

through her tireless efforts. Cindy was a public face for the library during a period of growth when more than \$2 million was raised solely from private donations. Under Cindy's leadership, more than 75 percent of Bainbridge Islanders have library cards, with the Island's 8,000 households, borrowing more than one-half millions books and materials last year.

Cindy has made the library a better place in every way. Her stewardship and leadership has ensured that the building and programs have adapted to the changing needs of Bainbridge Islanders. Her imagination and dedication to learning have made the Library a magnet for all the citizens of Bainbridge Island and have endeared her to the community.

I offer my praise to Cindy Harrison, for her devotion to the Bainbridge Island library and community.

INTRODUCTION OF BILL TO PROTECT THE POLAR BEAR

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 17, 2008

Mr. MARKEY. Madam Speaker, I am introducing this bill today because the polar bear is in the crosshairs of global warming and the ill-advised decisions of the Bush administration to proceed with an oil lease sale in a major polar bear habitat while delaying a decision to list the polar bear as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. This legislation would require that the Interior Department delay the oil drilling rights sale in Alaska's Chukchi Sea until it had made a decision on the listing of the polar bear under the Endangered Species Act, and had performed its responsibility of establishing "critical habitat" for the polar bear.

The Bush administration's own scientists project that the prospects for the polar bear's survival are bleak. Last year, Dr. Steven Amstrup, the Government's leading polar bear scientist, headed up a team of scientists charged with examining the impact of sea ice loss on polar bear populations. In a series of reports released last fall, Dr. Amstrup's team concluded that by mid-century, two-thirds of all the world's polar bears could disappear and that polar bears could be gone entirely from Alaska. Dr. Amstrup's team also noted that based on recent observations, this dire assessment could actually be conservative.

The actions of the Bush administration in the coming months could very well determine the fate of this iconic animal. The Interior Department is currently considering whether to list the polar bear under the Endangered Species Act as a result of the impact of global warming. While this decision has been nearly three years in the making, last week the Fish and Wildlife Service announced that it was going to delay any decisions beyond its statutorily required deadline—that legal protection for the polar bear would be put on ice while its critical habitat continues to melt.

Meanwhile, the Interior Department is revving up its regulatory machine to allow new oil drilling in sensitive polar bear habitat. Earlier this month, the Minerals Management Service finalized its plan to move forward early next month with an oil and gas lease sale of nearly 30 million acres in the Chukchi Sea, an area that is essential habitat for polar bears in the United States.

The timing of these two decisions leaves the door open for the administration to give Big Oil the rights to this polar bear habitat the moment before the protections for the polar bear under the Endangered Species Act go into effect. Rushing to allow drilling in polar bear habitat before protecting the bear would be the epitome of this administration's backwards energy policy—a policy of drill first and ask questions later.

The decision to list the polar bear must be made on the best science. The Bush administration is still working out how it can solve global warming—with great delay—but has not yet made any declaration that we, or the polar bear, are in any danger. The Endangered Species Act does not call for a solution before a declaration, but rather a clear decision to be made on the biological status of a species at a specific time. The Bush administration are not going to solve global warming without first declaring it a problem, and they are not going to save the bear without first declaring it endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Robert Frost wrote about two roads diverging in the wood, and here we have the Bush administration looking down two roads with regard to the polar bear. Down one road lies the survival of the polar bear and the orderly consideration of oil drilling and global warming and common sense. Down the other road, too often traveled by this administration, lies regulatory lunacy and a blatant disregard for moral responsibility. I urge Secretary Kempthorne and his agency to choose the Bush administration's road less traveled and protect the polar bear, and the rest of us, from global warming.

A TRIBUTE TO THE MONITORS CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF MAKING MUSIC

HON. G. K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 17, 2008

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, I rise and ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to the Monitors, one of eastern North Carolina's most noted bands. On January 25, 2008, members of this band will come together at the Boykin Center in Wilson, NC, to celebrate 50 years of making music.

Madam Speaker, Bill Myers and Cleveland Flowe came together and organized the band in 1957 setting the Monitors in motion over the next 50 years. And they are still grooving today. I want to say that Bill Myers is married to my very special cousin, Diana Davis Myers, and Cleveland Flowe was my band teacher when I was in high school many years ago.

Bill Myers is the only original member of the band who performs once or twice per month. Cleveland Flowe and his wife, Cathy, now live in Charlotte, NC. The Monitors' music varies according to the crowd. The band is very versatile and can take an audience back on a journey to the World War II era, or can have them doing the twist, jerk, or mashed potatoes into the 1940s, 50s, 60s, 70s or even break dancing to the 80s or "leaning back" to those songs that you may hear on the radio today. Although the band has kept up with the time, the members have been able to savor its origi-

nal flavor and can kick it into gear on command.

Madam Speaker, all one has to do is just name the occasion—a concert, Mardi Gras, Hawaiian luau, wedding reception, prom, cabaret, or a street festival, and the Monitors will have you springing to your feet and dancing to the beat.

The Monitors' claim to fame is their noted performances as back-up band with such greats as Otis Redding, Millie Jackson, Major Lance, Faye Adams and Joyce Thorne, and as the opening act with Ray Charles and Roberta Flack. Further, a little known history fact is that in the early stages of her career, Roberta Flack was lead singer for the Monitors.

Madam Speaker, this celebration is not only a time of reminiscence for the members of the Monitors which include Bill Myers, Cleveland Flowe, Jerome Morgan, Willie Dupree, Dick Knight, Fred Moye, Donald Tuckson, Sam Lathan, Clark Mills, Jr., Mollie Hunter and Gerald Hunter, but it is a charitable occasion where proceeds of the concert will be divided between the Arts Council of Wilson and the Charles H. Darden High School Alumni Association.

Madam Speaker, I applaud the Monitors for the joy that they have brought into the lives of people across the Nation through their musical talents. I ask my colleagues to join me in extending to this renowned band our heartfelt wishes and God's continued blessings.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 16, 2008

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, the provision that caused the President to veto the entire Defense bill simply reaffirms the original intent of Congress to allow victims of terrorism to hold countries that commit or provide material support for terrorist acts accountable. As a principal author of the provision, I am pleased that we were able to salvage much of it. But I am disappointed in the change that the President has insisted on.

The President has decided that it is of utmost importance to shield the Iraqi Government from suits by American soldiers who were brutally tortured by the Iraqi Government under Saddam Hussein, as prisoners of war during the gulf war. The soldiers were not only starved, denied sleep, and exposed to extreme temperatures. They were severely beaten, threatened with castration and dismemberment, and put through mock executions. As a result, they have sustained lasting physical and mental injuries.

These brave soldiers and their families have been waiting many years for justice in our courts. The President, through the actions of his lawyers in the courts, has endeavored to block their progress at every turn. He has even gone so far as to twist a provision Congress included in the Emergency Wartime Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2003, designed to remove restrictions on providing assistance to the new Iraqi Government, into an

astounding claim that Congress somehow implicitly thereby gave him authority to block court jurisdiction over suits against Iraq—a claim that disregards the understanding of those involved in negotiating that provision, as well as article III of the Constitution and the separation of powers.

And now, despite these new congressional efforts to help those soldiers, the President wants them to continue to wait—for the good, he says, of the new Iraqi Government. In order for the Defense bill to be signed, my colleagues and I have reluctantly had to amend this provision to allow the President to carve out the Iraqi Government entirely.

It is important to note that this change does not affect rights under current law. The President's waiver authority extends only to the provisions being newly enacted in this bill; by its clear terms, it does not extend to current law. There is ongoing litigation regarding the rights of these American soldiers under current law; if the President exercises his new waiver authority, that litigation will proceed unaffected by that waiver.

The difference is that, if the President exercises the waiver authority, these soldiers will not be helped by this new provision we wrote and passed, as we wanted them to be, and as they would be absent the waiver. I believe current law, properly interpreted, already gives them the protection they need to obtain justice. Among other things, I believe it is clear, despite the administration's assertions and one aberrational court holding to the contrary, that Congress intended the 1996 amendment to the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act to provide an explicit Federal statutory cause of action against state sponsors of terrorism for the victims. That intent is stated explicitly, among other places, in the House Judiciary Committee's report for the bill in the previous Congress, H. Rept. 103-702.

In the face of sustained efforts by the President to persuade the courts to disregard congressional intent, we wanted to give these soldiers, and other victims of state-sponsored terrorism, another clear path to obtaining justice. But the soldiers who suffered at the hands of Saddam Hussein will not get the benefit of this other clear path if the President exercises his waiver authority, as we expect he will.

And there is always a risk that the courts will be persuaded by the arguments of the President and his lawyers, and reach what we believe would be the wrong interpretation, and deny the soldiers' claims under current law. If so, then the waiver will have the effect of further delaying justice, and a very real possibility of making it harder to obtain at all. Because even though the waiver cannot permanently and irrevocably extinguish their claims, another delay may make it all the more difficult to gather the proof when those claims can once again be pursued.

For all these reasons, we did not want to make this change.

And when we ultimately concluded that the President was willing to hold the entire Defense bill hostage unless we did, we tried to limit the harm.

We wanted the President to have to weigh the interests of the victims in justice, and make specific findings to inform us, and the victims, why he believes those interests are outweighed by the interests of the Iraqi Government, and why he believes those interests cannot fairly be reconciled.

We wanted him to have to explain in those findings why he believes it necessary to shelter all of Iraq's assets from legal accountability, even when Iraq is reaping billions upon billions of dollars from its oil fields.

We wanted the President to have to reaffirm those findings periodically, so that they would not be set in stone.

And we wanted a sunset, to bring a definite end to what we believe is a manifest injustice.

Unfortunately, we were not able to achieve these goals.

What we have been able to do, instead, is to add a new sense of the Congress that the President should work with the Government of Iraq to get fair compensation to these victims. That is, of course, non-binding; but it could also create a new path to justice. And I hope the President will take it to heart, and act on it, and that through one of these paths, the victims will see some semblance of the justice they have been struggling for these many years.

Otherwise, I think the President will have done a grave disservice to these soldiers, who are only 17 in number, and whose treatment at the hands of our enemies, in the service of their country, calls for greater respect than they have been getting.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ZORA MCARTHUR MEISSNER

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 17, 2008

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in remembrance of Zora McArthur Meissner, and to celebrate her life of service to others and her community.

As a young woman in Alabama, Zora devoted herself to the civil rights movement as she registered young black voters, fought for the desegregation of schools, and demanded equality in the workplace.

After moving to Cleveland, Zora earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from John Carroll University while raising her children. Her spirit for advocacy and empowerment led her to a number of jobs working with the most vulnerable populations in Cleveland. Zora's compassion embraced everyone she encountered, and her desire to make the world and Cleveland a better place never waned. She had a genuine desire to help people, and relished the time she spent with clients.

Zora is celebrated in life by her beloved husband of 37 years, Joseph; and her children Betina, Chiquita, and Paul.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in remembering and honoring Zora McArthur Meissner, for a rich life spent dedicated to her family and her community. May her strength and spirit live on in us all.

HONORING RETIRING TOWN OF CHEEKTOWAGA COUNCILMAN THOMAS M. JOHNSON, JR.

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 17, 2008

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the illustrious public career

of one of western New York's most dedicated and hard working public servants—the Dean of the Cheektowaga Town Board, its longest serving member, Councilman Thomas M. Johnson, Jr.

Many years ago, the Buffalo News once referred to another public official with a reputation for energetic representation of his constituents as “indefatigable.” Untiring. Unrelenting. Unflinching. These and so many other adjectives only begin to describe the manner in which Tom Johnson served his constituents, and the town he loves so dearly.

Since my very first days in service as a Member of the House, Tom has been an advocate for countless projects within Cheektowaga, and for the betterment of the people who live there. I am proud to serve in public office alongside people of the caliber of Tom Johnson, and I am prouder still to call Tom my friend.

I have taken the liberty, Madam Speaker, of including within this extension excerpts from an article recently published in the Buffalo News that chronicles Tom's career and his plans to “retire”—with that word intentionally left in quotation marks. Tom will never truly retire from serving the town he so dearly loves, and all of us in elective office owe a great debt of gratitude to Tom for his service and his dedication to the people in his community. Tom, on behalf of the entirety of the House of Representatives, let me wish you, Barbara and your entire family the very best of luck and Godspeed.

CHEEKTOWAGA ICON JOHNSON LEARNING THE WORD “RETIRE”

(By Thomas J. Dolan)

Cheektowaga's longest-serving Town Board member, Thomas M. Johnson Jr., is stepping down after three decades in office, but you wouldn't know it to see him.

With just days to go before his term ends, Johnson, 66, is as restless as ever. He's showing up for work sessions at Town Hall, popping in at community meetings and appearing at all manner of ceremonies and events, just as he has done through much of his career. “He gets involved in practically everything. He goes to all the meetings. He gets involved with various groups,” said Thomas J. Adamczak, supervisor of town inspectors.

Whether it's the Cheektowaga Community Symphony Orchestra, a ceremony honoring veterans, a planning session to restock wall-eye in Cayuga Creek or a discussion of storm-drainage problems, Johnson has been a force in town affairs for decades. He has left his stamp on a wide variety of projects, from the Walden Galleria shopping mall to the town's new bike path, now under construction.

Johnson's 30 years on the board easily qualify him as Cheektowaga's longest-serving lawmaker, said Supervisor-elect Mary F. Holtz, the town historian.

“Nobody else even comes close,” Holtz said after checking her records.

And few town officials have made a greater impact than Johnson, observers say.

“Tom is a true institution in Cheektowaga,” said Eric L. Recoon, vice president of development for Benderson Development Co.

Recoon, who has frequently negotiated with Johnson regarding Benderson projects, gave this assessment: “Tom probably has, in his own way, done more for the town than almost anybody. He's so passionate about his town, and he was really tireless in his efforts to do what he feels would benefit the Town of Cheektowaga.”

And while many politicians show up at public meetings to earn some “face time,”