

The changes made to the AFG and SAFER programs in H.R. 3791 will improve these programs by allowing funding to be used for certain volunteer emergency medical services organizations and for building inspector certifications.

I want to thank Representative MITCHELL for his hard work in crafting this legislation which reflects bipartisan cooperation and is supported by the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Fire Fighters, the National Volunteer Fire Council, the National Fire Protection Association, and the Congressional Fire Services Institute.

All fire departments, including those in our congressional district in Texas, strive to provide a superior level of emergency service that continually improves the quality of life, health and safety of our residents, and I am proud to support legislation that will ensure that they can achieve those goals.

HONORING DETROIT CATHOLIC
CENTRAL COACH TONY MAGNI
AND CATHOLIC CENTRAL SHAM-
ROCKS' CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

HON. THADDEUS G. McCOTTER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Mr. McCOTTER. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor and acknowledge Detroit Catholic Central Coach Tony Magni and the entire Catholic Central Shamrocks' Cross Country Team on their Division 1 State Championship.

I am a proud graduate of Detroit Catholic Central High School. As a student, I learned how important it was to work hard, seek out knowledge, and fight for the less fortunate. I played sports at Catholic Central, so I know how important sports are in teaching our children the importance of teamwork and motivation.

On November 7, 2009, at the Michigan International Speedway, Shamrock Ricky Galindo came in third at the race and led the Shamrocks all season. The Shamrocks suffered from several injuries early in the season, but Coach Magni never lost confidence in the team's ability to persevere in the end. Not surprisingly, Magni has won five cross country championships since 1983 and is known as an extraordinarily talented coach.

Madam Speaker, Coach Magni and the entire Detroit Catholic Central Shamrocks cross country team worked tirelessly and productively to earn their state championship. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Coach Magni and the Shamrocks for reaching this milestone and recognizing the coach and team's contribution to the community and our country.

TOMPKINS LODGE OF THE FREE
AND ACCEPTED MASONS

HON. MICHAEL E. McMAHON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Mr. McMAHON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Tompkins Lodge of the Free and Accepted Masons that is now cele-

brating its 150th anniversary. This fraternal order has had a rich and long history filled with dedication to and compassion for the people of our community.

The Tompkins Lodge's history dates as far back as the American Revolution when British officers and colonist met in the Guyon-Clark homestead in the New Dorp section of Staten Island. The War of 1812 brought a halt to Masonic activity on Staten Island but the lodge was reconvened in 1819 in the home of Vice President Daniel D. Tompkins, who also served as Grand Master of Mason of New York State. They met in various homes until 1825 when the Richmond Lodge had its first meeting on the top floor of the Nautilus Lodge.

In 1839, the anti-Masonic movement had grown in New York and many lodges around the State surrendered their charters, but the Richmond Lodge stood firm and weathered out the storm. In May 1856, the lodge moved to the room occupied by the former Richmond Lodge, where it remained until a massive fire ripped through the Tompkinsville section of Staten Island.

After many years in their location, the Tompkins Lodge moved in 1908 to their current location above the Stapleton Office of the U.S. Postal Service.

From national programs such as their hospitals and senior living homes, to their works around Staten Island, the Tompkins Lodge is at the forefront of community service on Staten Island. Throughout their long and prestigious history, the Tompkins Lodge of the Free and Accepted Masons has volunteered their time and skills to the improvement of our community.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in commending the Tompkins Lodge of the Free and Accepted Masons for the vigorous devotion to the people of New York's 13th Congressional District for the past 150 years.

AMB. LYNDON OLSON SPEECH—IM-
PORTANCE OF CIVILITY IN
AMERICAN LIFE AND POLITICS

HON. CHET EDWARDS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Mr. EDWARDS of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD wise words from Ambassador Lyndon Olson that we would all do well to follow.

In a time of such little civility in our public discourse, Ambassador Lyndon Olson reminds us what is best about America. It is the strength of our values, our character, and common respect for our fellow man and woman that make our nation great.

We must strive to protect and nurture those values of common respect for one another if we are to grow as a nation.

REMARKS OF AMBASSADOR LYNDON OLSON UPON ACCEPTING THE TEXAS LEGACY AWARD FROM THE CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES AT THE EIGHTH ANNUAL TEXAS LEGACY LUNCHEON NOVEMBER 12, 2009, AUSTIN, TEXAS

Thank you very much for this honor. I appreciate the kind remarks of my friend Congressman Edwards. I also appreciate the opportunity today to talk to this distinguished group about a concern of mine.

I want to talk with you about civility, both in society in general and in our politics in particular.

I encourage you to think back . . . for some of us way back . . . to those report cards we got in first grade. Most everyone had different type cards and categories, but they were pretty much variations on the same basic theme. I'm not talking about your arithmetic or reading or penmanship grades. I'm talking about the comportment column, with things such as Exercises self-control . . . respects the rights of others . . . shows kindness and consideration for others . . . indicates willingness to cooperate . . . uses handkerchief (important even before the H1N1 virus) . . . and, my favorite was usually right up at the top of that 6-week report card and it's of particular significance to our discussion . . . "Plays well with others."

We were being taught about and graded on one of the most fundamental skills of our civilization: how to get along with others. There is a reason that plays well with others was one of the first things we were taught and evaluated on. And folks, I don't think we're getting a very good grade on plays well with others these days. Many of us don't even want to play with someone we don't like or agree with.

Where did all of this come from? In the majority of my life this hasn't been the case. Those of us in this room over 40 or 50 didn't grow up in anything like this environment. We didn't live like this. Not in our communities . . . not in our politics. We lived in a political world with strong feelings and positions, yes. And we took swings at each other politically. But it didn't come down, to the moral equivalent of street brawls and knife fights. Politics has always been a contact sport, but the conflict didn't permeate every aspect of our society and rise to today's level of social and verbal hostility. It is very unhealthy. And I'm not sure what to do about it. But I know it when I see it and hear it. And I know it is time we focus as much attention on our civil behavior as we do on achieving our personal and partisan agendas. How we do that, I don't know. But I want to raise the issue, ask the questions, and encourage you all to give it your consideration as well.

We live in an era of rudeness, in society in general, in the popular culture, and in our political life. Our culture today, in fact, rewards incivility, crudeness, and cynicism. You can get on TV, get your own talk show or reality series if you out-shout and offend the other guy. Everyone screams, no one listens. We produce a lot of heat but little light. The proclivity is to demonize our opponent. People don't just disagree . . . the challenge to the other is a battle to the death. Character assassination, verbal abuse, obnoxious behavior, and an overbearing attention on scandal and titillation—all that isn't just reserved to day-time TV anymore—it's the currency of prime-time, of late night, of cable news, of the Internet, and of society in general.

What happened to us? Should this be a sign of alarm? Is the problem selfishness—we won't be denied, we must be immediately gratified? We want everything we've ever seen in the movies? How do we live and get along like our parents and their generation? They had to sacrifice. They didn't get what they wanted when they wanted it. Is today's need for instant gratification a problem?

We are more inclusive today . . . and that is a good thing—but has that good made for increased tensions?

Is it the 24-hour news cycle? The 24-hour news cycle demands instantaneous news, which feeds off of controversy, scandal, and easy answers to difficult questions. There is

scant time for reflection or reasoned analysis. Market forces demand instantaneous information and jarring entertainment values, not sober analysis or wisdom. The news media are more prone to focus on the loudest, the most outrageous, and the most partisan actors. And given the rise of the political consultant class, candidates and campaigns are louder, more outrageous, and meta-partisan. Political consultants have helped create a permanent campaign where politics takes precedence over governance. The political consultants egg on all this for profit, creating controversy where little or none exists so the message, the theme of the day, is played out on TV and the media. They're paid handsomely to cause strife and create conflict in order to raise hackles, money, and attention . . . fomenting issues to suit their agenda. It's all about the message, not the solution, not the negotiation, the debate, the compromise to move forward. It's about who is controlling the message, who is defining the message, who is creating the message, who is keeping the conflict alive often where none existed before the consultant decided one was needed. Is this what keeps us at each other's throats?

Is it talk radio, attack TV? Is it the talk shows, the shout festivals where absolute hyperbole is the only currency? Mean-spirited hyperbole and hyper-partisanship breeds cynicism. Citizens are increasingly cynical about politics and about their government's ability to work. The damage to the ship of state, to the fabric of the nation begs repair. Whose job is it to change course and effect the necessary repairs? I'm not sure I have the answer to that, but I propose that in a room full of policy makers and politicians, men and women who talk to the media, who work in the public arena, who hire consultants, who set agendas, maybe we have a role to play in making things better.

You know, I can say that there are some people in this room, people I consider dear friends, who understand this problem and I believe share my concern. To those friends I say, you and I both know that we disagree very fundamentally on some very big issues but the truth is that we could care less about our disagreements and are more concerned about where we can find consensus and reasons to work and live together to construct a better future. I consider this kind of commitment to trust and open dialogue crucial to maintaining a sustainable society.

And indeed, isn't it about building a better future for our community, for our country, for our children? I say that even on the most intractable of issues, there is room for constructive debate, for consensus building, for the search for some common ground.

President Johnson once said to his Democratic colleague, Gov. George Wallace of Alabama, during the crisis of civil rights in the South: "What do you want left behind? You want a great, big marble monument that says, 'George Wallace: He built.' Or do you want a little piece of scrawny pine lying there that says, 'George Wallace: He hated'?"

The people I know in this room are builders. But we are confronting a world today where hate seems to be a predominant factor in the crisis of incivility confronting our politics.

Where are the rules that govern conduct? What happens eventually after this continuous rancor tears the fabric of our society completely asunder? Can we survive with this tenor . . . taking no prisoners, giving no quarter?

I'm asking these questions because you folks here are blessed with skills, talent, experience and a commitment to a positive public policy. You understand the importance of maintaining and protecting our

commonweal where we strive to serve our clients, our community, our country, and our state. If civil discourse self-destructs, we cannot move on the issues that matter. Think of this as an environmental crisis . . . the environment being our civil society and our very ability to live and work and prosper together.

I don't want to sound pious or preachy here, but if we are to prevail as a free, self-governing people, we must work together. We shouldn't try to destroy our opponents just because we disagree. We have to govern our tongues. The Proverbs tells us, chapter 18, verse 12, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." How we choose to use words—for good or for wrong—is clearly our choice. The health of our democracy depends upon a robust public discourse.

Recognize that I am not saying that conflict in our political life is to be avoided. Hardly so. It is not only proper but necessary for candidates to vigorously debate the issues of our day and examine their opponents' records. Don't let people confuse civility with goody two-shoes niceness and mere etiquette. Civility is a robust, tough, substantive civic virtue, critical to both civil society and the future of our republic. Civility entails speaking directly, passionately, and responsibly about who we are and what we believe. Divisions based on principles are healthy for the nation. Vigorous and passionate debate helps us to define issues and to sharpen positions.

Conflict cannot, should not be avoided in our public lives any more than we can avoid conflict with the people we love. But just as member of a household, as a family learn ways of settling their differences without inflicting real damage on each other, so we, in our politics, must find constructive ways of resolving disputes and differences.

Our work is here. We build from the base. We will foster change first by our example . . . by working together, respecting one another, and negotiating our differences in good faith and with mutual respect. Civility is neither a small nor inconsequential issue. The word comes from the French *civilite* which is often translated as "politeness." But it means much more. It suggests an approach to life . . . living in a way that is civilized. The words "civilized," "civilité," and "city" share a common etymology with a word meaning "member of the household." To be civilized is to understand that we live in a society as in a household. There are certain rules that allow family members to live peacefully within a household. So, too, are there rules of civility that allow us to live peacefully within a society. As we all learned in 1st grade a long time ago, we owe certain responsibilities to one another. Perhaps we spend a lifetime learning how to play well with others. So be it. It is a crucial goal for a civil society. Thank you.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE SERVICE OF J.E. "GENE" SMITH

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 19, 2009

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. J.E. "Gene" Smith, a national and community leader who is retiring from almost thirty years of service with the Choctawhatchee Electric Cooperative. Gene spent his career serving others and giving back to our community, and I am proud to honor this dedication and service.

As the son of a gas utility worker, Gene became interested in utility work at a young age. He began his career with Huntsville Utilities in Huntsville, Alabama before moving to another utility job in Jefferson City, Tennessee. By the time Gene was 28, he was manager of a Sweetwater, Tennessee utility. In 1978, he moved to the world of electric cooperatives and went to work as the general manager of Escambia River Electric Cooperative in Jay, Florida. Three years later, Gene moved a few miles east to DeFuniak Springs to work for the Choctawhatchee Electric Cooperative (CHELCO). He has served as Chief Executive Officer and General Manager of CHELCO since 1981.

While at CHELCO, Gene has made a lasting impression on the electric cooperative community. He served on the board of the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation from 1988 to 1993 with two years spent as the board's president. He also served on the board of the National Cooperative Services Corporation from 1995 to 2003 and as a trustee on the PowerSouth Energy Cooperative Board, representing CHELCO since 1981. Gene has been chairman of the Florida Electric Cooperative Association and the National Food and Energy Council Board. Because of his outstanding work on behalf of electric cooperatives, Gene was featured in *American Executive Magazine* in 2007. In February, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Board of Directors will present Gene with the Clyde T. Ellis Award. This award recognizes an individual who goes above and beyond the call of duty in furthering the principles and progress of rural electrification and the development and utilization of natural resources.

Beyond his expansive career accomplishments, Gene Smith has spent a lifetime dedicated to community service. He serves on the United Way of Okaloosa and Walton Counties, the Board of Trustees of Northwest Florida State College, the Okaloosa County Economic Development Council Executive Committee, and the Rotary Club. He is also a very active member of the All Sports organization which raises money for local youth-oriented non-profit organizations with an emphasis on sports. Local beneficiaries include the YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, and Special Olympics.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am honored to recognize Gene Smith for his service to the people of the United States. He is a dedicated community servant and national business leader. My wife Vicki and I wish all the best for Gene and his family as they embark on this next endeavor in their lives.

W. HAZEN HILLYARD POST OFFICE BUILDING

SPEECH OF

HON. ROB BISHOP

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 16, 2009

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, individuals like Hazen Hillyard deserve to be remembered and honored, and that is why I'm happy to sponsor this legislation to name the Smithfield Post Office after him. His life was a hallmark of dedicated public service, at the level