

several things to protect the Rio Grande as a living, flowing, natural system.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud that the agreement reached encompasses a central component that I advanced through legislation in 2003. I introduced the Middle Rio Grande Emergency Water Supply Stabilization Act in an effort to find a common-sense approach to sustainable water management in New Mexico. I knew then that the “solutions” being bandied about were little more than quick-fix answers that would not solve our real water crisis.

My bill dealt with these realities and many other crucial issues. It set up incentives to conserve our water resources and develop collaborative solutions at the local level. It aimed to restore and protect the Rio Grande River and the surrounding Bosque, and encouraged technological solutions for new sources of water and methods to harness such technology to increase water efficiency.

My bill paved the way for the creation of a conservation pool of water to support a living river. This was a very different approach than advanced by others. The Albuquerque City Council and a host of other entities, including conservation groups, farmers, the New Mexico Conference of Churches, and AARP New Mexico endorsed my legislation.

I am pleased that the accord reached by the city and the environmental groups includes my provision. Indeed, for the first time on the Rio Grande space will be allocated in the city's Abiquiu reservoir for water that will be dedicated to environmental purposes, including sustaining endangered species such as the Rio Grande silvery minnow. Under the deal, Albuquerque has committed to provide 30,000 acre-feet of storage space for exclusively environmental purposes.

In addition, the city committed to help fund a \$250,000 pilot water leasing program that would pursue agricultural water for environmental purposes, and change its water billing system to allow residents to add \$1 per month to their bills to fund environmental water acquisition for the Rio Grande.

While the agreement is welcome, our work is just beginning. The White House's 2006 budget requests \$19 million in Bureau of Reclamation funds for the Middle Rio Grande Project. That represents a \$10.2 million cut over current spending. At least \$4 million would be cut from funds available for activities to maintain compliance with the Endangered Species Act.

In 2003, the Department of the Interior developed a 10-year plan to ensure a manageable balance between endangered species and water use in the Middle Rio Grande. Implementation of that plan, by the department's own estimates, will exceed \$230 million. Yet, over the last three years, the Bush administration has only proposed investing \$19.4 million.

Making matters worse, the fiscal year 2006 Fish & Wildlife Service budget calls for eliminating \$542,000 in funding for the Middle Rio Grande Bosque initiative, labeling it a “lower priority project.”

Without support from the Bush administration, it will be more and more difficult to maintain the balance that is desperately needed. I will again do everything I can to see that these disastrous reductions are reversed.

Mr. Speaker, to be a conservationist is to be an optimist. While I wanted all of the stakeholders to reach this agreement much sooner, I am glad that consensus has finally been

achieved. It represents a significant step toward a fundamental change in how New Mexico and other Western States think about and manage crucial and limited water resources. As we approach similar confrontations in the coming years, I believe that we can use this historic pact as proof that seemingly divergent parties can reach a mutually acceptable and beneficial agreement.

IN HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE OF
ROBERT C. “BUDDY” BENSON

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2005

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and remembrance of my dear friend, Robert C. “Buddy” Benson, loving husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, civic activist, community leader, humanitarian, United States Veteran, and dear friend and mentor to many. His passing marks a great loss for his family and friends, and also marks a great loss for everyone whose life was touched by his own.

Grounded and humble, Mr. Benson was the quintessential “everyman,” yet his seemingly ordinary life belied his extraordinary heart and generous spirit. He would stop whatever he was doing to offer a helping hand. On countless occasions, regardless of the weather, he would stop his car to help stranded motorists. Mr. Benson was a hero to the downtrodden, and consistently reached out to offer assistance to those who struggled in life, leaving a life-long legacy of endless acts of kindness offered to friends and strangers alike.

Dolores Benson, Mr. Benson's beloved wife of 58 years, their seven children, eleven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren were central to his life. The united focus on family and service to others, shared by Mr. and Mrs. Benson, continues to illuminate the hope and promise of a better day for every citizen of this working-class community, from Seven Hills to Parma.

Mr. Benson retired from LTV Steel following 40 years of diligent and honorable work as a millwright. His friendly nature, quick wit and caring heart drew others to him, and he made friends easily. Concerned with the welfare of fellow workers and their families, Mr. Benson became actively involved in the steelworkers union. He held the position of treasurer with the United Steelworkers Local 2265 for 7 years, and served as their Chairman of the Compensation Committee for 35 years.

His life-long interest in politics and strong faith in the notion that “together, we can make a difference,” served to enrich our community's Democratic Party. Mr. Benson served as the president of the Seven Hills Democratic Club from 1983 to 1999, and led the effort in organizing several political campaigns. His humble nature precluded him from reveling in awards and accolades. However, his compassionate service to others was often recognized. In 1994, the Seven Hills Democratic Club named him “Democrat of the Year.” He was the recipient of citations from the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate Committee, which highlighted his humanitarian efforts.

Mr. Benson's faith was anchored by his church, St. Anthony of Padua, where he was

also a founding member. He volunteered on many community boards, including Pius X Council, VFW Post 1973, CAMEO, Southwest COPE, (AFL-CIO), and the Finance Committee of St. Anthony's.

Mr. Benson's greatest legacy is reflected in the lives of his family and friends; within the peaceful calm of St. Anthony's Church; within the energy of the Seven Hills Democratic Party, along the halls of Parma City Hall, and within the hearts of everyone whose life was touched by his.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor and remembrance of Robert C. “Buddy” Benson. The infinite measure of his heart, his courage, vision and integrity, defined his life and served to lift the lives of countless individuals and families throughout our west side suburbs. Mr. Benson's kindness, energy and compassion will be greatly missed within the hearts of his many friends, including my own. I extend my deepest condolences to his beloved wife, Dolores; His children, Robert, Jacqueline, Patrick, Mary, Elizabeth, Denis and Christine; His grandchildren, Gina, Kimberly, Bryan, Colleen, Robert, Michael, Christopher, Lauren, Christopher, Stephanie and Nicholas; His great-grand daughters, Callie and Allison.

Robert C. “Buddy” Benson lived his life with joy, energy and in unwavering service to others. His eternal faith in humanity and his consistent willingness to give of himself, while asking for nothing in return, will continue to serve as a powerful legacy of hope and possibility throughout our entire community, and his kindness and service will forever live within the hearts of all who knew and loved him well.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHARLIE MELANCON

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2005

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 41, had I been present, I would have voted “yes.”

IN HONOR AND REMEMBRANCE OF
DAVID J. O'REILLY

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2005

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and remembrance of David J. O'Reilly, devoted husband, father, brother, uncle, friend, and dedicated public servant. Mr. O'Reilly's commitment to the safety of Cleveland residents and concern for those less fortunate, defined his tenure of nearly two decades of outstanding public service as a police officer in Cleveland's 4th District.

Mr. O'Reilly, a life-long Clevelander, graduated from Benedictine High School. Throughout his entire adult life, Mr. O'Reilly remained committed to the welfare of his Slavic Village neighborhood. Affectionately known as the “Mayor of Fleet Avenue,” Mr. O'Reilly was a role model to neighborhood kids, and was a friend to our most fragile citizens, our homeless. Mr. O'Reilly's bravery and strength as a

police officer was equaled by his kind and generous heart. He consistently provided a hot meal or kind word to a person or family in need.

Mr. O'Reilly treated everyone with dignity and respect, regardless of their social status. He was just as comfortable in sharing a conversation with an elected official as he was in sharing lunch with a homeless man. His expansive heart and concern for others extended beyond the 4th District. He volunteered throughout the community, teaching community safety to neighborhood groups, and he also held leadership positions on the boards of many community organizations, including the Holy Name Society, St. Michael Hospital Community Board, and the Cleveland Police Patrolmen's Association.

Mr. Speaker and Colleagues, please join me in honor, gratitude and remembrance of Mr. David J O'Reilly. As a police officer, Mr. O'Reilly dedicated his professional life to the safety of his officers, and the safety of the entire Slavic Village community. I extend my deepest condolences to his beloved wife, Denise; his beloved daughter, Rebecca; his beloved son, James; and also to his extended family and many friends. His courage and kindness will live on forever within the hearts and memories of his family, friends, and the public he so faithfully served.

“JACKIE ROBINSON’S TRYOUT WITH THE BOSTON RED SOX, APRIL 1945”

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 2, 2005

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, this week the U.S. Congress is honoring one of the true giants of sports history, Jackie Robinson.

There is a little-known chapter in Mr. Robinson's career that is chronicled in the attached narrative. That chapter details an act of courage and creativity in the political life of Boston by Isadore Muchnick, a Boston City Councillor who served in the 1940s in the city. He deserves recognition for his achievement in obtaining a tryout for Jackie Robinson with the Boston Red Sox.

It also puts in context the courage and determination that Jackie Robinson displayed throughout his long and illustrious career in baseball.

It is a privilege for me to place this excerpted chapter, from the book “Shut Out: A Story of Race and Baseball in Boston” by Howard Bryant, into the RECORD.

JACKIE ROBINSON'S TRYOUT WITH THE BOSTON RED SOX, APRIL 1945, EXCERPTED FROM “SHUT OUT: A STORY OF RACE AND BASEBALL IN BOSTON,” BY HOWARD BRYANT

Virtually everything about Boston baseball is conditional. What would have happened if . . .

So who knew that on April 16, 1945, the Red Sox would once more approach history's intersection? With FDR on his deathbed and World War II winding down, fate and the last vestige of a city's social conscience conspired and put the Red Sox in a historic position.

At the end of World War II, the question of black rights in America was again relevant.

Asking black soldiers to fight and die for the liberty denied them at home created renewed dialogue.

Now, baseball found itself at the center of the argument. Black soldiers could not die on the battlefield and still be prohibited from playing center field in the major leagues.

Segregation was an unbreakable rule. That blacks played in separate leagues was a practice that went largely unquestioned. When debate was stirred, either from a relentless black press or from the few mainstream white reporters who made integration a cause, there was always a reason why the time was not prudent for the majors to open their doors to blacks. The only groups that were truly vociferous in their appeals stood on the fringes of the mainstream.

But during the latter half of 1944 and in the early months of 1945, Eddie Collins was uncomfortable. He was the vice president and general manager of the Red Sox and was now being pressured by Isadore Muchnick, a liberal Jewish city councilor, who demanded the Red Sox begin offering some form of talent evaluation of black players.

It was a threatening concept. Baseball prohibited black players from the major leagues in 1884, and no serious challenges to that authority had arisen. The desire to keep blacks out of the major leagues existed in great degree from the players all the way to the commissioner's office.

Shunned, blacks created their own leagues, and the races played the same game on patently uneven tracks. To some, the very existence of the Negro leagues was proof that blacks didn't care to play in the big leagues.

Yet here was an emboldened Muchnick, potentially unsettling the balance. For emphasis, he approached Collins with a hammer. In those days in Boston, a permit was required to play baseball on Sundays. The city council required a unanimous vote for the permit to be granted. Muchnick told Collins he would withhold his vote unless the Red Sox agreed to sponsor a tryout for black players, a potentially crippling financial blow.

This was a new pressure. Led by Muchnick's threat and with consistent commentary in the black press (and to a lesser degree the mainstream), integration advocates pushed baseball as they hadn't before the war.

Dave Egan from the Boston Record pushed in his column for the Red Sox or the Braves to be consistent with the Boston pedigree and lead the major leagues into a new, integrated era.

Wendell Smith, columnist from the black weekly Pittsburgh Courier, joined Egan in challenging Collins as well as other general managers across the league to offer tryouts to black players. Sam Lacy of the Baltimore Afro-American had vainly tried to push for integration in 1939. In 1945, Lacy and Collins began corresponding about integration.

It was, however, Muchnick's voice and clout that turned a cadre of disparate voices into something of a movement. Mabray “Doc” Kountze, perhaps the preeminent black reporter in Boston, referred to Muchnick as a “white modern abolitionist.”

Muchnick was the first person in the modern era to pressure baseball's power structure and come away with a tangible result. The Boston Red Sox would be the first team in the twentieth century to hold a tryout for black players.

“I cannot understand,” Muchnick wrote to Collins in late 1944, “how baseball, which claims to be the national sport and which . . . receives special favors and dispensation from the Federal Government because of alleged moral value can continue a pre-Civil War attitude toward American citizens because of the color of their skins.” What Col-

lins did next was a clear reflection of both the unassailable mindset of baseball as well as the arrogance of the Red Sox.

“As I wrote to one of your fellow councilors last April,” Collins replied to Muchnick in a letter, “I have been connected with the Red Sox for twelve years and during that time we have never had a single request for a tryout by a colored applicant. It is beyond my understanding how anyone could insinuate or believe that all ball players, regardless of race, color or creed have not been treated in the American way so far as having an equal opportunity to play for the Red Sox.”

Collins' cordial inaction insulted Muchnick, who pressed further. Collins had no intention of even granting the tryout, but he had badly underestimated Muchnick's tenacity. Collins was used to being in a position of strength when he dealt with baseball issues, but it was clear that he couldn't say a few positive, encouraging words to rid himself of Isadore Muchnick, a man who was determined to see tangible progress. When he received no satisfaction from their written correspondence in 1944, Muchnick alerted Collins to his intention to block the Red Sox from playing baseball on Sundays. It was a potentially crippling blow. In the 1940s, baseball clubs were almost completely dependent upon gate receipts as a revenue source. To infringe on that would surely get the attention of any baseball owner.

Jackie Robinson was fatalistic about the tryout. He didn't believe the Red Sox were serious about integration and wasn't especially thrilled about his own situation. He had only played for the Negro League's Kansas City Monarchs for a few weeks and was already disappointed by the league's air of gambling and disorganization.

When Robinson arrived in Boston, the tryout was delayed for two more days in the wake of Franklin Roosevelt's death.

[It] finally took place at Fenway Park at eleven on the morning of April 16, 1945. Two above-average Negro leaguers, Sam Jethroe and Marvin Williams, joined Jackie Robinson. The players fielded, threw, and took batting practice. [Manager Joe] Cronin sat, according to one account, “stone-faced.” Another depicted Cronin barely watching at all. Muchnick marveled at the hitting ability of Robinson, whose mood apparently darkened. Joe Cashman of the Boston Record sat with Cronin that day and reported that the manager was impressed with Robinson. He wrote cryptically, with virtually little comprehension, that he could have been witnessing a historic moment. “Before departing, Joe and his coaches spent some 90 minutes in the stands at Fenway surveying three Negro candidates. Why they came from such distant spots to work out for the Red Sox was not learned.”

Robinson himself was satisfied with his performance, although by the time he left Fenway he was smoldering about what he felt to be a humiliating charade. As the three players departed, Eddie Collins told them they would hear from the Red Sox in the near future. None of them ever heard from the Red Sox again.

Eighteen months later, the Dodgers signed Robinson, who would begin a legendary career a year and half later. Jethroe, at age thirty-three, integrated Boston pro baseball with the Braves in 1950 and would become the National League Rookie of the Year. Williams would stay in the Negro leagues, never again coming so close to the majors.

The remaining details of that morning are completely speculative. Robinson never spoke in real detail about the tryout. Joe Cronin never offered a complete account about the tryout except to say that he remembered that it occurred, although he and Robinson would never speak.