

Nations of necessary funding, we cannot expect it to become a more effective organization. Withholding funds from this worthy organization is the wrong way to urge its reform. It hinders the organization's efforts to reform and deprives the world of the benefits that treaties such as the Treaty for the Rights of Women advocate.

SUPPORTING FIREFIGHTER LIFE SAFETY SUMMIT INITIATIVES AND MISSION OF NATIONAL FALLEN FIREFIGHTERS FOUNDATION AND UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION

SPEECH OF

HON. DARLENE HOOLEY

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 21, 2005

Ms. HOOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 180, which supports initiatives by the national fire services to reduce fire fighter fatalities and injuries.

I want to congratulate the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. HOYER, for introducing this important measure. Mr. HOYER is a co-chair of the Fire Caucus and is a leading supporter of the fire services in Congress.

This resolution calls attention to the need to take action to reduce fire fighter deaths and injuries. It explicitly endorses the call from the major fire service organizations for a stand down to promote fire fighter safety.

The stand down would apply to every volunteer and career fire department in the Nation. It would require that each department suspend all non-emergency activities in order to concentrate on measures to raise awareness of safety issues and to institute steps to improve safety.

A growing perception of the need to take corrective action to improve safety was the motivation for a major summit meeting of the fire service community in March 2004. The summit developed 16 fire fighter life safety initiatives, which are listed in the resolution before the House.

Unfortunately, despite widespread dissemination and discussion of the initiatives, corrective action has been slow to develop, and the trend in loss of life in the fire services has not improved.

The stand down constitutes an action to try to change the culture, which is widely believed to be the key factor in bringing about constructive change.

The fire services perform a critical public safety role and all Americans respect the high level of devotion to duty and sacrifice that characterize fire service personnel. I applaud this resolution that seeks to reduce the loss of life and serious injury that too often occur to fire fighters during the performance of their hazardous duties.

Mr. Speaker, I comment this resolution to my colleagues and ask for their support in its passage by the House.

Since 1997, 29 Oregon firefighters have been listed in the Fallen Firefighter Memorial Database of the U.S. Fire Administration. They are:

Sanit Arovitx, Richard Hernandez and Kip Krigbaum (Columbia Helicopters, USDA Fire Service contractor);

Randall E. Carpenter, Jeffrey E. Common and Robert Charles Hanners (Coos Bay Fire and Rescue);

Paul E. Gibson, David Kelly Hammer, Jeffery D. Hengel, Jesse D. James, Richard Burt Moore, II, Leland Price, Jr., Mark Robert Ransdell and Ricardo M. Ruiz (First Strike Environmental, Roseburg, Oregon Department of Forestry Contractor);

Robert Chisholm (Gearhart Volunteer Fire Department);

Jake Martindale, Zachary Zigich, Daniel Eric Rama, Bartholomew Blake Bailey, and Retha Mae Shirley (Grayback Forestry, Inc., USDA Forest Service Contractor);

Larry A. Brown (Kingsley Field Fire Department, Klamath Falls);

John Robert Hazlett (Odell Fire District);

David Craig Mackey (Oregon Department of Forestry, Western Lane District);

Lawrence J. Hoffman (Oregon Department of Forestry);

Thomas Howard Kistler (Polk County Fire District #1);

Gerald Meyers (Sumpter Fire Department);

Randall Harmon (Superior Helicopter, LLC, Grants Pass);

Richard Warren Black (Weyerhaeuser, Eugene Helicopter Operation); and

Tony B. Chapin (Willamina Fire Department).

A TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM R. RUTTER

HON. MARILYN N. MUSGRAVE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2005

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a true hero, William R. Rutter. Mr. Rutter is a proud American who served our country in two major wars. After serving in World War II, Bill Rutter entered the U.S. Army Reserves, however, when the Korean conflict began he immediately volunteered again for active duty. After the Korean War he returned to the Reserves, serving a total of 37 years.

On December 15, 1950 in Korea when Bill Rutter was a Sergeant First Class with Fox Company, 7th Infantry, 3rd Regiment I.D., he volunteered to take a combat patrol out to probe and locate the enemy position and strength. Easy Company, 7th Infantry Regiment was pinned down. When they reached a position approximately opposite Easy Company they drew extremely heavy fire from the enemy force. There appeared to be two reinforced rifle companies with attached units. All of this patrol, with the exception of Sergeant Rutter, sustained wounds. He located a position that was protected where they couldn't be hit. He instructed his men to start walking back down the hill slowly one at a time while he and one of his men who was unable to walk provided cover fire. When they were all down the hill, Mr. Rutter strapped the wounded young Private on his back with his rifle belt and ran down the hill under extremely heavy fire. Sergeant Rutter was able to get all his men out alive that day.

Following his heroic service Bill Rutter served as a Deputy Federal Marshall and spent time working with the Federal Bureau of Prisons in several locations, including Alcatraz in California. He concluded his service in Colorado working for the Youth Conservation Core under the Bureau of Land Management.

He retired in 1981 and lives the small Eastern Colorado community of Fleming.

Mr. Speaker, we are so fortunate to live in this great country where freedom is something that we rarely have to think about and often take for granted. It is simply a way of life for us, and we are truly blessed to live in a country with citizens who willingly volunteer to put themselves in harm's way to defend and protect our great Nation.

I am proud to honor Bill for his courage and sacrifice on behalf of all Americans. I applaud Bill for his courage and selfless dedication to duty. He has helped protect our democracy and kept our homeland safe by placing his life on the line. Bill truly is the embodiment of all the values that have molded America into the great Nation it is today.

We can maintain the blessings of our freedoms only because we have citizens like Bill Rutter.

EXCESSIVE EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

HON. TERRY EVERETT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2005

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, with the passage of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, it is worth noting that this country has seen an increase in consumer and investor confidence, and a significant market recovery. Corporate scandals and plunging stock prices forced Congress to pass the most sweeping regulation of corporate activity since the 1930s, when the SEC was created.

Many positive developments have resulted from the passage of Sarbanes-Oxley, however more can be done. I fear that we have not seen the last of the corporate abuse exhibited by the Enrons and Worldcoms of the world, especially with regard to the raiding of pension funds.

I am concerned about a growing number of corporate executives in America who are less than fully accountable to their shareholders or employees. Some continue to demand and receive outrageous salaries and perks while their companies flounder. In some cases, these executives face civil and criminal investigations for fraud and corruption.

The current environment under which Corporate America pays its executives allows for minimal, if any, input by the shareholders. Oftentimes their will is suppressed, as was the case with Alcoa Inc. in 2003, when the board of directors rejected a proposal approved by the majority of shareholders that urged the board of directors to seek shareholder approval for future severance agreements with senior executives. Boards of directors continue to reward their executives with outrageous retirement packages regardless of the company's performance. Not only is the discrepancy between pay and performance a problem, but the fact that the disclosure to shareholders comes months after the payments are made is troubling.

One of the most disturbing facts of these misguided or criminal actions by corporate leaders is that their employees see their hard-earned profit sharing plans disappear. Yet, these corporate "rock stars" ride off with their guaranteed benefits package intact, while the

workers and shareholders take it on the chin. Their investments and savings, tied to corporate growth and built up over the years, have vanished. Plans of retirement are halted, either permanently or indefinitely; and many workers find themselves forced to work in their golden years.

Today, I have introduced legislation to require an advance disclosure to a company's shareholders upon the creation of or substantial increase in special retirement plans for executives. This will bring desperately needed transparency to the boardroom. Under current law, benefits payable under these plans are not considered reportable compensation, which is why this disclosure is necessary. This would allow shareholders to be proactive in determining whether or not their CEO deserves the millions he or she is getting paid.

I understand that this is a departure from the typical form of disclosure, however I believe the current environment under which Corporate America operates needs to change. We must improve investor confidence, and the advance disclosure of excessive corporate compensation will move us in that direction.

A HEALTHY DEMOCRACY

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the basic fact that, in our hearts, the American people truly love democracy. We love the ability of the people to influence the actions of decision-makers, of lawmakers and presidents to be removed from or elevated to office by the will of voters, and of the community to connect amongst diverse populations through the ballot box. We have passed legislation, protested on streets and waged wars to guarantee that every American has our most basic right, the right to vote, and our defining moments have been about the protection of this individual right.

Despite the struggles and challenges of the past and our passion for voting rights, we still routinely deny the right to vote to millions of ex-offenders, who have paid back their debt to society. In many states, there is no judicial determination of this high penalty. There is no connection to the crime committed and the punishment imposed. The denial of the right to vote is automatic based simply on a conviction, regardless of the nature of the crime or the individual involved. Reversing that decision and retaining one's right to vote in many states is nearly impossible and requires action by the Governor. As a Nation, we have long fought for the right of every citizen to vote; it should not be so easy to take that right away.

This denial erases the very core of our citizenship. It places the released ex-offenders on the outskirts of society and outside the decision making process. Their voice is silenced on the important issues of their community and this great Nation. Their unalienable right is taken away by legislative fiat in the interest of being "tough on crime." They are ostracized from their community and effectively denied the right to choose representatives and voice their opinion in public policy. They are relegated to the status of second-class citizens in terms of politicians, community leaders, and unfortunately themselves.

On the outskirts, many ex-offenders are frustrated and discouraged in their efforts to become contributing members of society. Denied the right to vote and to choose leaders and policymakers, ex-offenders often feel that they are not a part of this democratic system and this society. Their alienation, compounded by the stigma of their criminal record, limits their ability to be fully reintegrated into society.

If we believe in our current penal process, then the penalties imposed by judges and juries should be the only sanctions for one's crime, not the invisible sanctions of the legislature. If we do not believe in that process, then we should work to effectively reform the system and allow it to serve its true criminal, rather than civil, purpose. Regardless of our belief in the criminal justice system, disenfranchisement of ex-offenders is abhorrent to our beliefs. They are citizens. They have paid for their violations of our laws and they must be effectively reintegrated into our communities.

I submit for the RECORD an editorial from today's edition of the New York Times. Congress should heed the advice of the New York Times on this issue and once again protect the right to vote for all Americans. Too many have fought and died for this right to be lost.

[From the New York Times, Jun. 22, 2005]

EXTENDING DEMOCRACY TO EX-OFFENDERS

JUNE 22.—The laws that strip ex-offenders of the right to vote across the United States are the shame of the democratic world. Of an estimated five million Americans who were barred from voting in the last presidential election, a majority would have been able to vote if they had been citizens of countries like Britain, France, Germany, or Australia. Many nations take the franchise so seriously that they arrange for people to cast ballots while being held in prison. In the United States, by contrast, inmates can vote only in two states, Maine and Vermont.

This distinctly American bias—which extends to jobs, housing, and education—keeps even law-abiding ex-offenders confined to the margins of society, where they have a notoriously difficult time building successful lives. A few states, at least, are beginning to grasp this point. Some are reconsidering postprison sanctions, including laws that bar ex-offenders from the polls.

The Nebraska Legislature, for example, recently replaced a lifetime voting ban for convicted felons with a system in which ex-offenders would have their rights automatically returned after a two-year waiting period. Iowa, which also bars former prisoners from voting for life, took a similar step forward last week when Gov. Tom Vilsack announced his intention to sign an executive order that would restore voting rights to felons after they complete their sentence.

Governor Vilsack's decision is particularly important, given that Iowa has some of the most severe postprison sanctions in the country. Governor Vilsack's decision is particularly important, given that Iowa has some of the most severe postprison sanctions in the country. The other four states with similar laws are in the South, where disenfranchisement was created about a century ago, partly to keep black Americans from exercising their right to vote.

The Iowa and Nebraska cases reflect a growing awareness in some of the states that these laws offend the basic principles of democracy. They also stigmatize millions of Americans, many of whom have paid their debts to society and want nothing more than to rejoin the mainstream. The more the United States embraces this view, the healthier we will be as a nation.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC CHURCH LONG BEACH, MISSISSIPPI

HON. GENE TAYLOR

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2005

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 100th anniversary of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church located in Long Beach, Mississippi.

In early 1905, Bishop Thomas Heslin of the Natchez Diocese directed the order of St. Vincent de Paul, known as Vincentians, to build a church and religious retreat to fill the needs of the parishioners of Long Beach, Mississippi City, Perkinson and Wiggins. Forty acres of land were acquired on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and the church was consecrated as St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church on July 15, 1905.

As the City of Long Beach grew, so did the mission of the church. In 1915, St. Thomas was designated a parish church by Bishop John Gunn with Father Joseph Hagar serving as the new parish's first pastor. September 3, 1922 marked the first day of school for students of St. Thomas Elementary School, staffed by the Daughters of Charity.

August 17, 1969 marked a tragic day for all of South Mississippi when the Gulf Coast was struck by Hurricane Camille, a category 5 storm and the strongest hurricane to strike the United States in the 20th century. Camille destroyed the original 1905 St. Thomas Church and most other church associated buildings. As the region slowly recovered the church was rebuilt. Bishop Joseph Brunini dedicated the new St. Thomas Church on August 20, 1972.

The Vincentians ceded the parish to the Diocese of Biloxi in the summer of 1993, and Father Louis Lohan was named pastor of the congregation. The church's most recent major addition was the Parish Life Center, which was dedicated in November 2002.

So it is my great honor to congratulate the people of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church on their 100th anniversary.

TRIBUTE TO VERNON PARKER

HON. TRENT FRANKS

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 22, 2005

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, it is my great privilege to rise today in support of a statement entered into the RECORD June twenty-first by my friend and colleague, Mrs. MUSGRAVE of Colorado, to pay tribute to an extraordinary man, Vernon Parker, who is the kind of man that represents the backbone of the American way of life.

Vernon is first and foremost a husband to Sylvia, a father to Jim and Joe and a grandfather to Jennifer and Nicholas. He has been a teacher, an elementary and junior high school principal and an outstanding civic leader. But it was as the school superintendent in Briggsdale, Colorado, that our life paths intersected. There were eleven children in my third grade class. The entire school system, kindergarten through twelfth grade, had only one