

Libraries are very important to the future of this country, for people of all standings of wealth need access to books, access to computers, and access to other materials. The Memphis Library takes services to the community and gives people in their neighborhood the opportunity to read and make available to them cultural outreach.

We also have a television and radio station that is operated by our library, and it is an important facility, and I am proud that it's Tennessee's first facility to receive such an award and the first in the mid-South.

Congratulations to my city. You have a very proud congressman.

MOURNING THE LOSS OF JOHNNY GRANT, HONORARY MAYOR OF HOLLYWOOD

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

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, it is with great sorrow that I learned of the death my dear friend Johnny Grant, known internationally as the honorary Mayor of Hollywood. His departure from our lives has created a significant void in the normal glitz and glamour of everyday Hollywood. Johnny was a symbol of great Hollywood movers and shakers who took sincere interest in creating goodwill worldwide.

Johnny's legendary accomplishments in Hollywood drew strongly from his roots in radio and television. He was one of television medium's earliest pioneers and stars. Johnny traveled the world to entertain U.S. troops in his role as the United Service Organization ambassador. He joined comedian Bob Hope in taking entertainers to war zones to perform for military personnel and was the first recipient of the highest honor awarded by the USO. Johnny was also a retired major general in the California State Military Reserve, a volunteer backup and support force of the National Guard.

Johnny Grant served as chairman of the Los Angeles City Fire Commission; the Los Angeles County Social Service Commission; and the Burbank, California Police Commission. More recently, he had been a member of the Los Angeles City Cultural Heritage Commission. He was the only person ever to twice receive an Order of California, the State's highest honor.

A lifelong bachelor, Johnny Grant was best known to television audiences around the world as the enthusiastic host alongside the more than 500 celebrities he inducted into the Hollywood Walk of Fame. With his ebullient style, Johnny was one of the west coast's most sought after masters of ceremony. He emceed more than 5,000 civic and charity events. Johnny was also a humanitarian who produced hundreds of charity events where he was instrumental in raising millions of dollars for the USO, for the Boy Scouts, the Arthritis Foundation, police and fire services, veterans organizations, and others.

Although he has an honorary star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, the real star, his presence and inspiration will be sorely missed. We will miss him. And just last month he completed his 60th trip to entertain servicemen and women abroad.

We extend our most heartfelt condolences to his family, colleagues, and his many close friends here on Capitol Hill, in California, and around the world.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. LEE). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 53 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

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AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. LEE) at 8 o'clock and 18 minutes p.m.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

DEATH PENALTY FOR CHILD RAPISTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, soon our United States Supreme Court will hear the case of Kennedy v. Louisiana and decide whether capital punishment is permitted in rape cases where the victim is a child that is 12 or under.

Patrick Kennedy was sentenced in Louisiana to death after a jury convicted him of raping his own 8-year-old daughter. The facts show that he even tried to cover up the rape by cleaning up the evidence and then he blamed the rape on two neighborhood boys.

New Louisiana law allows the death sentence for raping a child that is under the age of 12, so Kennedy v. Louisiana asks the Supreme Court, among other things, to decide whether the eighth amendment of the United States Constitution, the cruel and unusual punishment clause, permits a State to punish the crime of rape of a child under the death penalty.

In 1977, the Supreme Court decided that a death sentence for rape of an adult woman was unconstitutional under a case called Coker v. Georgia. Coker really didn't discuss child rape, even though the victim in that case was 16 years of age. But since the

Coker decision, State courts have interpreted it to limit death penalty crimes to certain murders. Those murders are what I call the murder-plus doctrine. There must not only be a homicide, but there must be some felony committed or some other unusual circumstance, like murder during a kidnapping, murder during a robbery, murder during a sexual assault, or murder of a police officer, and that is the doctrine that has been basically substantiated by the Supreme Court.

However, last year, the Louisiana Supreme Court ruled that Coker v. Georgia doesn't apply in their particular case of capital punishment and rape cases when the victim is under 12 because it would still be murder-plus, murder plus the victim was under the age of 12; thus, it would fulfill the Supreme Court's requirements under the Constitution.

No one has been executed in the United States for a crime other than murder since 1964. Many States, including my home State of Texas, before that time allowed the death penalty for robbery by firearm, kidnapping, and sexual assault. But since those days, only murder plus some other felony is allowed under our Constitution.

There are approximately 3,300 inmates on death row in the United States, and only two of them face the death penalty for an event that did not involve a homicide as well as a felony, and those two are the two that are on Louisiana's death row. One is the petitioner in the upcoming Supreme Court case that the Supreme Court will decide very soon; the other is an individual by the name of Richard Davis, who was recently sentenced to death in Louisiana for sexually assaulting a 5-year-old girl.

Louisiana argues that the rape of a child is like no other crime. It also points out that the recent enactment of similar laws has occurred in other States such as Georgia, Montana, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Texas, my home State. Louisiana argues that it is compelling evidence of a national trend toward treating child rape as a distinct type of crime from other types of crimes.

But the issue will be whether the Supreme Court will allow States to make this decision for themselves, or will the Supreme Court continue to mistakenly go down the path and rely on international law, as it did when it barred the death penalty for 17-year-olds in a case called Roper v. Simmons. In Texas, 17-year-olds are adults, but the Supreme Court said no longer can 17-year-olds be executed for any crime. Hopefully, the Supreme Court will quit using international law and decide whether it is constitutional or not to execute someone for raping a child under the age of 12 based on American jurisprudence and our Constitution.

Madam Speaker, a death sentence fits the crime of child rape because a child rape victim suffers for the rest of their natural lives. Madam Speaker,

before I came to Congress, I was a judge for 22 years in Texas, and before that I was a prosecutor.

Many years ago, when I prosecuted cases, I prosecuted an individual who raped a 9-year-old. When her mother testified on the witness stand, she would not refer to the crime as rape or as sexual assault. She referred to that crime as a fate worse than death. And when she explained to the jury what that meant, she was saying that being sexually assaulted as a child is a fate worse than death. Hopefully our Supreme Court will not require a child victim to be murdered before the Supreme Court will allow the death penalty for the perpetrator, because it is, as this lady has testified many years ago, a fate worse than death. When a person commits a crime of sexual assault, they try to steal the soul of a victim.

So, Madam Speaker, I support a State's right to decide for itself whether or not a child rapist should be executed or not, because children are more important than rapists.

And that's just the way it is.

BEGIN IMPEACHMENT HEARINGS ON RESOLUTION OF IMPEACHMENT OF VICE PRESIDENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WEXLER. Madam Speaker, on November 7, 2007, this House voted to refer Congressman KUCINICH's resolution of impeachment of Vice President CHENEY to the House Judiciary Committee. As a member of the Judiciary Committee, I now ask that we immediately begin impeachment hearings.

The issues at hand are far too serious to ignore. DICK CHENEY faces credible allegations of abuse of power that if proven may well constitute high crimes and misdemeanors.

Did the Vice President manipulate intelligence to push this Nation into war based on false pretense?

Did the Vice President unmask a covert CIA agent for political purposes?

Did the Vice President order the illegal surveillance of Americans and the illegal use of torture?

These questions must be answered.

Just recently, former White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan revealed that the Vice President and his staff purposely gave him false information to report to the American people, a clear obstruction of justice.

This administration has undermined the checks and balances of our government by brazenly ignoring congressional subpoenas and recklessly claiming executive privilege. Impeachment hearings are the only way to force the Bush administration to answer questions and tell the truth.

Congress must take the first step by enforcing the subpoenas against Harriet Miers and the President's Chief of Staff and hold them in contempt of

Congress. In this time, at this moment, Congress must stand for the truth. If we fail to act, history may well judge us complicit in the alleged crimes of Vice President CHENEY.

Madam Speaker, a growing chorus of Americans are calling for accountability. The response from Congress thus far has been silence and denial.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida is reminded to refrain from personal references toward the Vice President.

Mr. WEXLER. Madam Speaker, not long ago I launched a Web site in support of my call for hearings. The people responded en masse. After only 4 weeks, over 189,000 Americans have registered their support for hearings, names I now hold in my hand. These frustrated and patriotic Americans come from all 50 States and share one common goal: accountability for the Bush-Cheney administration and a rebirth of Congress as an equal branch of government.

So many have been working on this cause before me. Groups like Democrats.com, AfterDowningStreet.org, CodePink, ImpeachBush.org, Impeach for Peace and others. All told, there have been well over 1 million signatures urging us to take action.

Tomorrow, I will deliver these names to my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee with a letter to my friend Chairman CONYERS calling for hearings. I will ask my colleagues to sign this letter. In addition, tomorrow, and continuing every day for months, I will publish in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD several thousand names of supporters who have signed up.

History demands that we take action, because the case against Vice President CHENEY is far stronger than the illegalities surrounding Watergate. When compared to the partisan and petty allegations made against President Clinton by Ken Starr and the GOP Congress, the true gravity of the case against the Vice President appears in its devastating clarity. In fact, in the history of our Nation, we have never encountered a moment where the actions of a President or a Vice President have more strongly demanded the use of the power of impeachment.

I have heard the arguments that it is too late, that we have run out of time, and that we don't have the votes. While today there may not be enough votes to impeach, it is premature to think that such support would not exist after hearings. Let us remember that it wasn't until after hearings began that the Watergate tapes emerged. Who knows what facts will comfort when the full truth is told in this case?

Arguing that it is too late signals to future administrations that in the waning months in office they are immune from constitutional accountability. Hold hearings which will put the evidence on the table, and the evidence alone must determine the outcome.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Visitors in the gallery are guests of the House and shall refrain from displays of approval or disapproval.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUMMINGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LEWIS of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

COMMEMORATING THE 79TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, today marks the 79th anniversary of the birth of history's greatest champion of peace, Dr. King, who became the youngest person ever to win the Nobel Peace Prize when he received that great honor at age 35.

At the King Center in Atlanta, visitors are asked to take a pledge that includes the words: "I pledge to do everything I can to make America and the world a place where equality and justice, freedom and peace will grow and flourish."

Today, Madam Speaker, America needs to hear Dr. King's message of peace more than ever before, because our Nation's leaders continue to take reckless actions to put the world on the road to ever-widening conflicts. We have seen many new examples of war-mongering in just the past few days and weeks. Twelve days ago, a leading Republican candidate for President said it would be fine for him if the American occupation of Iraq continued for another 100 years. Think about that. He would ask babies born 80 years from now to go to Baghdad for a commitment that the American people want to end right now.

Now, President Bush continues his saber-rattling over Iran. Days ago, he warned that the world must take action against that country before it is too late. Isn't this a clear signal that the administration is still considering an attack against Iran, even though we know that it is not developing nuclear weapons that can threaten the United States?

Therefore, as a lesson to be learned, we don't know all the facts about the