

EXPRESSING SORROW OF THE HOUSE AT THE DEATH OF THE HONORABLE ROBERT T. MATSUI, MEMBER OF CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, on January 1, 2005 the United States Congress lost one of its finest Members with the passing of Bob MATSUI. Recently re-elected to his 14th term by an overwhelming margin, Bob was an outstanding leader, beloved by his colleagues in Congress and his constituents alike.

As the third ranking Democrat on the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, and the Ranking Member on the Social Security Subcommittee, Bob served as an outspoken champion for the preservation of our social security system. In addition, Bob was a member of the Executive Board for the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), one of the most active caucuses in Congress. The trust and respect that his colleagues had for him was demonstrated last Congress, when he was elected as Chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

As we convene to begin the 109th Congress, it is important that we all pause to remember the noble work that Congressman MATSUI had accomplished during his 26 years in these halls. I would ask that all of my colleagues also keep his loved ones in their thoughts, including his beloved wife Doris; his son, Brian; his daughter-in-law, Amy; and his granddaughter Anna. Bob MATSUI was a great man, as well as an outstanding leader, and his service to our great Nation will never be forgotten.

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SPEECH OF

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, every now and then you encounter someone in public service who is a public servant in every sense of the word, who transcends petty partisan politics, who brings a depth of character and a depth of knowledge to surpassed by no person, someone who loves his country, works hard for the people he represents but loves his family even more. That person was Bob MATSUI who we lost over the weekend.

Bob was someone I grew to know and love. My first contact with Bob was a campaign check he sent to me in my first run for Congress in 1996. I had never met him before then but he must of saw something in me that motivated him to help me out a little during my first campaign when a lot of other people didn't think I could win.

And when I came to Congress, I quickly got to know Bob and appreciate him. He was

someone who made everyone feel special. He would solicit your opinions on the issue before us, even though his depth on the issues like tax policy, trade, social security and medicare, surpassed anything anyone else had. He cared for this institution and the process of democracy and he exuded boundless optimism about the future of our great country even though his first few months as a citizen of this country was spent in an internment camp in California shortly after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. He later led the effort in Congress to right that gross injustice by having our government apologize for that action.

In short, Bob MATSUI was someone I respected, looked up to and tried to emulate here in Congress. You can't replace a Bob MATSUI; he was rare and never fully appreciated to the extent he deserved. But we all can learn from Bob MATSUI and take his legacy of compassion, justice and fairness and make it our legacy to the next generation.

To his wife Doris, son, Brian, daughter-in-law, Amy, and granddaughter, Anna, may you surround yourself with family, friends and loved-ones during this difficult time and find comfort and understanding. Perhaps one day Anna will be old enough to read these testimonials to her grandfather and better appreciate how special he truly was. Please know that Bob was loved by many and will be missed by all.

May God bless him and keep in his company.

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SPEECH OF

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay my respects to one of the giants of the House of Representatives, Congressman Bob MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I can not tell you how shocked and saddened I was when I heard the news of Congressman MATSUI's passing. The constituents of the 5th Congressional District of California, the Democratic Party and our nation have suffered an enormous loss.

I had the honor and privilege of serving with Congressman MATSUI since I was elected to Congress in 1990. I was always impressed with Bob's knowledge, dedication and concern about the issues that he held close: healthcare for those who need it—especially for children, tax policy, fiscal responsibility and trade; as well as the issues that were important to his District: flood control, transportation, housing, and environmental preservation. His knowledge and passion on these and many other issues will be missed dearly.

Even on the rare occasion when we differed on an issue, such as trade, Congressman MATSUI presented his positions fairly and without rancor. He approached issues with an open mind and demonstrated a great ability to reach across the aisle. He had opponents, but no enemies.

Congressman MATSUI served the people of Sacramento for 26 years. While Bob MATSUI

was a valued member of the Democratic Party, he never forgot that his primary responsibility was to all of the people of California's 5th Congressional District, regardless of party affiliation. Bob always did what he thought was best for his constituents and for the country. He worked tirelessly for them in Congress and they have lost a valuable advocate.

Bob MATSUI had the respect and confidence of his peers. Time and again, Democrats elected him to leadership posts and he used these positions to be a capable and articulate spokesman for the Democratic Party. There is perhaps no other issue in which Congressman MATSUI proved to be more valuable—or will be missed more—than Social Security. His knowledge was second to none and as Congress debates the future of this vital program, we will miss his wise counsel about the importance of preserving Social Security as we know it for future generations.

Congressman MATSUI's experiences as a Japanese-American who was detained in an internment camp during World War II gave him a special sensitivity to the importance of preserving civil rights and civil liberties. His legislative work securing relief for those who were wrongfully held during World War II was a historic achievement and a fitting tribute to this great and good man.

Over the past several days, we have heard dozens of tributes honoring Congressman MATSUI. The words that were most often used in these accolades to describe Bob MATSUI were "integrity," "dignity" and "ability." For those that knew him, these words were only part of what made Bob MATSUI a terrific person, a dear friend and valuable Member of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, it is amazing to think that public service was not Bob MATSUI's first passion; architecture was. We are tremendously fortunate that Congressman MATSUI happened to read the biography of Clarence Darrow, which he always credited for inspiring him to enter law and eventually politics. California and, indeed the nation, has benefited from Congressman MATSUI's service and we thank him and his family for sharing him with us.

Congressman MATSUI will be sorely missed. My prayers are with his wife Doris, his son, Brian, his daughter-in-law, Amy and granddaughter Anna, and his many friends and family. God bless you, Congressman MATSUI. We will never forget you.

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SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mrs. MALONEY. Bob MATSUI was a dear friend. His long and distinguished public service on behalf of the people of California and all Americans was a tremendous benefit to his State and our Nation.

As a Member of Congress, he was a respected leader, an effective lawmaker, and a tireless leader of his party. With a major debate on Social Security looming, we will sorely

miss his unparalleled expertise and foresight on that issue.

Most of all—in that fight and in many to come—we will miss his compassion and his dedication to serving the most needy among us.

Throughout his career, BOB MATSUI was a champion of the vulnerable, leading the fight for civil rights. He said that he was inspired to go to law school by Clarence Darrow and to go into politics by John F. Kennedy. And he never stopped advancing those ideals.

Imprisoned as a young child in the Japanese-American internment camps of World War II, he authored the landmark bill that provided restitution to Japanese Americans held in those camps and, more important, tendered an official apology on behalf of the government.

Never one to shirk the tough jobs, he worked over decades on the thankless but essential task of improving flood protection for the Sacramento region, and recently reached an historic agreement on that critical issue.

BOB MATSUI was a thoughtful and prescient legislator. An early advocate of free trade, in the early 90s, he provided critical assistance to President Clinton in getting NAFTA through the House—despite opposition from labor groups that traditionally support Democrats. In 2000, he played a key role in obtaining permanent normalized trade relations with China, again at Clinton's behest. And he was a strong backer of giving the President fast track trade authority. At the same time, he was increasingly concerned over how little was being done to help Americans who had lost jobs.

Even those who fought the hardest with BOB over policy issues admired his intelligence and dedication and enjoyed his humor and warmth. He was a truly kind person and we will all miss his friendship.

My thoughts and prayers are with BOB MATSUI's family.

May he rest in peace.

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SPEECH OF

HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 11 expressing profound sorrow on the occasion of the death of the Honorable ROBERT T. MATSUI.

I am saddened by the loss of a great man and wonderful colleague in BOB MATSUI. He was a person dedicated to others, not just in his remarkable public service, but also in his warm and embracing character. His passing is a loss to the people of his district, California, and all Americans who benefited from his wisdom in Congress for the past 26 years.

Most of all, my heart goes out to his family. His wife, Doris, his son, Brian, his daughter-in-law, Amy, and, of course, his granddaughter, Anna, were the most important things in the

world to him, and I only hope that their grief can be tempered by the knowledge of his constant and unwavering love for them.

While it will be difficult for Californians, and all of BOB's colleagues in Washington to accept this tragic loss, I think we owe it to him to remember all of the positive things that BOB stood for. He was the first Japanese-American elected to the Sacramento City Council and one of the first Japanese-Americans to serve in the U.S. Congress.

These are remarkable feats for any American, but are simply astounding coming from BOB MATSUI, who was forced into an internment camp, along with his family, when he was only six months old.

But BOB would never hold a grudge against the country that had done him and so many other Japanese-Americans wrong. He was too great a man, and he had too big a heart. He continued to strive for what was right for decades, using his energy to improve those systems that so many Americans rely on. He was as committed to Social Security and protecting older Americans as he was to upholding the ideals and principles of the Democratic Party, creating a strong future for the next generations.

BOB MATSUI was a terrific mentor and a terrific friend to me. While our time together was cut too short, he provided an excellent role model of how to stay true to your beliefs even in the face of adversity. Today I join all Californians and Americans in mourning Congressman ROBERT MATSUI. Serving with him in this body will always be one of the great honors of my career.