

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2011, a bill to designate the Federal building and United States Courthouse in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, as the "George Howard, Jr. Federal Building and United States Courthouse".

Judge George Howard, Jr. was born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, on May 13, 1924. He began his service to our Nation at the age of 18 when he was drafted into military service during World War II. Judge Howard served with distinction in the United States Navy with the Construction Battalion—or the "Seabees"—in the South Pacific.

After completing his military service, Judge George Howard, Jr. returned to Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and re-enrolled in high school to complete his high school education. Upon graduating from high school, Judge Howard attended the pre-law program at Lincoln University in Missouri and graduated with honors. Judge Howard subsequently attended the University of Arkansas School of Law. He was the first African-American student to live on campus in the newly desegregated campus dormitories. He earned his law degree in 1954.

After graduating from law school, Judge Howard began a long, illustrious, and trailblazing legal career in his home State of Arkansas. In the 1950s, Judge Howard started a private law practice and devoted his energies to representing those whose voices would not otherwise be heard. He subsequently served on the Arkansas State Claims Commission, the Arkansas Court of Appeals, and the Arkansas Supreme Court. In 1980, President Carter appointed Judge Howard to the U.S. District Court, Eastern and Western Districts of Arkansas. Judge Howard was Arkansas' first African-American Federal judge.

Through his pursuit of legal and racial equality, and his exemplary career in public service, Judge Howard helped to pave the way for other African-Americans to pursue careers in law and public service. From his time as a private attorney, to his service as President of the State Council of Branches of the National Association of Colored People, NAACP, Judge Brown's judicial ideals were grounded in the fundamental belief of justice for all.

Judge Howard passed away on April 21, 2007, in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, at the age of 82. In honor of Judge George Howard, Jr.'s outstanding contributions to the State of Arkansas, the Federal judiciary, and his distinguished legal career, it is both fitting and proper to designate the courthouse located at in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, the "George Howard, Jr. Federal Building and United States Courthouse".

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 2011.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2011.

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.

DISCHARGE AND REREFERRAL OF H.R. 123, SAN GABRIEL BASIN RESTORATION FUND AUTHORIZATION ACT

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 123) to authorize appropriations for the San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund and that the bill be rereferred to the Committee on Natural Resources.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia?

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on H. Res. 505.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia?

There was no objection.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE REGARDING THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF PRIME MINISTER TONY BLAIR

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 416) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the public service of Tony Blair, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 416

Whereas Tony Blair has served as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom for more than a decade, winning three general elections as leader of the Labour Party;

Whereas Mr. Blair played an instrumental role in achieving peace in Northern Ireland and negotiating the Good Friday Agreement which brought all communities into the political and governmental process and ended centuries of division, conflict, and strife;

Whereas Mr. Blair committed himself to bringing devolved government to Northern Ireland which was achieved with the recent decision of the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Féin agreeing to form a power-sharing government;

Whereas the United Kingdom and the United States have had a long-standing alliance which was further strengthened during Tony Blair's tenure as he and the United Kingdom stood side-by-side with the United States during conflicts in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq;

Whereas Mr. Blair showed British solidarity with the United States after the 9/11 terrorist attacks by being the first foreign leader to visit Ground Zero and attending President Bush's speech before a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001;

Whereas Mr. Blair displayed exemplary leadership as Prime Minister when the United Kingdom suffered its own terrorist attacks on July 7, 2005, when suicide bombers killed 52 people traveling on London's public transportation system;

Whereas the United Kingdom has been a steadfast ally to the United States in the Global War on Terror as it is the second largest contributor of coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

Whereas on July 17, 2003, Mr. Blair was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal that declared "Congress finds that Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom has clearly demonstrated, during a very trying and historic time for our two countries, that he is a staunch and steadfast ally of the United States of America." Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the remarkable public service of Tony Blair during his tenure as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom; and

(2) expresses appreciation to Mr. Blair for his steadfast support for the United States and Britain's invaluable alliance to our Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

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

I rise in strong support of this resolution. As one of the co-Chairs of the bipartisan United Kingdom Caucus, I am honored to have the opportunity to speak in support of H. Res. 416, a resolution saluting the public service of Tony Blair, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

I would first like to commend our distinguished colleague, Mr. PETER KING of New York, for introducing this timely resolution that pays tribute to the remarkable political career of one of America's strongest allies.

Two days from now, Prime Minister Tony Blair will leave 10 Downing Street for the last time. He will be leaving behind a legacy of domestic reform and international activism. His successor, Gordon Brown, praised his accomplishments and told him that "Whatever we achieve in the future will be because we are standing on your shoulders."

Mr. Blair was first elected to Parliament in 1983 and served as Prime Minister for over a decade, securing a place in the record books as the only Labor leader to have won three successive elections.

Mr. Blair has been a strong and steadfast ally of the United States throughout his time in office. No American will ever forget the solidarity he expressed on behalf of our British cousins in the days following the devastating terrorist attacks of

9/11, when he announced, "We were with you at the first. We will stay with you to the last."

Mr. Blair was the first foreign leader to visit Ground Zero. He further demonstrated his support by sitting in this Chamber during President Bush's speech before a joint session of Congress 2 weeks later.

American hearts went out to Mr. Blair and the British people in July of 2005 when cheers of celebration over London's successful Olympic bid turned to tears of mourning following the devastating terrorist attack on the city's public transportation system.

Domestically, Mr. Blair was unwavering in his commitment to securing a lasting peace in Northern Ireland. Blair aided the negotiations that led to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement on April 10, 1998. This momentous agreement brought all communities into the governmental process, providing a framework in which the ballot box replaced the bomb as a means of political expression.

During his final months in office, Mr. Blair witnessed the fruits of his labor as age-old enemies Ian Paisley of the Democratic Unionist Party and Martin McGuiness of Sinn Fein took their places as first and deputy first ministers in the restored Northern Ireland Assembly. Mr. Blair welcomed the opportunity for Northern Ireland to "escape the heavy chains of history" and "make history anew."

It is appropriate that this House recognizes the outstanding public service of Tony Blair during his decade as Britain's Prime Minister and thank him for his unfailing friendship during our Nation's time of greatest need.

I strongly support this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

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

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

First I would like to thank our distinguished colleague, Mr. PETER KING from New York, for sponsoring this bill. He is the ranking member of the Homeland Security Committee, as you know.

I rise today in support of this resolution honoring the service of a true friend of the United States, Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Throughout his long career in office, more than a decade in total, Prime Minister Blair has been a strong champion of the trans-Atlantic alliance between the United States and Britain and the United States and the other states of Europe.

The U.S.-British relationship has indeed been made stronger due to Tony Blair, building an Anglo American alliance that has faced some of the darkest threats in the history of humankind. Our relations with all of Europe have benefited because of Tony Blair.

Just as Sir Winston Churchill inspired Americans in his time, the American people will never forget

Blair's solidarity with the United States in visiting Ground Zero just days after the September 11 terrorist attacks that killed so many of our citizens. We recall that he sat in our House gallery just a few days later when President Bush addressed a joint session of Congress concerning the tragic results of that terrorist attack.

Prime Minister Blair has backed up his words with real commitment in the struggle against extremism that may well determine the future of our modern civilization, a civilization that has been built on the principles of rational thought and the liberty of men and women rather than on extremism.

Indeed, British troops today stand beside our troops in the major conflicts of the struggle. Moreover, British law enforcement works in close cooperation with American law enforcement agencies, cooperation that has produced important results, as we saw in the successful prevention of terrorist plots, including the planned attack on U.S.-bound passenger jets in 2006.

Mr. Speaker, on a separate issue of great importance to many Americans, we recognize that in responding to the strife of Northern Ireland with the Good Friday agreement, Prime Minister Blair's contribution was nothing short of remarkable. He and Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern inherited a divisive, violent conflict that has continued for half a century and that has, unfortunately, taken over 3,000 lives. Many had tried earlier to resolve the conflict in Northern Ireland, but none achieved the extent of progress that Prime Minister Blair has during his time in office.

□ 1445

Rather than resigning himself to the status quo of senseless violence, Prime Minister Blair chose to commit himself fully to this endeavor, collaborating with his Irish counterparts and working towards achieving real progress toward peace in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Speaker, let us take this opportunity to reflect on Tony Blair's accomplishments and to reaffirm our gratitude.

I ask my colleagues to voice their support for this resolution.

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

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield as much time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from New York, PETER KING, the sponsor of this bill.

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding, and thank him for the service he has rendered to this body in the 6 brief months he's been here. He is certainly following well in the tradition of his father, who is a long-time friend of mine.

Let me also say how gratifying it is to be on the floor and have the manager of this bill which pertains to Tony

Blair being managed by the distinguished Ambassador WATSON, who does such an outstanding job as cochair of the United States-United Kingdom Congressional Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today in support of this resolution. I was especially privileged to introduce it because as Tony Blair exits from the Office of Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, he takes with him the admiration and the best wishes of all freedom-loving people throughout the world.

No one certainly has been a closer ally to the United States than Prime Minister Tony Blair. No one personifies the close links between the United States and Great Britain than Tony Blair; certainly follows in the tradition of Winston Churchill, who did more than anyone until his time to cement that relationship, and Tony Blair has even advanced it more. Whether it was President Clinton or President Bush, Tony Blair always stood as our strongest ally in Bosnia, in Kosovo, in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the international war against terrorism, and standing up for democratic principles and values.

And certainly as a New Yorker, I will always remember the fact that he was the first foreign leader to come to New York, to come to Ground Zero to meet with the firefighters and meet with the police officers and express the solidarity of the British people toward the people of New York, and of course, to the people of the United States, and to all peoples who were opposed to international terrorism. And then, as Ambassador WATSON mentioned, the fact that he was here in the House Chamber on September 20, 2001 when President Bush addressed the American people also showed his absolute commitment to the United States and to the war against terrorism.

As an Irish American, I have been involved for many years in the quest for a peaceful solution to the struggle in Northern Ireland. And depending on which historian you're talking to or which analyst you're talking to, this is a struggle that went back 800 years, 300 years, 80 years, 35 years. It really doesn't matter what timeline we're using, the reality is it was a seemingly unending struggle which was going to go on and on and on. And then the stars were properly aligned and Tony Blair became the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Bertie Ahern became the Prime Minister of Ireland, and President Clinton committed himself to using the good offices of the United States as an honest broker to try to bring about a peaceful resolution in the north of Ireland. And through incredible hard work and perseverance and dedication, it worked. And not only did Tony Blair deal with Prime Minister Ahern and President Clinton, what he did even took more courage, and that was to reach out to historic enemies, if you will, of the British Government. He reached out to people such as Gerry Adams and Martin McGuiness and Sinn

Fein, and he brought them to the negotiating table and sat down with them and worked with them. And he had them to 10 Downing Street and he broke down centuries of division and hatred. And at the same time, he worked with those on the other side, strongly on the other side, not just David Trimble of the Ulster Unionist Party, but also Ian Paisley of the Democratic Unionist Party.

And the Good Friday Agreement would not have been possible in April of 1998 without Tony Blair, but also the Good Friday Agreement went on for almost 9 years afterwards until it was finally brought to its ultimate fruition earlier this month. And it was done because Tony Blair never yielded. There were so many times between April of 1998 and May or June of this year that that agreement could have fallen apart, that it could have splintered, that it could have shattered if Tony Blair was not willing to take that extra step, and he did that.

And during this entire time that he was bringing peace to Northern Ireland and standing with us as our strongest ally, also Britain itself was under attack. And as Mr. BILIRAKIS and Ambassador WATSON mentioned, on July 7, 2005, when the London underground was attacked by terrorists causing large scale carnage and loss of life, and Tony Blair again stood strong and stood firm.

So, this is a moment where it's seldom that we see giants in history, and it's important, I think, that we not wait 50 years or 100 years or several centuries to acknowledge them, but to acknowledge them in their own time as being prophets with honor.

So I, again, say I've had the privilege a number of times of being with Tony Blair. I was with him with President Clinton in Washington and in Belfast and Armagh City in Northern Ireland, and just last month, again, at the British Embassy. He certainly is a man of stature, he's a man of achievement and he's a man of courage.

I am proud to support this resolution, and I urge its adoption.

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

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, in closing, there was nothing hesitant about Prime Minister Blair's resolve to fight back and send a message to terrorists that the United Kingdom, like the United States, would not succumb to ideology that espouses violence and death.

Like Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher before him, who stood shoulder to shoulder with President Ronald Reagan to bring down the greatest dark force of the 20th century, communist, Mr. Blair stood with President Bush even when few others would accept the challenge to eliminate the dark force of this new century.

Mr. Speaker, as all the previous speakers have suggested, this is most worthy resolution for a most worthy leader. I urge all of my colleagues to

join me in congratulating Prime Minister Tony Blair for his remarkable tenure as Prime Minister of the U.K., and for his steadfast support of the United States, and our invaluable alliance with Great Britain.

We look forward to his successor, Mr. Gordon Brown, following in Mr. Blair's footsteps by maintaining and building on our transatlantic alliance so we can stand strong and together face the uncertainties of a troubled world.

I would like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank Ranking Member KING for bringing forth this resolution. And also Ambassador WATSON, I thank you very much. Tony Blair is a true statesman, a man of principle.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 416.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING JACK VALENTI

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 361) recognizing and honoring Jack Valenti and expressing the condolences of the House of Representatives to his family on his death, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 361

Whereas Jack Valenti was born in Houston, Texas, on September 5, 1921, and resided in Washington, DC and Beverly Hills, California;

Whereas Jack Valenti graduated from the University of Houston with a Bachelor of Arts degree and from Harvard University with a Master of Business Administration degree;

Whereas Jack Valenti served as special assistant to President Lyndon B. Johnson;

Whereas Jack Valenti was the distinguished president of the Motion Picture Association of America for 38 years;

Whereas Jack Valenti was a trusted presidential advisor, a war hero, an author, and a pioneer in the American film industry;

Whereas Jack Valenti was a great humanitarian who served as a powerful spokesperson for the global fight against AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria;

Whereas Jack Valenti was a loving husband to his wife, Mary Margaret, and an exceptional father to his three children, Alexandra, John, and Courtenay;

Whereas Jack Valenti's spirit touched everyone he encountered, whether in his political career or in his time spent with the Motion Picture Association of America;

Whereas Jack Valenti revolutionized the movie industry through the creation of a voluntary movie rating system that has endured to this day;

Whereas Jack Valenti's vision for the movie industry has withstood the test of

time, and has provided guidance for families in their movie viewing experiences as well as safeguards for our filmmakers;

Whereas the vision and character Jack Valenti brought to the movie industry will be greatly missed; and

Whereas on April 26, 2007, Jack Valenti passed away, prompting his friend and confidant, Dan Glickman, to say, "Jack was a showman, a gentleman, an orator, and a passionate champion of this country, its movies, and the enduring freedoms that made both so important to this world. He also embodied the theatricality of our industry with his conviction, quick wit and boundless energy. In a very real sense, he was the ultimate leading man." Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes Jack Valenti as one of the greatest contributors to the motion picture industry;

(2) honors Jack Valenti for his service to his country, for his tremendous accomplishments, and for his contributions to the movie industry and to the Nation; and

(3) extends its deepest condolences to the family of Jack Valenti.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia?

There was no objection.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleagues in the discussion of H. Res. 361, recognizing and honoring Jack Valenti and expressing the condolences to the House of Representatives to his family on his death.

H. Res. 361, which has 95 cosponsors, was introduced by Representative DIANE WATSON on May 1, 2007. H. Res. 361 was reported from the Oversight Committee on June 12, 2007 by voice vote.

Jack Valenti was born September 5, 1921 in Houston, Texas. An honor student and debate champion at Sam Houston High School, he graduated at age 15. Lacking the funds to attend college, he worked for \$11 a week as an usher at a movie theater.

At age 20, Mr. Valenti served in the U.S. Army, which in 1941 was called the Army Air Forces. He flew 51 missions and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. He received his MBA degree from Harvard University in 1948 and 4 years later started an advertising business.

Mr. Valenti served as a Special Assistant to President Lyndon B. Johnson. In 1966, he left the White House to become president of the Motion Picture Association of America for 38 years. He died on April 26, 2007.