

Officer Oswell paid the ultimate price, and for that we are eternally grateful.

I thank CWO Scott A.M. Oswell for his service to our country and offer my deepest heartfelt condolences to his family.

LILLY LEDBETTER FAIR PAY ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 31, 2007

Mr. TIAHRT. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 2831, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. Although I join with all my colleagues in steadfast opposition to pay discrimination, this ill-advised, over-reaching, and disingenuous overhaul of civil rights law is the wrong approach.

Pay discrimination is not a partisan issue. Pay discrimination strikes at the heart of the American Dream. For more than 40 years, Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act has made it illegal for employers to determine an employee's pay-scale based on his or her gender. I wholeheartedly agree and support this law. Every American should be able to work hard, play by the rules, and make a living for his or her family. We do not stand for gender discrimination in the workplace.

This legislation is bad politics rather than good policy. H.R. 2831 was supposedly written to remedy a sad situation for one person—Lilly Ledbetter. She was apparently paid significantly less than her counterparts at Good-year Tire Company during her tenure there. Decades later Ms. Ledbetter filed a claim of discrimination. Taking her claim through the courts, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on May 29, 2007, that the statute of limitations had unfortunately run out.

Despite saying that H.R. 2831 simply restores prior law, by overturning a Supreme Court ruling against Ms. Ledbetter, in reality, Democrats will gut a decades-old statute of limitations that prevents the filing of "stale" claims and protects against abuse of the legal system.

Current law rightly provides a statute of limitations to file a discrimination claim, up to 300 days after the alleged workplace discrimination occurred. However, under this bill, employees or retirees could sue for pay discrimination years, even decades, after the alleged discrimination.

How can a company defend itself when the accused offenders left the company decades before? The answer is—they can't. And that is exactly the answer desired by the trial lawyers who support this legislation. This legislation will not end pay discrimination, but it will certainly encourage frivolous claims and lawsuits. It is inevitable that under this legislation employees will sue companies for reasons that have little if anything to do with the accused discrimination.

Not only is H.R. 2831 the wrong approach to deal with this serious issue, but this legislation also has the threat of a Presidential veto. A Presidential veto means there is no chance action will be taken on this important issue. If Democrats were serious about dealing with this issue, they would work with the President and Republicans to draft serious legislation

rather than move forward with this political stunt.

Madam Speaker, the issue of pay discrimination is too important to consider this poorly crafted, politically motivated piece of legislation. However, as much as we sympathize with Ms. Ledbetter, H.R. 2831 is bad legislation for our Nation. Let us join together, work in a bipartisan manner, and craft legislation that addresses pay discrimination while not destroying decades-worth of solid employment discrimination law. Until then, I ask my colleagues to join with me in opposing this legislation.

CELEBRATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL DOMINICAN DAY PARADE

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, August 4, 2007

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, today I join with the hundreds of thousands of Dominican residents of my congressional district and the millions of Dominicans around the world in celebrating August 12's 25th Annual Dominican Day Parade.

What was once an expression of pride through Washington Heights has grown to be one of the largest and loudest displays of cultural pride seen along New York's Sixth Avenue, a culmination of a series of events celebrating the Dominican Republic's traditional second day of Independence, El Día de la Restauración or Restoration Day.

It is also a time to remember Dominican achievements, on the island and in the U.S. A time to remind the world that many of the hemisphere's first institutions were established on the shores of Quisqueya, including the first cathedral and the oldest university. A time to remind the Nation that from the first big wave of Dominican migration in the 1960s to the most recent wave in the 1990s, Dominicans have struggled and worked hard to become a part of our national identity. Their contributions can be found in every facet of U.S. life—from baseball stars like Pedro Martinez, David "Big Papi" Ortiz or Alex Rodriguez to fashion legend Oscar de la Renta to the thousands of professionals that do battle as soldiers, doctors, lawyers, journalists, educators and social workers.

I can see that hard work in my own congressional district. Dominicans have a zest for grassroots participation, as evidenced by the number of Dominicans, especially women, who are involved in government or as leaders of professional and nonprofit organizations. They are an entrepreneurial group with a keen nose for business and a yearning to be their own boss, as evidenced by the way they have transformed the livery cab, travel, and hair salon industry.

Finally, who can deny the strong desire that Dominicans have for education. Although graduation rates for all Latinos are way too low, more and more Dominicans are choosing to go back to school, get their GED and enroll into the city's university system. This is seen by the fact that 50 percent of are Latino's that are enrolled in CUNY is of Dominican descent. In the number of after-school programs and activities that there are in northern Manhattan and other Dominican barrios.

So I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating this day and congratulating founder Nelson Peña and the hundreds of volunteers that help put on this grand display of pride. The success of our current democracy depends on us keeping our doors open to communities that energize our economy and our local neighborhoods. It depends on us remembering that we are a Nation of immigrants and that how we treat our newest Americans will go a long way to how we are treated around the world.

ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST MOON LANDING

HON. NICK LAMPSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, August 4, 2007

Mr. LAMPSON. Madam Speaker, on the recent anniversary of our Nation's first Moon landing, I had the privilege of attending a grand opening ceremony at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, honoring the completion of a new facility to house the historic Saturn V rocket. Because it's been a while since we've used this marvel of engineering, it's easy to overlook the fact that this rocket was capable of sending our astronauts to the Moon. Many public and industry partners played a role in restoring the rocket to its original glory, and this new facility will allow everyone to appreciate the incredible historic impact of this wonderful machine. As we continue to advocate for human space exploration and reach out further in the universe, we will always look to the Saturn V as inspiration for our most important continued quest, reaching out into space.

INTRODUCING A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING THE STATE OF ISRAEL ON CHAIRING A UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, August 4, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution congratulating the State of Israel on chairing a United Nations committee for the first time in history.

For the first time ever, an Israeli diplomat, Mr. Ron Adam, Director of the Israeli Foreign Ministry's U.N. Political Affairs Department, has been chosen to chair a U.N. committee: the Committee on Program and Coordination, CPC.

This 33 U.N. member body provides an important role to the functioning of the U.N., as it approves the work plan for all U.N. agencies and bodies.

Mr. Adam is highly qualified to represent his country at the U.N. He was former director of the Israel Foreign Ministry's U.N. Political Affairs Department and had been at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1990. From 1998–2002, he was a Counselor at the Israeli delegation to the U.N. Since 2004, he served as the director of the U.N. Political Affairs Department, in the Division for the United Nations and International Organizations. Last

year, Mr. Adam served as the deputy chair of the CPC, representing the European Group.

Madam Speaker, Israel was accepted in 2000 as part of the Western Europe and Others Group, WEOG, giving it the right to apply for positions on U.N. committees. The country already sits on several important committees and representatives from Israel have served as deputy chairs in the United Nations numerous times. However, this marks the first time that an Israeli has been chosen to chair a United Nations committee.

For far too long, Israel has been considered a second class nation at the United Nations, unfairly subjected to unjustified one sided attacks from other nations. The facts make the case themselves: 6 out of 10 emergency special sessions called by the United Nations General Assembly have directly condemned Israel, while no emergency sessions have been held against some of the world's worst cases of genocide or repressive regimes.

Israel is also the only U.N. member state denied membership by all of the U.N.'s five regional groups which elect U.N. bodies in Geneva.

Israel also remains the only country of the Western and Others Group to have a conditional status, thereby limiting its ability to caucus with its fellow members of this regional grouping, compete for open seats, or run for positions in major bodies of the United Nations.

The fact that some member states have chosen to use the U.N. as an attack mechanism toward Israel while blatantly ignoring the despicable human rights records of other states truly undermines the United Nations' credibility, integrity and effectiveness.

I am hopeful that Mr. Adam's appointment will help contribute to the normalization of Israel's bilateral and multilateral relations, as well as challenge future disproportionate United Nations condemnation of Israel.

I am also hopeful that the newly appointed United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will work to end any unfair vilification of Israel at the United Nations and to use his good offices to support Israel's bid to join the Asian regional grouping.

Finally, I am hopeful that Israel will be granted membership on the Security Council for 2019 and gain full participation rights in the United Nations.

I ask for my colleagues' support and urge the House Leadership to bring this legislation to the floor for its swift consideration.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RUBÉN HINOJOSA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, August 4, 2007

Mr. HINOJOSA. Madam Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 824 and 825, had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

TRIBUTE TO JOY ROSENHEIM SIMONSON

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, August 4, 2007

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, today I wish to pay tribute to Joy Rosenheim Simonson who passed away just a few weeks ago. Joy was a leading advocate for women's rights at a time when that was a steep uphill battle.

Joy rose to prominence in 1982, shortly after Ronald Reagan became President of the United States. At the first meeting of the National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs, of which Joy was the chairwoman, the Council replaced her with the notorious anti-woman's rights advocate Phyllis Schlafly, who quickly proposed abolishing the council.

The firing of Joy led to an uproar among women's rights groups around the country, and several Members of Congress, including our distinguished colleague from Massachusetts, my good friend Congressman BARNEY FRANK, denounced her removal. BARNEY went further than simply denouncing the outrage. He immediately hired her as a staff member of the Subcommittee on Employment and Housing of the Committee on Government Operations. One of the wisest decisions I made was to keep Joy as a member of my staff. Joy was with me for the six years I served as Chair of that subcommittee. She was a loyal, devoted and energetic staff member. We met many times a week to plan subcommittee investigations and hearings. She sat right behind me in our frequent hearings.

Joy had a wonderful sense of issues that needed to be dealt with, and she had excellent ideas of how to take the next steps in promoting women's rights. We had outstanding hearings that resulted in tough reports adopted by the Committee dealing with women executives (the glass ceiling), discrimination against women owning automobile dealerships, problems women face finding daycare, discrimination against women who breastfeed their infants, and many, many others. When Joy retired from working for the Congress, she was the oldest staff member of the House of Representatives.

Madam Speaker, Joy Simonson dedicated her life to public service. Her decade of service on the staff of the Employment and Housing Subcommittee was only a small part of her very distinguished career of public service. She led several organizations devoted to women's issues and helped break down barriers for women. Born in New York City, Mrs. Simonson moved to Washington after graduating from Bryn Mawr College to serve on the War Manpower Commission in the early 1940's. Later, in 1945 she worked for the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in Egypt and Yugoslavia, and then worked at Army headquarters in Frankfurt Germany. It was during this period overseas that she met and married her husband Richard Simonson. In 1948, they moved back to Washington, DC. Joy and Richard are the parents of a son and a daughter.

Joy Simonson was the first woman to head the District of Columbia's Alcohol Beverage Control Board, serving from 1964 until 1972. During this time she also founded the National Association of Commissions for women, and served as its president for three terms. She also notably fought for Title IX, protested the exclusion of women from the Augusta National Golf Club, and in 1967 organized the D.C. Commission for Women.

In 1992 Mrs. Simonson was elected to the D.C. Women's Hall of Fame for her untiring work on behalf of women. She was also later recognized by the National Center for Women, who gave her the prestigious Formothers Award.

Madam Speaker, Joy was here on Capitol Hill several months ago—after the election which finally gave us the first woman as Speaker of the House of Representatives. She was delighted and pleased beyond measure at seeing a woman preside over this body, where she devoted over a decade of remarkable service during her remarkable life.

I invite my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Joy Rosenheim Simonson.

VETERANS' HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. HEATH SHULER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2007

Mr. SHULER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2874, the Veterans' Health Care Improvement Act of 2007, which will make the readjustment period easier for our troops returning from combat. It focuses on the improvement of mental health services as well as homelessness prevention.

These brave men and women in uniform have dedicated themselves to defending our freedom, and as a grateful nation we owe them whatever support we can provide to ensure that after they return home our veterans have their needs met.

This bill puts into place a number of important and timely measures to improve the care offered to veterans. It allows for readjustment counseling and mental health services provided by qualified peers. This will allow veterans to receive whatever therapy they might require to readjust to civilian life from fellow veterans who have undergone a similar process, and are best placed to offer understanding and quality care.

I am especially pleased that this legislation contains provisions addressing the needs of female veterans. It also deals with the prevention of homelessness for returning troops. The problem of homelessness is worse for the veteran community than society at large, and thus we must ensure that all programs, for both men and women, are of a high standard.

Finally, H.R. 2874 offers more support to low-income veteran families living in permanent housing. The Federal Government needs to provide more assistance to these families and the organizations that help care for them, and I am pleased that this bill offers that assistance. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this legislation and support our troops as they return from their courageous missions.