

TRIBUTE TO HARRY LESTER

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of Harry Lester upon his retirement as the Director of District 2 of the United Steelworkers of America.

Mr. Lester has dedicated his life's work to the well-being and safety of steelworkers. The son of a West Virginia coal miner, who was tragically lost in a mining accident, Mr. Lester grew up to be a leading advocate for protecting the rights of steelworkers through the creation and preservation of decent wages, health benefits, workplace safety regulations, and education opportunities.

Mr. Lester began his career as an engineer with the McLouth Steel Corporation in Trenton, Michigan, in 1954 and rose to national attention in the 1980s for his leading role in the fight to save the company from bankruptcy and to preserve the jobs of its 3,600 steelworkers. As the USWA District Director and a member of the McLouth Steel Board of Directors, Mr. Lester orchestrated in 1988 the largest employee stock buyout of the time. While the company ultimately closed its doors in 1994, he has never ceased in his efforts to preserve the United States' steel industry and to provide for the rights of USWA members.

Notably, Mr. Lester engineered a Voluntary Employee Benefit Association plan and negotiated Cooperative Partnership Agreements between USWA members and National Steel Corporation. As steel companies consolidated, Mr. Lester worked at the negotiating table to guarantee that these protections were not lost. The language he ensured in these negotiations for workplace health and safety was recognized by the Supreme Court as the standard for workers. He has extended his championing of workers' rights into negotiations with Dow Chemical, National Standard, Quanex, and DSC, Ltd.

In addition to his commitment to his fellow workers, Mr. Lester has been a vigorous citizen of Michigan and is deeply committed to improving education and health in the State of Michigan. He and his wife established the Harry E. & Mary E. Lester Scholarship Fund for Steelworker Children to provide scholarship opportunities for the children of steelworkers in District Two. He was appointed by three governors to serve on the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority's Board of Commissioners and serves as a board member to many distinguished organizations, including the United Way of Michigan, the Michigan State AFL-CIO Board, the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan, and the Greater Detroit-Area Health Council. Mr. Lester initiated and co-chairs the Annual Downriver Community Prayer Breakfast in Southgate, Michigan, and holds the rank of "Ambassador" for the Detroit Muslim Temple of the Shrine. Recently, Mr. Lester was granted an Honorary Doctorate Degree in Humanities from Michigan State University.

Harry Lester often stood at the intersection of workers' rights and public policy. He understood that federal trade policy, and especially unfair trade practices of other nations, dramatically impacted the industry in which he worked and he was tireless in his efforts to impact change in Washington, DC. He also un-

derstood the real impact of federal policies on workers and their families when it came to retirement security, pensions and health care. He was passionate and articulate both in terms of impacting legislation, and informing his membership of the importance of those policies on their work and family life.

Mr. Speaker, I have been privileged over the years to work with Harry Lester, to observe his leadership and to call him a friend. I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Harry Lester for his decades of tireless and effective service to our Nation's workers.

TRIBUTE TO ALYSSA IMLER

HON. MELISSA A. HART

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Alyssa Imler, a teacher at Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Harrison, for her 2006 Disney Teacher of the Year Award nomination.

Imler has a unique method of teaching which keeps the students engaged in learning. She was nominated for this award anonymously by one of her students. If Imler is among the 40 Teacher of the Year honorees, she will be flown to Los Angeles for a red-carpet recognition ceremony. The honorees and their principals will participate in a week long educators conference. Honorees will also receive \$10,000 while their schools will receive \$5,000.

I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in congratulating Alyssa Imler and her 2006 Disney Teacher of the Year Award nomination. It is an honor to represent the Fourth Congressional District of Pennsylvania and a pleasure to salute such a dedicated individual such as Alyssa Imler.

VIOLA GEORGIAN BALESTRERI

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Viola Georgian Balestreri, who passed away on January 25, 2006 in Carmel, California, at the age of 92. Viola was born on September 19, 1913 in Brooklyn, New York to Amelia and Aniello Crispo and was the only girl among 11 brothers—a special child, indeed! After the death of her husband Vincent Balestreri, whom she married in 1938, she moved to Carmel in 1957. She taught at Junipero Serra School for many years while raising her two children, to whom she was devoted.

Viola was a strong woman who never criticized or said a harsh word about anyone. She was eternally optimistic and grateful for her family and the blessings in her life. She was a loving mother, mother-in-law, grandmother, sister and friend.

Her son, Ted Balestreri, owner of the famed Sardine Factory restaurant in Monterey, has been a good friend of mine and I grieve with him over the loss of his mother. I wish to ex-

tend my deepest sympathies to Ted and the entire Balestreri family on the loss of this beloved woman.

HONORING THE LIFE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF CORETTA SCOTT KING

SPEECH OF

HON. CHAKA FATTAH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 31, 2006

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay homage to Coretta Scott King, a great leader in the movement for civil and human rights on the occasion of her passing.

Known first as the wife of Dr. Martin Luther King, Mrs. King's commitment to the struggle for all people continued throughout her life. Attending Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, Coretta Scott King earned a Bachelor's Degree in music and education, skills she used to organize Freedom Concerts to benefit the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Serving as a delegate from Women Strike for Peace at a 1962 Disarmament Conference in Geneva, Switzerland, Mrs. King demonstrated her commitment to working for peace and justice worldwide.

Following the tragic murder of her husband, Coretta Scott King committed herself to promoting Dr. King's principles of nonviolence and social justice. First, in establishing the King Center for Nonviolent Social Change, which has trained tens of thousands of people in the philosophy and methods of Dr. King, she has been able to preserve and further his legacy. Second, she served as chair of the Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday Commission and worked for the national recognition of Dr. King's birthday.

In addition to working for the recognition of her husband's legacy, Mrs. King was always a tireless advocate for the abolition of Apartheid in South Africa, women and children's rights, gay and lesbian dignity, full employment and ecological sanity. In recognition of this work, Coretta Scott King has lead goodwill missions across the globe consulting with world leaders. In addition, the American Library Association has awarded Coretta Scott King Awards to more than 175 books written or illustrated by African Americans that promote understanding and appreciation for all cultures and demonstrate commitment to equality and justice.

Surely the passing of Coretta Scott King is a great loss to this Nation and the world. Mrs. King demonstrated a resilience and commitment to the ideals of equality and justice that has been matched by few and we all owe her a debt of gratitude.

TRIBUTE TO THE SISTERS OF ST. EMMA ON THEIR 75TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. MELISSA A. HART

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Ms. HART. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Sisters of

St. Emma for their 75th anniversary this month.

Many in western Pennsylvania are familiar with the Sisters of St. Emma's years of service at Saint Vincent College and Arch abbey, where until 1987 they prepared and served thousands of meals to students, the Benedictine Brothers, and even to the Pittsburgh Steelers during their Summer Training Camps at Saint Vincent. From 1987 until the present, the Sisters of St. Emma have continued to be a vibrant part of the area by operating a thriving retreat house just outside of Greensburg, PA. At the retreat house, the Sisters prepare meals, offer hospitality, and a place for hundreds of people annually who come to Saint Emma for spiritual growth and fulfillment.

I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in congratulating the Sisters of St. Emma for their 75th anniversary. It is an honor to represent the Fourth Congressional District of Pennsylvania and a pleasure to salute a dedicated community such as the Sisters of St. Emma.

IN RECOGNITION OF RUTH COTNEY

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a dedicated public servant and member of the community, Ms. Ruth Cotney, of Chambers County, Alabama. Ms. Cotney is a well-known and highly respected individual who has served her community, held public office, and is now completing her 50th year of employment at the Chambers County tax office.

In 1955, Ms. Cotney began her career at the Chambers County Courthouse in a time where most tax bills were written by hand. In 1979, Ms. Cotney was appointed by Governor Fob James to replace the retired tax collector. She completed the balance of the term, ran again, and won in 1984 for a 6-year term. She retired in 1991, but continues to work part-time at the tax collector's office.

I am proud to recognize Ms. Cotney today in the House, and congratulate her on her long and fulfilling career in service to the people of Chambers County. I wish her many more years of continued success and service.

SERGEANT HENRY PRENDES MEMORIAL ACT OF 2006 INCREASES PENALTIES FOR COP KILLERS

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to introduce the Sergeant Henry Prendes Memorial Act of 2006 today. This legislation will create a new Federal criminal offense for the killing, the attempt to kill or conspiring to kill, any public safety officer for a public agency that receives Federal funding. This would include State and local police officers, judicial officers, judicial employees, and firefighters.

Mr. Speaker, simply put, this legislation makes it a Federal crime to kill a public safety officer of any type. Under this legislation, a criminal convicted of the above charges will be punished by a fine and imprisonment for no

less than 30 years, or for life, or sentenced to death.

I have named this vitally important piece of legislation after a constituent of mine, SGT Henry Prendes. Sergeant Prendes of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, was killed in the line of duty on Wednesday, February 1, 2006.

SGT Henry Prendes joined the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department on February 26, 1991. He spent his first years patrolling the east Las Vegas neighborhood surrounding Charleston and Lamb Boulevards and was quickly promoted to Field Training Officer. On January 2, 1999, after working 1 year for the narcotics office as a detective, Henry Prendes was promoted to sergeant. As a sergeant he worked for the Crimes against Youth and Family Department, and later as Patrol Sergeant in the South West Area Command.

Sergeant Prendes was a native of Nevada and graduated from Las Vegas High School where he was vice president of his senior class and captain of the football team. He is survived by his wife Dawn and two daughters from a previous marriage, Kylee and Brooke. Sergeant Prendes, along with his family, was a devoutly religious man. He engaged in bible study at home with his wife and mentored children in his spare time. Before he died, he was in the process of building a 17-acre youth camp in Montana called, Creation Camp Jesus.

SGT Henry Prendes could be described as everyone's friend, always having a smile on his face, and always helping those in need. Some help people because they are police officers, but Henry was a police officer to help people.

Mr. Speaker, the pride I feel today in introducing this vitally important piece of legislation is overshadowed by the sorry I feel for the entire Prendes family.

INTRODUCING H.R. 4710, THE JUDICIARY RENT REFORM ACT OF 2006

HON. F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to introduce H.R. 4710, the "Judiciary Rent Reform Act of 2006." The purpose of this legislation is to ensure the rent paid by the Federal judiciary is rationally and equitably related to the actual costs of providing their facilities.

It may shock Members to learn that this is not the case nor has it been for some time. In fact, the Federal judiciary pays the General Services Administration (GSA) hundreds of millions of dollars more each year than the actual costs of maintaining and operating buildings. Chief Justice Roberts has characterized this practice as resulting in the judiciary being used "as a profit center for GSA."

By law, GSA is authorized to establish the rent to be paid by the judiciary. GSA's rates are supposed to approximate commercially equivalent rates. Their charges are not subject to negotiation.

Since 1986, the judiciary's annual rent payments to GSA have increased from \$133 million to almost \$920 million. As a percentage of the judiciary's operating budget, these payments have climbed from 15.7 percent to 20 percent. In contrast, rent for executive branch

agencies averages less than one percent of their budgets and no department is charged more than 3 percent.

To cope with soaring GSA rent payments, the courts have been compelled to make difficult choices, including a decision over 18 months to reduce employee ranks by 1,850 positions—a full 8 percent of on board staffing levels.

Consider the irony: the staffing required by the Judiciary Branch is compromised because the Executive Branch charges our courts too much for rent.

In the absence of a swift Congressional response to redress this imbalance, there is little doubt that the continued budgetary pressures, which will result from constantly rising rental costs, will cause the loss of even more court personnel.

The administration of justice should not be compromised because our courts are denied the ability to contain their rental costs. The judiciary has taken available action to reign in these expenses, including adopting a 24-month moratorium on new construction and requesting rent relief from GSA. To date though, GSA has refused to work with the courts in any meaningful way to find a solution.

As Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, I believe Congress has a duty to act to ensure the fair, efficient, and equitable adjudication of all legitimate issues brought before the courts. The use of the courts as a "profit center" can no longer be tolerated.

The bill I am introducing today will put an end to this practice by replacing the "commercially-equivalent" rent calculation that GSA has used with a requirement that the courts pay only for the actual operating expenses incurred in providing space. This simple change will result in a dramatic savings in the judiciary's rent expense.

This change will also give the judiciary needed flexibility, accountability, and responsibility for balancing the requirements imposed by their capital costs, personnel, and non-salary expenses.

The courts are best positioned to know whether the administration of justice will benefit more by hiring new personnel than by constructing a new courthouse or renovating an older one. Our courts should be empowered to make the decision that is in the public interest and that is most likely to enhance their ability to adjudicate and resolve cases.

In his inaugural year-end report on the Federal judiciary, Chief Justice Roberts addressed this issue directly:

The disparity between the judiciary's rent and that of other government agencies, and between the cost to GSA of providing space and the amount charged to the judiciary, is unfair . . . [and] the judiciary must . . . find a long-term solution to the problem of ever-increasing rent payments that drain resources needed for the courts to fulfill their vital mission.

Mr. Speaker, the solution is for Congress to enact the "Judiciary Rent Reform Act of 2006," which will require the Administrator of General Services to charge the judiciary only the actual cost of providing space in federally-owned facilities or the actual costs of procuring and servicing leases in privately-owned space.