

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SALI. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time and urge passage of this legislation and again commend the gentlewoman from South Dakota for its introduction.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2654.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1245

ROBERT MERRILL POSTAL STATION

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2778) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3 Quaker Ridge Road in New Rochelle, New York, as the "Robert Merrill Postal Station".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2778

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. ROBERT MERRILL POSTAL STATION.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3 Quaker Ridge Road in New Rochelle, New York, shall be known and designated as the "Robert Merrill Postal Station".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Robert Merrill Postal Station".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SALI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield such time as she might consume to the distinguished gentlelady from New York, who is the author of this legislation, Representative NITA LOWEY.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation, which would rename the Wykagyl Post Office in New Rochelle, New York after Robert Merrill.

I want to thank Chairman WAXMAN for his support of this bill and for plac-

ing it on the suspension calendar today.

Born on June 4, 1919, Robert Merrill spent his life performing from the grand stages of the world's opera houses to Broadway and music and television. He set the standard for theatrical and musical excellence.

Robert Merrill was a favorite of U.S. Presidents, performing at the invitation of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Harry Truman and Ronald Reagan. He was the only singer to perform before Congress, the Cabinet and the Supreme Court, and Mrs. Roosevelt at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt memorial service held in the U.S. Capitol.

In 1968, President Johnson appointed him to the National Council on the Arts, and President Clinton awarded him the National Medal of Arts in 1993.

Throughout his career, Merrill performed as a soloist with every major orchestra in the United States and many of the world's great conductors, including Arturo Toscanini, Leonard Bernstein and Herbert von Karajan. His annual coast-to-coast recitals included performances at such venues as Wolf Trap, the Hollywood Bowl, Philadelphia's Mann Music Center.

Often referred to as "America's Star Spangled Baritone," he was well known for singing the "Star Spangled Banner" at Yankee Stadium. In 1969, Merrill began singing the national anthem on opening day for the New York Yankees, a tradition that continued for over 25 years.

In addition to his dedicated singing career, Robert Merrill also lent his talent and presence to community and local charities, including volunteer work at the New Rochelle Hospital and New Rochelle Public Library.

For over 50 years, Robert and his wife, Marion, made New Rochelle, New York their home and were active supporters of West Chester Community College, the West Chester Arts Council and the New Rochelle Arts Council.

Mr. Speaker, Robert Merrill spread his talents and love for the arts all over the country, enriching all who experienced his performances. I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring this great American by passing this legislation.

Mr. SALI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We do rise today to honor a truly great artist in the field of opera. Robert Merrill, the highly acclaimed baritone singer was well known for his remarkable career with the Metropolitan Opera.

He was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, son of Polish immigrants, and he was first inspired to perform as a singer after watching a performance of Il Trovatore as a teenager. His mother guided him through his early musical training, which he paid for by working as a semiprofessional baseball pitcher.

An avid baseball fan, he became widely known for his annual singing of the national anthem at Yankee Sta-

dium on opening day and for special events, a tradition he carried on for over 30 years.

His legendary performances at the Metropolitan Opera brought him national fame and recognition in the arts and the opportunity to perform with other notable singers and entertainers.

He performed for numerous presidents, including Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy. Throughout his career, he performed as a soloist with some of the world's greatest conductors, made numerous recordings, and appeared at several worldwide music festivals. Outside of the stage performances, he also ventured into radio and television.

Robert Merrill enjoyed a successful career in performing music for over 30 years. His velvety smooth voice was said to have improved with every performance. He retired from the opera in 1976, and made one final performance in 1983 for its centennial.

In 1968, he was appointed to the National Council on the Arts by President Johnson and was awarded the National Medal of the Arts in 1993.

He died at the age of 85 while watching his favorite pastime, baseball, at his home in New Rochelle, New York. It is appropriate that we honor him with the naming of a post office in his beloved hometown.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I'm pleased to join my colleague in the consideration of H.R. 2778, which names the postal facility in New Rochelle, New York after Robert Merrill.

H.R. 2778, which was introduced by Representative NITA LOWEY on June 19, 2007, was reported from the Oversight Committee on August 1, 2007, by voice vote. This measure has the support of the entire New York congressional delegation.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Robert Merrill was born on June 14, 1917, in the New York City borough of Brooklyn. As a teenager, he dreamed of either playing professional baseball or becoming one of America's top singers. In 1944, he made his professional debut singing Amonasro in "Aida" on a Trenton, New Jersey stage. A year later, he signed with the Metropolitan Opera, where he would sing more than 500 performances over the course of 3 decades.

Throughout Mr. Merrill's career, he sang with popular stars ranging from Frank Sinatra to Louis Armstrong and appeared worldwide at music festivals. He performed as a soloist with many of the world's great conductors, including Leonard Bernstein.

Mr. Merrill performed for several presidents, including President Franklin D. Roosevelt, President Harry S. Truman, President Dwight D. Eisenhower and President John F. Kennedy.

He died on October 23, 2004, at the age of 85.

Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague, Representative NITA LOWEY, for introducing this legislation that highlights the career of one of America's most talented artists. I commend her for this introduction and urge its passage.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SALI. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2778.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

OWEN LOVEJOY PRINCETON POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2825) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 326 South Main Street in Princeton, Illinois, as the "Owen Lovejoy Princeton Post Office Building".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2825

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. OWEN LOVEJOY PRINCETON POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 326 South Main Street in Princeton, Illinois, shall be known and designated as the "Owen Lovejoy Princeton Post Office Building".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Owen Lovejoy Princeton Post Office Building".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SALI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I might consume.

As a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I'm pleased to join my colleague in the consideration of H.R. 2825, which

names the postal facility in Princeton, Illinois after Owen Lovejoy.

H.R. 2825, which was introduced by Representative JERRY WELLER on June 21, 2007, was reported from the Oversight Committee on July 19, 2007, by a voice vote. This measure has the support of the entire Illinois congressional delegation.

Mr. Owen Lovejoy, the son of a Congregational minister, was born on January 16, 1811, in Albion, Maine. He graduated from Bowdoin College, Brunswick, in 1832 and studied law.

In 1836, Mr. Lovejoy was ordained as the pastor of the Congregational Church in Princeton, Illinois, a position which he held for 17 years. He was a strong opponent of slavery, and he used the pulpit to attack slavery and helped slaves gain their freedom from bondage.

In 1856, Mr. Lovejoy was elected to Congress with the help of fellow Illinoisan, Abraham Lincoln. He served four terms in the United States House of Representatives and continued his work as an abolitionist.

Mr. Lovejoy worked with Members of Congress in both Chambers to weaken slavery and attempted to achieve a measure of equality for all people regardless of race. When critics within his own Republican Party expressed fears that the former slaves were not going to live in the North if they gained their freedom, Mr. Lovejoy replied, and I quote, "Let them stay where they are and work under the stimulus of cash instead of the lash."

Mr. Lovejoy died on March 25, 1864, just 2 weeks before the introduction of the 13th amendment to the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague, Representative JERRY WELLER, for introducing this legislation, and urge swift passage.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SALI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate Mr. Owen Lovejoy, who was an accomplished lawyer, Congregational Minister, abolitionist and Republican Congressman.

Mr. Lovejoy was born on January 6, 1811, in Maine, where he taught school in order to support himself while in college and law school after his father's death.

After becoming a convert to abolitionism in 1836, he studied for the ministry under his brother, Elijah Lovejoy, a well known antislavery, Presbyterian minister. Tragically, 1 year later, Elijah was murdered while trying to prevent the destruction of the printing press of an Illinois antislavery society from an angry, drunken anti-abolition mob. After his brother's murder, Mr. Lovejoy is reported to have vowed to devote himself to, quote, "the cause that has been sprinkled with my brother's blood."

After becoming a Congregational church minister, Lovejoy used the pulpit to attack slavery.

He was elected to Congress in 1856, with the support of Abraham Lincoln, and served four terms. Although he died before seeing the enactment of the 13th amendment to the Constitution, Congressman Lovejoy's legacy lives as a lifelong champion of equality.

Because of his courageous support of equality for all, regardless of race, it is fitting that we name the Princeton, Illinois Post Office in his honor.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve. I have no further speakers, so I will wait for my colleague to yield back, and then I will.

Mr. SALI. Mr. Speaker, I yield back.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, I have no further speakers, but I, again, want to commend my colleague from Illinois, Representative JERRY WELLER, for introducing this legislation.

Owen Lovejoy, in actuality, is one of the great abolitionists of his day, an individual that many people don't know nearly enough about. And so I commend Representative WELLER for making sure that he will be etched in the hearts and minds of the people in that town and in that community. I urge its passage.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2825, a bill I introduced that would name the post office in Princeton, Illinois after Owen Lovejoy. Owen Lovejoy is perhaps best known for his role in advocating for the abolition of slavery and his work with the Underground Railroad.

Owen Lovejoy was born in Albion, Maine in 1811 to Daniel, a Presbyterian minister, and Elizabeth Lovejoy. While growing up, young Owen came to admire his older brother Elijah, who taught him Latin classics when Elijah came home from college. Owen grew up to follow in his brother's footsteps by attending Bowdoin College. Unfortunately, his father died while Owen was in school, forcing him to leave Bowdoin College after 3 years.

After the death of his father, Owen moved to Illinois to live with his brother Elijah, who was the editor of an anti-slavery newspaper. During this time, Owen became a convert to abolitionism. His dedication to abolitionism grew on November 7, 1937 when an anti-abolition mob attempted to destroy Elijah's printing press. In the ensuing struggle, Elijah Lovejoy was killed by the mob. For Owen, abolitionism became "the cause that has been sprinkled with my brother's blood."

After his brother's death, Owen Lovejoy moved to Princeton, a village with a population of 200. Rev. Edward Beecher recommended him to Hampshire Colony Congregational Church, the church from which he spoke out against slavery for the next 17 years.

Owen used the pulpit to attack slavery. He also operated the "Lovejoy Line" of the Underground Railroad. His farmhouse, surrounded by 1300 acres of farmland, was one of the busiest for slaves trying to gain their freedom.

In 1854, Owen Lovejoy was elected to the Illinois legislature. Two years later, he was elected to Congress with the help of a fellow Illinoisan, Abraham Lincoln. He served four terms as the Representative to Illinois' Third