

TRIBUTE TO JAMES LEADER

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to James Leader, a dedicated Foreign Service Officer who has done so much to promote and strengthen relations between the United States and the Republic of Sri Lanka. He has been an example of the best of our Foreign Service—passionate, knowledgeable, and effective.

Jim served at the American Embassy in Colombo from 1970–72 and as a Desk Officer for Sri Lanka in the Department of State from 1973–77. He maintained contact with many Sri Lankans and Americans interested in Sri Lankan affairs and recognized the need to form an organization to nurture and build on those relationships. To meet that need, in 1994, Jim teamed up with Gil Shinbaum to launch the auspiciously-named Serendipity Group.

The Serendipity Group is an organization of former American Ambassadors and officials who lived in Sri Lanka and retain a strong interest in Sri Lankan affairs. My father, who served as an Ambassador to Sri Lanka between 1973–76, and my mother were part of this group, and I witnessed the commitment, shared by all its members, to building stronger ties between the United States and Sri Lanka.

Jim and his wife, Carillon, invited Group members to their home for informal discussions and activities. He recruited speakers to Serendipity Group forums and fostered conversation between Sri Lankan Ambassadors to the United States, U.S. Ambassadors to Colombo, scholars, writers, and others who shared his passion for Sri Lankan-American interests.

In addition to his diplomatic efforts, Jim deserves recognition for his philanthropic work. In 2004, when Sri Lanka was devastated by the tsunami, he mobilized resources for a significant relief donation.

In all, James Leader's initiative in founding the Serendipity Group, and his inspired leadership, have made an important contribution to the relationship between the United States and the Republic of Sri Lanka. As he steps down as leader of the Group, I congratulate him on his years of service, both in public and private life, and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, domestic violence is a widespread tragedy that indiscriminately affects families of all races and classes. It is a serious crime that has no social barriers.

Thanks to the leadership of the women in Congress, this body has made great strides in addressing many issues surrounding domestic violence.

For example, The Violence Against Women Act of 1994, helped dispel the myth that living

with domestic violence was a lifestyle choice of the victim. This landmark legislation directly impacted federal and state laws which today recognize domestic violence as a crime for which the abuser, not the victim, is responsible.

Unfortunately, much more still needs to be done to help victims become survivors.

For example, studies estimate that in the United States close to one-third of women will be physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend in their lifetime.

Credible research has also found that the inability to financially support themselves and their children is a critical factor contributing to one staying in an abusive relationship.

Without the ability to be self-sufficient, many survivors are left with the terrifying choice of staying with their abuser or being unable to provide for themselves and their children.

While many states, including my home state of California, have taken action to help survivors retain their financial independence, the job protections offered by state laws vary dramatically.

For example, in 21 states when a survivor is forced to quit a job due to the abuse, she or he is not eligible for unemployment benefits.

And only nine states protect a survivor's job if they are attacked by a partner or spouse and need time off to find a safe place to live.

These discrepancies in state laws often determine whether a person will continue to be a victim of abuse or a survivor.

On October 31, I, together with Representative POE from Texas, introduced three bills to help victims of domestic violence become survivors regardless of where in the country they live.

Our bills address three key economic factors that prevent many survivors from leaving an abusive relationship by providing victims of abuse with the employment protections and the increased economic stability they need to leave an abuser.

The three bills are: The Job Protection for Survivors Act, the Insurance Non-Discrimination for Survivors Act, and the Unemployment Insurance for Survivors Act.

The Job Protection for Survivors Act will allow survivors of domestic violence, without the fear of losing their jobs, to take limited leave from work to make necessary court appearances, and get help with safety planning. Employees will also have job protection if they ask for reasonable safety modifications in the workplace.

The Insurance Non-Discrimination Act for Survivors will prohibit employers or insurance providers from basing hiring or coverage decisions on an individual's history of abuse. This will help address the fear many have of seeking help because they know companies may use documents such as police records to drop or reject their insurance coverage.

The third bill, the Unemployment Insurance for Survivors Act, guarantees that survivors are eligible for unemployment benefits. Current Federal law remains inadequate in ensuring survivors have the resources they need while seeking new employment and a safe place to live.

Madam Speaker, for many this package of bills can literally make the difference between life and death.

I want to thank the many dedicated advocates who labor every day to end domestic vi-

olence for their support of these bills. I have worked closely with them for many years, and their input and expertise has been invaluable in crafting these measures.

I also thank Representative POE for his co-sponsorship and I look forward to working with him to pass these bills.

Madam Speaker, violence in America's families has a devastating effect not only on the target of the abuse but on the family unit. It is especially damaging to the children who suffer emotionally or are themselves the target of physical abuse.

I urge my colleagues to join me and Congressman POE and co-sponsor the Job Protection for Survivors Act, the Insurance Non-Discrimination for Survivors Act, and the Unemployment Insurance for Survivors Act to empower survivors against the violence in their lives.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, on November 5, I was detained in my district due to travel delays, and missed the votes on passage of the Motion to Close Portions of the Conference to H.R. 3222, the FY08 Department of Defense Appropriations Conference; H.R. 513, the National Heroes Credit Protection Act; and H. Res. 744, recognizing the contributions of Native American veterans and calling upon the President to issue a proclamation urging the people of the United States to observe a day in honor of Native American veterans. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on passage of all three bills.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO PAULA FRANCIS

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Paula Francis who has served Las Vegas as a Senior Television Anchor for over 25 years.

Ms. Paula Francis graduated from the University of Wisconsin at Madison and in 1985 moved to Las Vegas as the evening news anchor at KTNV-TV. In 1990 she joined KLAS-TV as the evening news anchor alongside friend and colleague Gary Waddell.

In addition to her professional career, Ms. Francis has continually given back to the community. She serves on the board of the Shade Tree Shelter for Homeless Women and Children, the Community Advisory Board for the Assistance League, and the Southern Nevada Chapter of International Women's Forum. She also contributes her time by reading to students during Nevada Reading Week. She also speaks to individuals and organizations about health issues including her campaign to educate women about breast cancer awareness called "Buddy Check 8".

Ms. Francis has received numerous awards for her time spent in Southern Nevada. She

was chosen as "Best TV Anchor in Las Vegas" by the readers of the Las Vegas Review-Journal six different times, and along with Gary Waddell, received the Best Anchor Team Award in the Women in Communications Electronic Media Awards. She also was inducted into the KLAS-TV Hall of Fame in July 2000.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Paula Francis. Her contributions to KLAS-TV and to Southern Nevada are admirable. I applaud her commitment to Southern Nevada and I thank her for her time and support to our community.

IN HONOR OF VETERANS DAY 2007

HON. DAVID SCOTT

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise in honor of the veterans who have served so bravely in defense of our freedoms to say thank you for your service. November 11, 1918 marked the day major hostilities during World War I ended, and was subsequently adopted as Veterans Day in the United States. This day now gives us an opportunity to reflect on the many sacrifices made by the Armed Forces throughout our history. As members of Congress continue to address the needs of today's soldiers and veterans, I share these thoughts in honor of those who have fought and died for our country.

Earlier this year, I made my third trip to the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany where I met with our brave service members who were injured while serving in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Repeatedly, I see the severity of these injuries and I know that properly caring for our returning soldiers demands far more funding than what has been allocated by previous Congresses. Since the beginning of our military engagements in the Middle East, health care for returning service members and veterans has been wholly unsatisfactory.

Under the strong leadership of Democrats, we have begun the process of providing the necessary funding to adequately address the needs of our soldiers and veterans. In May, Congress provided \$5 billion for the health care needs of soldiers returning from the Middle East, including \$1.8 billion for veterans enrolled in VA health care programs. This funding will ensure the Department of Defense and Veterans Administration both have the resources to provide timely and efficient case management services, especially for the young men and women who served in operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. In March, I supported legislation limiting the number of cases assigned to a physical evaluation officer, in order to ensure the utmost attention to soldiers' needs. This proposal would also encourage accountability by establishing a toll-free number for families to report deficiencies in military medical facilities.

As nearly one in three soldiers admitted to Walter Reed Army Medical Center presents with traumatic brain injuries (TBI), we will continue to target investments to respond to these most debilitating injuries. I am pleased Congress provided \$900 million specifically for TBI treatment and services to soldiers. Additionally, this year the Senate has proposed \$10 million for the TBI Program, to improve serv-

ices for soldiers' families. I also supported legislation that would establish four VA facilities solely dedicated to rehabilitating and tracking the progress of soldiers with TBI. In honor of the brave men and women who suffer these injuries, I will continue to advocate for increased funding throughout the appropriations process for fiscal year 2008.

Congress must also continue to take a hard look at the current rating systems for disabled veterans, which many have described as disparate, unfair and outdated. Earlier this year, Lt. General James Terry Scott, chair of the Veterans Disability Benefits Commission (VDBC), expressed concern that the status quo is not meeting the needs of veterans and returning soldiers. The VDBC, and the Dole-Shalala Commission formed by President Bush this year in response to the deplorable conditions at the Walter Reed Annex, both agree that the dual-disability rating system through the Veterans Administration and the Department of Defense needs a permanent fix. With the commissions' detailed recommendations in mind, I will work diligently to ensure a system that equitably compensates soldiers with service-connected disabilities, while reducing the red tape that so often compromises the ability for veterans to receive care.

As a representative to the United States Congress for nearly six years now, I have worked tirelessly to represent the interests of the active duty and retired military who call the 13th District home. On this Veterans Day, let us remember our family, friends and neighbors who have proudly worn the uniform. We are forever grateful for their service and we will continue to work persistently to ensure our nation's veterans will want for nothing.

TRIBUTE TO GUNNERY SERGEANT ANGEL BARCENAS, U.S. MARINE CORPS

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, the poem below was written by poet and Capitol guide Albert Carey Caswell in honor of Gunnery Sergeant Angel Barcenas from Paramount, California. Gunnery Sgt. Barcenas admirably served our great nation on Marine One during the Clinton and Bush Administrations. In July 2006, he was wounded by an improvised explosive device in Iraq and had both of his legs amputated below the knee. He started walking again 3 months after his attack, crediting the professionals at Walter Reed for his quick recovery. In May 2007, fighting all odds, he led a two-mile motivational run through lower Manhattan with the Marine Corps, and New York firefighters and police. Gunnery Sgt. Barcenas is an American hero whose unwavering sense of duty and dedication should be an example for all Americans. I proudly submit the following into the RECORD.

MARINE ONE

Marine One,
America's Son, . . . A Most Heroic One!
Who so bravely marched off to war, . . . to
do what had to be done!
Terminating Evil . . . as have all of our fine
heroes, long as time begun!

Lock and Load,
A True American Hero, Who So Lives By A
Code . . .
A Marine's, Marine . . . a presence, a force
upon the scene . . . who'll make hearts
explode . . .
So Very Bold!

From That Great Golden State,
As A Hero's Hero . . . our Lord God, would so
create!

Strength In Honor, In awe at what we saw
. . . as we so watch you rebuild, with
but your new gait!

I've got a life to live, for this Angel . . .
Heaven can wait!

Serving, Two Presidents . . .
Aboard Marine One, as has been your most
honored residence . . .

Bringing home a Hero, who gave his fine legs
. . . as you too would live that same
page . . .

And still your courage weights, and has been
getting greater by the day!

Building, from where none lies left . . .
Rising up from the ashes, for no one will
take your dreams . . . for you are,
America's Best!

As into a future, this our world . . . as an
Earth Angel, you shall bless . . .

On the ready, my fine son . . . you never
rest!

As An Angel, here on earth . . . until, on the
scene as an Angel in The Angel of Our
Lord you burst!

Teaching us all, about your fine character
and courage first . . . and of a human
being's true fine worth!

Our True Fine Sum, Thy Kingdom Will Come
. . . Someday, when you leave this
earth.

Someday, you shall shine . . . in our Lord's
Sun!

Until then! Standing Guard, Standing
Strong, Standing Hard . . . for That's
Who You Are!

That's What You Do . . . So Tried And True
. . . As Angel, Your Heart Takes Your
Far!

Walking like Travolta, no walks like you!
Running fast and far . . . A Force, A
Shining Star

On the road of life, where it all begins and
ends . . .

Is the Greatest of all forces, which so burns
bright until times end . . . is but, The
Heart Which sends . . .

As Angel, yours so emanates . . . from deep
down within, your soul is one of great-
ness . . . my fine friend!

For you are my Son, A Marine's Marine . . .
You Are . . . Marine One!

PAYING TRIBUTE TO MARY-ELLEN McMULLEN

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Mary-Ellen McMullen who has been bestowed the honor of Nevada Alumni Association Alumna of the Year from the University of Nevada, Reno.

Mrs. McMullen has a history as a longtime Nevadan, moving to Reno at the age of 13 with her family. She was immediately exposed to the University of Nevada as her father began his tenure as the dean of the College of Education.

Mary-Ellen was a student in the College of Education majoring in English with a minor in