

There are tremendous economic incentives for the United States to take climate change seriously. In December, the Pew Charitable Trust estimated that the clean energy sector could generate \$1.9 trillion in revenue from 2012 to 2018. We also know that there are three times as many jobs created per dollar spent on renewable energy than on fossil fuel. As we work to create an economy that supports 21st century jobs, how can we overlook one of the world's fastest-growing industrial sectors and the millions of jobs it would support?

Large multinational corporations have joined environmentalists, scientists, and the vast majority of the American public who recognize the impact of carbon pollution on our world. For example, Coca-Cola has already suffered from a global water shortage that is driving up costs, and Coke has recognized climate change as a challenge to its future profitability.

The business plans of ExxonMobil and other Big Five oil companies assume they will have to pay for the cost of carbon in the future. This Congress should recognize the same facts that these business leaders have accepted: climate change is real and requires a different game plan. History will not be kind to climate change deniers.

The Schakowsky-Lowenthal amendment doesn't ask for much. It doesn't change the bill's provisions. It simply asks us as 21st century leaders of the most powerful country in the world to say "yes" to this simple fact: climate change is real and can have negative consequences.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Chairman, I rise to oppose the gentlelady's amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Kentucky is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WHITFIELD. I have a great deal of respect and admiration for the gentlelady from Illinois. I might say, this legislation would never have been necessary if EPA had adopted a standard that had been adequately demonstrated and was not in violation of the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

I would also say in wanting to add this language to the bill, EPA itself, in discussing its proposed regulation, projected that its rule would result in almost zero CO<sub>2</sub> emission changes or quantified benefits in cost by 2022. So even EPA does not think that their regulation is going to really significantly reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions because 96 percent of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are naturally occurring; less than 4 percent are man-made.

I might also point out once again that no one is a denier of climate change, but more and more scientists seem to be disagreeing with the impact of manmade CO<sub>2</sub> versus naturally occurring CO<sub>2</sub>.

After the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Cli-

mate Change in the fall of last year, a group of scientists from the non-governmental Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in a 1,200-page report with thousands of references to peer reviewed papers made the argument that natural forces, not man-made forces, are really driving the Earth's climate. So we are particularly concerned that this regulation would prevent America from flexibility. In the future if natural gas prices go up, we would not have the option, like most every other country in the world, of building a coal plant, and so that is why we respectfully oppose her amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Chairman, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from California (Mr. LOWENTHAL).

Mr. LOWENTHAL. I thank the gentlewoman from Illinois for yielding and for being a steadfast leader on this issue.

Mr. Chairman, this amendment simply confirms what world's scientists already know: that greenhouse gases contribute to long-lasting changes in our climate that can have a range of harmful effects.

Disinformation by entities with conflicts of interest have fueled reports of scientific disagreement. However, the scientific community is not divided because there is no compelling scientific evidence denying human's role in climate change, period. Case closed.

Every minute we waste on the myth of disagreement is a minute longer we wait to take concrete action, making our inevitable energy transition even more expensive.

Mr. Chairman, we will be judged by our children for what we do here today. I urge an "aye" vote.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WHITFIELD. I yield myself the balance of my time.

In reply to this case closed argument, I would just point out that the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which came out in the fall, acknowledged a lack of warming since 1998 and a growing discrepancy between the model projections and the reality of the observations actually made; that the discrepancy between the models and reality was increasing. It also acknowledged the evidence of decreased climate sensitivity to the increases in atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations. It also acknowledged that sea level rising during the period 1920-1950 was the same as in 1995 to 2012. Now that is the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

With that, I respectfully request that we defeat the gentlelady's amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Illinois will be postponed.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MCKINLEY) having assumed the chair, Mr. HULTGREN, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3826) to provide direction to the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency regarding the establishment of standards for emissions of any greenhouse gas from fossil fuel-fired electric utility generating units, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

#### REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2824, PREVENTING GOVERNMENT WASTE AND PROTECTING COAL MINING JOBS IN AMERICA; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2641, RESPONSIBLY AND PROFESSIONALLY INVIGORATING DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2013; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 113-374) on the resolution (H. Res. 501) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2824) to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to stop the ongoing waste by the Department of the Interior of taxpayer resources and implement the final rule on excess spoil, mining waste, and buffers for perennial and intermittent streams, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2641) to provide for improved coordination of agency actions in the preparation and adoption of environmental documents for permitting determinations, and for other purposes; and providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

#### ELECTRICITY SECURITY AND AFFORDABILITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 497 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 3826.

Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HULTGREN) kindly resume the chair.

□ 1756

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole

House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 3826) to provide direction to the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency regarding the establishment of standards for emissions of any greenhouse gas from fossil fuel-fired electric utility generating units, and for other purposes, with Mr. HULTGREN (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, a request for a recorded vote on amendment No. 6 printed in House Report 113-373 offered by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) had been postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. LATTA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 7 printed in House Report 113-373.

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Chairman, I rise to offer my amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 8, line 4, strike "government" and insert "Federal Government".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 497, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of my amendment to H.R. 3826. This amendment would make a clarification to the bill to make explicit that "demonstration projects" refer to projects that have received Federal Government funding or assistance. This responds to comments raised when the bill was marked up that the definition of "demonstration project" could be construed to sweep in any project receiving government support, including local tax assistance.

This amendment helps clarify the bill and also highlights the provisions of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 which apply to the EPA's proposed standards for new plants. The Energy Policy Act expressly prohibits EPA from considering technologies at Federally funded projects under DOE's Clean Coal Power Initiative to be adequately demonstrated. The purpose of this is to prevent the premature mandating of technologies that are commercially viable.

EPA's determination that "carbon capture and storage" or CCS, technologies for new coal-fired power plants have been "adequately demonstrated" is not borne out in the real world. In the agency's proposed rule, the EPA cites four government-subsidized CCS power plant demonstration projects that are in various stages of planning development.

First, Southern Company's Kemper County, Mississippi, project is still under construction, subject to delays and cost overruns. In the company running the project's own words, this

plant "cannot be consistently replicated on a national level" and "should not serve as a primary basis for new emissions standards impacting all new coal-fired power plants."

Next, Summit's Texas clean energy project is still in the planning stage. It does not yet have financing and has also been subject to multiple delays.

The third project, Hydrogen Energy California LLC's project, is still in the planning and permitting stages.

Lastly, SaskPower's Boundary Dam CCS project, a government funded, small 110-megawatt facility rebuild project in Canada is still under construction and reportedly \$115 million over budget.

It seems very clear to the companies and institutions most involved with these CCS projects that they are not yet ready to be considered for commercial deployment. As one former Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy in the Obama administration suggested, it is disingenuous for the EPA to say that CCS is ready.

□ 1800

It should be very clear to the American taxpayers that this administration is working day and night to eliminate the use of coal in this country. In places like my home State of Ohio, where 78 percent of our energy comes from coal, the result will be higher electric bills for our families and seniors already dealing with increased health care costs as a result of ObamaCare.

We should be pursuing energy policies that will lead to more energy that is less expensive for people, rather than less energy that is more expensive for our citizens. As we know, increased energy costs impact the most vulnerable citizens in our country.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support the amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Chairman, the underlying bill prevents EPA from setting a standard or requirements for new—new coal-powered plants.

Instead of telling a new coal-powered plant they have to use technology to reduce their carbon emissions, this bill says they can't require that of new plants, unless new plants are already using technology to reduce emissions.

Well, okay, if they are already using technology, we can say everybody ought to use that technology; but then the underlying bill goes further and says: Well, not only are they using technology that accomplishes the goal, but there has got to be six plants represented all over the country that are achieving the standard using technologies, and then EPA can consider a standard for new power plants.

This is like the belts and suspenders. They can't look at foreign technology.

They have to use six plants that are using technology.

Of course, one would ask: Why would anybody spend money to use technology to reduce carbon pollution if they are not required to do it? It costs money.

So it is so unlikely that they are ever going to be able to set a new standard at the Environmental Protection Agency, given the underlying bill.

But the bill also says, if there are six plants that are using technology, they better not use technology that has been funded by the government. Well, why not? That is what the government does.

We provide DOE grants to have demonstrations of new technologies. That is what the underlying bill says. If they are achieving reductions in carbon pollution because it is involving government funds, we are not going to count those.

Well, now, we have the Latta amendment that says: Well, wait a second. What if it is funds for demonstrations that are not using Federal dollars, but local dollars?

Well, fine. I don't have any objection to that, but I don't know why we would say Federal dollars can't be used to demonstrate technologies that are successful, so the Latta amendment narrows the underlying bill, but really doesn't accomplish much.

Why, I would ask: Would we want to say that the Department of Energy, using taxpayer dollars for projects to find new and better ways to improve air quality for the American people, should not be used by EPA to set a standard for future power plants?

These projects funded by the Federal Government help companies figure out how to reduce air pollution more effectively and at a lower cost. The whole point is to develop technologies that can be applied across the industry to reduce air pollution.

So if the Federal Government funds those new technologies and they are successful, we are not going to let a standard be based on that; but if the State funds the development of the new technologies that accomplish these goals, oh, we can use that, but they better be part of six, and they better fit this underlying standard—this underlying requirement that there be six in different parts of the country and on and on and on.

Well, I don't object to this amendment. I don't see what the amendment particularly does to make the bill any better. It doesn't solve any particular problem that I see, but I just want to point out how offensive this underlying bill is to not let EPA set standards for new plants when we know that technologies can reduce the carbon pollution.

But we are not going to look at it for real, unless they meet a higher standard, which is six plants; but they better not be using government-funded technologies from the Federal Government, which would be the case if this amendment is adopted.

So I just want to make these points rhetorically because I think people ought to understand how offensive this bill is.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Chairman, does the gentleman have anything further?

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire who closes the debate on this amendment?

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California has the right to close.

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 8 OFFERED BY MR. WAXMAN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 8 printed in House Report 113-373.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill, add the following:

**SEC. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

This Act shall take effect when the Administrator of the Energy Information Administration certifies that a Federal program, other than a program under section 111 of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7411), will reduce carbon pollution in at least equivalent quantities to, with similar timing, and from the same sources as the carbon pollution reductions required in the aggregate by the rules and guidelines listed in paragraphs (2), (3), and (4) of section 4.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 497, the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Chairman, President Obama reached out to the Congress, to the Republican majority of this House, and he said: Let's work on ideas that could help us deal with this problem of climate change.

But he also said he wanted to make it very clear that, if the Republicans won't act because this House majority won't do anything to address climate change, he will.

The bill we are considering today shows that the Republicans' plan on climate change is to give up hope. Their plan is to let our children and grandchildren suffer the effects of climate change without lifting a finger to protect them; worse, the Republicans' plan is to stop any meaningful action to slow climate change. I think this position is indefensible.

Today's bill would amend the Clean Air Act to ensure that coal-fired power plants are able to pollute indefinitely with impunity. This bill would condition EPA's authority on conditions that simply can never be met or at least not as long as it is cheaper to dump pollution into the air rather than clean it up.

Republicans complain they don't like EPA's approach. Well, what is their plan to address climate change? For years, Democratic Members have shown that we are willing to consider any suggestion to reduce carbon pollution and to slow climate change.

We could put a price on carbon. We could put a limit on carbon pollution. We could support the development of clean energy. In the bill that I authored with now-Senator MARKEY, we dedicated \$60 billion to deploy carbon capture and sequestration technology on new coal power plants.

But what Congress can't do is simply say no to everything, no to a price on carbon, no to a limit on carbon, no to regulation on carbon.

What my amendment suggests is, if they don't want EPA to act to reduce the pollution from carbon coming from coal-burning power plants, we are saying: All right, address this problem, make sure we have some other alternative that will work.

Because if they don't have an alternative that will work, in effect, the Republicans are saying: We are not going to do anything, either we don't believe there is a problem called climate change, the scientists are all lying to us—of course, we will never let them come before our committee and testify because they will only lie to us about it—the science is wrong, we don't have to worry about it.

We have heard over and over again from Mr. WHITFIELD that 96 percent of the problem is naturally occurring carbon. Well, naturally occurring carbon is balanced; it is absorbed by photosynthesis and other processes.

But that 4 percent is upsetting the balance, and that balance that is being upset is a threat to this planet. It is a threat to our atmosphere. It is a threat to our Nation when we see hurricanes, floods, droughts, all these climate events that we hear about every night in the evening news.

So what is their alternative? If they don't want coal-burning power plants regulated, give us an alternative that will reduce that 4 percent that is upsetting the balance.

I would suggest that they are telling us they have no alternative whatsoever. I don't think that is an adequate answer to what many experts believe is the leading threat to our survival on this planet.

I would urge that we adopt this amendment. If they don't like what EPA is doing, tell us their plan. If they have other ideas for reducing carbon pollution to prevent catastrophic climate change, let's hear them; but if they don't, they should step aside and let the President lead.

I urge support for this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Kentucky is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Chairman, I would point out once again, as I did in

the beginning of this debate, that the Constitutional law professor Jonathan Turley, testifying before the Judiciary Committee, recently made the statement that:

If left unchecked, the United States President could effectively become a government unto himself because of excessive executive orders and excessive regulations.

The only reason that we are here today is that the President, without any really national debate, went to Copenhagen and other international groups and made commitments for the U.S. on the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

In the energy sector, our emissions are the lowest that they have been in 20 years. If EPA had adopted emission standards and technology was available that had been adequately demonstrated to meet those standards, we wouldn't have any problem, but they did not do that. In fact, they violated the 2005 Energy Policy Act in setting these emission standards.

We tried to talk to EPA; we tried to talk to the President; we tried to talk to his representatives; and we got the cold shoulder. So the only option available to us in trying to overcome these executive orders and regulations is to adopt some legislation.

In our legislation, we don't expect a coal plant to be built, but if natural gas prices go up, America—like every other country in the world practically—will be able to build a coal plant, and the technology will be available to meet those emission standards.

With that, I would respectfully oppose the gentleman's amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Chairman, my amendment doesn't stop EPA from acting if we can get an alternative, an alternative that would reduce the carbon pollution to the same level the EPA is proposing.

My friend and colleague, Mr. WHITFIELD, said the President, if left unchecked, would make these commitments. Well, President George H. W. Bush made a commitment on behalf of this country that we would try to achieve reduction of carbon to 1990 levels.

If the Republicans want to do something on their own and not let the President do it, tell us how you can accomplish these goals. If you don't want to achieve these goals, it is either because you don't believe we need to achieve them or you are not willing to do anything about the problem.

I urge support for the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Chairman, I would just say that we believe the President's views are extreme when he sets a goal of reducing by 83 percent below the 2005 emission levels.

For that, we think this legislation is absolutely essential to give the American people the flexibility in the future to build a coal plant to help meet the electricity needs of this great country.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California will be postponed.

□ 1815

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Chair, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. YOH) having assumed the chair, Mr. HULTGREN, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3826) to provide direction to the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency regarding the establishment of standards for emissions of any greenhouse gas from fossil fuel-fired electric utility generating units, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

#### HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kentucky?

There was no objection.

#### THE ULTIMATE PRICE FOR FREEDOM

(Mr. OLSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, on March 6, 1836, nearly 200 Texans took their last breaths at the Alamo. A week before that, their commander, William Barret Travis, sent a final plea for help. Here are parts of that inspiring letter:

To the people of Texas and all Americans in the world, I am besieged by a thousand or more Mexicans under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continual bombardment and cannonade for 24 hours and have not lost a man. The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion; otherwise, the Garrison are to be put to the sword.

I call on you in the name of liberty, of patriotism, of everything dear to the American character to come to our aid. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor, that of his country, victory or death.

May God and history always remember the Alamo.

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE HIGH SCHOOLS IN ALABAMA'S SEVENTH DISTRICT THAT WON THE STATE BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS IN 2014

(Ms. SEWELL of Alabama asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to declare Alabama's Seventh Congressional District to be the district of high school basketball champions.

This year, in 2014, at the State tournament held by the Alabama High School Athletic Association, teams from the Seventh Congressional District of Alabama dominated, winning four boys basketball State championship titles and one girls.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Class 1A boys basketball State champions, St. Jude Educational Institute of Montgomery, Alabama; Class 3A boys basketball State champions, Midfield High School of Midfield, Alabama; Class 4A boys basketball State champions, Dallas County High School of Plantersville, Alabama; Class 5A boys basketball State champions, Parker High School of Birmingham; Class 5A girls basketball champions, Wenonah High School of Birmingham, Alabama.

No doubt that in the Seventh Congressional District of Alabama we breed winners. I plan to provide individual remarks about each school's victory so that each school is recognized in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. For now, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating and honoring the State of Alabama high school basketball champions from Alabama's Seventh Congressional District, the district of high school basketball champions.

#### HONORING HENRY WILLIS NEAL

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, it is with heavy heart but a joy for his life that I rise today to honor Henry Willis "Hanq" Neal of Houston, Texas, who lost his battle in life last week. He was the music minister at the Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church, an awesome tenor voice anointed by God.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Henry Willis "Hanq" Neal, the legendary minister of music at Houston's Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church, who was called home by the Lord on Thursday, February 27, 2014. He was 57 years old.

The attack that took his life occurred the Sunday preceding, after a number of church services where he led the music ministry, and then concluding at another church a few miles away, never stopping, never ceasing to lead to the glory the Lord.

Hanq Neal possessed a distinctive singing voice that enthralled all audi-

ences, the church and the unchurched. According to the Reverend Marcus D. Cosby, Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church's senior pastor, because of Hanq, people's lives have been comforted and we have been enriched by his musical genius.

Hanq Neal was born on September 4, 1956, one of eight children. He was raised in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, where he began to play the organ at 4 and took up the violin at 7. He performed in school orchestras and sang in the church on Sunday. He dreamed of becoming a teacher, a gifted musician, and vocalist.

Hanq Neal and two church friends formed a gospel trio, the Pentecostal Ambassadors. The group was discovered at a Gospel Music Workshop of America conference and signed to a recording contract by the gospel legend, Reverend James Cleveland.

Hanq Neal sang the lead on "If You Move Yourself," the title track of the 1980 gospel album recorded live in Detroit by the Donald Vails Choralers.

The main thing that I want to share with all of you is that Hanq Neal was a friend. He sang at Erica Lee's, my daughter's wedding. And he sang this song, Mr. Speaker, for the late Congressman Mickey Leland, "There Is Hope."

Hanq Neal gave hope to the world. We loved Hanq Neal. He was a hero, an American hero. We have lost a unique talent. We wish our deepest sympathy to his family, and he will be missed. You may not know him, Congress, but he is an American hero.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Henry Willis "Hanq" Neal, the legendary Minister of Music at Houston's Wheeler Baptist Church, who was called home by the Lord on Thursday, February 27, 2014. He was 57 years old.

Hanq Neal possessed a distinctive singing voice that enthralled all audiences, the church and unchurched. According to the Rev. Marcus D. Cosby, Wheeler Baptist Church's senior pastor, because of Hanq, "people's lives have been comforted and we have been enriched by a musical genius."

Hanq Neal was born September 4, 1956, one of eight children. He was raised in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where he began playing the organ at 4 and took up the violin at 7. He performed in school orchestras and sang in church on Sunday. He dreamed of becoming a teacher.

A gifted musician and vocalist, Hanq Neal and two church friends formed a gospel trio, the Pentecostal Ambassadors. The group was discovered at a Gospel Music Workshop of America conference and signed to a recording contract by gospel legend, Rev. James Cleveland.

Hanq Neal sang the lead on "If You Move Yourself," the title track of the 1980 gospel album recorded live in Detroit by The Donald Vails Choralers.

In 1984, Hanq joined the Windsor Village United Methodist Church, a small-but-growing Houston congregation, and eventually established five choirs with a total membership of 600. He served there until 2001 and helped Windsor become the denomination's largest congregation.