

HONORING DAVID ALEXANDER
PATERSON

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2008

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, today I would like to recognize the historic governorship of David Alexander Paterson, who at the age of 53, has become the 55th Governor of the great State of New York. Mr. Paterson is New York State's first Black Governor. I would like to again wish New York's new Governor well, and support his efforts on behalf of the great State of New York. I would like to enter this March 25th editorial from the CaribNews entitled "A Breath of Fresh Air in Albany" into the RECORD.

BREATH OF FRESH AIR STIRS ALBANY—GOVERNOR PATERSON TAKES OFFICE AS NEW YORK'S CHIEF EXECUTIVE

"I am David Paterson and I am the Governor of New York State."

With those words and many more, David Alexander Paterson, decisively assumed the mantle of office as the Chief Executive of America's most influential state at the age of 53 years.

With the State's Chief Judge, Judith S. Kaye, administering the oath office, the grandson of Caribbean immigrants was sworn in on Monday as the 55th Governor of New York and the third Black head of a state government in the more than 125 years after America's Reconstruction era.

It was truly a historic moment, filled with symbolism, pageantry and realism. Few, if anyone present in the legislature, who watched it on television or who listened to the ceremony on the radio would forget the class act that unfolded in Albany, the State capital.

Paterson's rise to the most powerful position in state government was swift as it was stunning and despite the unusual circumstances which led to his ascension—the forced resignation of Eliot Spitzer after he became embroiled in a lurid sex scandal involving high priced prostitutes—it was clear that the transition had occurred smoothly and that Paterson, a legally blind person, was and is in charge. His presence at the helm is a sharp reminder of the changing times in which we live. Who would have imagined a mere few years ago that in the first decade of the 21st century, the United States would be on the verge of electing a Black man, Senator Barack Obama of Illinois, or a woman, U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton, a Democrat of New York, as the next President of the country or would have a Black person with Jamaican and Grenadian roots occupying the Governor's mansion in the Empire state or another Black as the chief executive of Massachusetts.

It was not only pride that filled the hearts of New Yorkers everywhere. It was also a sense that a decent human being who had fought against the odds caused by his disability and spawned by the ubiquitous nature of prejudice had prevailed.

U.S. Congressman Charles Rangel, Chairman of the House of Representatives' powerful Ways and Means Committee, and an icon on Capitol Hill and in Harlem summed up the situation well in a "Dear David" letter to the new Governor when he said: "You have defied expectations, compiling a record of accomplishment as a member and leader of the New York State Senate. Now, as holder of the state's highest office, I am confident that you will govern with the same wisdom and leadership to make a positive difference in the lives of all New Yorkers."

The noble Congressman spoke for all of us.

In his short address after the official swearing in, Governor Paterson went straight to the issues that could define his administration: the need for jobs at a time of economic crisis; the necessity to improve education and reduce its costs to the taxpayers, students and their parents; the need for improved health care; and the importance of equity in society.

To get things done Paterson will need all of the goodwill he can get from his colleagues in government and from those whose taxes pay the bills. With the national economy in a tailspin and with the state facing a gaping hole in its budget of about \$124 billion, fiscal prudence without sacrificing quality of services and help for those who need it the most must be a number one priority. The Governor, Senate and Assembly must work closer together, something that didn't happen at all during Spitzer's 16 months in office.

Paterson recognized that hard bit of reality and it was an important message which he sent when he lamented, rather briefly, about the absence of the cooperation in recent times. And he did it without holding up Spitzer to ransom, so to speak. An important signal was sent to everyone when some former governors, George Pataki, a Republican, and Hugh Carey, a Democrat made a point of being present and Paterson went to great lengths to recognize them and others who can make a difference in the weeks, months and the two and a half years he has left to complete the four year term.

Standing alongside the Governor were his wife and children, his parents, Mr. & Mrs. Basil Paterson, people known for their grace and integrity. Their presence sent a message about the value of family, something to which the state's chief executive alluded when he sought to tell New Yorkers something about himself and the role Harlem has played in his life.

In his letter, Rangel, a long-time friend of the Paterson family, reminded the Governor that as he faces the "great challenges" which are ahead of him and the state, "you are not alone. Count me among the many New Yorkers who wish you well and stand ready to support your efforts on behalf of the great state of New York."

We wish to join the choir and sing the chorus, not simply with voices and lyrics but with sincere action.

Yes, there are difficult days ahead for most people in the country. But with determination, clarity of thought and his noted sense of humor, not to mention his decency we are confident that the Governor and indeed the state will succeed.

**SUPPORT FOR OVERRIDING THE
PRESIDENT'S VETO OF H.R. 2082**

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of overriding the President's veto of the Intelligence Authorization bill (H.R. 2082). President Bush vetoed this important bill because of a clause that holds the intelligence community to the same standard as military personnel by banning the use of waterboarding and other harsh interrogation techniques that are prohibited in the Army Field Manual. While announcing his veto, the President stated that "this is no time for Congress to abandon practices that have a

proven track record of keeping America safe." President Bush is misguided: the use of waterboarding and other tactics neither strengthens our national security nor improves our intelligence capabilities. The United States does not need to disregard human rights in order to keep our country safe.

There is no doubt in my mind and I want to make it clear, waterboarding is torture. Some call this practice "simulated drowning." In reality, waterboarding is drowning. The victim experiences the same struggle, panic, swallowing, vomiting, taking water into the lungs, and inability to breathe. This inhumane practice can cause severe psychological trauma for years. After World War II, the United States convicted Japanese soldiers of war crimes for waterboarding American and Allied prisoners of war. This method is also banned by the Geneva Convention, which was signed by the United States.

The CIA recently admitted to using waterboarding and the Bush Administration has refused to ban intelligence personnel from using this technique in the future. It is abhorrent that this White House would soil the reputation of this great Nation as a beacon of freedom and a champion of human rights by allowing the use of torture in the same manner as brutal dictatorships.

The Army Field Manual interrogation techniques produce dependable intelligence without resorting to torture. General David Petraeus, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, wrote: "Some may argue that we would be more effective if we sanctioned torture or other expedient methods to obtain information from the enemy. That would be wrong. Beyond the basic fact that such actions are illegal, history shows that they also are frequently neither useful nor necessary."

Torture is ineffective and inhumane and it is time that the intelligence community put an end to the use of barbaric practices. If the United States continues to condone torture, we put our men and women in uniform at risk of having the same interrogation practices inflicted upon them.

Torture is a crime against humanity and unacceptable under any circumstances. Any nation that tortures or tolerates torture is not truly free.

My State of Minnesota has a proud tradition of fighting for victims of torture both at home and abroad. Former Governor Rudy Perpich helped to found the Center for Victims of Torture—a world renowned center for the treatment and healing of torture victims. When the Center opened in 1985, it became the first of its kind in the United States and only the third treatment center in the entire world. Today, with centers in the Twin Cities, Sierra Leone and Liberia, CVT is helping thousands of torture survivors from 60 countries.

Madam Speaker, the reputation of the United States has been profoundly damaged in the eyes of the world as a result of the failed policies of the Bush Administration. First the world saw photographs of Abu Ghraib, then discovered that the U.S. practices extraordinary rendition, and now knows the President of the United States approves the use of torture. Torture will be a stain on President Bush's legacy and his presidency will be a dark shadow in our country's history. I strongly encourage my colleagues to overturn the Presidents veto and begin restoring the United States' moral standing in the world.