

misguided because the young people don't "realize how their self-image is debilitated when they use this awful word in public."

THE N-WORD AND BLACK HISTORY—WHY IT SHOULD BE BANNED

(By Tony Best)

Julius Caesar, Gnaeus Pompey and Marcus Crassus used it liberally in Rome, Britain Gaul, the Balkans and Greece.

Whether as a writer, military general or orator, Caesar used the Latin word "Niger" liberally in his historical accounts of the Gallic Wars, conquests of Britain or in reports on the Senate in Rome. And when he spoke or wrote it around 50 BC he was describing a color, as in a piece of armor, house, chariot or a horse.

But somehow "Niger" that meant Black in English became "Negars" in Jamestown in the United States in 1619 to describe with contempt a shipload of African captives who were put into a state of bondage in the U.S.

Although scholars are divided over why John Rolfe, a Jamestown colonist, recorded "Negars" in his diary to describe the Blacks, whether he wanted to be verbally abusive or was simply describing Black people, what has happened since then is that the pejorative term which eventually became "Niggers" has taken on a long-lasting life of its own. This highly offensive word or some form of it has found its way into literature—Amos Zu Bolton II's "Niggered Amen" and Carl Van Vechten's "Nigger Heaven" are two examples—in comedy routines by Blacks and in the lyrics of rap music in the late 20th and early 21st century.

At the urging of New York City Council member Leroy Comrie of Queens, the legislative body at City Hall is this week considering a resolution that calls for a moratorium on the use of the N-word in our City. While opinion is split over what action the Council should take, it's clear that the use of the word is offensive to most right-thinking Blacks and should be expunged from our vocabulary.

Yes, some Blacks, especially rappers, may wish to defend the use of "Niggas" or "Niggaz" on First Amendment grounds of free speech or as a term of endearment among Blacks to describe each other; what's not in dispute is that the term is meant to be degrading.

Andrea C. McElroy, a Black member of the Irvington Council in New Jersey, which placed a symbolic ban on the word's use there, put it well when she said that Black adults and society as a whole should give the youth a history lesson. We may be at the end of Black History Month in 2006, but learning is a continuous process.

"There is a swelling population of Black youth that use this word as if it is a term of endearment," she said. "And I think it is basically incumbent upon us to remind them of what that word meant to so many of our ancestors. This is something we probably should have done years ago."

Yes, the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which guarantees free speech prevents the legalized banning of the word but there can be nothing wrong with sending a message to young people and others, whether comedians, reporters, novelists or historians, that the N-word was meant to degrade Black people, not to praise them.

Austin "Tom" Clarke, one of Canada's most celebrated novelists, whose latest work, "The Polished Hoe," captured the Giller Prize, Canada's equivalent of the Pulitzer, had an important reminder for the lawmakers at City Hall.

"It doesn't matter if it is used in Black circles and societies as a term of endearment," said the West Indian. "Historically its usage

has been offensive. One may attempt to argue that when it is used by Blacks to define or address themselves, the bad meaning of the word is softened. But the fact is that its usage is either seen or heard by white people who might themselves feel that what is good for the goose is good for the gander. That was exemplified with very negative effect recently by a white comedian in America (Michael Richards, who played Kramer on Seinfeld) and who thought he was being heckled by an aspect of his audience, used the word to ridicule his audience. His demonstration and use of the word in a public place might very well be reflective of his thoughts and feelings." Interestingly Richards declined to attend the Council meeting when invited to do so. Although he later apologized, the vehemence of his original mouthing told a story about vindictiveness which his anger brought into the open.

Richards isn't alone. Time and again, whites in particular resort to the N-word whether in literature, on the stage or the screen to suggest superiority over Blacks and to hint at violence to force them into submission.

The historical connection with violence and the N-word isn't simply 400 years old. Lynchings were commonplace in the 20th century and the N-word was often the rallying cry of racists to justify their lethal actions.

While it's true that Richards didn't commit violence as he uttered the two syllables, it's not difficult to see him being driven by rage and contempt for Blacks in the audience by turning to violence.

On Long Island, that's what a white middle class mother of three children apparently did when her children's West Indian nanny didn't feed the family dog on time in 2005. She subsequently pleaded guilty to assaulting the Black woman by pushing her down some steps, injuring her leg and then throwing her clothes on the lawn, all while calling her a N...

Apparently, she had waited three years to call her that. Thankfully, that incident is now the subject of a federal civil rights civil case seeking damages.

Contrary to what some misguided Blacks and whites would wish us to believe, the N-word can't be transformed into anything beautiful.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2007

Mrs. DeLAURO. Madam Speaker, due to a death in the family, I missed a series of suspension votes, the vote on Water Quality Investment Act and the Living Kidney Organ Donation Act.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall number 121, "yea" on rollcall number 122, "No" on rollcall number 123, "Aye" on rollcall number 124, "yea" on rollcall number 125, and "yea" rollcall number 126.

FREEDOM FOR JOSÉ ANTONIO MOLA PORRO

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2007

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of FLORIDA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about

Jose Antonio Mola Porro, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Mola Porro is a member of the Cuban Foundation for Human Rights and director of the Pedro Luis Boitel Independent Library, in a country oppressed by a regime that mandates official propaganda and prohibits truthful news. Due to his commitment to democracy and human rights, he has been repeatedly harassed and incarcerated.

In May 2005, while on his way to a meeting of the Assembly to Promote Civil Society in Cuba, Mr. Mola Porro was arrested and condemned to two agonizing years in one of the dictator's hellish totalitarian gulags for being a "pre-criminal danger to society". On February 28, 2006, Mr. Mola Porro was "conditionally" released after serving ten months of his "sentence". Never wavering in his commitment to freedom for the Cuban people, upon his release he again devoted his energies to depicting the true, tragic, reality of totalitarian Cuba.

During the early morning hours of November 17, 2006, approximately a dozen of the regime's state security thugs rearrested Mr. Mola Porro and again forced him to survive against all odds in an infernal dungeon. Following his arrest, the dictator's henchmen broke into Mr. Mola Porro's home, savagely wreaking havoc on what little belongings he had. When they finished, over one hundred books and magazines, along with many of his personal belongings, had been stolen.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Mola Porro suffers in grotesque conditions at the whim of a tyrant because of his steadfast belief that the Cuban people do not deserve to live condemned to oppression and under constant threat of unprovoked torture, abuse and arbitrary arrest. A condition that has fated, according to the U.S. Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices—2006, thousands of Cuban citizens to serve sentences for "dangerousness" in the absence of any criminal activity.

Mr. Mola Porro is a symbol of bravery in the face of a murdering tyrant's oppression. He is unrelenting in his fight for freedom for the Cuban people. It is a crime of the highest order that people, just 90 miles from our shore, who dream of and work for freedom, are imprisoned in these nightmarish conditions.

Madam Speaker, despite the constant harassment, the example of Mr. Mola Porro is proof that the Cuban people have leaders who are unafraid to demonstrate their thirst for democracy and freedom. My Colleagues, we must demand the immediate release of Jose Antonio Mola Porro and every prisoner of conscience in totalitarian Cuba.

H.R. 1362, ACCOUNTABILITY IN CONTRACTING ACT VOTE 155: ON THE MOTION TO RECOMMIT WITH INSTRUCTIONS

HON. JOHN J. HALL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2007

Mr. HALL of New York. Madam Speaker, unfortunately, the amending text contained in the motion to recommit was not fully debated or its full ramifications considered prior to the vote, and I cast my vote on the limited information available. As a result, my vote was informed by my concern over the current state

of military recruiting. Nonetheless, I wish to reaffirm my opposition to the military's policy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and my belief that the policy should be discontinued, as well as my support for the 1st amendment rights of American universities.

H. RES. 149, SUPPORTING THE GOALS OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2007

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 149, a resolution supporting the goals of International Women's Day.

International Women's Day is an opportunity for us to evaluate the status of the world's women. As we take time to reflect on our achievements, we must reaffirm our commitment to addressing the inequalities and injustices that women in our country and around the world continue to face.

For example, we must do more in the fight against poverty. As much as 70 percent of the world's poor are women, many of them subsisting on less than \$1 a day. Furthermore, according to the World Bank, women earn on average 22 percent less than men. To address these disparities, we must continue expanding micro-lending practices and other opportunities for women to start small businesses, as well as working to increase women's land and property rights.

Improving access to education for girls is also critical to expanding economic opportunities for women. Despite the fact that access to primary education is increasing around the world, girls compose two-thirds of the 130 million school-aged children who are not attending school. Investing in girls' education enhances the quality of life of women and families throughout the world. Increased education for girls results in numerous benefits including lower maternal, child, and infant mortality rates, lower rates of HIV/AIDS infection, and higher earnings.

Here at home, we celebrate Speaker NANCY PELOSI, the first female Speaker of the House, women's increasing educational attainment and participation in the workforce, and the growing number of women-owned businesses. While we have made incredible strides, challenges remain. Here at home, we must continue working to close the gender pay gap, increase access to appropriate health care, and protect Title IX, which provides opportunities for American girls and women in athletics.

I am committed to working for peace and justice for all the world's women. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the goals of International Women's Day.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MARRIED STUDENT DEBT RELIEF ACT OF 2007

HON. LEE TERRY

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2007

Mr. TERRY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Married Student Debt Relief Act

of 2007 to end the marriage penalty contained in the portion of the tax code allowing for the deduction of student loan interest.

Current tax law discriminates against married couples trying to pay down their educational debt while starting careers and families. Individual taxpayers are allowed to deduct up to \$2,500 in student loan interest from their taxes each year. However, once a taxpayer marries, they are only allowed to deduct the same amount—\$2,500—as a married couple, regardless of whether both spouses are paying back individual student loans.

Because the existing tax law limits married couples to the \$2,500 deduction even when both spouses carry student debt and could have each taken a \$2,500 deduction while single, I am introducing the Married Student Debt Relief Act of 2007 to correct this inequity. This legislation would double the student loan interest tax deduction to \$5,000 for married couples who file a joint tax return when both spouses hold student debt, ensuring tax law treats students fairly, whether they are single or married.

The average U.S. student graduates with \$19,000 in educational debt. The government should not make it more difficult for young married couples to payoff their debts as quickly as possible to increase their quality of life and begin making their dreams come true. I am joined by more than 25 bipartisan Members of Congress in introducing this legislation today. It is important to help married couples pay down their student loans as quickly as possible to support their families and futures.

This problem in the tax code was first brought to my attention by my constituent, Michael Currans of Omaha. He wrote to me about the inequity, and I drafted legislation shortly thereafter to correct it. After learning of the effort, he wrote:

First off, I'm very pleased that my simple email to Congressman Terry has resulted in such an enthusiastic response. This is the first time I've ever written to my representatives in Congress, and it has definitely helped me see the value of getting involved. I really wish that I had written about this years ago.

Ever since we were married in 2000 and began filing our joint tax return, my wife and I have struggled to understand the rationale for not allowing married couples to each take advantage of the student loan interest deduction to the same extent as two unmarried individuals. Between us, we had over \$70,000 of student loan debt, and while we diligently make all our payments on time, it is frustrating that the principal balances are reduced so slowly. We often discuss how we'd like to make additional payments to try to pay the loans down faster, but now that we've got kids in the picture, daycare expenses, and a house to maintain, extra cash to put toward the student loans seems hard to come by. We find some solace in knowing that we can at least deduct a portion of the interest we pay.

We are not complaining. The federal student loan programs have been good to us. We've both earned valuable undergraduate degrees, my wife at the University of Northern Iowa, and myself at Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa. Further, student loans allowed us both to attend the excellent law school at the University of Iowa where we met. Without student loans, we would not be where we are today, so even without the benefit of the full student loan interest deduction, our student loans are a positive investment.

Some might ask why a two-income family with both spouses being attorneys should

have any grounds to seek additional relief from income taxes. However, my wife is a public defender representing juvenile delinquents in Douglas County, Nebraska. She is most definitely using her law degree for the public good, earning much less than she might if she chose to pursue private practice. I'm sure for many married lawyer couples, the student loan interest deduction is a nonissue due to the phase-out at higher incomes, but for us, it is still an important deduction. I'm certain the deduction is important to the great many married couples of lesser means paying on student loans for both spouses, especially in cases where one spouse chooses to stay at home with children.

We've joked on occasion about how we'd have been better off from a tax perspective if we'd just remained unmarried, lived together, and filed separate tax returns until our student loans were paid off. I doubt most couples would actually choose to live that way just for the additional student loan interest deduction. Nonetheless, why should a married couple be treated differently than two individual taxpayers? There is no good reason for this inequity, so I really hope this legislation goes through.

If I can be of help, please let me know. Thanks to Congressman Terry and his staff for taking up this issue.—Mike Currans.

I am grateful to Mike for bringing this inequity to my attention so we can work in this Congress to correct it. I urge more of my constituents to bring their concerns to my attention, and I encourage every American to communicate their views to their Congressional Representative. Your voice does make a difference.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I hope all of my colleagues will join my efforts by cosponsoring this legislation and working to bring it to a vote in the House of Representatives.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE RETIREMENT OF RONNIE AND JANIS BOND

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 15, 2007

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is with great honor that I rise today to recognize Ronnie and Janis Bond for their retirement from Booker T. Washington High School in Pensacola, Florida.

Ronnie and Janis Bond have dedicated their professional careers to Booker T. Washington High School. Ronnie has been teaching at Washington for 38 years, and Janis retired in 2002 after 32 years of teaching. They worked everyday to challenge their students both in and out of the classroom. Ronnie served as an assistant coach for the football program for twenty-seven years, and Janis coached cross-country for five years. Together they have coached track and field for sixteen years and girl's basketball for the past thirty-two years.

When the State of Florida officially recognized girl's basketball as a high school sport in 1975, Ronnie and Janis truly made a home for themselves and began to develop what has become the best girl's basketball program in the state. They have devoted themselves to the players, and in return, the talented student athletes have made many tremendous achievements over the years. Under the leadership of Ronnie and Janis, the Washington