

Starkville, Mississippi's great citizens, in fact, an outstanding businessman recognized across the entire state and a family man of great reputation. Lewis F. Mallory, Jr., is chairman of the board and chief executive officer of the National Bank of Commerce, now known in Mississippi as Cadence Bank. He was inducted this year into the Mississippi Business Hall of Fame.

Lewis has been a leader in Mississippi banking circles for decades, and has been very successful in leading his bank through a period of tremendous growth. When Lewis began his career, his bank had about \$8 million in assets, two locations and 20 employees. Today, he has \$1.4 billion in assets in 32 offices in 12 communities throughout Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee. The company provides jobs for more than 475 people with earnings to exceed \$14 million.

Lewis grew up on the campus of Mississippi State University where his father served as Vice President for Business Affairs. He graduated from MSU with special honors in 1965 with a degree in Banking and Finance and a minor in Economics. While in college, Lewis was a member of Phi Eta Sigma, Beta Gamma Sigma, Phi Kappa Phi, and Omicron Delta Kappa.

Currently, Lewis is a member of the Board of Directors, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Mississippi Economic Council, Mississippi State University Foundation, Mississippi Catholic Foundation, Greater Starkville Development Partnership and is on the Senior Executive Advisory Council for the College of Business and Industry at Mississippi State University.

Lewis is a member of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Starkville and he and his wife Pie are the parents of two sons, Marcus and Lewis F. III.

Mr. Speaker, Lewis Mallory is a highly respected businessman and community leader and he thrives on promoting Starkville and Oktibbeha County. I commend him on his selection of the Mississippi Business Hall of Fame and I am proud that he is one of my constituents.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF THE HOUSE THAT SYMBOLS AND TRADITIONS OF CHRISTMAS SHOULD BE PROTECTED

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2005

Mr. HOLT. Madam. Speaker, I am troubled and disappointed that this resolution concerning Christmas is before the House today. It is a solution in search of a problem, it is divisive, and it comes at the cost of substantive issues that should be addressed.

There is a sad irony in this resolution. Christmas is supposed to be a season of goodwill, bringing people together, a holiday that brings out the best in us, and encourages us to reach out to our fellow man. Instead, this resolution was created simply so the Majority could pat itself on the back. It is a straw man, and should not have been considered by the House because it is needlessly divisive and inappropriate.

It comes as a surprise to no one, I'm sure, that as a Christian, I support and look forward to celebrating Christmas with my friends and family. But this is beside the point. More importantly, I support and respect the right of my fellow citizens to celebrate religion as they chose.

The House floor should not be manipulated so one group or members can revel in their own sanctimony. What makes America a great and free society is our system of government and our Constitution, which provides each citizen with broad, basic rights and freedoms. One of these is freedom of religion. This right treats all religions, and the lack of religion, equally. Yet today in this resolution, the House singles out one religion over the others, and defends one religious holiday at the expense of others. I wish this resolution had not come to the floor.

Just over a month ago, the House of Representatives unanimously supported a resolution that I sponsored which stressed the need for continuing interreligious dialogue and respect. Rather than "protecting" one specific religious holiday, we should protect and defend all of them. And we should honor the right of every citizen to celebrate or not celebrate these religious holidays as they chose. We should support and protect Hanukkah, Kwanza, Diwali, and all other religious holidays. It is my experience that the American people are much more respectful of each other's differences than the House may believe. They do not need to be told to respect the symbols of Christmas. They already do, just as they respect other religions.

Rather than creating a false argument over Christmas, the House should honor the spirit of Christmas through its own actions. Christmas is not about trees and candy canes, it is about a spirit of giving and helping those who need help. If the House wants to do something about Christmas, it should protect the various federal programs the Majority is trying to cut, such as food stamps, Medicaid, and money to help low income families pay their home heating bills. Ending the cuts on these essential programs for the poor and disadvantaged in our society would truly honor Christmas.

I will vote present on this resolution because it does not belong on the House floor.

PENSION PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 15, 2005

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, the House today passed the Pension Protection Act. I voted in favor of this legislation, though with great reservation.

The Pension Protection Act is a comprehensive attempt to reform our Nation's pension laws. Congress is taking up this issue in the wake of several major corporations defaulting on their pension plans. American workers are crying out for assistance as their nest eggs, for which they've worked their entire lives, are shrinking before their very eyes. I don't think anyone can argue the fact that something must be done.

But H.R. 2830 is a far cry from what is needed to place our pension system on a

strong foundation. I am concerned that the workers in many of our Nation's oldest industries are going to lose out when this legislative process shakes out. I am concerned that the future of the defined benefit—and the future of the worker's nest egg built through a defined benefit plan—is in jeopardy. And I am concerned that companies will continue to be able to dump their negotiated pension plans through bankruptcy proceedings.

Today's bill does not go far enough in alleviating my concerns.

However, I can tolerate this legislation for the simple reason that it gives us an opportunity to go to conference and improve this bill. And improve it we must—or I will be unable to support final passage on a conference agreement.

Today's debate was a needed and necessary exercise. But as we look to conference, we must remain focused on protecting the retirement dreams, and indeed the American dream, to which so many of our workers look forward.

If the conference report doesn't include the silver lining of pension protection our workers will depend upon in their golden years, I will be unable to support this bill on final passage.

IN RECOGNITION OF CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT RALPH J. CELENTO III SERVICE AND DEDICATION TO THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions of a great American, Chief Master Sergeant Ralph J. Celento III. I honor him today for his 30 years of service in the United States Air Force.

Chief Celento's most recent assignment was flight chief, vehicle operations for the 99th Logistics Readiness Squadron, 99th Mission Support Group, 99th Air Base Wing, Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada. In this position Chief Celento was responsible for all enlisted matters and he assisted the flight commander in daily missions. In addition, Chief Celento directed over 150 personnel, ten sections, and ensured that vehicle management services to Nellis AFB were complete.

Chief Celento was born in Rochester, New York and entered the Air Force in 1976. His Air Force career has included assignments in various transportation and logistical programs on bases in North Carolina, California, Washington, Maryland, and Mississippi. Chief Celento also served overseas in Japan, Germany and the Republic of Korea.

Chief Celento has been awarded over 19 major awards and decorations during his distinguished service in the Air Force including the Bronze Star, Air Force Meritorious Service Medal with five Oak Leaf Clusters, National Defense Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and more.

Chief Celento's accomplishments also include the White House Communication Agency Award, Best Vehicle Operations Flight in Air Education and Training Command, Verne

Orr Award for Most Productive Unit, and the Best Vehicle Operations Flight in the Pacific Air Forces Command among others.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and heartfelt gratitude that I salute Chief Celento for his service and dedication to our great nation.

RECOGNIZING THE DECATUR
TELEPHONE COMPANY

HON. CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, small and family businesses are the backbone of America's economy. Today I want to recognize one of these family institutions that serve a community in Newton County, Mississippi. In this day of international mergers and billion dollar telecommunication deals, it is wonderful to see a small and stable company continue to provide telephone service to customers after sixty years in the same family. If I may, let me quote from The Newton Record's November 23, 2005 issue and article titled "Decatur Telephone marks 60 years" by Kenneth Billings.

Few enterprises are fortunate enough to reach a milestone one local business will celebrate next month when its owners celebrate more than half a century of operating the business. On Dec. 5, Bill and Louise Bailey will mark their 60th year as owners of the Decatur Telephone Company and the continuation of a family legacy begun in 1945.

"In a way it seems like any other day," Louise Bailey said of the upcoming anniversary. "Sometimes I can't believe it has really been that long. The office has been a part of home so long it is sort of an extension of what we do everyday."

The Baileys purchased the company shortly after Bill returned home from the military and began seeking a vocation. They purchased the company and all 46 customers from Katie Perkins in 1945 and began what would grow into a family legacy.

Over the years they nurtured the business and in 1976 earned the distinction of becoming the first telephone company in the world to be completely digital. Today, Decatur Telephone boasts more than 2,500 customers in the central part of Newton County.

Bill, 84, and Louise, 83, still take an active part in the business, but in recent years have begun to cut back. No longer is all day spent at the helm of the business as they prepare to pass the reins to other family members to carry on the legacy of the business.

Although their son, Mark has gone on to a career in medicine after spending summers at the company as he grew up, their daughter and company Vice President Esther Smith is preparing to take control when time comes for her parents to fully retire. Smith said taking up the family business seemed the natural thing for her to do having spent most of her life inside the offices of the company.

"I have grown up here," she said. "I remember when I would walk 'home' this is where I came. While momma and daddy worked I went into the storeroom and played. I even one time tried to memorize the entire phone book because I thought that was what I had to do.

"Daddy was always so good to look into future. He was a real visionary business person. In the world, technology changes so fast and he was making advances for the company at a critical time. I just hope I can continue on the path daddy started."

The Bailey's said an all-day open house is set for Dec. 5 at the Decatur Telephone Company for customers and friends to join with them in celebrating their anniversary with finger foods and refreshments available.

Mr. Speaker, this month marks 60 years of Bailey Family telephone service to Decatur, Mississippi and hope they will continue for many more decades to come. They make it possible for my constituents to call here to Washington, DC and participate in the great American experiment, the democratic debate of our Congress. They are able to call around the world and down the street. It may be technology that makes it possible, but it could not be done without the hard work of folks like Bill and Louise Bailey and their family.

COMMENDATION FOR ROGER EASTON,
NATIONAL MEDAL OF
TECHNOLOGY RECIPIENT

HON. CHARLES F. BASS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

Mr. BASS. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to congratulate New Hampshire resident Roger Easton for receiving the National Medal of Technology, America's highest honor for technological achievement.

More importantly, I would like to commend Mr. Easton for four decades of distinguished service to the field of navigation technology and to our Nation. His numerous inventions, from the Minitrack satellite tracking system to the "Navigation System Using Satellites and Passive Ranging Techniques," provided the foundation for the development of the Global Positioning System (GPS) in widespread use today. This crucial technology initially advanced the capacity and effectiveness of U.S. satellites, in addition to providing a measure of increased security in the Cold War era by enabling our military to track unknown objects orbiting the Earth. Mr. Easton's ground-breaking inventions have subsequently inspired the use of GPS technology in the civilian sector, including the system's adaptation for usage in commercial airplanes and personal automobiles.

His contributions as a public servant are equally noteworthy, having served two terms as a colleague of mine in the New Hampshire State Legislature and three terms on the Board of the New Hampshire Electric Cooperative. The National Medal of Technology could not have been bestowed on a more deserving individual, and it is an honor to offer this outstanding contributor to America's economic, environmental, and social well-being my heartfelt congratulations.

STATEMENT ON RELEASE OF RESPONSE BY AMERICA'S SECOND HARVEST TO HURRICANES KATRINA AND RITA

HON. JAMES P. MCGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 16, 2005

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, the destruction caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

was devastating. More than one thousand people died and thousands of Gulf Coast residents lost their homes in these storms. As we now know, the Federal Government's reaction and response was woefully inadequate. We've seen how FEMA was ill-equipped to handle the catastrophes caused by these massive storms. We know that the then-Administrator of FEMA, Michael Brown, was the wrong choice to head such an important agency and we know that the lives of these Gulf State residents will never be the same because, in part, of the botched Federal response.

The responses to these hurricanes weren't all bad. The residents of the gulf coast were fortunate that there are non-profit organizations that were able to step in and provide the basic services and care to the victims of these storms.

One such group, America's Second Harvest, was a beacon of hope during and after the storm, providing food and water to the victims. America's Second Harvest is the nation's largest hunger-relief charity, and their truckloads of food and water helped support food banks and food-rescue organization in the gulf coast and other impacted areas.

Yesterday, December 15th, America's Second Harvest released a report documenting the impact of emergency food distribution in the wake of these devastating storms. Specifically, this report details the depth and breadth of the impact of the Gulf region hurricane disasters on the charitable food distribution system and the clients it serves. This report shows that demand for emergency food assistance in the Gulf Coast tripled following Hurricane Katrina. Just as startling is the finding that the demand for emergency food assistance continues to be more than fifty percent higher than it was before Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The study also confirms what we know—that low income families and African Americans were disproportionately impacted by the hurricane disasters.

I'm a co-chair of the House Hunger Caucus, a group I helped form to focus on and educate Members of Congress about the issue of hunger. Two days ago, the Caucus hosted a briefing on the food distribution response—Federal Government and private groups—to the hurricanes. What we learned is that we need to tighten up the system. We need to cut red tape so that food and water is on the ground, ready to go into impacted areas right away. We need to educate people in disaster-prone areas so they have adequate supplies of food, water and other necessities.

And we need to make sure that the Federal Government and private groups have clear lines of communication and that there are real plans in place so that the relief and recovery can begin immediately after a disaster. There will be disasters. According to experts, the Gulf Coast is only a mild tropical storm away from being devastated once again. We must take the lessons learned from Katrina and Rita, apply to them now, and get ready for the next natural disaster that will strike.

This report, and the expertise of America's Second Harvest, is a good first step and I'd like to commend Bob Forney and his staff at America's Second Harvest for their work on it and for their dedication to combating and ending hunger in America. As we look into the successes and failures in the days leading up to and the days, weeks and months following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, this report should