

RECOGNIZING THE CHILDREN OF
CONGREGATION SHIR SHALOM
OF SONOMA, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2005

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the children of Congregation Shir Shalom in Sonoma, California who are deeply concerned about the tragedy taking place in Darfur, Sudan. These children recognize that the world cannot stand by while whole populations are slaughtered because of their race or religious beliefs. In the children's own words:

We are Jewish children at Congregation Shir Shalom in Sonoma, California, who have learned about tikkun olam, about making the world a better place. We have learned that Jews cannot be just for ourselves. We must be for others, too.

In our synagogue's school, we have learned there are other children we do not know, but who are living in danger in Darfur, Sudan. We know that bandits and other bad people are killing them and their families. Many people have died in Darfur, including many children. Also, children in Darfur and their mothers and fathers have had their things stolen from them. Because of all this millions have run away from their homes in Darfur.

As Jewish children, we know about the Holocaust, when Jews were killed just for being Jews. We know that there are people in Darfur who are now being killed just for being who they are.

Knowing this, we know we cannot stand by and let it happen. We know we are only children, so we need the help of grown-ups in our city, our state, and national governments to take action to protect the children in Darfur and their families.

We ask our government to make it safe for families living in Darfur. We ask for bandits and other bad people to be stopped from robbing and killing the children, women, and men living in Darfur. That way maybe all the food that is being sent to the people in Darfur might get through. Books might get through, too, and then children in Darfur can get to go to school like we do.

We ask all this because we are all human, and it is important to not just think of ourselves. It is important to make the world a better place for children like us who just want peace and maybe a chance to play and have fun like we can do in Sonoma, California.

Please listen to what we are asking and do what you can do to help those living in Darfur, Sudan have a chance to be happy.

Mr. Speaker, these words are profound and they will echo through history. We owe it to the children of Congregation Shir Shalom and to the children of Darfur to do everything in our power to resolve this grave humanitarian crisis.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION
OF H.R. 1279, GANG DETERRENCE
AND COMMUNITY PROTECTION
ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2005

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 1279. This punitive bill does nothing to help fight and deter the root of the gang problem plaguing our neighborhoods. I represent communities that are afflicted with gang violence, and I know first hand the suffering that families have to go through as a result. I support a combined approach to the gang problem that encourages prevention, intervention and suppression.

This bill is filled with criminal sanctions that would only help exacerbate the gang problem. The legislation would federalize a host of crimes currently and competently handled by the states. It would also penalize even non-violent drug dealing and some misdemeanors as crimes of violence. Without reason, the legislation expands the definition of criminal street gang. The bill imposes unduly harsh and discriminatory mandatory minimum sentences and expands the use of the federal death penalty to new offenses.

I strongly oppose the provision that allows the government sole discretion in deciding whether or not to try juveniles as adults. It is a proven fact that prosecuting children as adults increases, not decreases, crime. Study after study has shown that youth transferred to the adult criminal justice system are more likely to re-offend and to commit more serious crimes upon release than youth who remained in the juvenile system. At a time when the Bush administration has proposed huge cuts to programs that serve our youth, it is irresponsible to pass legislation that would only destabilize our communities and aggravate crime.

This bill is a simplistic approach to a complex problem that has its roots in the lack of a quality education and after school programs and negative influences from adults and broken families, among other problems. Our society must provide young people with meaningful alternatives that will draw them away from the gang lifestyle. We should not be soft on crime; my community has suffered for many years and we know how gang violence has scarred our families. That is why we must punish those who need to be punished while also remembering to give youth the opportunity to succeed in life. I support effective measures to combat gang-related crime and this bill completely fails to do that.

TRIBUTE TO LAST FULL-TIME
CHAIRMAN OF TENNESSEE VAL-
LEY AUTHORITY BOARD, GLENN
McCULLOUGH

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 18, 2005

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, Glenn McCullough steps down today as the 12th and

last full-time Chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority Board.

I have worked with thousands of people during my years in Congress. Chairman McCullough has been one of the kindest and most honorable with whom I have had the privilege to work.

Glenn McCullough, in my opinion, has been an outstanding Chairman for TVA. He has had the extremely difficult job of attempting to balance all kinds of competing interests, and he has done the job well.

He has done great things for the environment and the employees at TVA while still remembering that many TVA ratepayers and low-income people also need help, too.

Chairman McCullough is a man of high integrity who should be remembered as one of the finest Chairman TVA has ever had. He has worked as hard as possible for the people of the Valley, and this Nation is a better place today because of his service.

I would like to call to the attention of my colleagues and other readers of the RECORD the following article from the May 16 edition of the Knoxville News Sentinel.

DEPARTING CHAIRMAN SAYS UTILITY STILL
FACES FINANCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL CHAL-
LENGES

(By Duncan Mansfield)

Departing Chairman Glenn McCullough said the Tennessee Valley Authority is stronger than when he arrived in 1999, but the nation's largest public utility still faces financial, environmental and competitive challenges.

Tougher soot and smog requirements on coal-fired power plants could cost TVA \$4 billion to \$5 billion beyond the \$6 billion it has already spent or committed for pollution controls.

Rising fuel prices for its fleet of fossil plants, gas turbines and nuclear stations could force further cost-cutting and a likely electric rate increase that would affect some 8.5 million people receiving TVA power in Tennessee and six surrounding states.

Yet as McCullough nears the end of his term on Wednesday, May 18, as the 12th and final full-time chairman in the 72-year history of TVA, he remains optimistic about TVA's future.

"I think TVA will continue to be a high performer," McCullough told The Associated Press in a recent interview in his 12th floor office at TVA headquarters in Knoxville.

McCullough, 50 was mayor of his hometown of Tupelo, Miss.—TVA's first member city—when he was appointed to an unexpired term on the three-member TVA board in 1999 by President Clinton. In 2001, President Bush elevated McCullough, backed by then-Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., to chairman.

During his tenure, TVA changed its Tennessee River watershed plan to improve recreational use, set rising peak-power demand records, adopted a rate increase in 2003 to pay for coal plant pollution controls and developed the first commercial wind farm in the Southeast.

TVA also reduced a nearly \$28 billion long-term debt by \$1.8 billion. In doing so, the agency eliminated hundreds of jobs and put one of its twin headquarters towers in Knoxville up for sale as surplus. The tower sale is pending, and the payroll stands at 12,700—compared to more than 30,000 in the 1980s.

The self-financing government agency with a \$7 billion budget also took heat over extravagant travel and entertainment spending by executives but moved quickly to crack down with new internal policies.

However, McCullough said the boldest actions were the 2001 write-off of \$3.4 billion in

non-producing assets, including three unfinished nuclear reactors, and the \$1.8 billion decision to restart a mothballed reactor at the Browns Ferry station in Alabama by 2007.

"It was a good business decision, not an easy one," he said of the write-offs, while the gamble on the Browns Ferry reactor—60 percent complete—could pay off in meeting baseload demand through 2014.

"All of those things kind of roll off the tongue, but I tell you, there are thousands of people that did their job better so that TVA could have record generation and record clean air and record economic growth and record debt reduction," McCullough said.

Looking ahead, McCullough said a rate increase, which has become rare in recent years at TVA, seems inevitable because of rising fuel costs that can't be controlled.

"I think the future board will have to determine what rates need to be and when adjustments are necessary," he said. "I don't know how much, and I don't know when."

McCullough doesn't know if he will be on an expanded part-time board that is being created after he leaves. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., pushed the board restructuring to make the group more open

and responsive. The White House has yet to name nominees.

McCullough sees plenty of opportunities and challenges ahead for them.

TVA is working with two national consortiums studying designs and licensing for the next generation of nuclear plants, while TVA assesses the feasibility of using its unfinished Bellefonte nuclear plant in Alabama as a possible project site.

Meanwhile, TVA continues to review efficiencies and costs of new "clean coal" technologies for its fossil fleet. McCullough believes coal and nuclear should remain the foundation of TVA's power system.

"We are also looking at the business model," McCullough said. "There could be some opportunities for TVA to do joint ventures with perhaps other utilities or other entities that make good business sense."

He cited TVA's deal set up a few years ago to buy power from the Red Hills Power Plant and Mississippi Lignite Mining Co. near Ackerman, Miss., as an example of a successful joint venture.

Meanwhile, growing private and commercial development along the Tennessee River continues to stir resentment among the families of former residents displaced by TVA's

hydroelectric dam projects in the 1930s and '40s.

McCullough is sympathetic to a point. "Land in the valley is almost sacred. That is a characteristic of the South that I am frankly proud of—'Don't mess with the land.' I understand that," he said.

"But if you look on the TVA seal, you see the words 'Progress Through Resource Development,'" he said. "And you can't make progress without some development."

McCullough said he is looking forward to going home to Tupelo and spending time with his wife, Laura, and two teenage sons, and weighing his career options.

More low-key than his predecessors, McCullough said being chairman of TVA, like being mayor of Tupelo, was "a wonderful opportunity to make a positive difference."

"I didn't ask to come to TVA, and I didn't ask to be chairman. But I was asked to do this job, and it was a unique opportunity," he said. "If you get it right, if you make good decisions and fulfill the mission of TVA, then the people of the valley can be better off for generations to come. And that can be satisfying."