

ACKNOWLEDGING THE SERVICE OF
MR. JIM DION

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2005

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, at the complicated intersection of housing, poverty and community development issues, one man has shined as a guiding light. Mr. Jim Dion, assistant executive director for Housing Operations at the King County Housing Authority, has devoted his life to ensuring that our low-income neighbors—be they families, victims of domestic violence, seniors or people with disabilities—live in high quality affordable housing. After three decades of distinguished public service in King County, WA, Mr. Dion is about to retire. He is a living testament to the power that a single individual possesses to help provide quality affordable housing opportunities, build communities, encourage self-sufficiency and protect the dignity of people with limited resources, while safeguarding the public trust.

The child of a minister father and a social worker mother, Mr. Dion undoubtedly acquired a keen sense of public service from an early age. Perhaps that explains his rise through the ranks from a property manager overseeing 700 units of family and elderly public housing in 1974 to a senior executive currently administering more than 4,300 units of housing as well as rental subsidies for 8,200 additional households.

During his career, Mr. Dion expanded the housing safety net in King County through a number of additional Federal and local programs and by partnering with nonprofit organizations to provide on-site services to residents.

Mr. Dion also worked diligently to promote acceptance of low-income housing in several high-cost suburban cities such as Bellevue, Redmond, and Kirkland, areas of the county with excellent job bases. Mr. Dion's involvement in this initiative, along with the well-managed, well-maintained housing he oversaw, paved the way for favorable community response to low-income housing in affluent areas and continues to ensure that living in these cities is a viable option for struggling families.

While administering housing for more than 12,500 households is a staggering enough accomplishment in itself, Mr. Dion did so as a model of efficiency and effectiveness. Since HUD has had an evaluation process in effect, Mr. Dion led his staff to achieve HUD's highest ratings for both KCHA's section 8 and public housing programs, reflecting his hard work and his commitment to the families and individuals he served.

Awards from industry housing organizations for KCHA programs and properties under Mr. Dion's jurisdiction have been practically commonplace.

Mr. Dion also tackled issues beyond the scope of "bricks and sticks." With his strong belief in the ability of people to overcome difficult circumstances with appropriate support, Mr. Dion is credited for laying the foundation of what is now the Resident Services Department at the housing authority.

Mr. Dion's commitment to public service did not stop with King County. For most of his 30-year career, he has also been an active mem-

ber of the National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials, serving on its Housing Committee and its Board of Governors at the national level, as well as in various positions of leadership at the regional and chapter levels. His unparalleled grasp of the regulatory process made him a truly respected voice on Capitol Hill.

Home is where we raise our children. Home is where we hope to age in the company of our friends and family. Home is where vulnerable individuals and families can maintain their dignity and gain a foothold in self-sufficiency. Through Mr. Dion's thoughtful, compassionate leadership, thousands of people have improved the quality of their lives because they had a good, safe home.

As the sun sets on his career, it is only fitting that we acknowledge the 30 extraordinary years of Mr. Dion's dedicated public service. My sincere congratulations to Mr. Dion, whose calm, reasoned approach to ensuring quality housing and services for our most vulnerable residents has forever instilled in his colleagues at the King County Housing Authority and in Washington's congressional delegation the importance of providing the best possible support to families and individuals in need. He leaves a legacy of hard work, compassion and high standards that serves as an example to us all.

HONORING MICHAEL EAKER ON
HIS CAMPAIGN TO BE ELECTED
TO THE CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY
LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 7

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2005

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Michael Eaker, a resident of Chautauqua County for his quest to become the elected representative to the seventh legislative district in the Chautauqua County legislature. Although Mr. Eaker was not able to realize his dream he has been able to make an impact on other's lives in a different way.

The campaign trail is a difficult path to take. Any person with a dream may enter but only a few are able to reach the end. Mr. Eaker traveled that path with his head held high and a smile on his face the entire way. I have no doubt that his kind demeanor left a lasting impression on the voters of district 7.

Chautauqua County is blessed to have such strong candidates with a desire to make this county the wonderful place that we all know it can be. Mr. Eaker is one of those people and that is why, Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor him today.

SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2005

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to submit for the RECORD the following commentary written by Keith Burris which appeared in the Journal Inquirer on November 21, 2005. It is one of the most thoughtful and

accurate commentaries on the plan for action in Iraq proposed by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURTHA). I agree wholeheartedly with his conclusion, "JOHN MURTHA is trying to save lives now. He is right. And courageous. And the loyal friend of those who fight."

SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS

(By Keith C. Burris)

Everyone knows that public support for the president's war in Iraq has eroded. We know it not only because we read the newspapers and their reports about the polls but because so many of us are a part of that erosion.

After 9/11, most of us were capable of a knee-jerk reaction. Most Americans felt, "We have been attacked; we cannot just sit back and wait for the next attack." Most Americans supported attacking Afghanistan, because, to the extent that there was a Terrorist Central, that was it.

Invading Iraq was a tougher sell.

But Americans were inclined to trust their government, even though the memory of the Vietnam War was fresh in our minds.

That was a war in which thousands of young soldiers fought bravely and some 50,000 died. They were told, and we were told, that they fought for freedom; to contain communism; and, to paraphrase what was then being taught senior officers at the Army War College: If we fought the bad guys over there, we might not have to fight them over here.

Today, the young men and women fighting in Iraq are told the exact same things, and the nation is today told the exact same things, except that the word terrorism may be substituted for communism.

Our leaders went into Vietnam with good, even noble intentions: To "help those people" and to give them what we have—freedom and democracy. But our leaders didn't know enough about the history or the culture of the region. They didn't have a clear political or military objective. They didn't have adequate military power to subdue the country. So they got bogged down in a civil war in which they could not be sure about their allies and they sent our soldiers to fight a guerrilla war in which tactics were as unfocused as strategy and mission.

And then they began to lie.

The newest Nixon tapes show that the president actually instructed his aides and the military to lie. Our government broadened the war—into Cambodia. It told us it didn't. It got caught in the lie. And then the Nixon administration told the Congress and the public our troops were out when they were not. It's easy, explained the commander-in-chief to his deputies—we say one thing and do another.

Indeed, the entire war was based on what is now called "false intelligence." President Lyndon Johnson told the Senate that an American ship had been fired on in the Tonkin Gulf.

It hadn't been.

The final stage was flag waving: President Johnson, President Nixon, and their allies and aides said that people who suggested we had to correct this massive, tragic mistake—negotiate a political end and get the troops out—were demoralizing our troops and aiding and abetting the enemy.

In other words, they were treasonous.

Don't criticize the war effort while there are men in the field, we were told.

But if the war was not criticized, and a correction of course was not made while the war was going on, and the president would not or could not exert sufficient military effort to win the war, how would the war ever end?

It could only end as it did. By sputtering out. But with ultimate Viet Cong victory

and hasty American retreat by the U.S. troops that remained.

Meanwhile, between the time the nation realized it had made a mistake, roughly 1968, and 1975, many thousands died. Many fine foot soldiers. Many naval men patrolling waters they would give up, take back, and ultimately give up again. Many Marines. Many, many Vietnamese civilians.

And all for what?

None of it stopped the triumph of communism or the subsequent triumph of capitalism in Vietnam.

We got it wrong.

But, worse, once we realized we got it wrong, we "stayed the course," and then our leaders told us lies.

The biggest lie was: The way to show devotion to the troops is to support a war without a goal; without adequate military strategy or resources; without a chance of victory. If you love the boys, don't question the war.

In reality, that attitude killed a lot of boys who should not have died.

The biggest lie was that patriotism is blind acceptance and sacrifice of our country's young.

But something stopped Abraham before he slew his son Isaac. Maybe it was the voice of God. Or maybe it was the voice of questioning and of reason.

II

After Vietnam, one of that war's brave soldiers, a man named Colin Powell, came up with a formula for what he said we really owed our troops.

It wasn't flag waving or blind loyalty to those in charge of the state.

No, he said we owe our soldiers:

—A clear reason for fighting.

—A plan to win.

—And overwhelming force, so that they can be sure they will win and will not be sent out to fight and die as sitting ducks and human sacrifices.

We knew that Powell not only understood war, but understood the Vietnam War. And that is why many of us trusted him when he told us we had to go to war with Iraq.

But it turned out he was wrong.

The CIA was wrong.

The Department of Defense was wrong.

The Senate was wrong.

Most of the country was wrong.

We had a reason for war:

Saddam Hussein was a brutal tyrant.

If he had nuclear or deadly chemical weapons, he would use them. We were told he did.

Take him out first.

Fight them on their ground and not ours.

Help those people. Bring them freedom.

Contain terror.

But Saddam didn't have those weapons.

And once again, our leaders did not know enough about the history of a region they sought to reform.

And we don't know who our allies are in Iraq, if any.

And we didn't do it Powell's way.

We didn't send extra troops; we sent too few.

Our soldiers are sitting ducks.

And our best young people are fighting and dying for a war that will not end; a war without a purpose or a strategy or even defensive tactics; a war we now know was based on wrong information and false premises.

Some of us thought, once, that we could not be fooled again. After Vietnam, we would make the policymakers present a preponderance of evidence for war, and a real plan to win.

But 9/11 happened and we bought into the false premises, and we trusted Colin Powell. So now what?

We have been through the cover-ups and finger pointing about cooked intelligence.

And now the president and his men have started to call the war critics traitors.

You cannot oppose the war, they say, and support our troops.

It is incredible that they should feel entitled to this shameless emotional blackmail. For what kind of love is it that sends the young to die for no good reason, and with inadequate equipment? (Some of our military still lack adequate weapons and supplies, and 20 percent of their families have no health insurance.)

Logically, the true act of fidelity to the troops would be to either (a) give them a chance to win or (b) get them out of there ASAP.

This is what Rep. John Murtha of Pennsylvania has been saying for a year. And when he said so, in the past, he would usually add that the nation would probably not support massive force, since there are not another 150,000 soldiers to be had. Military victory would require occupation of the country, and therefore a draft, and, incidentally, colonial occupation for the better part of a decade. (Military victory and more troops is still the option Sen. John McCain prefers, though he does not mention the word "draft.")

The other day, Murtha, the first Vietnam vet elected to Congress (31 years ago) and the military's best friend on Capitol Hill, could take it no more. Not long after one of his visits to maimed soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, he called a press conference, which he almost never does. His message: Get our troops out as quickly as it may be done.

He has actually introduced a piece of legislation. It says:

—Redeploy the U.S. troops in Iraq to the periphery of the country immediately.

—Create a quick reaction force in the region.

—Create an "over the horizon" presence of Marines.

—Use diplomatic channels to pursue security and stability.

—Turn Iraq over to the Iraqis.

Murtha said he thinks it will take about six months. He said there is no military objective left for our military to achieve. They have done all they can.

Second, he said he is now convinced that the presence of our troops actually makes the nation less stable. They are the targets of the terror and unrest. They are the cause of continuing war, not the solution. Our troops function as foment. They are only killing time for Iraqi and U.S. politicians, and being killed.

Murtha rocked the capital and reignited opposition to the war.

III

John Murtha also has two Purple Hearts. "Are they going to call him a traitor?" asked a friend.

Well, yes.

The speaker of the House immediately accused Murtha of delivering "the highest insult to the troops."

The Republican floor leader said Murtha was "undermining the troops."

A congressman from Texas said Murtha wanted to "take the cowardly way out."

About a week ago, the president started this mantra: Trying to end the war gives comfort to the enemy, he said.

Criticizing war policy demoralizes the troops.

Then the vice president said it.

Then the president repeated it. Twice.

And all Republicans have since spoken with one voice: If you don't want your son or daughter to die for a war Bush and Cheney have no idea how to win, you are a disloyal American.

Sadly, even Connecticut's own 2nd District Congressman, Rob Simmons, joined in. He

attacked war critics on Veterans Day, just as the president did, and said that antiwar politics "undermines their (veterans) cause and degrades their heroic service and sacrifice."

No, it doesn't. It values their heroism enough to try to save their lives.

Lack of mission demoralizes them.

Lack of reinforcements undermines them.

A war without purpose or chance of ultimate victory is what degrades their sacrifice.

Simmons even joined in bashing John Murtha.

But Murtha probably knows more generals, officers, and grunts personally than anyone in Congress. He insists that they should not be asked to die, or suffer lifelong maiming, in vain.

Murtha's retort to the suggestion that he is undermining the fighting men and women he has devoted his life to?: "This is not a war of words. This is a real war, and people are getting hurt."

Rep. Simmons went on to speak of the lack of support for Vietnam veterans during Vietnam and the mistreatment many suffered when they came home—they were not honored as they should have been and some were taunted and blamed for the war of their president.

True.

But that abuse was as nothing compared to fighting in that war after our government had given it up.

And most Americans, even then, could tell the difference between brave soldiers and a bad policy.

This country loves its fighting men and women in Iraq. The people have backed them all the way. The government criminally—has not.

During Vietnam there were plenty of us who wanted to end the war but honored and admired those willing to fight and die for their country. Some of us had family there and were intensely proud of their bravery and sacrifice. We could also see the futility of the war and the cynicism of the war makers. It is possible to do both. Most Americans get that. Rob Simmons should too.

A few weeks ago, I was in Washington when the big national protest of the war was going on. The city was full of "peaceniks." I met one of them on a subway. He was a man in his middle to late 70s who had been wounded in Korea, the forgotten war—my Dad's war. This man wore a T-shirt that said "Veterans for peace." And this is what he told me we owe our troops: "Certainty. We have to be sure it is worth it. We have to know what we are doing. Or don't go. If we screw it up, we have to fix it."

That doesn't sound unpatriotic to me.

When this war was about to start, Rep. Simmons was not for it. He said that from the intelligence he had seen, Saddam was not a lethal and imminent threat. He said we needed to clean up Afghanistan. He said the war on terror would be mostly an intelligence war, not one of bombs and tanks. He said it would be a long and complicated war and we needed to make friends, not enemies, in the developing world.

He changed his mind.

But he was right the first time.

And I wish he had spoken out and broken with his president then.

That would have had an impact.

When military men stand up to an unjust war, it makes a difference.

Sen. Richard Russell, the lead military expert in Congress during Vietnam, told President Johnson to get out in 1966!

But LBJ was afraid to lose a war, and Russell kept silent. Imagine if he had spoken out.

That is why Murtha is an American hero. He fought bravely in the Vietnam War and he is trying to end the Iraq War.

His speaking out may save American lives. Rob Simmons is also a good man—a brave, decorated vet, and a fine public servant.

But the odious tactic of questioning the loyalty and patriotism of people who want to end the war is beneath him.

And you know what else?

The people in power who kept the Vietnam War going for at least seven years after they knew the war was lost, and kept sending good boys to die knowing it was lost, and called the people who tried to end the war unpatriotic, they are the ones whose names stand disgraced in history.

And the doves who saw that the war was hopeless—the people the president called “weak” and “soft” and “Nervous Nellies”—they were right. Far from being treasonous, they were patriots. Far from being demoralizers, they were trying to save soldiers’ lives.

John Murtha is trying to save lives now.

He is right.

And courageous.

And the loyal friend of those who fight.

TRIBUTE TO DARRELL TALBERT

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2005

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Darrell Talbert for the leadership and dedication he has displayed while serving as mayor of the city of Corona, California. On November 29, 2005, Darrell’s term as mayor came to a close and I want to thank him for his commitment and service.

Darrell has called Corona home for as long as he can remember and he continues to demonstrate the extraordinary qualities we expect in our community leaders. Shortly after graduation from California State University, San Bernardino in 1989, Darrell co-founded Odyssey Group, Inc. and Odyssey Publications, Inc. The Odyssey Companies quickly became industry leaders in the autograph and memorabilia business.

Just 5 years out of college and ready to take a more active role within the community, Darrell was elected to the Corona City Council in 1994. During his time on the city council, the city of Corona as well as the surrounding region has experienced significant growth. While this growth is surely a positive sign, it undoubtedly presents our local leaders with a number of challenges. In order to maintain the high quality of life residents come to expect, the Corona City Council has taken a number of steps to provide residents with the necessary infrastructure and services.

The city of Corona has had a balanced budget in each of the years Darrell has served on the city council, and they have done so without implementing new taxes. Under his leadership and due to carefully managed fiscal budgeting, the city has added over 100 acres of new parks, implemented the Downtown Revitalization Project and successfully attracted new retail stores, businesses and nationally recognized restaurants to serve the citizens of Corona and the surrounding communities.

I know I speak on behalf of our entire community in expressing my appreciation for Darrell’s tireless efforts on behalf of our city. I also want to thank his wife Kimberly and daughter Haley for supporting Darrell and at times sacrificing their time with him to allow him to perform his civic duties.

HONORING MARK SACKETT ON HIS CAMPAIGN TO BE ELECTED TO THE CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 4

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2005

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mark Sackett, a resident of Chautauqua County for his quest to become the elected representative to the fourth legislative district in the Chautauqua County Legislature. Although Mr. Sackett was not able to realize his dream he has been able to make an impact on other’s lives in a different way.

The campaign trail is a difficult path to take. Any person with a dream may enter but only a few are able to reach the end. Mr. Sackett traveled that path with his head held high and a smile on his face the entire way. I have no doubt that his kind demeanor left a lasting impression on the voters of district 4.

Mr. Sackett is a former legislator where he served the people of district 4 for many years. Mark is also a very creative man who never stops thinking of ways to assist a friend. Many people of Sheridan, New York may remember the large gavel that he constructed.

Chautauqua County is blessed to have such strong candidates with a desire to make this county the wonderful place that we all know it can be. Mr. Sackett is one of those people and that is why, Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor him today.

CHEMICAL ADDICTION AND THE SPREAD OF HIV/AIDS

HON. JIM RAMSTAD

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2005

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize last week’s World AIDS Day and draw attention to the troubling relationship between chemical dependency and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

In addition to the implicit dangers associated with intravenous drug use, use of illicit drugs and/or alcohol abuse can lead to poor decisions and unsafe sexual behavior that can result in HIV infection.

America’s youth, our most precious resource, are at especially high risk since adolescents face increased vulnerability to chemical addiction. Studies show that 50 percent of the individuals addicted to illicit drugs begin using drugs when they are between 15 and 18 years old.

That’s why the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) views drug abuse prevention and treatment as essential to stopping the spread of HIV infection, especially for America’s young people.

And while NIDA is an excellent resource that provides some of the top research in the area of chemical addiction, it is equally invested in educating the public about this public health problem. That’s why, in conjunction with World AIDS Day, NIDA is initiating a new public awareness campaign about the dangerous relationship between addiction and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

As co-chair of the Addiction, Treatment and Recovery Caucus, I want to congratulate NIDA and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for developing this life-saving campaign and commend these fine organizations for the tremendous research they are doing. This educational campaign and impeccable research will help us to better understand and prevent the devastating connection between chemical addiction and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND MASANORI SHOBO OHATA

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 6, 2005

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge and honor the Reverend Masanori Shobo Ohata as he formally retires from the Buddhist Churches of America and from the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin.

Reverend Ohata has served as a member of the Board of Trustees for the Institute of Buddhist Studies since 1982. The Institute of Buddhist Studies is the graduate school and seminary of the Buddhist Churches of America. It is the first nonwestern religious seminary to be affiliated with the Graduate Theological Union, an interfaith consortium of seminaries dedicated to study and dialogue in a religious and cultural pluralism.

Reverend Ohata has also served as a member of the Board of Trustees for Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Endowment Foundation since 1998. He was involved with the inception of the Endowment Foundation in 1983. The Foundation has provided over 11 million dollars of direct benefit to vital programs of the BCA which include ministerial welfare, education and administrative support.

Reverend Ohata has also served as a Sanyo (advisor) to the Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America and has advised five consecutive Bishops beginning with Bishop Shinsho Hanayama, whose term ended in 1968, through Bishops Tsuji, Yamaoka, Watanabe and Ogui.

Reverend Ohata’s contributions to the community are clearly demonstrated in his compassion and understanding. An immigrant himself, Reverend Ohata is a strong believer in the unifying powers of diversity, faith, tolerance and understanding. He has shared this strength through roles within the community.

The San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin sits in the heart of my district and opens its doors to people of every ethnicity, faith, nationality, culture and creed in the spirit of sharing and community. Yearly Obon festivals bring hundreds of people into the halls of the Buddhist church for good food and increased understanding among San Jose’s extremely diverse communities of neighbors and friends.

Although Reverend Ohata is formally retiring, I am certain that his legacy will continue throughout the sidewalks of San Jose’s Japantown and within the vibrant and diverse communities he has touched.