

HONORING KENNETH LASITER

**HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 22, 2010*

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Kenneth Lasiter upon being awarded with the "Lifetime Achievement Award" by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 9896. Mr. Lasiter was honored on Saturday, January 30, 2010 in Chowchilla, California.

Mr. Kenneth Lasiter was born in Merced, California in 1946. He graduated from Chowchilla High School, where he played on two championship football teams. Mr. Lasiter attended Fresno City College for 1 year and in 1966 he enlisted in the United States Army. He completed basic training at Fort Ord, California, where he fired "expert" with the M-14 rifle. Mr. Lasiter went to Fort Rucker, Alabama for Aircraft Maintenance School; he completed training with a specialty in helicopter maintenance and repair. He also completed courses in the Code of Conduct and Military Justice.

After completing stateside training, Mr. Lasiter was ordered to Vietnam in March 1967. He joined the 655th Transportation Detachment, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade. The 12th Brigade had deployed to Vietnam in 1965 and consisted of 11,000 personnel and 34 aviation units. The Brigade was based at Long Binh in the III Military Region in Vietnam and was the largest unit of its type to serve in combat.

Mr. Lasiter spent 12 months in Vietnam. During that time he flew combat missions as a door gunner on HU-1B and UH-1D "Huey" Helicopters. He was promoted to crew chief and was later selected to act as crew chief for the group commander. During this time there was increased hostility as regular North Vietnamese forces made their way down the Ho Chi Minh Trail through Laos and Cambodia into South Vietnam. Mr. Lasiter's units flew assault, medical and supply missions to fire bases and in support of ground forces. Mr. Lasiter was part of the cadre that assisted the 1st Air Cavalry when it deployed from the states to Bien Hoa, Vietnam.

Upon completing his 12-month tour in Vietnam, Mr. Lasiter returned to the United States. While on leave he married Carolyn. The newlyweds flew to Germany, where Mr. Lasiter assumed duties at the Wirtheim Army Airfield and was the acting crew chief with CH-23 units.

Specialist 5 Lasiter was released from active duty in September 1969. For his service, Mr. Lasiter was awarded the Army Commendation Medal, the Air Medal with seven oak leaf clusters, the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal with device, the Aircraft Crewman Badge and Expert Rifle and Sharpshooter Badges.

Upon returning to civilian life, Mr. and Mrs. Lasiter made their home in Chowchilla, California. Mr. Lasiter attended Merced College. He then started a lifelong career in farming. Mr. Lasiter is a Life Member of Chowchilla Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9896 and is a member of the Cornerstone Community Church. Mr. and Mrs. Lasiter continue to live in Chowchilla. They have two children and three grandchildren.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Kenneth Lasiter upon being named as a "Distinguished Life Member" by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 9896. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Mr. Lasiter many years of continued success.

**THE CONGRESSIONAL YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL: A LEGACY OF SERVICE****HON. SAM JOHNSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 22, 2010*

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I ask my fellow colleagues to join me in congratulating the 2009-2010 Congressional Youth Advisory Council. This year 45 students from public, private, and home schools in grades 9 through 12 made their voices heard and made a difference in their communities, their country, and their Congress. These students volunteered their time, effort, and talent to inform me about the important issues facing their generation. As young leaders within their communities and their schools, these students boldly represent the promise and the hope we all have for their very bright future.

President Ronald Reagan said, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free."

To ensure that the blessing of freedom is passed from one generation to the next, the members of the CYAC spent time interviewing a veteran and documenting the experience for the "Preserving History Project." Today I'm proud to submit the brief summaries provided so the patriotic service of our dedicated veterans and the thoughtful work of the CYAC may be preserved for antiquity in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. A copy of each submitted student summary follows.

To each member of the Congressional Youth Advisory Council, thank you for making this year and this group a success. It is not a coincidence that this congressional tribute celebrates two generations of service. Each of you is trusted with the precious gift of freedom.

You are the voices of the future and I salute you. God bless you and God bless America.

The summary follows:

I, Kathryn Boswell interviewed Reba Leonard, SSG of the United States Army. She was part of the technology branch and was stationed in San Antonio, Germany, and Pensacola. From this experience, I have learned about sacrifice for your country, camaraderie with fellow soldiers, and the effect serving in the military has on a life. Reba is a strong woman and has learned from her experiences in the army to live life to the fullest and "keep a bigger perspective on life." It's not just about me, it's about the wellbeing of the people around me. She worked on the first computers, and was able to communicate live time from Germany to Maryland in the 1980s. She also worked off the first portable hard-drive. She is a computer specialist at McAfee and has raised two boys in Plano, Texas.—Kathryn Boswell

**ON HOUSE RESOLUTION TO REDUCE THE USE OF PLASTIC AND PAPER BAGS****HON. JAMES P. MORAN**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 22, 2010*

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, as we mark the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, I ask my colleagues to consider cosponsoring a resolution I am introducing today to reduce the use of plastic and paper bags.

Single-use retail plastic and paper bags are bad for the environment. Both paper and plastic bags consume valuable natural resources when produced, generate waste, and pollute the environment. They keep us dependent on nonrenewable resources and impose external costs that we bear in the form of higher waste disposal costs, visual blight, the destruction of wildlife and the deaths of tens of thousands of animal and marine life by entangling them in the plastic or poisoning them through toxins that leach into the ground and waterways. We use more than 100 billion plastic bags every year and because they don't biodegrade, each bag represents a persistent threat to the environment.

While paper bags are less harmful to the environment, they require four times as much energy to produce and generate 70 percent more air pollution and 50 times more water pollution than plastic bags. And while recycling efforts should be applauded, recycling rates are dismally low. Between one and three percent of all plastic bags are recycled and between ten and 15 percent of all paper bags are recycled.

The resolution encourages states to establish targets for businesses to reduce distribution of plastic and paper bag use by 40 percent over the next five years; educate the public about using reusable bags through public-private initiatives, public awareness campaigns, and other methods whenever possible; and facilitate the dissemination of best practices among businesses for reducing single-use retail bag consumption. It would also encourage businesses to adopt consumer credit programs to promote reusable bag use.

One need look no further than the District of Columbia to measure success. Late last year the District imposed a 5 cent tax on plastic bags which led to a dramatic impact on bag use. The number of plastic bags used by supermarkets and other establishments dropped from the 2009 monthly average of 22.5 million to just 3 million in January 2010.

I could conclude here, but that would be only half the story. This resolution was brought to my attention by two enterprising Georgetown University students, Mariel Reed and Brian Lin. Together with their fellow classmates they drafted the resolution in response to a bill I introduced last year to tax plastic and paper bag use. They used my bill as a case study on environmental legislation. Both students are very bright and realized that there is little prospect my bag tax bill would be enacted. My bill does point toward a worthwhile objective, and it builds on the actions of several local and foreign initiatives that have met with success. But, there is no group or organization that has backed it and few Members today prefer to be on record supporting a tax increase.

And here is the second lesson these Georgetown students came to realize and what remains a valuable lesson that the environmental community needs to appreciate as a movement. The public and many elected officials are not always in sync with what we need to do to restore the environment and preserve it for future generations. Progress on the environmental front has never been a clear and straight line but erratic path with peaks and troughs. But, if we look back over the past 40 years, we have seen considerable progress. If you were to average out all the peaks and troughs, an upward progress would begin to appear. We can be proud of our achievements and the fact that such landmark laws like the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act, and many others that we have passed since the 1970s, have gone a long way toward restoring the environment. Our land, air and water are cleaner than they were on the first Earth Day.

While the science of today has led us to a better understanding of our relationship with nature, we must also appreciate that a democracy requires time for the public to accept and support the necessary changes.

Just as the time may not be ripe to ban the use of plastic bags, we can encourage broader public participation in recycling and promoting alternatives that over time will achieve the same goal. There are a number of proven approaches that work to reduce plastic and paper bag use. All have merit and the states are the appropriate forum through which these approaches can be developed and implemented.

Again I applaud the efforts of the two Georgetown students and their class for providing us a valuable political lesson on this 40th anniversary of the first Earth Day.

#### THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S QUESTIONABLE NASA PLAN

**HON. FRANK R. WOLF**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 22, 2010*

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the FY2011 budget proposed by President Obama for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NASA. I believe the administration plan would abdicate U.S. leadership in space. Nearly every astronaut, including Neil Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon, has spoken out against this misguided budget proposal.

I submit articles from *The Wall Street Journal* and the *Orlando Sentinel* which further call into question the administration's judgment with regard to NASA.

[From the *Wall Street Journal*, Apr. 17, 2010]

#### NASA WHIPSAW: PROP RE-DO FOR OBAMA'S SPEECH

When President Barack Obama gave his long-awaited speech Thursday laying out a vision for NASA, the backdrop featured an immaculate mockup of the Orion space capsule.

But only a few days before, workers at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida had frantically removed all vestiges of the Orion program from the same building.

What prompted the prop swap?

The reasons behind the abrupt scene change—and Obama's positive words about Orion in his address—reflect the sudden shifts and last-minute policy decisions that continue to buffet the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. For more on that, read this *WSJ* article.)

In February, the White House shocked many in industry and Congress by seeking to kill NASA's Constellation manned exploration program, designed to replace the retiring space shuttle fleet and eventually take astronauts back to the moon and on to Mars. The multi-billion dollar Orion capsule, reminiscent of the Apollo era, is part of that program.

In the following months, the Obama administration resisted entreaties by Lockheed Martin, the capsule contractor, and its champions on Capitol Hill to save Orion. The company repeatedly tried but failed to interest NASA and the White House in pursuing a less-expensive, stripped-down version of the capsule, "Orion light." For the White House, all of Constellation was too expensive and would take too long to complete.

On Mondays as the space center was preparing for the high-profile presidential policy speech, Lockheed had forklifts and other equipment hurriedly removing everything related to Orion from the building where Obama would speak, according to people familiar with the details. Administration officials bluntly told company executives that the president didn't want to be associated with Orion.

That quickly changed. On Tuesday afternoon, chief White House science adviser John Holdren called Joanne Maguire, head of Lockheed Martin's space programs, to inform her that a revised version of the Orion capsule would be reinstated in the president's plans. Now, NASA wants to use the capsule, at the very least, as an emergency escape system for U.S. astronauts when they are on the international space station.

That still left NASA, however, with the dilemma of what to do about the mockup. Between Tuesday night and Thursday morning, the White House, NASA managers and local center officials managed to restore the Orion mockup to its earlier prominence in the building. "Things were really changing pretty quickly there, at the end," said one administration official.

As photographers and reporters swarmed around Obama, pictures of the capsule were beamed around the world.

Lockheed didn't have any comment. The White House had no immediate comment.

During his speech, Obama had only nice things to say about the Lockheed Martin program, though he initially mispronounced its name. NASA, he said, "will build on the good work already done" on the Orion crew capsule, and it will become "part of the technological foundation for advanced spacecraft to be used in future deep-space missions."

[From *OrlandoSentinel.com*, Apr. 18, 2010]

#### OBAMA'S SPACE PLAN ADDS INSULT TO INJURY

(By Douglas MacKinnon)

With all due respect to President Obama, regarding his speech in Florida on "Space Exploration in the 21st Century," I simply have to ask, "Are you kidding me?"

As one who has consulted on and written extensively about our space program, worked in the White House and drafted a speech or two, I know shameless pandering filler when I read it.

The president's speech had more useless and suspect filler than a New York City street hot dog—part of that filler being when

the president recognized his chief science adviser, John Holdren. This is the same man who just told students the United States couldn't be No. 1 in science forever.

When the nation and the program most needed honesty, true direction and an unwavering belief in the promise of space, the president chose to add insult to the injury that is the dismantling of our human spaceflight program. To quote Neil Armstrong, James Lovell and Eugene Cernan, the president's decision to "... cancel the Constellation program, its Ares 1 and Ares V rockets, and the Orion spacecraft, is devastating."

Three heroic and history-making astronauts take the unusual step of writing an open letter to warn of this "devastating" action, and the president responds with a pedestrian speech that makes a mockery of a dire situation. Worse, for purely political reasons, he decided to pit the Apollo 11 moonwalkers against each other.

To try and blunt the criticism of him by the first man to step on the surface of the moon, Obama not only flew Buzz Aldrin with him on Air Force One for the event at Kennedy Space Center, but led his remarks by referring to Aldrin as a legend. Aldrin may be the only one not aware of his role as a prop of the White House political operation.

It's not a stretch to imagine Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel turning to David Axelrod and saying, "If the first man on the moon is going to strongly and publicly criticize us, then let's use the second man to walk on the moon as validation for our 'promise them anything but deliver nothing' new vision."

In a speech void of detail, the president said, "By the mid-2030s, I believe we can send humans to orbit Mars and return them safely to Earth." Where have I heard something like that before? That would be President George H. W. Bush in July 1989 when he spoke of landing Americans on Mars. Twenty-one years later, Obama gives us a watered-down version of that speech.

In 1989, much of the media rightfully took President Bush to task for an open-ended goal that lacked specifics and would have carried a price tag in the hundreds of billions of dollars. Say what you will about Bush's half-hearted effort, at least his astronauts would have landed on the Red Planet. Under Obama's fictional plan, for our investment of more than \$100 billion, our astronauts would only get to wave at Mars as they zipped around it, with a landing saved for a future mission. Can't we just wave at it for free from here on Earth?

The president betrayed both his lack of interest in human spaceflight as well as his ignorance of the subject when he said, "Now, I understand that some believe that we should attempt a return to the surface of the moon first, as previously planned. But I just have to say pretty bluntly here. We've been there before. Buzz has been there..."

By that thinking, European explorers should have abandoned the New World and President Jefferson should have ignored the explorations and discoveries of great natural wealth made by Lewis and Clark.

For reasons of cost, commercial enterprise, science and national security, it makes sense for us to establish bases, observatories, mines and potentially even military operations on the moon. If we don't, others—particularly the People's Republic of China with its military-controlled space program—most assuredly will.

President Obama has played the space community for fools, and he's hoping he will get away with it. Unfortunately for us all, China, Russia and others share his hope.