

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TODD RUSSELL PLATTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 3, 2009

Mr. PLATTS. Madam Speaker, due to my attendance at a U.S. Navy change of command ceremony, I regret that I could not cast recorded votes for roll Nos. 80–85. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on roll Nos. 80, 81, 82, 84, and 85, and “no” on roll No. 83.

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE H.
WILLIAMSON, CHIEF DEPUTY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

HON. DANIEL E. LUNGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 3, 2009

Mr. DAVID E. LUNGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to George H. Williamson who is retiring after 31 years of service as a criminal prosecutor. George was my Chief Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division during the eight years that I was privileged to serve the citizens of California.

When you think of George Williamson, the first thing which comes to mind is that he is a “lawyer’s lawyer.” Were Black’s Law Dictionary to put pictures next to their definitions, you would find a picture of George next to the definition of “criminal prosecutor.” What else could you say about a man who has tried over 70 homicide cases? It is not surprising that he was named “Prosecutor of the Year” by the California District Attorneys Association and received the “Outstanding Advocacy Award” from the Association of Government Attorneys in Capital Litigation. The National District Attorneys Association inducted George into the “Home Run Hitter’s Club” in recognition of his stature as one of the finest litigators in the United States. He was meticulous in his legal preparation, persuasive in his courtroom presentation and unequivocally ethical in his dealings with all parties.

In his work supervising our Criminal Division in the California Department of Justice, George was not only responsible for managing 450 attorneys and staff, but he personally handled major case litigation as well. In this regard, he was responsible for one of the most significant public corruption cases in California history, where he obtained a conviction against the former California Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Let me also say that one of the most admirable leadership qualities displayed by George was his role in mentoring young lawyers in the California Department of Justice. Although George may be retiring, he leaves behind him a legacy of fine lawyers who include District Attorneys within their ranks.

It was an honor to work with George H. Williamson during my tenure as Attorney General. He will always have my friendship and respect, and I wish him the best with his endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO MR. BENNIE GOODEN

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 3, 2009

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize the life and legacy of Mr. Bennie Gooden, a dedicated civil servant who contributed so much to the lives of others in Mississippi. His dedication to public service began with his tenure as a teacher in Coahoma Agricultural High School and later Dean of Men at Coahoma Community College. Afterward, he transitioned to being the first Project Director for the HeadStart Program in Coahoma and Tunica Counties.

Madam Speaker, not only did Bennie serve in the arena of education, but he was an advocate of affordable housing for all. In 1969, he led the Chapel Hill Baptist Church in the ownership and development of a 100-unit housing development, Chapel Hill Heights. He was a Certified Real Estate Manager, CREM, and managed multi-family housing units throughout the Southeast in a career which spanned 35 years. One can understand why his name, particularly in the Mississippi Delta, is synonymous with “housing.”

Madam Speaker, Bennie amassed many honors and was involved with an impressive list of religious, civic and community endeavors in his life, which include: being a member of the Coahoma County Branch NAACP for more than 50 years, past President of the Aaron E. Henry Community Health Services Center, Inc., he served on the Advisory Board of the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission, he was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to serve on the Board of Directors of the National Institute for the Building Sciences, and he received the Medgar Evers Award for Outstanding Civic Community Leadership, and the Coahoma County Branch NAACP Spirit and Freedom Award.

Without Bennie Gooden’s support, I would not be in the position I am today. Madam Speaker, I’m grateful for his presence in my life and the lives of Mississippians all around our great state.

RECOGNIZING THE PROFESSIONAL
EXCELLENCE OF THE UNITED
STATES TRANSPORTATION COM-
MAND AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF THE MILITARY AND CIVIL-
IANS WHO SERVE ON TRAVIS
AIR FORCE BASE

HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 3, 2009

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the hard work, and professionalism of General McNabb and the fine men and women of the United States Transportation Command. Their accomplishments are unmatched as they delivered 2 million passengers, 3 million short tons of cargo, and nearly one and a half billion gallons of fuel worldwide in order to meet Department of Defense needs.

I am also proud to include the patriotism and total dedication to excellence exhibited by

the military and civilian members of my district who played a vital role in these accomplishments as they performed their duties on Travis Air Force Base.

As you know, Travis Air Force Base is the largest Air Mobility base in the country and serves as the principal staging area for the Pacific Theater. As such, Travis plays an invaluable strategic role in our airlift programs.

With President Obama’s decision to increase military operations in Afghanistan, Travis’ role will increase in prominence. Travis is host to the 615th Contingency Response Wing and is also home to the David Grant Medical Center which is the primary lead for the Craig Joint Theater Hospital at Bagram Air Force Base.

Since the 2005 Mobility Capability Study, Department of Defense Officials have not been able to agree on the baseline inventory requirements for the C–17. I have long been an advocate of keeping the production line open to address future requirements and have supported supplemental appropriations to reach the baseline levels for this multi-role platform required by the Air Force and Transportation Command for mission accomplishment.

I look forward to working hard in this Congress to provide our brave men and women with the tools they need to continue to keep our nation secure while also being able to respond to national emergencies.

FREEDOM FOR OMAURIS RONDON
RIVERO

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 3, 2009

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about Omauris Rondon Rivero, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

The Cuban people continue to suffer a repression unprecedented in the history of our hemisphere. For 50 years Fidel and Raul Castro have imposed a brutal, murderous and unscrupulous totalitarian tyranny on the Cuban people.

Last May, Mr. Rondon was thrown into a dungeon after being accused of “defamation of government institutions, heroes and martyrs” by the dictatorship. It is unclear what Mr. Rondon had said, but the dictatorship sends people to the gulag even for the slightest of “verbal transgressions.”

Mr. Rondon is not known to be a member of any human rights group, opposition political party or independent civil society organization. But he said something that bothered the criminal thugs who oppress the Cuban people. He was “sentenced” to a year in the gulag. Reports from within the political prisons have pointed out that Mr. Rondon has suffered continuous and serious beatings inside the degrading gulag where he is locked up. In totalitarian Cuba the cries of the tortured are never heard; we can only imagine the horrors Omauris Rondon is being subjected to.

Thousands, like Mr. Rondon, languish in Cuban dungeons simply for their support of freedom, democracy and the Rule of Law, or for other acts that are considered criminal only

by a murderous and demented totalitarian tyranny such as the Castros' (actions like "attempting to leave the country without permission").

While countless thousands of Cubans suffer in the tyranny's infernal gulag, tourists visit the island's "delights", enjoying the regime's apartheid tourism system and partaking of the child prostitution promoted by the Castros' regime. Heads of State and government, foreign ministers and other "dignitaries" flock to totalitarian Cuba, partaking in the regime's sponsored "delights", and bringing ignominy to the nations they allegedly represent.

But, Madam Speaker, I rise to remind my colleagues of the real Cuba. I rise to remind my colleagues that Omauris Rondon Rivero, and thousands of others who suffer in the Castros' gulag, exist. That they represent the best of the Cuban nation. That they represent the future of Cuba, a free and democratic Cuba. And I rise to demand the immediate and unconditional release of Omauris Rondon Rivero and all the political prisoners in the nightmare that is totalitarian Cuba.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE WORKING FAMILIES' FLEXI- BILITY ACT

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 3, 2009

Mrs. MALONEY. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the Working Families' Flexibility Act, which will ensure that working Americans can ask their employer for modified schedules so they can balance the demands of their jobs and their home life.

Modeled on successful legislation adopted in the United Kingdom, the legislation would give employees a right to request modification of their hours, schedule, or work location. It would require employers to seriously consider all such requests in a timely manner, and provide an explanation for requests that are denied. The bill also includes job protection for employees who make flexibility requests. Small businesses would be exempt from this bill, and the Department of Labor would be called upon to develop regulations for the flex-time process.

This bill will raise awareness of the rising need for flexible work schedules, and will protect employees who are nervous about requesting a change in schedule. Called the "soft-touch" law in the UK, it would not place undue burden on businesses, it only asks that they evaluate these requests and provide a response explaining their decision, whatever it is. Adopting a flexible workplace has been shown to reduce turnover, which helps employers cut costs and retain valuable employees. In the UK, over 80 percent of requests have been approved and over 80 percent of employers report no adverse effect from the legislation.

AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 3, 2009

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

We are all painfully aware that our nation is in a deep economic recession. The grim numbers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics begin to tell the story. For months the unemployment rate has been rising and in January nearly 600,000 jobs were lost. This is the highest number of jobs lost in a one-month period since 1974. It is estimated that if joblessness continues at the same rate, unemployment rates will be in the double digits by summer and the highest unemployment level since the Great Depression.

Economists on both sides of the aisle agree that we need swift and robust action to counter this troubling downturn. By making needed investments in areas such as infrastructure, healthcare, and education H.R. 1 will address rising joblessness by creating jobs in areas where investment will make a long-term impact. In my home state of California it is expected that the measure will create or save close to 400,000 jobs.

As a healthcare advocate I am particularly pleased that the bill also provides \$1 billion to restore state and local health department jobs that will be lost in the next year due to budget cuts. Not only will this funding keep thousands of people employed, it will also ensure that the public continues to receive critical prevention and wellness programs that these employees provide. Moreover, it is essential that we ensure the stability of our public health infrastructure which is critical to national and local responses to natural or man-made catastrophes.

I am also gratified that the bill includes funding to address critical health care workforce shortages. At a time when millions of Americans are unemployed, there are well over 140,000 unfilled registered nursing jobs in our hospitals, nursing homes and community health centers. To address this need the bill includes \$500 million for nurse training.

The bill also allows governors to spend up to \$10 billion for school modernization. The funding provided for school renovation and repair is essential to address the nation's crumbling education infrastructure. Our nation's students and teachers deserve to learn and work in buildings that are not crumbling around them.

There is no dispute that economic conditions will get worse before they get better. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is an important step forward in reversing the course of the current recession. It will provide a desperately needed boost to our ailing economy, and will provide American families with a needed social safety net as they weather the worst of this economic crisis.

I urge my colleagues to vote yes to stabilize our economy and assist Americans impacted by this crisis.

EARMARK DECLARATION

HON. VERN BUCHANAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 3, 2009

Mr. BUCHANAN. Madam Speaker, pursuant to the Republican Leadership standards on earmarks, I am submitting the following information for publication in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD regarding earmarks I received as part of H.R. 1105, the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009:

Requesting Member: Congressman VERN BUCHANAN

Bill Number: H.R. 1105

Account: Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service—SRG

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: Florida Citrus Mutual

Address of Requesting Entity: Lakeland, FL 33802

Description of Request: I secured \$1,217,000 for the continuation of vital citrus canker research by the UF-IFAS, through the Cooperative State Research Extension and Education Service (CSREES), to improve technologies for treatment and detection, methods of movement and containment, and means to control and eliminate this devastating citrus disease.

In 2005, USDA-Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) detected citrus greening in Florida. This is yet another severe citrus disease that must be addressed. USDA-APHIS and ARS are working in conjunction with Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Plant Industry (FDACS-DPI) and UF-IFAS to develop a joint citrus health production plan for an interim period, while the scientific community works to find disease resistance and/or a cure for these diseases. Research efforts will include management of citrus canker and greening to minimize tree mortality and yield loss in a cost effective manner, as well as the economic implications of these diseases in world citrus markets. This joint, coordinated research is not only imperative to Florida citrus, but also important to all U.S. citrus production.

Requesting Member: Congressman VERN BUCHANAN

Bill Number: H.R. 1105

Account: Health Resources and Services (HRSA) Health Facilities and Services

Legal Name of Requesting Entity: University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee

Address of Requesting Entity: 8350 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34243

Description of Request: I secured \$143,000 to address nursing shortages by supporting educational development at the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee Campus

Critical nursing shortages throughout the United States continue to grow as the population ages and the nursing workforce approaches retirement age. The University is in the initial stages of preparing for separate academic accreditation. Once this is achieved, their highest priority will be to establish a College of Nursing on the campus. With a nursing program in place we will be able to reach and educate the southern-most portions of Florida. The funds from this proposal will be spent to support the development of a teaching simulation laboratory (equipment and simulation models) on our campus, for equipping a video-conference classroom, and the development of web, on-site, and blended courses.