGNIZING BETTY LUCINDA ETCHISON

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 28, 2004

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Betty Lucinda Etchison for her nearly 58 years of committed service to the McLanahan Corporation. Her presence with the company will be sorely missed.

Betty Lucinda was born in Geeseytown, Pennsylvania, in 1928 to George J. and Rebecca H. Etchison. After graduating from Hollidaysburg High School in 1946, she began her journey through the McLanahan and Stone Corporation as a stenographer. At the time, she was only a temporary employee; but after proving herself as a capable worker, Ward McLanahan hired her as a full-time employee.

Under the direction of James Craig McLanahan, Ms. Etchison further disclosed her vast capabilities, quietly earning recognition for her incomparable performance on the job. Shortly after the company became the McLanahan Corporation, Ms. Etchison's distinguishing loyalty was acknowledged, as she became Michael McLanahan's personal secretary and remained in the same position for the next 31 years. Working tirelessly to overcome the obstacles of having to learn and master continually changing technology, Ms. Etchison flourished under her final boss, Sean McLanahan.

To the enjoyment of local citizens, her spirit and dedication translated into every aspect of her life. Ms. Etchison has been a life-long member of the Scotch Valley Grange, helping to prepare food and treating the crowds by playing the piano at numerous functions and selflessly contributing her time and musical talent to the Lutheran churches of Frankstown and Geeseytown. Her uncompromising sense of duty to the community in which she lives has been a source of inspiration.

Having worked diligently for four generations of the McLanahan family, Ms. Etchison has demonstrated an unyielding enthusiasm and care for the company which she has served. For her incomparable generosity, service to the McLanahan Corporation, and unabated commitment to excellence, Betty L. Etchison deserves the highest recognition. The legacy she has left behind is one that every American should emulate, and her contributions will not go unnoticed by the business for which she worked nor the community in which she lives. I would like to congratulate Ms. Etchison on her accomplishments, and I wish her the best of luck in her retirement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 28, 2004

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, January 27, I was unavoidably detained due to the inclement weather and was not present for roll call votes numbers 6 and 7. The votes were on H.R. 1385 and H.R. 3493, respectively. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on both measures.