



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 108th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 150

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2004

No. 21

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 25, 2004.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RAY LAHOOD to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: "Remember you are dust; and unto dust you will return."

Lord God, it was You who first spoke these words to Adam and Eve. Year after year, throughout every epic of recorded history, Your word echoes with humbling judgment. You remind us how frail and faulty human life really is. But You also give us time to change and become Your children of light.

Success, honor and all possessions sift through our fingers. Nothing truly lasts, except You, O Lord. The dawn of new life and the cycle of death follow each other as surely as daylight follows nighttime.

May personal conscience and the narration of humanity's crimes against humanity call forth repentance and efforts to set things right. So let the ashes of human deeds cry out to You.

O Divine Forgiveness, recreate Your people out of the ashes. Your phoenix flame can set us free. Your mercy endures forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the

last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. RYUN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. RYUN of Kansas led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment concurrent resolutions of the House of the following titles:

H. Con. Res. 264. Concurrent resolution authorizing and requesting the President to issue a proclamation to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Constantino Brumidi.

H. Con. Res. 358. Concurrent resolution authorizing the printing of "History of the United States Capitol" as a House document.

H. Con. Res. 359. Concurrent resolution permitting the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony as part of the commemoration of the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust.

PROTECTING UNBORN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow this body will vote on Laci and Conner's Law, the Unborn Victims of Violence Act. This bill would make it a Federal crime to kill or harm an unborn child in the act of a Federal crime against a pregnant woman.

Opponents of this bill claim that this is about abortion. They are wrong. This bill actually protects the expecting mother. The bill identifies 68 existing Federal laws dealing with acts of violence and expands them to include harm to an unborn child.

In upholding Minnesota's unborn victims law, the Minnesota Supreme Court said, "The possibility that a female homicide victim may be pregnant is a possibility that an assaulter may not safely exclude."

Over half the States have unborn victims protection laws on the books. Many have been upheld by State courts. None have affected access to abortion.

Let us put politics aside and pass this bill. We need to protect victims of violent crime and their unborn children, and the bill does that. It offers a defense for those who cannot defend themselves. It makes criminals think twice before attacking a pregnant woman.

COMMENDING BILL MCNEAL ON BEING NAMED THE NATIONAL SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR

(Mr. ETHERIDGE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my good friend Bill McNeal on being named the National Superintendent of the Year by the American Association of School Administrators. I have worked with Bill for many years, and no one is more deserving than he is of this award.

Since the year 2000, Bill has served with distinction as the Superintendent of Wake County Public Schools in my congressional district in North Carolina. Wake County is a diverse community and one of the fastest-growing school systems in America.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

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



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Bill has demonstrated outstanding leadership in raising student performance by reaching out to all elements of the community and bringing folks together behind a shared vision of education excellence.

Just this week, *Forbes Magazine* named Wake County schools the number three school system in ranking among the best 100 large school districts in America. Wake County is now a showcase for successful education reform through bold leadership.

At a time when schools across America are facing budget cuts and struggling to comply with the President's No Child Left Behind unfunded mandates, Bill McNeal's accomplishments are proof again that real leadership in education reform is taking place every day in our schools.

I call on my colleagues to join me in commending Bill McNeal for this hard-earned recognition.

SUPPORTING THE UNBORN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE ACT

(Mr. RYUN of Kansas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RYUN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, after being brutally beaten and losing her unborn child in the process, Tracy Marciniak was told that her attackers would not be held accountable for her child's death. Under current Federal law, the only crime committed was assault. There was no acknowledgment for a grieving mother.

When Laci Peterson was found, she was not alone. The small body of her son Conner was with her. Laci's parents not only lost their daughter, but their grandson as well. Logic tells us that two bodies means that murder should be charged for two victims.

Thankfully, 29 States, including California, have enacted unborn victims laws to adequately punish the perpetrators of these heinous crimes. Because of this, the killer of Laci and Conner Peterson will not go unaccounted for for two murders.

It is time for the United States Congress to protect unborn victims of Federal crimes. It our responsibility to recognize the killing of a pregnant woman as an act that ends two lives and assign punishment accordingly.

The Unborn Victims of Violence Act would not only provide long overdue protection to unborn victims, but also help ensure justice and closure for the families. I urge Members to join me in seeking justice for women and their unborn children and the families they leave behind. I urge members to vote for the Unborn Victims of Violence Act.

RECOGNIZING 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF LEAGUE OF UNITED LATIN AMERICAN CITIZENS

(Mr. FROST asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I am here to recognize the 75th anniversary of the League of United Latin American Citizens, the oldest and largest Hispanic organization in the country. Since its inception on February 17, 1929, LULAC has championed the cause of Latinos in the United States and Puerto Rico.

In 1930, the organization desegregated hundreds of public places, including barber shops, swimming pools, restaurants, hotels and others. The following year, LULAC helped organize and fund the case against the Del Rio, Texas, Independent School District, which was the first class-action lawsuit against a segregated Mexican school. Again in 1946 LULAC set its sights on ending segregation in schools through the *Mendez v. Westminster* lawsuit, which ended a century of segregation in California's public schools, and by 1948 it ended the segregation of Mexican children in the State of Texas.

By 1940, LULAC had sought to change the workplace for Hispanics, helping to file discrimination cases for the Federal Employment Practices Commission. LULAC was also crucial in earning Hispanics the right to vote by taking the *Hernandez v. the State of Texas* case to the Supreme Court in 1954.

Mr. Speaker, we all should recognize the valuable work of this organization.

IN SUPPORT OF THE UNBORN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE ACT

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, faced with the many grave threats to the sanctity of life in the modern world, the value of life from its very beginning must be affirmed, as must the right of every human being to have this primary good respected to the highest degree. As a mother, I feel duty-bound to speak out on behalf of those who have no voice, the innocent unborn child.

Under Federal law, an individual who commits a Federal crime of violence against a pregnant woman receives no additional punishment for killing or injuring the woman's unborn child during the commission of that crime. The Unborn Victims of Violence Act would narrow this gap in the law and would provide greater protection for women from crimes of violence.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to pass this important legislation this week and send it to the President for his signature.

TRIBUTE TO SGT. THOMAS ROB- BINS AND THOSE WHO HAVE MADE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE PROTECTING AMERICA'S WAY OF LIFE

(Mr. McNULTY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, over the recent recess, I attended the funeral of Sgt. Thomas Robbins, a young man who grew up in my congressional district, who was recently killed as a result of injuries sustained in Iraq.

When I attended that funeral, it brought back many painful memories. Chief among them was the time in August of 1970 when I was called home to learn that my brother Bill had been killed in Vietnam. It made me think about my priorities and the need to remember that had it not been for all of the men and women who have served in the United States military through the years, the rest of us would not have the privilege of bragging about how we live in the freest and most open democracy on Earth.

Freedom is not free. We have paid a tremendous price for it. We continue to pay that price today, and we need to be grateful to all those who have served and especially those who have made the supreme sacrifice.

Mr. Speaker, I extend my sympathies to all of the members of Thomas' loving family, and all of his many friends, on this tragic loss. He now becomes one of the reasons why, when I get up in the morning, the first two things I do are to thank God for my life, and veterans for my way of life.

TRIBUTE TO NORMA KNUDSEN

(Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a very special person, Norma Knudsen. Although she is one of the oldest members of the Spicer, Minnesota, Sunrise Lions Club at age 86, Norma continues to be one of their most active and devoted volunteers.

Norma has been a leader in efforts to restore and preserve the gift of sight by volunteering at various charity events like baseball games, barbecues and fish fries to benefit the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank, one of the most successful eye banks in the country. While this is laudable itself, it is even more remarkable when you consider that Norma suffers from macular degeneration, a devastating eye disease that has left her almost totally blind.

Because of her selfless efforts and the outstanding example she has been for the rest of us, Norma was recently presented the Helen Keller Award by the Spicer Sunrise Lions Club. There is no more deserving person for this award than Norma Knudsen. With her long track record of volunteerism, Norma has more than met Helen Keller's challenge to be a "knight of the blind in the crusade against darkness."

Mr. Speaker, I commend the fine efforts of Norma Knudsen to help bring sight to many who would have been left in the darkness.