

Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK), he introduced a resolution (H. Res. 704) which “explores the ongoing violence by Iraqi security forces against the residents of Camp Ashraf; calls upon the Iraqi Government to live up to its commitment to the United States to ensure the continued well-being of those living in Camp Ashraf; and calls upon the President to take all necessary and appropriate steps to support the commitments of the United States” to ensure protection of Camp Ashraf residents.

The majority of the members of the House of Representatives who have co-sponsored the resolution include 11 Committee Chairs; 13 Committee Ranking Members; 54 Sub-Committee Chairs; 49 Sub-Committee Ranking Members; and 30 House Foreign Affairs Committee members.

ROS-LEHTINEN stressed that in light of repeated breach of guaranties provided by the Iraqi Government to the United States that residents of Camp Ashraf would be treated humanely, “the U.S. is obligated to take all necessary and appropriate steps to uphold our commitments.” The Florida lawmaker added that “we must send a clear message to the residents of Camp Ashraf that the U.S. Congress stands with them.”

Congressman EDOLPHUS TOWNS (D-NY), Chairman of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, lauded the bi-partisan nature of support for Camp Ashraf and said “it’s so important that we continue to work together . . . to bring about the change that is so needed today.”

Congressman DANA ROHRBACHER (R-CA), Ranking Member of House International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight Subcommittee, remarked that “we must make sure that anyone who is fighting the mullah regime and would replace it with a democratic government is an ally of the people of the United States and we should not allow them to suffer negative consequences if we can prevent it. That is especially true of the people of Camp Ashraf.”

Congressman TED POE (R-TX), a member of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade said: “It is important that we constantly stay vigilant that we let the people in Camp Ashraf know that their silent voices are heard here in the United States . . . We are not going to stand idly by while those who wish to do harm to the residents of Camp Ashraf mend, weave their wicked ways and they will not be dispersed into parts and regions unknown to the rest of us.”

Congressman LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART (R-FL) described the Iranian regime as “regime of thugs,” and added “this is most impressive to have the majority of the U.S. Congress of one mind with regard to a critical issue and the travesty the brutality that was engaged against the innocent people in Ashraf. And so we will get this to the floor and we will pass it and we will stay on this issue.”

Congressman MARIO DIAZ-BALART (R-FL) described the attack on Ashraf as “a cold-blooded murder” and emphasized that the only way that they “could ever be totally safe is by having a free homeland.”

FILNER added that “the administration should encourage the United Nations to play a much more active role insofar as it concerns Camp Ashraf and strengthen the role of a U.N. monitoring team in Ashraf to one of pro-

tecting the residents to ensure that their rights and safety are respected and all the inhumane restrictions placed on them by the Iraqi government are lifted.”

Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, the President-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, also addressed the briefing via video from Paris. She emphasized that the House majority support for Ashraf indicates its recognition of the Iranian Resistance, especially Ashraf, as “a decisive factor in confronting this antihuman regime” in Tehran. Addressing the co-sponsors of the resolution, Mrs. Rajavi remarked that “While appreciating your efforts, I would like to ask you to continue your noble and humanitarian work in order to ensure that: The protection of the residents of Ashraf is guaranteed as long as the U.S. forces remain in Iraq; Mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq is expanded to guarantee the rights of Ashraf residents. The United Nations assumes the protection of Ashraf and a U.N. peacekeeping force is stationed at Ashraf; all restrictions and the blockade imposed by the Iraqi government against Ashraf in the past 14 months are lifted.”

Congresswoman JUDY CHU (D-CA) of the Judiciary Committee told the reception that “I was happy to support House Resolution 704. Certainly there needed to be protection for the people in Camp Ashraf. We should make sure that they continue to be safe. The United States and the Iraqi government should ensure that these residents have all security that they need. And so we must continue the pressure to make sure that happens so that the pro-democracy movement can continue to be safe and the Iranian people can be safe. So let us continue our relationship. I’m very, very happy to see that you are here on the Hill and that you’re presenting your issues to us.”

Congressman TRENT FRANKS (R-AZ), member of the Armed Services Committee, told the gathering that “We see some of the people of Camp Ashraf in Iraq that are being persecuted and threatened and even the Iranian government wants to see them repatriated to Iran and I think that represents a great danger to them and I want you to know that there are a lot of us that reject that completely. We want to see both the Government of Iraq and the Government of the United States stand up and make sure that we protect these people in Camp Ashraf.”

In his remarks, Congressman AL GREEN (D-TX) from the Homeland Security Committee told the reception that “Doctor King was right when he said decades ago—and his words ring true today—‘Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere’. Injustice in the streets of Iran is a threat to justice in the streets of every nation on the planet Earth and we must end injustice in the streets of Iran . . . We must support the human rights movement that is taking place in Iran.”

IN REMEMBRANCE OF MR.
BENJAMIN HOOKS

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 2010

Ms. RICHARDSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember Mr. Benjamin Hooks, who passed away this morning at the

age of 85. Benjamin Hooks was a champion of equality and justice who fought tirelessly for civil rights and, in doing so, made our country a better place for all Americans.

Benjamin Hooks was a critical figure in the fight for civil rights in the United States. In addition to fighting racial segregation through his successful careers a businessman, lawyer, judge, and minister, Mr. Hooks is most well known for his work with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP. Mr. Hooks was a pioneer of the NAACP-sponsored restaurant sit-ins and boycotts in the early years of the Civil Rights Movement.

In 1976, the NAACP elected Benjamin Hooks as the executive director of the organization. Mr. Hooks reenergized the NAACP, increased its enrollment dramatically, and enhanced the group’s effectiveness. At a time when the Civil Rights Movement was widely considered to have ended, Mr. Hooks recognized that much work was left to be done and recommitted the NAACP to tirelessly fighting for the rights of disadvantaged communities across the United States. Mr. Hooks guided the NAACP through decades of activism and oversaw the constant modernization and adaptation of the organization to respond to the new challenges of changing times.

Benjamin Hooks was a giant in the fight for civil rights in America over the last 60 years. Even as he and his family were targeted in bombings against civil rights leaders in the 1990s, his resolve and commitment to an equitable society never faltered. In characteristic modesty, Benjamin Hooks often referred to himself as “just a poor little old country preacher,” but the truth is that he was much more than that. He left an indelible mark on American society and helped improve the lives of countless Americans. Mr. Hooks was honored for his life of service with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which President George W. Bush presented to him in 2007.

I extend my deepest condolences to the family and friends of Mr. Benjamin Hooks as they grieve the loss of this truly special individual.

RECOGNIZING T.C. MARSH’S JUNIOR RESERVE OFFICERS TRAINING CORPS AND CORPORAL DAVID BATES

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 2010

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize T.C. Marsh Middle School’s Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) and Corporal David Bates on their winning the National Middle School Drill Championship for the third time.

Corporal David Bates has led the JROTC program for the past eleven years. He has taught them the importance of personal responsibility, discipline, commitment, and hard work. Under his leadership, T.C. Marsh’s JROTC has taken the prestigious title of National Champion three times in the past four years.

After spending countless hours practicing their drills, the cadets were ready to compete and capture the national title once again. In

addition to practicing daily, cadets also garnered the support of teachers, families, friends, and the local community to raise \$12,000 to help cover the cost of equipment and travel expenses. They are the essence of discipline, dedication, and hard work. By working together, the cadets have developed a mutual respect for each other and honed their leadership skills.

Madam Speaker, I ask my esteemed colleagues to join me in congratulating the members of the JROTC and Corporal David Bates on their well-deserved victory. I commend them for their dedication and hard work and I wish them all my very best.

HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION RECONCILIATION ACT OF 2010

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 2010

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, this is a historic vote. With passage of health care reform, 32 million people without insurance will now be covered and 94 percent of Americans will now be guaranteed health care coverage. In New York State, close to 2.5 million people who are currently uninsured will have health care coverage once this bill is passed. The reforms we are considering today will help improve the lives of millions of Americans—starting immediately, and continuing over the course of their implementation in the next ten years.

Starting immediately: No insurance company can deny coverage for pre-existing conditions or gender; Young people can stay on their parents' coverage until age 26; If you're self-employed or a small-business owner you'll be able to buy health coverage on competitive exchanges; If you've taken early retirement over age 55 but before you're eligible for Medicare, you'll be able to continue your employers' coverage until age 65; And if you're over 65 and have Medicare's Part D drug coverage, the "donut hole" has been eliminated.

The reconciliation bill we are voting on vastly improves the Senate bill's impact for states like New York who will not be penalized for having served New Yorkers and having an expansive Medicaid program. This provision will give more federal Medicaid funding support for New York State, which would have suffered a loss under the Senate-passed bill. Instead of costing millions, New York State will now save hundreds of millions in the first full year of implementation.

New York's public hospital system is the leading provider of uncompensated care to the uninsured and underinsured. Though this bill lowers the ten-year reduction in Medicaid and Medicare Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) payments by \$3 billion, I remain concerned these cuts will weaken our health care safety net in New York. After all, while significant coverage expansions will be achieved through health care reform, there will still be populations that will remain uncovered or underinsured, and our hospitals will continue to bear the burden and cost of their health care. It seems like the best approach would have been that DSH cuts would be made contingent upon reductions in the uninsured. In-

stead of expansion triggers in the Senate bill, the reconciliation bill is improved with set levels of reductions per year and require the Secretary of Health and Human Service to develop a methodology to reduce states' Medicaid DSH allotments to achieve mandated savings.

More broadly, I support this bill because of the positive impact it will have on women's lives. As Chair of the Joint Economic Committee, I prepared a report that looked at the specific health care challenges facing women and how women would benefit from comprehensive health care reform. More than two million women have lost their health insurance since the recession began due to their own job loss or their spouse's job loss. 1.3 million women lost their health coverage when their spouse lost his job and an additional 800,000 women lost their health care as a result of their own job loss. More than two million women have faced the brutal double-whammy of a lost job and lost health care. While job losses during this recession were much greater for men than women, women have fared worse than men in recent months. And this has had real consequences for women's health care coverage: in the last six months, the number of women losing health insurance benefits due to their own job losses has increased by nearly 50 percent. Over one quarter (28%) of women ages 19–24 have no health insurance at all. Part of that number is likely explained by the economic challenges facing young women. Young women have been hit hard in the recession, facing an unemployment rate of 13.1 percent, significantly higher than the national rate of 9.7 percent, and making it less likely that they will have job-based coverage. Health care reform will help us to overcome inequities at the center of the current system—where women pay more than men for the same coverage, or even, where women who are not smokers pay more for coverage than men who are smokers. My report and the reality is that the health care system is serving women poorly, the recession has made the situation worse, and now more than ever, we need health care reform.

While I am speaking of women's health care, I must mention my opposition to the restrictive language on abortion included in the Senate bill which remains in reconciliation. While not as onerous as the Stupak language that was part of the final House bill, this language will directly impact a woman's right to legal reproductive health services and I oppose it. But the value to women and American families of finally achieving health care reform is far too important to risk losing it.

Mr. Speaker, a great deal of the discussion today focuses on the moral reasons for extending health care coverage. While I agree with the moral imperative, the fiscal necessity is clear. This bill cuts the deficit by \$143 billion in the first ten years and then cuts the deficit by \$1.2 trillion in the second ten years. The bill is fully paid for and will not add a dime to the deficit. While it will cost \$938 billion over a decade, it is critical to note that Americans spend nearly \$2.5 trillion every single year on health care now and nearly two-thirds of the bill is paid for by reducing health care costs.

We must not let this moment pass without recognizing its historic nature. Today, millions of Americans will win basic rights—the right to health care, the right to live without the fear of chronic disease, and the right to never having

to worry about losing insurance coverage because of a pre-existing condition or exceeding a lifetime cap. While not perfect, this bill will hold insurance companies accountable; provide billions of dollars in tax breaks for small businesses to help them insure their employees; and, above all, expand access to quality, secure, affordable health care coverage for millions of Americans.

I'd like to thank and commend the leadership of Speaker PELOSI, Majority Leader HOYER, Chairmen WAXMAN, MILLER and RANGEL and of course, Chairman Emeritus DINGELL who has been working on health care reform since he first came to Congress.

The time is now. Our current system is broken. Costs continue to increase at unsustainable rates and too many families and businesses are feeling the debilitating burdens brought on by these expenses. Too many Americans have inadequate coverage or lack coverage entirely and are suffering or dying as a result.

I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this momentous reform. I urge my colleagues to reach beyond the rhetoric and the politics. Instead, recognize that today we will make a lasting difference in people's lives. Today we change the health of our nation for ourselves, for our children, and for our grandchildren.

DEATH OF THE GREAT CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST, DR. BEN- JAMIN L. HOOKS

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 2010

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, today, this nation lost a historic and influential figure in the struggle for civil rights, Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks. Dr. Hooks served this country throughout his life through his unwavering devotion to protecting the rights of minorities and the poor. I express my condolences to his family and all of those who were touched by his many years of service to our community.

Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks was a man of great character and moral conviction. He served as the executive director of the NAACP for over 15 years, restoring the organization's financial soundness and membership base. He created several initiatives to combat discrimination, from projects that provided employment opportunities in Major League Baseball to economic development initiatives in urban communities.

This great civil rights leader not only served as executive director of the NAACP, but also served our great nation as a World War II veteran. His experiences in the war led to his fight against social injustices in the United States. Dr. Hooks also served in the ministry, as a minister at the Greater Middle Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. His work will live on through his contributions to our society as well as the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute at University of Memphis.

Dr. Hooks was a great friend of mine, a thoughtful mentor, but more importantly, he was a stalwart champion of the least, the last and the lost. His philanthropy will be remembered forever and serve as an inspiration and guide for futures to come.