

César Chávez is not just an icon. César Chávez is a living legacy of what this country's unfinished business is, the unfinished business of giving worth to each human being in this country.

I would end with a quote by César Chávez: "We can choose to use our lives for others to bring about a better and more just world for our children."

That is the greatest opportunity we have.

DEMOCRAT LEADERSHIP PUSHING MICHIGAN IN THE WRONG DIRECTION

(Mrs. MILLER of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Madam Speaker, my home State of Michigan is currently experiencing really hard economic times. We have the highest unemployment in the Nation. We have the lowest personal income growth in the Nation, dropping home values, tightening family budgets.

Government overspending, combined with declining revenue from the soft job market, has forced my State into a fiscal crisis, and our Democrat Governor thinks that the way to solve the problem is by raising taxes and increasing government spending.

Here in Washington, we also have a spending problem and a deficit that is too large. So what do the Democrats offer? The largest tax increase in American history, almost \$400 billion, and massive new government spending.

The Democrats are also pushing arbitrary and draconian fuel economy standards that could decimate our domestic auto industry and cost even more Michigan jobs.

Madam Speaker, the people of Michigan just cannot take it anymore. They do not need bigger government. They need bigger paychecks, and I ask the Democrat leaders to take pity on the citizens of Michigan. Please just give Michigan a break.

CÉSAR CHÁVEZ NATIONAL HOLIDAY

(Ms. LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise this morning in strong support of H. Res. 76, a resolution to create a national holiday in honor of a great human being, César Chávez.

Madam Speaker, already nine States celebrate his life. The legacy that he left on the history of this Nation must be recognized. He made a difference not only for Latinos, not only for migrant workers, but for the poor and the working poor, and he also built a coalition of conscience across racial and economic boundaries.

I am reminded today of the political support César provided to me during my first campaign for the California legislature. He truly helped me win my

very first election, and for that I am deeply grateful.

I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting the movement for a national holiday in honor of this great civil and human rights leader and such an important historical figure of our Nation.

Feliz cumpleaños, César.
Si se puede.

CELEBRATING CÉSAR CHÁVEZ

(Mr. RODRIGUEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise today to recognize and celebrate the 80th birthday of César E. Chávez.

César Chávez was born in Yuma, Arizona, and grew up in migrant labor camps, into the poverty of the migrant worker's life. He became an historical figure who embodied humility and extraordinary strength during his peaceful struggle towards social justice.

He was an individual who represented the ones who had less and had no representation whatsoever. He dedicated his entire life to tirelessly championing the rights of the farm laborers; and along with him was Dolores Huerta, also founder of the United Farm Workers union, fighting for better wages and conditions for those individuals that pick our fruit and feed our Nation.

César Chávez has been an extraordinary icon in my home State of Texas. In San Antonio, we honor his legacy during the annual César Chávez march to recognize those individuals that labor picking up our food.

Additionally, we cannot travel anywhere in the United States without seeing a town or street named after this amazing individual. We in San Antonio, Texas, have César Chávez Boulevard as well as others throughout the country.

I hope that his legacy will continue to remain, and I rise today to encourage my colleagues, urging the President and the Congress to establish a national holiday for César Chávez and encourage them to support H. Res. 76.

HAWAIIAN HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. BALDWIN). Pursuant to section 2 of House Resolution 269, proceedings will now resume on the bill (H.R. 835), to reauthorize the programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development for housing assistance for Native Hawaiians.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. When proceedings were postponed on Tuesday, March 27, 2007, 10 minutes of debate remained on the bill.

The gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. CAMPBELL) each have 5 minutes remaining.

Who yields time?

□ 1030

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. We are virtually at the end of our remarks, so it would probably be useful, Madam Speaker, to reiterate from last evening's proceedings.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CAMPBELL of California. I thank the gentleman from Hawaii.

Madam Speaker, I do claim the time in opposition. However, I do think the arguments relative to the bill were made last night.

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

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Madam Speaker, I will just recapitulate for a couple of moments, then perhaps we can move to the conclusion.

I indicated last night, and I think it was agreed to by Mr. BACHUS of Alabama and others, by way of material that has been entered into the RECORD, like Mr. RENZI of Arizona, that this should not be a partisan fight. In fact, "fight" probably is the wrong word, but, I mean, even a disagreement here.

The reason that this bill passed overwhelmingly last week, with significant support from the Republican side of the aisle, was that it was supported in committee by Republicans and Democrats. The bill is here before the Congress as a result of a request by Hawaii's Republican Governor, and the former Chair of the Hawaii Republican Party, who is now the head of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands.

We have always had legislation in this area based on the underlying law, which was passed in 1921, by the Congress, setting aside certain lands for Hawaiians. The issue before us is about refinancing of home mortgages. This is not about whether the original law, under which the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands was established, it is constitutional.

On the contrary, that issue has been raised, and it perhaps should be raised in another context; namely, if someone wants to change the underlying law. But we should not punish my constituents or anybody's constituents for the fact that they appear before us in the form of a bill trying to carry forward on the admonitions required of them, in this instance, by the Department of Housing and Urban Development in order to get their mortgages refinanced.

Let me say, just as recently as February 9 of this year, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against a group of individuals who came before the court, saying that funding for programs that benefit Hawaiians, in this instance, of this bill, the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, constitutes an unconstitutional discrimination against non-Hawaiians.

The Federal appeals court ruled that was not the case. In fact, they returned it to the U.S. District Court to see if the plaintiffs were eligible "in any

other capacity.” That is to say, other than whether it was constitutional.

So we have, as recently as the last 30 days, appeals court admonitions that the constitutionality of having programs for Hawaiians is, in fact, constitutional.

If someone wants to argue that, please let’s argue it on the basis of a bill that addresses that itself, rather than the bill which is before us, which has to do with the refinancing of mortgages. Please don’t punish people that are trying to own their own homes, to keep their own homes, because of some ideological difference that we might have.

Mr. RENZI. Madam Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 835, the Hawaiian Homeownership Opportunity Act of 2007.

This bill is a reauthorization of Title 8 of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act—commonly known as NAHASDA.

H.R. 835 reauthorizes the program within the Department of Housing and Urban Development that provides low-income Native Hawaiian families the opportunity for homeownership on their Hawaiian home lands.

Back in 1996, Congress passed NAHASDA—which reorganized the system of housing assistance provided to tribes through HUD.

The Indian Housing Block Grant program was created to provide funds directly to tribes for housing services as determined by the tribes themselves.

In 2000, NAHASDA was amended to include Title 8 so that Native Hawaiians could receive block grant funding as well through a separate grant program—the Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant program.

This program funds housing programs on Hawaiian Home Lands—through the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, a Federal agency established by Congress in 1921 to administer trust land in Hawaii.

Title 8 funding has allowed the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands to target housing assistance to families at or below 80 percent of median income.

This funding is used for such assistance as infrastructure development, downpayment assistance, self-help home repair programs, and financial literacy programs.

Additionally, Habitat for Humanity has also received funding through this program.

Title 8 of NAHASDA was originally authorized for 5 years, through 2005, and has not been formally reauthorized since, although appropriations acts have continued to provide de facto 1-year reauthorizations for the program.

This bill would reauthorize the program through fiscal year 2012.

In addition to reauthorization, the bill makes two changes to existing law.

First, it makes the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands eligible for loan guarantees authorized under Title 6 of NAHASDA. Giving the Department Title 6 access would allow the Department to help more low-income families become homeowners without a large increase in Federal appropriations by partnering with the private market.

Second, this legislation allows Native Hawaiians the use of HUD’s Section 184(a) guaranteed loans for refinancing in addition to construction. Adding the refinance authority re-

duces the cost of homeownership for low-income families and can also reduce risk by lowering monthly mortgage payments.

Congress must continue to embrace initiatives such as the one we are considering today that encourage Americans to own a home.

Last week, this bill failed to receive the two-thirds majority necessary to pass under the suspension calendar, although the majority of members voted to approve the bill.

I believe that the bill’s failure to pass was the result of misconceptions about this bill that I would like to address.

This is not a bill about Native Hawaiian sovereignty.

The subject of Native Hawaiian sovereignty is a separate issue altogether and is not addressed in this legislation.

This bill simply reauthorizes and makes some small improvements to an existing program. It does not confer any special rights to the Native Hawaiians—nor does the bill suggest that Native Hawaiians should be given a status equal to that of Native Americans.

It simply reauthorizes a program created by Congress in the year 2000, just 7 years ago.

At that time, Congress chose to establish a housing program to benefit poor Native Hawaiians living on their home lands—200,000 acres scattered throughout the islands of Hawaii.

In the 7 years since the Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant program has been in place, it has enabled thousands of Hawaiians to live in decent, safe, and sanitary housing and helped thousands to achieve the dream of homeownership.

This program is a model for Federal-State cooperation and also an example for how Federal resources can support the efforts of the private market in providing the capital necessary for homeownership.

Yesterday, Hawaiians celebrated Prince Kuhio Day, a State holiday recognizing the contributions of a great leader who was a leading member of the Republican Party in Hawaii and a delegate to the House of Representatives for nearly 20 years.

I ask my colleagues that we honor the memory of Representative Kuhio, and that we continue to support the Native Hawaiians living on the Home Lands.

I would like to recognize Mr. ABERCROMBIE for introducing this legislation.

Also, I thank Chairman FRANK and Ranking Member BACHUS of the Financial Services Committee for working to bring this bill to the floor, which was approved by the Financial Services Committee by voice vote.

I urge my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation to reauthorize a program to help Native Hawaiians living in poverty.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to support the final passage of H.R. 835, the Hawaiian Homeownership Opportunity Act of 2007.

Opponents of this bill believe this program may be unconstitutional based upon a mistaken interpretation of *Rice v. Cayetano*. But *Rice v. Cayetano* was a voting rights case. The question put to the Court was whether limiting the right to vote for trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to Native Hawaiians violated the 15th amendment. The court in *Rice* specifically declined to rule on the status of Native Hawaiians and Native Hawaiian programs created by Congress.

Moreover, this bill and these programs have never been a partisan issue in the past. This reauthorization and improvements were requested by Hawaii’s Republican administration and Governor Linda Lingle. The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands is chaired by the former head of Hawaii’s State Republican Party. This bill was introduced last year by Congressman Bob Ney and was reported out of the Financial Services Committee by voice vote and without amendment. Last Congress’s Republican chairman of the Financial Services Committee, Mike Oxley, cosponsored this bill.

I mention these pieces of background information to illustrate the wide support for the program and the fact that it has been both Democratic and Republican. Last week, when this bill was up for consideration in the House under a suspension of the rules, the GOP leadership issued a statement just hours before the vote, calling the bill “unconstitutional” and charged that it would “confer on Native Hawaiian an arrangement like that between the federal government and American Indian tribes.” Despite these charges, the bill was able to garner 34 Republican votes.

The status of Native Hawaiians needs to be debated and should be debated in the House. However, this is the wrong venue for that. I have another bill pending in the House of Representatives that would establish a process for the Federal recognition of Native Hawaiians. I hope to have this legislation considered by the House Natural Resources Committee and will gladly debate these issues at that time.

This measure is about helping low-income Native Hawaiians own their own home. The programs reauthorized by H.R. 835 simply provide funds for infrastructure, helps Native Hawaiians obtain mortgages and allows for refinancing to lower the cost of homeownership. This bill is about assisting Native Hawaiians to reach the American dream of owning their own home.

I believe this bill can, and should, pass with overwhelming bipartisan support. I urge my colleagues to vote for final passage of this bill and support efforts to get more low-income people into their own homes.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 269, the bill is considered read and the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. CAMPBELL of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question are postponed.