

to Missouri. Randall is a retired executive from the IBM Corporation. He spent 29 years with IBM in various sales, management, and executive positions. His last position at IBM was senior location executive for the Kansas City region and senior state executive for Kansas and Missouri with responsibility for programs and policy implementation essential to IBM's interests, reputation and involvement relating to both the internal IBM community of 900 employees, and to the outside community. His responsibilities also included government relations, community relations, and all IBM philanthropic grants.

After IBM, he was recruited to be the senior vice president for business growth and member connections for the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce. His responsibilities included membership, technology, small business activities, aviation, minority business alliances, the economic advisory board, and the world trade center.

Randall holds a bachelor of science degree in business administration with honors from Walton School of Business, University of Arkansas. Throughout his life, Mr. Ferguson has exercised a tireless belief in the principle of putting "others" before "self." He has put his principles to practice, and the effects of his efforts can be felt throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area. Recognizing his business acumen, Great Planes Energy, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and Shelter Insurance voted him on to their corporate boards.

Civically, Randall serves on 12 boards in the greater Kansas City area with varied interests such as energy, healthcare, education, economic development and technology, employment, and diversity in such areas as race, sex, and religion. In all of his activities, he demonstrates his dedication and commitment to the greater good of others. His high energy pace translates directly to the results he is able to obtain for the benefit of all in the greater Kansas City area. Regardless of whether he is in the trenches or the boardroom, his poise and thoughtfulness is ever present. For those reasons and more, it is indeed an honor and a privilege to recognize Randall Ferguson, Jr. at the Missouri Walk of Fame reception, hosted by myself and fellow Missourian, U.S. Representative WM. LACY CLAY of St. Louis.

Madam Speaker, please join me in expressing our appreciation to Mr. Randall Ferguson, Jr. and his endless commitment to serving the residents of the State of Missouri. He is a true role model not just to the African-American community in Missouri, but to the entire African-American community-at-large. May his success serve as a stepping-stone for many other African-Americans eager to be just as successful in their endeavors. While it is but a small acknowledgement for all of the work he has done, it is a heartfelt gesture to a heartfelt friend, taking strength from the lives he has touched in our hometown.

COMMEMORATING SEA OTTER AWARENESS WEEK

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 22, 2008

Mr. FARR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the 6th Annual Sea Otter

Awareness Week, September 22–28, 2008, sponsored by Defenders of Wildlife. This weeklong event provides the opportunity to educate the broader public about sea otters, their natural history, the integral role that sea otters play in the near-shore marine ecosystem, and the conservation issues they are facing.

In the early 1700s, before wide-scale hunting began, sea otters ranged across the North Pacific rim from Japan to Baja, California. The worldwide population estimates for that time range from the hundreds of thousands to possibly a million or more. Before the hunting began, there were approximately 16,000–20,000 along California's coast. Killing these animals for their fur brought down their numbers until they were thought to be extinct off California by the early 1900s.

But they were not driven completely to extinction. In the 1930s a small population, less than 100, was discovered that had escaped the hunt in a remote cove on a coastal ranch in Big Sur on the central coast of California. Since that time, groups such as Defenders of Wildlife, Friends of the Sea Otter, and The Ocean Conservancy have raised public awareness and helped protect this important species under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act.

The presence of the California sea otter has become an icon of the State's coastal environment and culture, and these charismatic animals bring significant tourism revenue to Californian coastal communities. The spring census conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey this year counted 2,760 animals, down 8.8 percent from last year, and their range extends along the central coast from Half Moon Bay to Pt. Conception.

These numbers are significantly less than what is necessary to consider the population stable and their population growth in recent years is slower than their cousins in Alaska. Researchers are beginning to identify indirect hazards for sea otters such as non-point source pollution, pathogens, and entrapment in fisheries' gear that are causing their population growth to slow. Such realizations support the need for continued research and preventive measures to respond to these issues, while continuing to ward against the direct killings/takings that still occur.

The decline of southern sea otters off the California coast not only impacts the species itself, but it affects other marine populations and the surrounding ecosystem. They are what scientists refer to as a keystone species. This means that they are integrally important to the ecosystem in which they live. For example, the demise of sea otters allows their prey, sea urchins, to proliferate unchecked, which leads to the alarming overgrazing of kelp beds—one of the ocean's nursery grounds for many marine animals. In particular, research shows that the absence of sea otters has a direct link to the sharp decline of kelp along portions of California's coast.

The sea otter is also what scientists refer to as a sentinel or an indicator species. In this way, the sea otters are the canaries in the coal mine for our coastal health. The sea otters are all too effective at monitoring toxins and diseases in the marine environment, which can affect the health of humans and other wildlife.

California has taken the first step toward addressing these emerging concerns by signing

into law California Assembly Bill 2485, which establishes a State fund for sea otter conservation. Again this year Californians had the option of donating a portion of their tax returns to sea otter conservation. I want to emphasize that this means that Californians voluntarily pay a little more on their tax return to help protect these animals. To date, this has raised almost \$270,000.

However, this is a federally protected species and California cannot go it alone. In addition to working with my colleagues to secure Federal funds to support a continued and complete recovery of the population, I introduced H.R. 3639, the southern sea otter Recovery and Research Act. Earlier this year, the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, and Oceans held a hearing about the southern sea otter and the management of these populations.

Dr. James Estes from the University of California, Santa Cruz; Andrew Johnson, from the Monterey Bay Aquarium; and Jim Curland from Defenders of Wildlife testified on the state of the sea otter populations. I and my colleagues have sought their knowledge and expertise, along with other Federal, State, and local experts and citizens to provide for research and recovery programs for the southern sea otter.

Madam Speaker, I applaud the many accomplishments of Defenders of Wildlife, who carry out the important mission to preserve our Nation's wildlife and habitat. I also applaud the other non-profit environmental organizations, working with the Monterey Bay Aquarium, researchers, fishermen, State and Federal agencies, schools, and many other institutions and individuals, who devote tremendous effort to protect and recover the southern California sea otter. Sea Otter Awareness Week is just one of their many activities geared towards honoring and saving this species, and I am proud to be associated with this vital work.

HONORING JUDGE HAROLD BAREFOOT SANDERS, JR.

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 22, 2008

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, today I mourn the passing of one of my political heroes, the legendary U.S. District Judge Harold Barefoot Sanders, Jr.

Madam Speaker, Judge Sanders is best known for overseeing a desegregation plan for the Dallas Independent School District from the 1980s until 2003. Judge Sanders also directed the overhaul of state schools for mentally retarded people and served as a legislative counsel to President Lyndon Johnson.

Madam Speaker, from his core, Judge Sanders symbolized civil rights. He knew that fairness took work, and his diligence is why he was able to make history and inspire a generation of my Texas colleagues. As an assistant attorney general in the Department of Justice, he was credited with helping pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965. As a Texas legislator, he helped write the Texas Mental Health Code. And as a federal judge, in a ruling that I believe took more courage than any other, he declared Dallas' segregated schools illegal.

Madam Speaker, President John F. Kennedy appointed Judge Sanders as U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Texas in 1961.

President Jimmy Carter elevated him to the federal bench in 1979. Judge Sanders was a help to me personally with my acclaimed national and international Peace Initiative. His counsel and assistance were instrumental to its success. I know Judge Sanders as a man revered for his intellect and compassion. I will truly miss him; the void he is leaving will not soon be filled.

Madam Speaker, Judge Harold Barefoot Sanders, Jr., born in Dallas, graduated from North Dallas High School in 1942 and went on to serve as a lieutenant in the U.S. Naval Reserve until 1946. He received his law degree from the University of Texas in 1950 and served three terms in the Texas Legislature. In 1952 he married Jan Scurlock, who survives him. He is also survived by daughters Martha Kay Crockett of Dallas and Mary Frances Korsan of Santa Monica, CA; a sister, Martha Ann Schneider of Dallas; brother, Charles Addison Sanders of Durham, NC; and 10 grandchildren.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE “INDIVIDUAL DEPOSITOR AND COMMUNITY BANK PROTECTION ACT OF 2008”

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 22, 2008

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, today I introduced the “Individual Depositor and Community Bank Protection Act of 2008,” which raises the federal deposit insurance limit from the current \$100,000 to \$200,000. This upward adjustment in the federal deposit insurance limit is long overdue. The last increase in the deposit insurance limit—to the current \$100,000—was made 28 years ago, in 1980, the year Ronald Reagan was first elected President. This has been the longest period in history in which there has been no raise in the deposit insurance maximum. Since 1980, our nation’s economy has changed, with an undeniable increase in income, prices, and wealth. By failing to raise the deposit insurance limit in kind, Congress has effectively weakened the federal guarantee underlying deposit insurance.

Deposit insurance, established in response to the financial meltdown of the 1930s that led to the Great Depression, is vital to consumer confidence and to the stability of our nation’s banking system. It also is an effective mechanism for ensuring that small community banks can maintain a competitive position vis à vis large national banks. Large banks are not as dependent as small ones on deposit insurance because they are categorized as “too big to fail” and will be protected by the federal government should they run into financial trouble. As a result, they have a competitive advantage in securing depositors and in providing loans. Small community banks enjoy no such protection and, as a result, depend on a robust federal deposit insurance guarantee to reassure consumers that their money is safe in a community bank. Weakening deposit insurance effectively gives a competitive upper hand to the ever-shrinking number of large national banks and, in the long run, will limit the vitality and competitiveness of our nation’s banking industry.

At this moment of economic crisis and deep financial uncertainty for millions of Americans, I urge my colleagues to support this straightforward and long-overdue raise in the federal insurance deposit limit. It is vital to maintaining our nation’s financial stability, ensuring a solid foundation for economic growth, promoting competition in the banking industry, and reassuring an anxious nation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 22, 2008

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise to explain my reason for missing votes on September 11 and 15, 2008. My voting percentage is over 96 percent for the 110th Congress, and I rarely miss votes, but felt it was extremely important to be home in Houston, Texas while my neighbors and constituents were making preparations for Hurricane Ike and to help recovery efforts in the immediate aftermath. The storm made landfall early Saturday morning, and by the time it passed Houston Saturday afternoon, it had caused the largest power disruption in the state’s history, along with tremendous flood and wind damage. There are still nearly two million people in the Houston area without power, and many without water. When I left yesterday to fly back to Washington, significant relief efforts by Federal, State, and local emergency officials were just getting underway.

There is still a tremendous amount of work to be done, and I ask for everyone’s thoughts and prayers as Houston and the Gulf Coast recover from this devastating storm.

Had I been present to vote, I would have voted as follows:

On rollcall vote No. 585, on Approving the Journal, I would have voted “aye”;

On rollcall vote No. 586, H. Res. 1344, on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree to the resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the terrorist attacks launched against the United States on September 11, 2001, I would have voted “aye”;

On rollcall vote No. 587, H. Res. 6532, on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree to the Senate Amendment to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to restore the Highway Trust Fund balance, I would have voted “aye”;

On rollcall vote No. 588, on Motion to Adjourn, I would have voted “aye”;

On rollcall vote No. 589, H. Res. 1200, on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree as amended, a resolution honoring the dedication and outstanding work of military support groups across the country for their steadfast support of the members of our Armed Forces and their families, I would have voted “aye”;

On rollcall vote No. 590, H. Con. Res. 390, on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree as amended, a resolution honoring the 28th Infantry Division for serving and protecting the United States, I would have voted “aye”;

On rollcall vote No. 591, H. R. 6889, on Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, a bill to extend the authority of the Secretary of Education to purchase guaranteed student loans for an additional year, and for other purposes, I would have voted “aye”;

EL CENTRO FIRE CHIEF BENNIE BENAVIDEZ INDUCTED INTO THE NAVY FIREFIGHTER HALL OF FAME

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 22, 2008

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker and colleagues, I rise today to recognize Bennie Benavidez, retired NAF El Centro Fire Chief, who was inducted into the Navy Firefighter Hall of Fame at the 2008 Navy and Marine Corps Fire and Emergency Services Awards Luncheon on August 14, 2008 in Denver, Colorado.

Chief Benavidez is the first nominee and first inductee from the Navy Region Southwest into the Hall of Fame, which was created three years ago. He was selected by the 13 Regional Fire Chiefs as a person whose contributions should be recognized for posterity.

He served his country for many years in a Navy Fire Career which included rapid promotions: Firefighter 1955–1956, Engineer 1956–1960, Captain 1960–1973, Assistant Chief 1973–1974, and Fire Chief 1974–1983. Upon his retirement, he was appointed as the Fire Chief of the Imperial County Fire Department and served for an additional 15 years, working to improve the training and safety of fire fighting personnel.

Bennie Benavidez’s love of the fire service was passed along to one of his sons, who rose to the rank of Engineer with a local fire department before his death in the line of duty. He keeps his son’s memory alive through his community support and charitable contributions to the Burn Institute and local hospitals.

His accomplishments fill several pages. Some examples follow. He received Congressional recognition for “outstanding and invaluable service to the community.” He was recognized as “Imperial Man of the Year” by the California State Assembly. He was appointed as Deputy State Fire Marshal for the state of California. He received a commendation from the State of California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services. One of his primary contributions has been to foster friendship and cooperation in firefighting training between Imperial County and friends just across the border in Mexico.

Some of his 20 memberships, past and present, include the Imperial County Fire Chiefs Association, International Association of Fire Chiefs, California State Firefighters Association, Southern California Earthquake Preparedness Committee, Elks Lodge #1325, American Legion Post #25, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Korean War Veterans Association, and Member of several Imperial County Committees regarding the environment, hazardous materials, and community economic development.

It is impossible to thank Bennie Benavidez for all his contributions, throughout his career and in volunteer activities within his community. The occasion of his induction into the Navy Firefighter Hall of Fame is an appropriate time to recognize him, his contributions, and the most prestigious honor that has been bestowed upon him.