

INTRODUCTION OF THE CITIZENS INVOLVEMENT IN CAMPAIGNS (CIVIC) ACT

HON. THOMAS E. PETRI

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 12, 2007

Mr. PETRI. Madam Speaker, today Representative PAUL KANJORSKI and I are introducing bipartisan legislation to establish a program of limited tax credits and tax deductions to get average Americans more involved in the political process. This bill, the Citizens Involvement in Campaigns (CIVIC) Act, will broaden the base of political contributors and limit the influence of big money donors in federal elections.

We need to take a fresh look at innovative approaches to campaign finance reform, with special attention paid to ideas that encourage, and not restrict, greater participation in our campaigns. Toward this end, I have been advocating tax credits and deductions for small political contributions for many years. An updated tax credit system would be a simple and effective means of balancing the influence of big money donors and bringing individual contributors back to our campaigns. The impact of this counterweight will reduce the burden of raising money, as well as the appearance of impropriety that accompanies the money chase.

Most would agree that the ideal way to finance political campaigns is through a broad base of donors. But, as we are all painfully aware, the economic realities of modern-day campaigning lead many candidates to focus most of their efforts on collecting funds from a few large donors. This reality alienates many Americans from the political process.

The concept of empowering small donors is not a new idea. For example, from 1972 to 1986, the federal government offered a tax credit for small political contributions. This provided an incentive for average Americans to contribute to campaigns in small amounts while simultaneously encouraging politicians to solicit donations from a larger pool of contributors. Currently, 6 geographically and politically diverse States (Oregon, Minnesota, Ohio, Virginia, Arkansas, and Arizona) offer their own tax credits for political contributions. These state-level credits vary in many respects, but all share the same goal of encouraging average Americans to become more involved.

The CIVIC Act can begin the process of building this counterweight for federal elections. This bill is designed to encourage Americans who ordinarily do not get involved in politics beyond casting a vote every 2 or 4 years (that is, if they bother to vote at all) to become more active participants in our political process.

The CIVIC Act will reestablish and update the discontinued federal tax credit. Taxpayers can choose between a 100 percent tax credit for political contributions to Federal candidates or national political parties (limited to \$200 per taxable year), or a 100 percent tax deduction (limited to \$600 per taxable year). Both limits, of course, are doubled for joint returns. As long as political parties and candidates promote the existence of these credits, the program can have a real impact and aid in making elections more grassroots affairs than they are today.

A limited tax credit for political contributions can be a bipartisan, cost-efficient method for helping balance the influence of large money donors in the American electoral process. Instead of driving away most Americans from participation in political life, we can offer an invitation for citizens to play a larger role in political campaigns. It seems to me that this will be a fruitful way to clean up our system, while at the same time convincing Americans that they actually have a meaningful stake in elections.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RANDY NEUGEBAUER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 12, 2007

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Madam Speaker, on Friday, March 9, 2007, I was absent from Rollcall votes 132, 133, 134 and 135 due to official business.

Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on Rollcall vote 132, the rule providing for consideration of H.R. 720, the Water Quality Financing Act of 2007.

On Rollcall 133 for the Baker Amendment to H.R. 720, I would have voted "aye." I strongly oppose extending Davis-Bacon requirements for construction under H.R. 720.

On Rollcall vote 134, the motion to recommit H.R. 720, I would have voted "aye."

Finally, on Rollcall vote 135, final passage of H.R. 720, I would have voted "nay."

I ask that my statement appear in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

HONORING LYNBROOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 12, 2007

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Lynbrook Elementary School on their 50th anniversary.

Located in Springfield, Virginia, Lynbrook Elementary School opened its doors on February 11, 1957. Although it opened on that day and was dedicated a month later, the school continued to take shape over the next twenty years as the local population boomed and the true needs of the community were realized. An air-conditioning system, a gymnasium, a music room, additional classrooms and "the pod" were all added to create the Lynbrook that we know today. Additionally, in 1976 a contest was held to select a new school mascot. Out of this contest, and the imagination of a young Wee Lane Yee, Lenny the Leprechaun was born.

The school continued to evolve through the end of the last century. In the 1980's many of Lynbrook's long standing traditions, including "Shamrock Shindigs" and the medieval fair, were started. Also, the students began publishing the schools first newspaper, The Four Leaf Clover, which remains in circulation today.

Lynbrook strives to stay true to its long standing mission statement: to provide a safe environment where all students will become

lifelong learners and develop a positive sense of self-worth and an appreciation among students, staff and community for all diverse backgrounds and experiences.

To that end, the school is constantly seeking to improve its strong relations with its students, parents and community. The students' academic, social and emotional learning are met utilizing proven instructional strategies. Families are encouraged to participate in PTA events, such as: family nights, socials, concerts, student programs and cultural events. Additionally, Lynbrook has been repeatedly recognized for its students' active participation in the Marine Corps Marathon Healthy Kid Fun Run. All of these factors demonstrate a concerted effort on behalf of the school's faculty to mold the young people at Lynbrook Elementary into well rounded, high-functioning adolescents.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I would like to commend and congratulate all of the students, faculty and parents who have played such an integral part in the establishment and growth of this fine academic institution. I call upon my colleagues to join me in congratulating Lynbrook Elementary School on its 50th anniversary and in wishing them many more years of continued academic success.

IN MEMORY OF DAVID IVORY

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 12, 2007

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor David Ivory, former Fort Worth city manager, who passed away on Friday, March 9, 2007. Mr. Ivory was known by many as a loyal, trustworthy, and dedicated public servant.

Mr. Ivory served his country for two years in Korea, achieving the rank of Lieutenant. In 1973, he received his master's degree in public administration from Brigham Young University. He also served in the Utah state legislature for a brief time.

After moving to the City of Fort Worth, Mr. Ivory served in many City Hall positions, ultimately being named city manager in 1989. His achievements include involvement in numerous economic developments, such as the annexation of the Perot Group's 5600 acres in North Fort Worth and the creation of Alliance Airport.

Mr. Ivory was 62 years old, at the time of his passing. He is survived by his wife, Margery; his son, Charles; and his daughter, Angela. I would like to extend my sincerest condolences to the Ivory family; my thoughts are with them as they endure this difficult time. The City of Fort Worth has lost a devoted public servant and a great man.

HONORING THE LIFE OF PRIVATE KELLY YOUNGBLOOD, U.S. ARMY, OF MESA, ARIZONA

HON. JOE DONNELLY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 12, 2007

Mr. DONNELLY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the sacrifice of Private Kelly

Youngblood of Mesa, Arizona, who was killed on February 18, 2007 after being shot by a sniper in Ramadi, Iraq. Kelly risked everything in a fight to bring democracy to people halfway around the world.

Kelly represented the best that the United States of America has to offer. After graduating from McClintock High School in Tempe, Arizona, Kelly set his sights on military service. While only 19 years old, he was aware of all of the potential dangers associated with his service. Yet, despite his young age, a sense of duty called him to enlist. It had been Kelly's lifelong dream to serve his country and shortly after his 18th birthday he achieved his dream by enlisting in the Army. Following basic training Kelly was sent to Iraq as a member of the 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. He left behind his mother Kristen and sister Melaney of Mesa, Arizona, his grandparents, Charley and Jean Herrold of Westville, Indiana and many friends around the country. I stand here today to express my gratitude to Kelly and his loved ones for their sacrifice.

Today, I join Kelly's family and friends in mourning his death. While we struggle to come to terms with our sorrow over this loss, we can take pride in his example and joy in our memory of his life. Kelly served bravely as a soldier working to bring freedom to the people of Iraq. His courage and strength of character will provide an example for future generations and his memory will continue to bring comfort to his loved ones in their time of grief.

Kelly was known as a loving and kind young man with an excellent sense of humor. His grandmother told the local newspaper, "That kid was so much fun. He made jokes out of everything. He's going to be sorely missed." Today and always Kelly will be remembered by family members, friends, and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero. We honor the life he laid down in service to his country.

As I search for words to do justice in honoring Kelly's sacrifice, I am reminded of a speech by General Douglas MacArthur to a graduating class at West Point. "The soldier above all other people prays for peace, for he must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war." Kelly's grandparents remember his last Christmas, when he worshiped at Westville United Methodist Church. As a soldier about to enter combat we can be assured that Kelly prayed for peace in Iraq, for his fellow soldiers and for his country he left behind. We too will continue this prayer in Kelly's memory and will continue his fight to bring peace around the world.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of Kelly Youngblood into the official record of the United States House of Representatives for his service to this country and for his sacrifice in the name of freedom, democracy and peace. When we think of this cause in which we are engaged and the pain that the loss of our heroes brings, I hope that the memory of Kelly and others like him will bring some solace in our grief and some hope for our future.

May God grant peace to those who mourn and strength to those who continue to fight and may God be with all of you, as I know he is with Kelly.

INTRODUCING THE "SENATOR PAUL SIMON STUDY ABROAD FOUNDATION ACT"

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 12, 2007

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, today I rise in partnership with my distinguished Foreign Affairs Committee Ranking Member, Ms. ROSS-LEHTINEN of Florida, to introduce a very significant piece of legislation, the "Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation Act." This measure will create a new government corporation with an annual budget of \$80 million—authorized for 10 years—to dramatically increase the number of non-traditional U.S. students studying abroad in non-traditional destinations.

This bill will provide significant long-term boost to our effort to prevail in the global war against terrorism. It will do so by dramatically increasing foreign understanding of the enduring strength and value of America's democratic culture by exposing foreign students and their families to one million of our best and most authentic diplomats, our American students. It will also vastly increase the talent pool of young Americans with foreign cultural experience and language knowledge to support our foreign affairs agencies, U.S. global NGOs and U.S. global corporations.

The bill responds to a landmark Congressionally commissioned November 2005 study entitled, "Global Competence and National Needs", authored by the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, which proposed "... a broad vision for the U.S.: send one million students to study abroad within a decade." The idea behind this vision, as articulated in the study, was that "making study abroad the norm and not the exception can position this and other future generations for success in the world much as the establishment of the land-grant university system and enactment of the GI Bill helped create the 'American Century'." The Lincoln Commission which was headed up by former AID Administrator Mr. Peter McPherson and included my colleagues, Ms. SLAUGHTER from New York and Mr. KIRK from Illinois, was established by Congress in 2004 at the urging of Senator Paul Simon who tirelessly advocated for this agenda.

Madam Speaker, I believe this is an incredibly important legislative initiative. If enacted it will democratize study abroad in the way that the GI bill democratized higher education. Today, many American college students still face financial and institutional impediments to study abroad. The Senator Paul Simon Act and the Foundation it creates will tear down these barriers and make foreign study a normal rather than an exceptional part of an American college education.

Today our Nation faces a deficit of cultural knowledge that is a clear impediment to our effort to prevail in the global war on terrorism and to keep America competitive in a global economy. Our foreign affairs agencies are struggling mightily to find recruits who have firsthand understanding of critical cultures and languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Pashto, and Dari. The Senator Paul Simon Act will rectify this by vastly expanding the talent pool of young Americans with global skills.

I urge my colleagues to join this important effort by supporting this legislation.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 720, WATER QUALITY FINANCING ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, March 9, 2007

Mr. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, today I rise to voice my pleasure and support of the passage of H.R. 720, the Water Quality Financing Act. I would also like to pay tribute to Chairman OBERSTAR for his efforts in reauthorizing this program for the first time in 13 years. Chairman OBERSTAR is a dear friend of mine and he has been one of my greatest partners in our efforts to clean the Nation's waters.

Under President Bush's proposed fiscal year (FY) 2008 budget, the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund is facing a \$16 million cut. H.R. 720, of which I am a proud cosponsor, would authorize \$14 billion for the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund over the next 4 years, providing communities with the financial means to construct municipal wastewater treatment plants. In recent years, Michigan has seen over 1,000 separate sewer overflows, totaling over 20 billion gallons of spilled sewage. Funding through the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund is crucial to preventing further such disasters in Michigan.

Since Congress passed the Clean Water Act, the Federal government has provided more than \$82 billion for wastewater assistance which led to tremendous improvements in our wastewater infrastructure. However, this infrastructure is starting to deteriorate, leading to sewage and untreated waste flowing into our rivers and lakes and leaking onto our roads and even into our basements. It has been estimated by the EPA that each year, overflows from sewer systems discharge about 850 billion gallons of wastewater and storm water containing untreated waste, toxic debris, and other pollutants into the environment.

The Republican leadership allowed the Clean Water State Revolving Fund to expire in 1994 and has failed to reauthorize it because of their objection to the Davis-Bacon prevailing wage law. Furthermore, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have cut funding by 34 percent. Unfortunately the Republican-controlled Congress has not been our only barrier; the Bush Administration has also repeatedly tried to obstruct clean water programs. In fact this week the White House issued a Statement of Administration policy conveying the President's opposition to H.R. 569 and H.R. 700, describing the bills as "excessive" and "unrealistic in the current fiscal environment" respectively. We have watched these setbacks to our clean water programs for far too long. I urge the Senate to pass these bills and show this Administration that the Congress will not let our waters be neglected any longer.