

today, these people play an important role not just in a communication and entertainment medium, but in the lives of Americans.

In much of the commercial radio wasteland today, where content is centralized and digitized, while costs are cut, local personalities, who played such a profound role in virtually every community, are more and more a distant memory.

In my hometown of Portland, Oregon, we are still blessed with a few distinctive local voices. But sadly last month, we lost one who can only be described as an icon. For decades Les Sarnoff was the most distinctive personality in what started as an idiosyncratic, offbeat and obscure FM station. He helped it grow into a major commercial success and a Portland fixture. The characteristics that made him such a well respected professional and beloved local figure helped him rise above and survive the turmoil in the industry, the often destructive changes, to brighten the mornings of tens of thousands of my neighbors every day for the better part of three decades.

Les was a dedicated and disciplined professional, arising shortly after midnight every weekday to spend hours in preparation before his morning shift. He was a step ahead of legitimate trends in music, but with a profound respect for both music and artists that was timeless. He had a rapport and a chemistry with not only his audience, but the outstanding people that were part of his morning team over the years. Despite a demanding schedule and brutal hours, Les always made time to be part of public events and public affairs.

Now, media and people in politics need for, professional and ethical reasons, to maintain a certain distance. That is far more important to a media personality like Les, than for a politician like me. And observe that distance he did, but always with a sense that I was a friend, with a sense of interest and awareness whenever I would visit him in the station or more often do a telephone interview from our Nation's Capitol or an occasional lunch or interaction at a civic event. But it was not Les Sarnoff letting his guard down. It was Les revealing that at core he liked, understood and respected everyone. He was curious, funny and caring. Even in his passing, Les brought our community together as thousands gathered last Sunday to honor his memory in Portland's Pioneer Square, our City's front yard. By reflecting on his life, we reflect on ours.

To his wife Rita, Les' many friends and colleagues, because of his love for and work with you, we have all been touched. We will never be the same without Les, but also, we will never be the same because of Les Sarnoff.

WORLD HEPATITIS DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, today, May 19, marks the second annual World Hepatitis Day, when the need for greater public awareness towards prevention and treatment of this silent killer is recognized internationally.

Hepatitis is a prime example of an issue that must be addressed now, as Congress and the administration work together to create a sustainable health care system for future generations.

Of those infected with viral hepatitis C, more than three-quarters are unaware of their infection, making the long-term consequences of HCV infection, including cirrhosis of the liver and liver cancer, a greater, greater danger.

A study about HCV released just yesterday by Milliman Incorporated, one of the Nation's most respected firms, tells a troubling story. They are saying that over the next 20 years, medical costs for patients with HCV infections are expected to increase from \$30 billion in 2009 to over \$85 billion in 2024.

Chronic viral hepatitis is a leading cause of primary liver cancer, one of the fastest growing cancers, which significantly impacts 6 million Americans and has a 5-year survival rate. The minority population will be disproportionately affected. Hepatitis C is twice as common among African Americans as among whites.

As a Member of the United States House of Representatives, I will continue to support increased funding towards public education, early detection, testing and counseling for patients. We cannot afford to be silent about this disease any longer. We must speak out and take action. That is what we need to do to curtail this very, very serious problem.

THE DROUGHT CRISIS IN SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to a drought crisis that is affecting California's San Joaquin Valley. Three years of below-average rainfall have created tremendous hardships in valley communities that are the backbone of California's agriculture economy. We have heard time and time again about the deep, deep financial impacts affecting all regions of our country. But in places like Detroit and in places like the San Joaquin Valley, where you have 30 and 40 percent unemployment, it is no longer a deep recession, but it is a depression.

Farmers and farm workers in the San Joaquin Valley grow over 350 different crops, employing tens of thousands of people and providing half the Nation's fruits and vegetables. It is number one in the dairy industry and a host of

other important agricultural commodities that are not subsidized, that don't use subsidized water, that, in fact, are critical to healthy diets for Americans and provide a tremendous balance of payments on our trade efforts abroad.

Sadly, though, three critical years of drought shortage have had a devastating effect on communities in the San Joaquin Valley and in my district. My district and Congressman CARDOZA's district are at ground zero where we have communities that have 30 and 40 percent unemployment, communities that have 10 and 12,000 people, 30,000 people, 50,000 people. When one-third of the people in your community don't have jobs, it is a depression.

Today, clearly, our environmental regulations are not working. We have an inability to move water around California.

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We know that, if this drought lasts a fourth and fifth year, Katy, bar the door.

These are food lines in communities in my district. The irony is that these are some of the hardest working people you will ever meet. Normally, they would be working in fields, working in processing facilities, putting food on America's dinner plates. Sadly, they're in food lines. How horrific in America. Many of my colleagues for the last 4 months, 5 months have been working to try to bring attention to our State representatives, to our Governor and, here, to our President and to the new administration in town because we know, in California, like other parts of the country, droughts and floods are cyclical.

This photograph is an almond orchard that has been pulled out because of a lack of water. So, to that degree, Congressman CARDOZA and I, in January, began meeting with the new administration, laying out a host of administrative efforts that we thought, with flexibility, could allow us to move water around from parts of the State that have water. We have met with Secretary Salazar and his staff, with the Mid-Pacific Region and their staff time and time again and with the Governor and his director of water resources, and we have brought to the attention of the President and of his White House staff the fact that they should come to the valley and see firsthand the devastating impacts.

We need to have flexibility during times of drought. Clearly, people are as important as the other environmental balances and trade-offs that are there. If the Environmental Species Act were working, we would not have a decline in the fisheries that have taken place over the last two decades. So we are working on short-term efforts to try to deal with the current situation in the event that this drought lasts a fourth or a fifth or a sixth year.

The last drought we had in California lasted 6 years, from 1988 to 1993. I predict to my colleagues that if, in fact,

this drought lasts a fourth or a fifth year, California will be rationing water in southern California and in the Bay Area, and we will see a horrific set of circumstances affecting our State.

So it is time to act now, both with the short-term remedies as well as with the long-term remedies. We need to try to do everything we can to plan for the next year in the event that this drought continues. We need to provide flexibility at the Federal and State pumps to move water around, to make water banks work, and yes, in the long term, we need to fix the plumbing system in the delta.

California has 38 million people. By the year 2030, it is estimated we will have 50 million people. We have a water system designed for 20 million people. It cannot work. So, with a larger coalition of the Latino Water Caucus, we marched on water in April. We are going to continue to march. We are going to continue to try to seek out our colleagues who want to constructively help us with the administration to understand that both short-term and long-term investments in California infrastructure are critical if we are going to solve this problem.

This is a forerunner of what's occurring, not just here in California but around the world. Water is the lifeblood of man's ability to produce food and fiber. The problems we are having in California today are happening around the world. We need to act today.

VETERANS COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HEINRICH. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise today to introduce the Veterans Communication Improvement Act. This bill will provide for a smoother transition for servicemembers moving to veteran status, and it will help facilitate the communication between all veterans and veterans' services.

Currently, when a servicemember concludes his service to our country, he fills out a form known as the DD-214. This form is essentially a compilation of a member's time in the military. It includes awards and medals and other pertinent service information such as promotions, combat service or service overseas. The DD-214 also contains information needed to verify military service for benefits, retirement, employment, and membership in veterans' organizations, which makes it one of the most important documents in the military.

As to be expected, the DD-214 contains the current physical address and phone number of the veteran, but there is no place on the form for a veteran to include his or her e-mail as the best way to be contacted. Far too often,

however, when servicemembers return home from active duty or if a veteran has simply moved to a new home, they lose contact with the Department of Veterans Affairs. This bill will enable one more avenue of communication, an e-mail address, to be included on each servicemember's DD-214 form.

For many veterans, particularly for our youngest veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, a personal e-mail address is the most common and efficient way to communicate with them. In utilizing modern e-mail technology, this legislation will make great strides in expediting the delivery of benefits that our country's veterans unquestionably deserve. These brave Americans and their families have made immeasurable sacrifices to our Nation's well-being. I am honored to sponsor this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

REGIONAL IMPACTS OF CLEAN ENERGY LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. I thank the Speaker.

Today, I rise as a southern Congressman to discuss the regional impacts, Mr. Speaker, on clean energy legislation and on a renewable electricity standard in particular.

We have heard that it is impossible to have a national renewable electricity standard, because different States have different renewable energy resources, and that the southeastern United States, in particular, would be unable to meet targets established by the renewable electricity standard in the draft American Clean Energy and Security Act now being considered by the Energy and Commerce Committee of this body.

I represent a State in which there is not a single utility-scale renewable generation facility. The Virginia General Assembly has not enacted a mandatory renewable electricity standard, so we have failed to create market certainty for firms that would invest in renewable energy otherwise. In contrast, New Jersey has 44 megawatts of grid-connected solar capacity, fueled in part by a 22.5 percent renewable electricity standard with solar set aside. New Jersey has more than twice as much grid-connected solar energy generation than the total for all States without a renewable electricity standard, including Virginia, even though it has less solar exposure than any State in the Southeast. What we have witnessed in the Southeast is not a lack of natural resources but, perhaps, a lack of political will.

Since we are in the midst of the most severe economic contraction since the Great Depression, the clean energy jobs legislation before us represents not an academic debate but, rather, an opportunity to spur economic growth and to reduce greenhouse gas pollution based

in successful policies that have been enacted at home and abroad.

Just as more than half of our States have enacted successful renewable electricity standards, so too have other nations. Germany, for example, has a lower solar exposure than almost all of the United States, and yet it is the world's leader in renewable energy, as documented in a recent article in the National Journal. In the last decade, the number of Germans employed in the renewable energy sector has grown from 30,000 to 280,000. Germany has installed 22,247 megawatts of wind energy and 3,811 megawatts of solar photovoltaic. Strong mandatory incentives for renewable energy have fueled this jobs boom in Germany.

The number of coal mining jobs in the United States has fallen by 50 percent in the last three decades, principally due to mechanization. Those coal jobs disappeared from States like Virginia and West Virginia, which lack incentives for renewable energy. In Germany, on the other hand, the number of coal mining jobs also has fallen, but the number of renewable energy jobs created has more than offset the lost jobs by a factor of five. Unfortunately, many U.S. companies, like First Solar, have built factories in Germany rather than here in America because Germany had requirements for renewable energy production.

The minority claims that a clean energy bill will result in net job losses, but in reality, we are losing jobs right now because we do not have a stronger clean energy policy. We cannot cling to antiquated modes of energy production that are hemorrhaging jobs and then expect to achieve, much less expedite, an economic recovery here at home. If we are to drive economic growth, we must invest in innovation and in job creation, not in exhausted resources and outmoded systems of production.

Here in the South, where we have not benefited from strong renewable energy incentives, we need a national renewable electricity standard to create new jobs in both mill towns that have lost jobs overseas and in prosperous business centers such as those I represent in northern Virginia. The Southeast has wind resources in the Continental Shelf, in the Appalachian Mountains, and it has good solar exposure throughout our entire region.

Now is the time, Mr. Speaker, to exploit those natural resources and to produce energy right here at home. Now is the time to pass clean energy jobs legislation with a strong renewable electricity standard.

CROSSROADS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH) for 2 minutes.

Mr. YARMUTH. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress is being called on to make some very critical