

INTRODUCTION OF THE ALASKA
NATIVE CLAIMS SETTLEMENT
ACT TO PROVIDE EQUITABLE
TREATMENT OF ALASKA NATIVE
VIETNAM VETERANS

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2007

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce legislation today to correct an inequity for my Alaska Native Vietnam Veterans with regard to their native allotment issues.

Approximately 2,800 Alaska Natives served in the military during the Vietnam conflict and therefore did not have an opportunity to apply for their Native allotment. In 1998, P.L. 105-276 amended the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) to provide Alaska Native Vietnam veterans an opportunity to obtain an allotment of up to 160 acres of land under the Native Allotment Act.

P.L. 105-276 contains three major obstacles that prevent Alaska Native Vietnam veterans from selecting and obtaining their Native allotment. First, Alaska Native Vietnam veterans can only apply for land that was vacant, unappropriated, and unreserved when their use first began. Second, Alaska Native Vietnam veterans can only apply if they served in active military duty from January 1, 1969 to December 31, 1971 (even though the Vietnam conflict began August 5, 1964 and ended May 7, 1975). Third, Alaska Native Vietnam veterans must prove they used the land (applied for in their native allotment application) in a substantially continuous and independent manner, at least potentially exclusive of others, for five or more years. This requirement was not in the original Native Allotment Act, nor has it been required of other Alaska Native applicants in applying for their native allotment. Further, adjudication of use and occupancy issues will take years and will be very costly.

My bill will increase the available land by authorizing Alaska Native Vietnam veterans to apply for land that is federally owned and vacant. The lack of available land under existing law nullifies the very purpose of granting Alaska Native Vietnam veterans an allotment benefit. This is true because most land in Alaska is not available for Alaska Native Vietnam veteran allotment applications under existing laws. For example, there is no land available in southeast Alaska because it either is within the Tongass National Forest or has been selected or conveyed to the State of Alaska or ANCSA Native Corporations.

My bill will also expand the military service dates to coincide with the entire Vietnam conflict: August 5, 1964 through May 7, 1975. The expansion of military service dates to include all Alaska Natives who served in the military during the Vietnam conflict is consistent with the federal government's policy of providing benefits to veterans of the Vietnam War. The federal government has given public land benefits to veterans (or their widows or heirs) of every war beginning with the Indian Wars of 1790 and ending with the Korean conflict in 1955. Incidentally, Alaska Native veterans were not eligible for these public land benefits until 1924 because the courts had determined Alaska Natives were not United States citizens.

My bill would extend the deadline of the allotment application to three years after the Secretary of the Interior issues final regulations under Section 3 of this bill. It also would correct the dates of Approval of Allotments to accommodate the extension of the application process of an Alaska Native Vietnam veteran.

My bill would also assure ANCSA Regional and Village Corporations that if an Alaska Native Vietnam veteran makes his or her allotment selection within lands selected (and not necessarily conveyed) by those Corporations said Corporation's lands entitlement will remain intact.

My bill would prohibit an Alaska Native Vietnam veteran from selecting lands within the right of way granted for the TransAlaska Pipeline or the inner and outer corridor of that right-of-way withdrawal (for security reasons after 9/11 attacks). It also would prohibit a veteran from selecting lands containing a building, permanent structure, or other development owned or controlled by the United States, another unit of government, or reserved for national defense purposes other than National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.

My bill would also allow a veteran who made an allotment selection under Section 2(g) of this bill, before the date of the enactment of this bill, may withdraw that selection and reselect lands under this section if the land originally selected were not conveyed to that person prior to enactment of this bill.

My bill will also replace existing use and occupancy requirements with legislative approval of allotment applications. Use and occupancy requirements would be replaced for several reasons: (1) Congress has made legislative approval available to all other allotment applicants under 43 U.S.C. Section 1634(a) (1) (A); (2) legislative approval of allotments prevents costly and lengthy adjudication of use and occupancy issues; and (3) many Alaska Native Vietnam veterans could not meet use and occupancy requirements as a result of military service. For example, the application of a deserving Alaska Native Vietnam veteran who was paralyzed during the Vietnam conflict would be rejected if that veteran were unable to complete the five years of use of the claimed land and had not used the land for five years before the war.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation for Alaska Native Vietnam veterans who served their country in a time of conflict. I want to remind my colleagues that we owe our veterans the respect, dignity and honor them so well deserve for fulfilling their duty and commitment to this great nation. Please do not deprive my Alaska Native Vietnam veterans their rightful opportunity to apply for their native allotment as was afforded other Alaska natives in my great State.

TRIBUTE TO EMILY ALLEN

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2007

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Emily Allen who has been awarded the Curtis Garrett Scholarship of Jefferson County, Colorado, in the amount of \$1,000. Emily will use this scholarship to attend McPherson College in McPherson, Kansas, majoring in education.

Emily is a 2007 graduate of Alameda High School of Lakewood, Colorado and has had a very accomplished academic career. She graduated seventh in her class with an overall grade point average of 3.8. Emily was very involved in her high school career and that involvement only adds to the recognition this young woman deserves.

Emily was very involved with the cheerleading squad at Alameda High School, and will continue that involvement at McPherson College. Deciding on an education degree, she will be following in the footsteps of her parents, both of whom are Jefferson County teachers.

The dedication demonstrated by Emily Allen is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential that students at all levels strive for their best in their education to develop a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations once again to Emily Allen for winning the Curtis Garrett scholarship. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication she has shown in her high school career to her athletic and academic careers at McPherson College.

RECOGNIZING UNITED MEDICAL
CENTERS

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2007

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, on the occasion of Health Center Week I wish to recognize United Medical Centers. United Medical Centers serve Kinney, Maverick and Val Verde Counties, three rural communities where access to healthcare is often limited. United Medical Centers, along with other community health centers in Texas, provide much needed healthcare to uninsured and medically underserved populations. In rural communities, community health centers are often the only medical facility within miles, and the health professionals there serve as the family doctors for everyone in the community. Health centers like this one expand access to quality care for all people and contain healthcare costs by promoting preventative healthcare and primary care services. Health centers are essential to our nation's healthcare system, providing high standards of care, reducing unmet needs in underserved communities and encouraging preventative care through outreach activities. Health centers guarantee access for all individuals, helping to eliminate health disparities and achieve healthcare for all. Again, I recognize United Medical Centers for its important contributions to healthcare and for improving the health and quality of life of the people of the 23d Congressional District of Texas.

THANKING MR. PHIL NICHOLS FOR
HIS SERVICE TO THE HOUSE

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2007

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, on the occasion of his retirement in

May, I rise today to thank Mr. Phil Nichols for his long career of outstanding service to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Phil Nichols has been an employee of the House for 31 years. During that time, he has earned the respect and admiration of his fellow co-workers. Phil is a person of great character and will leave behind a legacy of professionalism, hard work and dedication to the institution. His accomplishments while serving the House were many. One of his most notable contributions was as a member of the team responsible for reupholstering the two chairs on the dais in the House Chamber which are used by the Vice President of the United States and the Speaker of the House during every State of the Union speech.

Phil's retirement is bittersweet. The House will lose an individual who from day one of his employment made a long term commitment to excellence. His performance has always been exceptional and beyond expectations. His legacy will live on in the Chamber of the U.S. House of Representatives. We wish Phil many wonderful years in fulfilling his retirement dreams.

THE NATIVE AMERICAN CHALLENGE DEMONSTRATION PROJECT ACT

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2007

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Madam Speaker, I am happy to introduce today the Native American Challenge Demonstration Project Act of 2007. This legislation acknowledges the special historical and legal relationship of the United States to Native American people and builds on the lessons we as a Nation have learned in the international arena and our often-failed efforts to bring jobs, income and hope to Native people here at home.

Anyone who has visited Alaska Native communities or Indian reservations in the continental U.S. knows that Native people continue to lag behind their countrymen despite a rich cultural legacy and in some instances abundant natural resources on and under their lands. Native economies face a number of hurdles including geographic remoteness, distance from markets and population centers, and lack of or poor physical infrastructure. After decades of failed Federal efforts to revitalize Native economies, I believe the time is right to use what we know is working to reduce poverty, increase incomes, and encourage transparent governments in the developing world. Initiated in 2003, the Millennium Challenge Act has put forth ration has developed a model for reducing poverty and promoting sustainable economic growth.

The bill I am introducing today would use these same principles to enhance the long-term job creation and revenue generation potential of Native economies by creating investment-favorable climates and increasing Native productivity. It would also administer Federal economic development assistance in a new way to promote economic growth, eliminate poverty, and strengthen good governance, entrepreneurship, and investment in Native communities.

The Native American Challenge rests on four key principles that are as relevant to Na-

tive communities as they are to the developing world: (1) reducing poverty through vigorous private sector economic growth is a proven method of success; (2) rewarding constructive policies that are initiated and followed by the host government is a legitimate tool of United States policy; (3) operating as true partners with eligible entities increases the chances of success by maximizing communication and identifying and pursuing whatever mid-course corrections might be needed in tailoring an eligible entity's development plan; and (4) focusing on clearly-articulated criteria and concrete results by funneling Corporation attention and resources on those countries that have clear objectives, are willing and able to measure progress, and can therefore ensure accountability in their development plan.

A critical component of the Native American Challenge is in its demand for accountability in the performance of the Compact terms and use of financial resources and this legislation would require that not later than March 15, 2008, and annually thereafter, the eligible entities shall prepare and submit to the Secretary written reports regarding the assistance provided under this Act during the previous fiscal year. These reports, with any additional information the Secretary deems relevant, will then be transmitted to Congress by May 15 of each year.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

TRIBUTE TO MELISSA FLEMING

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2007

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Melissa Fleming who has been awarded the Curtis Garrett Scholarship of Jefferson County, Colorado, in the amount of \$1,000. Melissa will use this scholarship to continue her education at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Colorado.

This is truly an incredible honor for Melissa, because this is the second year that she has been awarded the Curtis Garrett Scholarship. The selection committee for the scholarship was so impressed with Melissa's dedication to her degree at the University of Colorado, they decided to award her a second time, an unprecedented milestone in the history of the scholarship award.

The Curtis Garrett Scholarship is based on two criteria that Melissa has fulfilled, those being a demonstrated financial need and the desire to pursue a career in political science or education. Melissa has chosen special education as her future career.

I encourage all students at every level of education to give their personal best to their studies and educational pursuits; that they may develop a work ethic and sense of pride in their work, characteristics that will guide and help them through every step of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Melissa Fleming for winning the Curtis Garrett Scholarship, for an unprecedented 2 years. I am proud of the dedication Melissa has shown in her first year of college and have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication in her successive years at the University of Northern

Colorado and to her future career in education.

RECOGNIZING CACTUS HEALTH SERVICES

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2007

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, on the occasion of Health Center Week I wish to recognize Cactus Health Services. Cactus Health Services serves Terrell and Pecos Counties, two rural communities where access to healthcare is often limited. Cactus Health Services, along with other community health centers in Texas, provides much needed healthcare to uninsured and medically underserved populations. Health centers like this one expand access to quality care for all people and contain healthcare costs by promoting preventative healthcare and primary care services. Health centers are essential to our Nation's healthcare system, providing high standards of care, reducing unmet needs in underserved communities and encouraging preventative care through outreach activities. Health centers guarantee access for all individuals, helping to eliminate health disparities and achieve healthcare for all. Again, I recognize Cactus Health Services for its important contributions to healthcare and for improving the health and quality of life of the people of the 23d Congressional District of Texas.

THANKING MR. ARTHUR "ART" BALTRYM FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE HOUSE

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2007

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, on the occasion of his retirement on July 24, 2007, I rise today to thank Arthur "Art" Baltrym for over 32 years of outstanding service to the United States House of Representatives.

Art began his career with the House in 1966 as a Congressional Page. After completing his education at St. John's University in New York and Georgetown University in Washington, DC, he graduated with a bachelors degree in Political Science. At that time, he returned to the U.S. Capitol and worked as a Capitol Police Officer.

Art left the Capitol Police in 1971 to pursue a challenging opportunity to work for the Education and Labor Committee, where he worked for the next seven years. In January 1978, Art was hired by the Clerk of the House as a cabinetmaker for the former Property Supply department. Over the next 32 years, he was promoted to various positions and eventually became manager of the CAO Furnishings department. Art's accomplishments are far too lengthy to list in this tribute. However, two examples of his contributions are worthy of recognition.

After the original Speaker's Chair was given to then Speaker Thomas P. ("Tip") O'Neal for placement in his official library, the Clerk of