

military servicemembers who risk their lives defending America. When these troops make the ultimate sacrifice for our country, the emotional impact on their families is devastating.

While nothing can replace a lost loved one, outdoor recreation has a proven track record of providing at least some measure of relief in times of profound tragedy.

In 2021, Congress permanently codified free lifetime passes to our national parks and public lands for Gold Star families in the Alexander Lofgren Veterans in Parks Act, a bill I proudly cosponsored and helped champion through the Natural Resources Committee.

Unfortunately, the eligibility for these passes did not include families whose relatives were killed in incidents such as hazardous training accidents or due to a service-related illness.

H.R. 1682, however, would expand access to free lifetime America the Beautiful passes to Gold Star and next of kin family members and family members of fallen veterans. This legislation is a meaningful way to support families whose loved ones were lost in selfless service to our Nation.

I commend Representative EVANS for spearheading this noble effort. As a former captain in the Army National Guard, Representative EVANS understands the sacrifices of our servicemembers and their families. In fact, the namesake of this legislation honors a former soldier of Representative EVANS, Marc Belo, who dedicated over half of his life to serving our country in the Marine Corps, the District of Columbia Army National Guard, and the Colorado Army National Guard. Marc was one of the first responders to the Pentagon on 9/11.

Just months after his swearing in, Representative EVANS is already delivering for the people of his district and military families across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I reiterate my strong support for his bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1682, a crucial measure that would guarantee free access to our national treasures for all Gold Star families.

To honor the sacrifice and service of their loved ones, Congress has provided Gold Star families with a free America the Beautiful pass that covers entrance fees and standard day-use fees for national parks and other Federal recreation sites.

However, eligibility for this program is limited and leaves some families out because of a technicality. This bill would fix that oversight by broadening access to include families of servicemembers who died during inactive or Active-Duty training, as well as travel to and from training or duty stations.

These families have already made the ultimate sacrifice for our country, and they deserve for us to fix this techni-

cality. I thank Representative EVANS for bringing this forward and everyone who worked on this in a bipartisan way to make this happen.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. EVANS), the lead sponsor of the bill.

Mr. EVANS of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this bill, H.R. 1682, the Benefits that Endure for Lifetimes Of Service Act, or BELO'S Act, named after Marc Belo, a fellow veteran, aviation legend, and friend with whom I had the great honor of serving.

This bill would honor our Nation's fallen heroes and their loved ones by expanding free access to national parks to the families of veterans who pass away from a service-related illness or accident.

As a former Army Black Hawk helicopter pilot, I had the blessing of serving with countless men and women across the Active-Duty, Reserve, and National Guard components of our Armed Forces. During that time, I took on many roles, from supporting wildfire fighting efforts to deploying as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. Mr. Speaker, any soldier or veteran will tell you that service to the Nation takes many forms, but that also means sacrifice does, too.

When I learned that, under existing law, only the families of soldiers who died in Active-Duty combat operations were eligible for free lifetime national parks passes, I immediately thought of my friend and fellow veteran, First Sergeant Marc Belo.

I served alongside Sergeant Belo for a decade in the Colorado Army National Guard. Belo was already a senior sergeant and crew chief when I was a young lieutenant. He took me under his wing from day one. Whether it was a domestic operation, including fighting fires and conducting search and rescues, or whether it was deployment overseas to the Middle East as part of Operation Enduring Freedom, Marc and I were in it together.

He was the heart and soul of our company, Alpha Company "Wolfpack," and the 2-135th General Support Aviation Battalion "Blackjacks." An amateur photographer and a true patriot who was a 9/11 first responder and who gave his life to his Nation for more than 30 years, the passage of this bill could not come at a more timely, if tragic, moment.

Unfortunately, 1 year ago this week, Marc passed away from cancer related to his military service. His family, friends, and all who served with him were devastated.

Mr. Speaker, a friend you served with being taken far too soon by a service-related illness or injury is a story that, unfortunately, sounds all too familiar to veterans all across our country. The circumstances of their deaths can

never minimize the magnitude of their sacrifice.

That is why I am so proud to sponsor the bipartisan BELO'S Act, along with the gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA). This ensures that the families of servicemembers who die in circumstances not related to combat, like training accidents or service-connected illness, are still honored with free lifetime passes to enjoy America's beautiful national parks.

While this will benefit military families from coast to coast, it will especially make a difference for the military families in my district, who are blessed to live so close to some of the most beautiful public lands and national parks in the country. It is truly the least that we can do to thank these veterans' families for serving right alongside their loved ones.

Veterans and military families often find solace, peace, and healing in the great outdoors. Whether it is coping with PTSD, undergoing physical training, or coming to terms with the loss of a loved one, national parks play a vital role in their health and well-being.

It is my sincere hope that this bill can play a small role in helping military families, like the Belos, find peace in their loss and honor their loved ones who are taken from them too soon.

This week marks 1 year since Marc left us, but his legacy lives on and is now helping other veterans to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring American heroes like Marc Belo and their families by passing this important bill.

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again thank Representatives EVANS and PANETTA for their efforts to introduce this meaningful legislation.

This bill would reduce the financial burden on our military families who want to visit our national parks and expand their access to the healing powers of outdoor recreation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1682.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FLATSIDES WILDERNESS ADDITIONS ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1612) to designate the

Flatside-Bethune Wilderness in the Ouachita National Forest, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1612

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Flatside Wilderness Additions Act”.

SEC. 2. ADDITIONS TO FLATSIDE WILDERNESS.

Section 3(d) of Arkansas Wilderness Act of 1984 (Public Law 98-508; 98 Stat. 2349) is amended by inserting “and certain land in the Ouachita National Forest, which comprise approximately 2,212 acres, generally depicted as” Land Proposed for Wilderness Designation “on the map titled” Flatside Wilderness, Proposed Addition Designation “, dated November 12, 2024” after “1984”.

SEC. 3. FIRE, INSECTS, AND DISEASES.

Nothing in this Act or the amendment made by section 2 shall be construed to limit the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture under section 4(d)(1) of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1133(d)(1)), in accordance with existing laws (including regulations).

SEC. 4. DESIGNATION OF WILDERNESS ADDITION.

The wilderness designated by section 3(d) of Arkansas Wilderness Act of 1984 (Public Law 98-508; 98 Stat. 2349), shall be known as the “Flatside-Bethune Wilderness”. Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to such portion of the Flatside Wilderness shall be deemed to be a reference to the Flatside-Bethune Wilderness.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOYLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1612, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Representative HILL’s legislation, H.R. 1612, which would add four parcels totaling 2,215 acres of Ouachita National Forest lands to the Flatside Wilderness Area in his district.

The Ouachita National Forest is the oldest and largest national forest in the Southern United States, spanning nearly 1.8 million acres across Arkansas and Oklahoma.

Managed by the U.S. Forest Service, it is a true multiple-use forest, supporting timber harvesting, wildlife conservation, and a wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities, such as hiking, hunting, camping, and fishing.

Arkansans take great pride in this forest, which draws more than 670,000 visitors each year. Currently, only 3.6

percent of the Ouachita National Forest, including the existing Flatside Wilderness Area, is designated as wilderness.

The Flatside Wilderness was expanded by 640 acres during the 115th Congress. The Forest Service also studied the potential designation of the parcels included in today’s legislation.

This bill has strong local support and has been endorsed by Arkansas Governor Sarah Sanders; the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism; and the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize Representative HILL for his efforts on this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1612, the Flatside Wilderness Additions Act, introduced by my colleague from Arkansas (Mr. HILL).

This bill would expand the boundaries of the Flatside Wilderness Area in the Ouachita National Forest by approximately 2,212 acres and redesignate the area as the Flatside-Bethune Wilderness.

Representative Bethune represented Arkansas here in the House of Representatives, and he was a strong champion for conservation. He sponsored the first bill to designate the Flatside Wilderness back in 1984, so the redesignation included in this bill is a fitting tribute.

Wilderness areas hold immense importance for a variety of reasons. They support and provide essential ecosystem services, including clean air, water, carbon sequestration, and critical wildlife habitat.

Protecting the wilderness is not just about preserving pristine environments. It is also about safeguarding our national heritage and ensuring a healthy planet for future generations.

I thank Representative HILL for his work on expanding the wilderness area in his State. I and many of my Democratic colleagues also have bills we would like to advance to provide conservation protections for special areas in our congressional districts. This bill demonstrates that we can and should work in a bipartisan manner to protect and conserve public lands.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL), my colleague and the lead sponsor of the bill.

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, Mr. WESTERMAN, and my colleagues in the House who serve on the Natural Resources Committee for working with me on the Flatside Wilderness Additions Act over the past 5 years.

I stand in strong support of H.R. 1612, which I think is a model for how to go

about considering recreation conservation lands in our national forests.

The Ouachita Mountains and the surrounding forest sit in the southwest corner of Arkansas. It is the oldest and largest national forest in our southern region. It has origins in my district of central Arkansas and stretches some 220 miles west into eastern Oklahoma through my good friend, Mr. WESTERMAN’s district.

It encompasses nearly 10,000 acres of rugged terrain, and the most treasured views in the Ouachita region are in Flatside Wilderness. For those visitors that Congressman WESTERMAN referenced, the area also includes the challenging and very popular Ouachita National Recreation Trail, which bisects Flatside Wilderness.

Back in 1984, under the leadership of former Arkansas Senator Dale Bumpers and my predecessor, Congressman Ed Bethune, the Arkansas Wilderness Act was passed and signed into law by President Reagan. This legislation designated Flatside as one of the first Arkansas wilderness areas to be added to the National Wilderness Preservation System. At the time of its passage, the Flatside area was intended to be larger than what was ultimately designated.

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In 1984, the Forest Service and its Flatside advocates were not able to craft a strategy where all the studied and preferred acres of the forest could be included. As such, Mr. Speaker, when I joined Congress in 2015, I set out to complete that original designed 1984 plan for Flatside.

In 2019, with the help of Arkansas Senator JOHN BOOZMAN and Chairman WESTERMAN, we were able to add 640 acres to Flatside, which was signed into law by President Trump.

That same year, Senator BOOZMAN and I collaborated on an appropriation measure that directed the Forest Service to complete a study on which the surrounding lands that were eligible to be added to Flatside would be carefully studied.

Mr. Speaker, it is the results of that 2019 legislatively directed study that was published in 2021 that are the basis for the law proposal before us today.

With the help of my colleagues, this bill will finish the work started some four decades ago in which I have been personally dedicated since joining this House.

With this final addition, the Flatside Wilderness area can continue to serve central Arkansas as a place of economic, recreational, and historic importance.

First, as Chairman WESTERMAN noted, this is not creating a new wilderness area but simply designating additional land. It has wide support, as noted by my friend, including our local county and city officials in the county where it is located: Governor Sarah Sanders, Arkansas Parks & Tourism, the leadership of our Game and Fish Commission, and many other local

leaders and outdoor recreation groups in our State.

Rest assured also, Mr. Speaker, the current forest management plan for Flatside already includes prescribed burns, fire suppression techniques, and reiterates the authority of management to protect the area from fire, insects, and disease.

So, I thank my friend, Mr. WESTERMAN, for working with me on this. I think it should be supported by all the Members in the House. It is a model, as we have talked about before, for how we bring local officials, outdoor recreation, conservationists, and forest land management people together to advance something that is sought by our local leadership in the State.

So I thank Mr. WESTERMAN, Speaker JOHNSON, Leader SCALISE, and Representative EMMER, as well as all the members of the House Natural Resources Committee for working with me on this proposal.

As I conclude, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that for four decades this has been an important place in my life. It reminds me of John Muir's famous poem:

Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.

Mr. Speaker, I hope future generations of Arkansans and a lot of Texas visitors will enjoy those glad tidings from Flatside.

I include in the RECORD an article titled: "Opposites Attract: How a Conservative Texan Helped a Liberal Arkansan Enact the Sweeping Arkansas Wilderness Act of 1984."

OPPOSITES ATTRACT: HOW A CONSERVATIVE TEXAN HELPED A LIBERAL ARKANSAN ENACT THE SWEEPING ARKANSAS WILDERNESS ACT OF 1984

(By J. French Hill, April 25, 2009)

BEFORE THE ARKANSAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION SOUTHERN ARKANSAS UNIVERSITY MAGNOLIA, ARKANSAS

Twenty-Five years ago in 1984, a dedicated group of conservationists constructed an exceptional coalition, known as the Arkansas Conservation Coalition (ACC). They were successful in their quest to set aside 91,000 extraordinary acres of national forest as "forever wild" wilderness. Their success to which I pay tribute today came on the twentieth anniversary of the Wilderness Act of 1964. In 1964, Congress authorized guiding principles that would carefully select areas within existing federal lands and define them as wilderness—areas would be off limits in perpetuity to roads, timber harvesting, mining and oil/gas exploration and other commercial activities—and, more importantly in today's culture, all motorized vehicles: no ATV's or 4-wheelers. But, man himself is welcomed as a visitor to camp, hike, climb, hunt and fish, canoe, swim and kayak.

While there have been U.S. forest reserves dating to President Harrison in the 1890's, it was President Teddy Roosevelt that established the National Forest Service in 1905 and dedicated over 150 million acres for future generations. Included among these extraordinary resources were both the Arkansas National Forest in 1907 (later renamed

the Ouachita National Forest by President Coolidge in 1924) and the Ozark National Forest in 1908.

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter requested that the Forest Service undertake a review of all potential wilderness areas across the country and make recommendations to Congress. Their effort was referred to as the Second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation, or RARE II. The Forest Service was required to assess each potential area for wilderness designation as to presence of rare plant or animals; historic, recreational or sites of solitude; man's existing impact in the area; and, the potential impact on economic development or nearby private land ownership and use.

The ACC also sent out teams to assess sites in the Ozark and Ouachita National Forests. Their detailed report offered up eleven areas with approximately 138,195 acres for consideration. The Forest Service plan ultimately proposed only 45,701 acres and recommended that seven areas deserved "further planning" while fourteen others deserved "non-wilderness" uses. In April of 1979 President Carter endorsed the Forest Service recommendations.

Politicians that supported the forest products industry, including U.S. Representative Beryl Anthony (D-AR) from the Fourth District of Arkansas, expressed support for the Forest Service proposal. He offered legislation to enact its recommendations and to appropriate funds for roads and timber leasing in the disputed areas. He stated that the forest industry would "support wilderness," but only "responsible wilderness." Of further concern to wilderness proponents, a "twenty year window" had been left open in the 1964 Act to facilitate mineral leases or claims; and, as a result, applications were pouring into federal land offers before the window would shut in 1983.

To gain time, the ACC in 1983 persuaded Senator David Pryor (D-AR) and U.S. Representative from First District, Bill Alexander (D-AR) to request the Forest Service to delay any development in the potential areas. ACC members, Bill Coleman, Don Hamilton, and Tom McClure toured the state with an informative slide presentation supporting the larger ACC proposed list of areas. In February 1982, Arkansas Governor Frank White (R-AR), an avid hiker and canoeist, issued a Proclamation in favor of the ACC Plan and urged action by Congress.

Governor White's favorable view of wilderness was echoed by another strong conservative voice in the country. Then Newsweek columnist, George F. Will, in an August 16, 1982, column passionately argued for wilderness in firm opposition to President Reagan's Interior Secretary James Watt's position of no further wilderness set aside.

In fact, the Reagan Administration supported the Carter Forest Service position on RARE II recommendations. The only firm Arkansas delegation position was Beryl Anthony's limited approach. Therefore, ACC members needed a break in order to have a shot at a bill before "twenty year" leasing window closed or some other action derailed their attempt for more wilderness areas in Arkansas.

The ACC firmly believed that their break would come when Arkansas' senior senator, and distinguished member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Dale Bumpers (D-AR), would introduce a bill—as he had promised 18 months previously in 1981. But, again, the public support for the ACC approach came not from a Democrat, but from a Republican, Second District U.S. Representative Ed Bethune of Searcy. In April of 1983, Bethune, toured the areas and announced that he would introduce legislation to designate Flatside in Perry and Sa-

line Counties as wilderness. Flatside (about 10,885 acres) was the only ACC designated area in the Second District. He also told reporters that he would like to see all eleven areas recommended by the ACC included in a final bill.

Bethune's action prompted the Arkansas delegation's only other Republican, U.S. Representative John Paul Hammerschmidt (R-AR) of Harrison to take a position. He announced that he was opposed to Bethune's and Anthony's efforts recalling that he had told his constituents a "number of years ago that we probably had enough wilderness areas". However, by the end of 1983, Hammerschmidt and Alexander had sided with Anthony and co-sponsored his Forest Service-backed bill. Arkansas wilderness legislation was now deadlocked in the House and Senators Bumpers and Pryor had yet to take any action.

The Arkansas Democrat reported that Anthony and Bethune were applying pressure on Bumpers and Pryor and that Bumpers and Pryor were waiting on a compromise in the House. But, in the "air war" Bethune was gaining ground. He obtained endorsements from pro-business groups such as The Little Rock Chamber, Mack McLarty, then Chair and the Arkansas Industrial Development Commission.

Then, a miracle of legislative courage happened. On the last day of the 1983 session, Senators Bumpers and Pryor introduced a wilderness bill, S. 2125, almost a duplicate of Bethune's. They indicated that they would hold public hearings in Arkansas despite the fact that two House subcommittees had already held extensive hearings in May 1983. Regardless of the two year delay, proponents now had a House bill and a Senate companion. The delay also resulted in trying to legislate during the upcoming presidential election year. Indeed, it was an uncertain environment for wilderness.

On Wednesday, February 15, 1984, on the campus of UALR, Bumpers and Bethune sat side-by-side, allied and ready to hear 130 scheduled witnesses—the most Senator Bumpers remarked he had seen in his nine years in the Senate. Senator Pryor would have joined them, but was attending the funeral of his Mother. These hearings would be followed by a second set of hearings in Washington in April 1984.

So, let's pick up the "back story" as to the role of a conservative Texas Republican in this wilderness saga. On February 7, 1984, the week before Little Rock hearings, I sent a note to my boss, Senator John Tower (R-TX) about the Bumpers and Pryor bill, S. 2125. At the time, I worked for Senator Tower on the staff of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing & Urban Affairs.

Having grown up in Arkansas and spent many boyhood hours in the Ozark and Ouachita National Forests, I had closely followed the House logjam and was eager to help my life-long friend, Don Hamilton, and the coalition spark unusual support in the Senate.

In order to persuade Senator Tower to co-sponsor wilderness legislation outside his home state, I need a solid fact case. With help from Joe David Rice of the Arkansas Department of Tourism, we discovered the fact that Texans were the number one source of tourists in Arkansas.

The Senator was amused, but nonetheless agreed to co-sponsor S. 2125. He announced his intent on February 20, 1984 in a statement inserted in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. He described typical visitor to Arkansas as a "43 year old Texan traveling with his family." He concluded his endorsement with this critical caveat: "... while I am in support of Texans enjoying their beautiful wilderness, I will never concede which state has better football teams."

Reaction to Tower's co-sponsorship was swift. First, it was rare, if at all, for any out of state senator to co-sponsor another state's bill. And, it was more shocking to some that John Tower, conservative Republican, powerful chairman of Senate Armed Services, would endorse an environmental bill: Tower with a "zero rating from the pro-conservation voters" supported Bumpers with 77% rating from the same group. An aide to Bumpers declared his reaction as "delighted . . . (but) it sure is strange."

The Arkansas Gazette described the endorsement in an editorial dated March 6, 1984, with the opening line: "Amazing yes, but true." The Gazette opinion argued that Tower's co-sponsorship of S. 2125 "evidences more support for conservation in Arkansas than Anthony, Alexander and Hammer-schmidt." The Pine Bluff Commercial Appeal in an editorial called "Tower of Strength" demonstrated powerful support for the State's tourism resources by saying, "Let's not skimp when it comes to saving something so valuable—and so invaluable."

On March 8, 1984, Senator Bumpers wrote Don Hamilton enclosing a copy of Senator Tower's statement of support saying, "I'm sure you had something to do with his decision." Tower followed up his co-sponsorship by submitting a statement for the record at the Bumpers hearings in Washington on April 6, 1984. In his statement, Tower quoted from conservationist and Republican President Theodore Roosevelt. I had recently been at Theodore Roosevelt's home, Sagamore Hill on Long Island, seen the quote and recommended to Senator Tower for inclusion:

The civilized people of today look back with horror at their medieval ancestors who wantonly destroyed great works of art, or sat slothfully by while they were being destroyed. We have passed that stage. We treasure pictures and sculptures. But we are, as a whole, still in that low stale of civilization where we do not understand that it is also vandalism wantonly to destroy or to permit the destruction of what is beautiful in nature, whether it be a cliff, a forest, or a species mammal or bird.

It should be noted that in May 1984, Senator Tower also co-sponsored with Senator Lloyd Bentsen (D-TX) a bill to block clear cutting and development in 34,300 acres of East Texas. Politically, Tower was up for reelection in 1984 and he desired to broaden his legislative record beyond his internationally recognized expertise in military and foreign relations matters. Thus, the Arkansas wilderness bill and the Texas anti-clear cut measure both fit neatly in his legislative diversity plan. In a 1986 law school paper, distinguished Little Rock attorney, Scott Trotter, postulated that Tower was recruited as a co-sponsor "in anticipation of opposition from several oil companies."

And, while several oil companies in fact opposed the legislation, there was no such grand plan as considered by Mr. Trotter. The lead component in this legislative pact was simply the bond of friendship and belief in the cause. In the end, opposition from last minute concerns related to paper, oil and gas and air quality issues were all turned away and the U.S. Senate passed S. 2125 on August 9, 1984. Following House passage, President Reagan signed the bill into law on October 19, 1984 (PL 98-508).

I'll conclude with this photo taken on May 7, 1984, of Senator Tower sitting in his office in the Russell Senate Office Building reviewing Bill Coleman and Susan Morrison's beautifully illustrated volume, *Arkansas Wilderness*. I dedicate these remarks to the memory of my friend and mentor, John Tower. He was killed tragically in a plane crash with his daughter Marian in April, 1991. He was 65

and she was 35. Our country has had few public servants possessing his patriotism, intellect and commitment to the Constitution. And, it was just like him to disagree vigorously with Senator Bumpers on arms control, but link arm-in-arm and work for the common good of their constituents and preserve spaces of solitude for generations to come.

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I would like to, once again, thank my colleague from Arkansas, especially Representative HILL, for his tireless efforts on this piece of legislation and for the diligence in the process that he labored through to get to this point today. I appreciate him bringing forth this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1612.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONVEYANCE FOR AQUIFER RECHARGE PURPOSES

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 331) to amend the Aquifer Recharge Flexibility Act to clarify a provision relating to conveyances for aquifer recharge purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 331

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CONVEYANCE FOR AQUIFER RECHARGE PURPOSES.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Subsection (c)(3) of the Aquifer Recharge Flexibility Act (43 U.S.C. 390g-9) is amended—

(1) by striking "The holder" and inserting the following:

"(A) *IN GENERAL.*—The holder";

(2) in subparagraph (A) (as so designated), by striking "may transport water for aquifer recharge purposes without requiring additional authorization from the Secretary where the use does not expand or modify the operation" and inserting "may, acting for the holder or on behalf of a State, political subdivision of a State, Indian Tribe, or public entity and subject to subparagraphs (B) and (C), use the existing right-of-way, easement, permit, or other authorization for the purpose of aquifer recharge and the transport and use of water rights for aquifer recharge without requiring additional authorization from the Secretary, which use shall not be considered an expansion, modification, or substantial deviation"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(B) *NOTICE REQUIRED.*—

"(i) *IN GENERAL.*—Not less than 30 days before using an existing right-of-way, easement, permit, or other authorization for the purpose of

aquifer recharge under subparagraph (A), the holder of the right-of-way, easement, permit, or other authorization shall submit to the Bureau of Land Management notice of the intended use, in accordance with clause (ii).

"(ii) *REQUIREMENTS.*—A notice submitted under clause (i) shall—

"(I) identify the State, political subdivision of the State, Indian Tribe, or public entity intending to use the existing right-of-way, easement, permit, or other authorization for the purpose of aquifer recharge;

"(II) identify the existing right-of-way, easement, permit, other authorization, or recognized authorized use for ditches and canals constructed on public land before or on October 21, 1976, under the authority of sections 2339 and 2340 of the Revised Statutes (43 U.S.C. 661) intended to be used;

"(III) provide details on the intended use and scope of use for the purpose of aquifer recharge of the existing right-of-way, easement, permit, or other authorization; and

"(IV) provide a copy of the agreement between the State, political subdivision of the State, Indian Tribe, or public entity and the holder of the right-of-way, easement, permit, or other authorization to use the existing right-of-way, easement, permit, or other authorization for the purpose of aquifer recharge."

(b) *EFFECT.*—Subsection (c)(4) of the Aquifer Recharge Flexibility Act (43 U.S.C. 390g-9) is amended—

(1) by striking "Act creates" and inserting "section—

"(A) creates";

(2) in subparagraph (A) (as so designated), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end of the following:

"(B) waives the obligation of the holder of a right-of-way, easement, permit, or other authorization described in paragraph (3)(A) to comply with all applicable—

"(i) Federal laws; and

"(ii) policies of the Bureau; or

"(C) provides authority to construct, modify, or expand any existing infrastructure covered under subsection (c)(3)."

(c) *TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.*—The Aquifer Recharge Flexibility Act (43 U.S.C. 390g-9) is amended in each of subsections (a) and (c)(5) by striking "Act" each place it appears and inserting "section".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOYLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members be given 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 331, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 331, sponsored by Congressman FULCHER. In 2020, Congress passed the Aquifer Recharge Flexibility Act. The intent of that law was simple. It allowed existing irrigation canals to be used for conveying aquifer recharge water without requiring additional authorization from the Federal Government.