

HONORING THE SUSSEX COUNTY VETERANS MEMORIAL

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2005

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring attention and pay tribute to Sussex County, New Jersey, for their efforts to recognize the heroic feats of our region. In the historic downtown square of Newton, New Jersey, a 34-inch-diameter cast bell is engraved with the words “Sussex County Veterans Memorial 2005.” This memorial is long overdue, but truly represents the liberty, freedom and democracy our brave men and women in the armed forces have fought for. What better time to present this memorial than on the occasion when our Nation pays our respects to our defenders of liberty on Veterans Day.

Defending our country by serving in the armed forces is one of the most commendable achievements and deserves our utmost gratitude and respect. America’s armed forces have time and again fought to protect our homeland and bring freedom and prosperity to the entire world.

We must never forget the sacrifices of these men and women and every effort must be made to ensure that our veterans and all they fought for are never forgotten. The Sussex County Veterans Memorial will remind all Americans of the monumental accomplishments our soldiers have made throughout history. They will be honored, admired and remembered forever.

It is with extreme reverence that I offer my sincerest gratitude to the veterans of Sussex County, New Jersey.

A TRIBUTE TO MRS. BLANCHE SPARROW RIVERS IN CELEBRATION OF HER 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2005

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of my most senior constituents, Mrs. Blanche Sparrow Rivers, who will be celebrating her 100th birthday on November 15, 2005.

Mrs. Rivers, is the third of five children born to Henry Clay and Hattie Brown Sparrow. Since the New Bern school system only offered 2 years of high school, Mrs. Rivers’ father sent her to Durham, North Carolina, to the National Religious Training School where she matriculated to Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. In 1927, Mrs. Rivers received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in English from Shaw University. She went on to teach English in the New Bern public school system for 24 years until her retirement in 1951. Mr. Speaker, I am certain that Mrs. Rivers can take credit for shaping many young minds and is responsible for directing the paths of many of my constituents who have grown into productive upstanding citizens.

In June 1932, Blanche Sparrow married Mr. Bishop Singleton Rivers, and in July 1935, Barbara Lucille Rivers was born. Mrs. Rivers is a charter member of the Theta Beta Omega

Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. She is also a faithful member of the St. Peter’s African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, which her father helped build. She continues to serve as a Captain for the Annual Fundraising Team.

Mrs. Rivers has five grandchildren, Michael, Lisa, Leander, Gary, and Marc, and five great-grandchildren, Morgan, Kristen, Marissa, Kaci and Kori—listed in order of the most senior. She is a beloved member of the community and church. Mrs. Rivers still resides in New Bern with her daughter, Barbara.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my Congressional Colleagues and the more than 660,000 constituents whom I represent, I extend my very best wishes to Mrs. Blanche Sparrow Rivers as she celebrates this tremendous milestone. I ask my Colleagues to rise and join me in wishing Mrs. Blanche Sparrow Rivers a Happy 100th Birthday.

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 3, 2005

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4128) to protect private property rights:

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of The Private Property Rights Protection Act, H.R. 4128. I have heard from a number of my constituents in New Jersey. They have come to my town hall meetings, sent me emails and called me on the phone, to express their concern about the potential for abuse of the power of eminent domain. I have heard their concerns and I share their concerns. That is why I support this legislation to make clear that local authorities may not use the power of eminent domain solely to increase the tax revenue for the town.

H.R. 4128 is a bipartisan bill that responds to the Supreme Court ruling in *Kelo v. City of New London*. Most troubling about the decision was that the Court upheld the right of New London to take private property and transfer it to another private individual for the purpose of increasing the tax revenue of the city. I am glad we are acting today to prevent this from becoming a regular practice.

The rights of property owners were so important to our nation’s founders that they enshrined property rights in our Constitution. They knew that towns and municipalities would need to look after the greater public good and occasionally acquire property with just compensation to the owners in order to use that property for public good. The power of eminent domain has enabled us to make many advances over the years. It was used to create the national railroad system, the interstate highway system, and make telephone, electric, sewer, and water lines available to all our communities. Eminent domain, when used properly, is a critical power of government that has benefited people in New Jersey and across America.

When used improperly, however, eminent domain is a fearsome power. Transfer of a person’s property—particularly their home—to

another private interest solely on the basis of tax revenue is an unwise and dangerous authority. With this bill, Congress is rightly acting to protect private property rights and ensure that property owners will not have their house taken from them by an over zealous town council seeking to increase its tax coffers.

Mr. Chairman, while eminent domain is used across America for beneficial and important reasons that support the public good, we need to ensure that towns do not overstep their powers. H.R. 4128 helps define the boundary lines.

RECOGNIZING SOLANO COUNTY AS ONE OF THE 100 BEST COMMUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2005

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Solano County for its selection as one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People by America’s Promise, the Alliance for Youth.

I am proud that this honor has been bestowed upon our community, but I am by no means surprised. Everyday, we in Solano County are visibly reminded of the commitment of the government and people of Solano County to the health and safety of our children. I want to congratulate the many dedicated parties who have worked so diligently to make Solano County one of the top communities in our country for young people.

Solano County is poised to become the first county in California with health care coverage for 100% of its children. Solano County has been an excellent steward of its share of Tobacco Master Settlement agreement funds, ensuring that it is spent on effective health services.

Solano County’s annual Children’s Report Card is an effective tool for government and non-profit organizations to continually reassess the needs of our youth. Clearly, Solano County is getting it right when it comes to kids.

Organizations such as the Children’s Network, First 5 Solano, the Child Care Planning Council, the Family Resource Centers, the Solano Coalition for Better Health, the Solano County Board of Supervisors and the Solano County Department of Health and Social Services, as well as countless others, deserve credit for this distinction.

Again, I commend all of the people and organizations that continue to work tirelessly to make Solano County one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People.

AUTHORIZING THE REMAINS OF ROSA PARKS TO LIE IN HONOR IN THE ROTUNDA OF THE CAPITOL

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 28, 2005

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to recognize

and honor the life and legacy of civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks, who passed away recently at the age of 92.

Ms. Parks was a daughter, a wife, a mother, a seamstress, who, like all of us, was trying to make a good life for herself and her family. On December 1, 1955, Ms. Parks refused to relinquish her seat to a white man in a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama, and this simple and courageous action changed the course of American history. Her strength and willingness to take a stand for her rights and those of others sparked the beginning of the Montgomery bus boycott and paved the way for the historic 1964 Civil Rights Act banning racial discrimination in public facilities. Ms. Parks' act of courage and bravery inspired the modern civil rights movement that went on to revolutionize our country.

Her steadfast faith in justice and equality, and the power of an individual to initiate change, has served as inspiration and encouragement for equal rights movements the world over. Millions of people with disabilities, and those who are discriminated against around the world, have looked to Ms. Parks' leadership in their claims for equality in the face of injustice. My constituents, and indeed this entire country, are grateful for her strength and courage. We as a country have been made better by the movement Ms. Parks ignited.

Mr. Speaker, in remembering her greatness, her dignity, and her legacy, Members of this House also recently made an historic vote. When this House voted to allow Rosa Parks to lay in honor in the Capitol Rotunda, it marked one of the few occasions a citizen who did not hold public office, and the first time a woman, has been recognized in this way. With that vote, we commemorated more than the great civil rights movement that her act initiated. In bestowing this honor upon Ms. Parks, we recognized that one person, one individual citizen, can have an impact, and can change lives.

Rosa Parks' legacy is one that will lead us in continuing the fight for social justice and the struggle for equality for all people. We must all remain committed to fighting the inequities that remain in our country and to championing fundamental rights for all whether they are voting rights, or a commitment to ending poverty in America. This is the true legacy of Rosa Parks which will live for years and decades to come.

TRIBUTE TO THE REVEREND
JAMES H. BILLINGTON OF SAN
MATEO, CALIFORNIA

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2005

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me today in paying tribute to the Reverend James H. Billington. For the past 6 years, Rev. Billington has been the Rector of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in San Mateo, California, in my Congressional district, and one of the largest and most important parishes in the State of California. After filling his spiritual calling on the West Coast, Fr. Billington and his family have decided to return to their roots on the East Coast. Though this will be a loss both to his congregation and to our community, I wish Fr.

Billington well in his future endeavors, and I know he will be a tremendous asset to whatever church family or organization he joins next.

Fr. Billington had a remarkably successful tenure at St. Matthew's. From a spiritual perspective, he led a passionate effort to strengthen Sunday School programs for church youth, increased the number and variety of worship services, and was a constant source of love and compassion to his elderly parishioners. He expanded ecumenical outreach by allowing a local Hispanic Pentecostal congregation to use St. Matthew's for their own services. Through his work with the Mills Health Center, he integrated healing services into the church calendar for cancer patients and opened the church during business hours for hospital staff.

Mr. Speaker, Fr. Billington was also very successful in matters of church administration. Despite a substantial increase in unemployment among his parishioners from Silicon Valley, annual giving increased by 37 percent. Through his solid leadership and strict fiscal policies, the church was able to completely retire a long-standing debt that Fr. Billington had inherited when he assumed leadership of the parish. In addition, the historic physical structure of the church was improved through major restorations to the stained glass windows and the organ, and the St. Matthew's Day School was restored to its earlier prominence. To the delight of his parishioners, Fr. Billington restored a previously condemned, church-owned historic landmark building into a community center for contemplative outreach.

An inspired church leader, Fr. Billington is also a gifted intellectual and dedicated humanitarian. His path to the priesthood began in earnest with his enrollment in the Episcopal Divinity School from which he graduated in 1996 with a Master of Divinity degree. Prior to this, he received a BA and an MBA from Harvard University. Before entering the priesthood, Fr. Billington earned several accolades for humanitarian work. He was awarded the Lyndhurst Prize in 1985—an annual award given to only five Americans for outstanding humanitarian contributions. From 1984 to 1986, Fr. Billington served as Director of the Appalachia Habitat for Humanity. In recognition of his extraordinary leadership, his chapter was named a model chapter by the founder, Millard Fuller.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a great pleasure for me to work with Fr. Billington on various community events and to become acquainted on a personal level with his family. His lovely wife Julia is currently a respected physician at Mills Health Center. She previously served as an Associate Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. Julia's dedication to the San Mateo community mirrors that of her husband's. The two of them have worked together to take on many important projects, including a mission to provide free medical care to those in need. The Billingtons are the happy and proud parents of four boys: James, Adam, Jonathan and Joshua.

Fr. Billington has been an integral part of interfaith efforts that have greatly benefited my congressional district and beyond. He has been aptly described as a true community leader, an outstanding rector, and an all-around humanitarian. After 6 years of tireless service to St. Matthews and the community, Fr. Billington will be deeply missed. His deep

commitment and dedication to the Episcopal Church earned him the highest esteem and trust of all whose lives he touched. His spiritual leadership has brought joy, peace and comfort to his parishioners. His eloquent sermons were an inspiration to all. By engaging his wry sense of humor, he has been able to simplify complex religious issues for his parishioners.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Fr. Billington for his contributions and dedication to public service. I wish him and his family many more years of richly deserved good health and happiness.

HONORING THE 250th ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

HON. CHARLES W. DENT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 4, 2005

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 250th anniversary of the Union United Church of Christ of Neffs, Pennsylvania and to pay tribute to the many contributions its congregation has made to the cultural fabric of the Lehigh Valley.

Established in 1755 by immigrant farmers and craftsmen, the first Union United Church of Christ was constructed on a 100-acre plot of land donated by the Schlosser family of Neffs. As the predominant language in the area, all services at Union Church were conducted in German until 1920 when English began to be incorporated.

Shortly after the church's formation in 1755, America went to war with Britain to gain its independence. Reflecting its role as an important element of the Lehigh Valley's cultural history, several Revolutionary War soldiers from the area are buried in Union Church's old cemetery, including Colonel Stephen Balliet, who commanded American battalions at the battles of Brandywine and Germantown.

In 1797, a new church was built to replace the original log structure that the congregation had been using since 1755. This building, known fondly as "Scrub Oak Church" due to the large number of oak trees in the surrounding hills, later housed the church's Sunday School, which was organized in 1846.

The construction of the congregation's current home, a striking red brick church built in the colonial style of 18th Century England, was completed in 1871 at a price of just over \$35,000.00. A tribute to its wonderful design and preservation, the Union Church is one of the most recognizable and beautiful structures in Lehigh County.

To commemorate their 250th Anniversary, members of Union Church have conducted a year-long celebration that has included a musical program entitled "250 Christmases at Neffs", a series of German heritage events, and an organ concert. While the congregation spent much of the last year honoring their past and celebrating their present, it was their involvement in building a family's future that exemplifies the positive impact this church has always had on life in the Lehigh Valley.

In September 2004, members of Union Church began working with Habitat for Humanity of the Lehigh Valley to renovate the home of a mother and her four sons living in