

HONORING THE LIFE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF JOHNNY MAESTRO

HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 9, 2012

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of a great singer and humanitarian, John Mastrangelo, known to his fans, friends, and fellow musicians as Johnny Maestro. Johnny would have been 73 years old this week, and his influence on popular music and on the New York neighborhoods he loved so dearly is still being felt.

John Mastrangelo was born on Manhattan's Lower East Side on May 7, 1939, graduated from Charles Evans Hughes High School in 1956, and attended Borough of Manhattan Community College.

In 1956, John Mastrangelo joined four teenage singers from Manhattan's Lower East Side to form The Crests. Their vocal harmony was innovative, combining elements of jazz, R&B, and early rock 'n' roll to become true pioneers of rock and roll music. They were one of the first integrated popular vocal groups. While the rest of the country was still struggling with the legacy of Jim Crow, The Crests—Johnny Maestro, who was Italian-American; three African Americans: J. T. Carter, Talmouge Gough, and Patricia Van Dross (older sister of R&B great Luther Vandross); and Harold Torres, who was Puerto Rican—were recording groundbreaking music. With Johnny Maestro as the lead singer, The Crests recorded hits like "16 Candles," "Trouble in Paradise," "The Angels Listened In" and "Step by Step."

Following his time with The Crests, Johnny Maestro had a short solo career, and then joined another popular New York group, the Del-Satins, as lead singer. In 1968, they merged with a Long Island group, The Rhythm Method, to form The Brooklyn Bridge. The Brooklyn Bridge recorded a series of hits, including "Welcome Me Love," "You'll Never Walk Alone," and "Your Husband, My Wife." They had their biggest hit with Jimmy Webb's "The Worst That Could Happen." Johnny Maestro and The Brooklyn Bridge continued to perform for forty-two years. Johnny Maestro's exceptional tenor voice won accolades from fans and fellow musicians alike. His distinctive voice remained vibrant and strong throughout his fifty-three year career.

Johnny Maestro was more than a great musician; he was also a great humanitarian. Johnny and the Brooklyn Bridge gave generously of their time, performing benefit concerts for numerous good causes.

He performed at many fundraising events on Staten Island such as the Borough President's "Back to the Beach" concert. He also performed for the New York City Fire Department and Police Department, the United States Military, Italian American Association, as well as church and school fundraisers. He performed on the Jerry Lewis Telethon and as part of "We Are the World," which raised funds for worldwide hunger relief.

Johnny Maestro and The Brooklyn Bridge were inducted into the Vocal Group Hall of Fame in 2005, the Long Island Hall of Fame in 2006, and the South Carolina Rhythm and Blues Hall of Fame, just to name a few of their many honors.

On March 26, 2011, the City of New York honored him by renaming the intersection of Mason Avenue and Midland Avenue on Staten Island as "Johnny Maestro Way."

Johnny Maestro and The Brooklyn Bridge were unswerving supporters of our police, fire, military, and Italian-American benevolent associations. The communities I represent warmly remember the benefit concerts Johnny Maestro and The Brooklyn Bridge participated in to aid 9/11 responders and their families. In 2007, Johnny Maestro sang at a concert digitally filmed and sent to bases of our Armed Forces overseas. Johnny Maestro and The Brooklyn Bridge ended their concerts by singing "You'll Never Walk Alone" and dedicated the song to the men and women in uniform. Today, the surviving members of The Brooklyn Bridge continue to honor Johnny's legacy by performing the songs he sang with The Crests and The Brooklyn Bridge, and supporting the humanitarian causes he held so dear.

Sadly, that great voice was stilled when Johnny Maestro died at the age of 70, following a valiant struggle with cancer. He continued to perform up until two months before his death.

Mr. Speaker, Johnny Maestro was the consummate New Yorker. He was talented, and he gave of his gifts and his success for the betterment of his City and those most in need. His life and his art are an example of what is best in our City and in our Nation. I urge all members of the House to join me in remembering and honoring Johnny's Maestro's life and work, and to remember a man whose musical accomplishments and humanitarian deeds have touched the lives of so many people.

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE,
AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 8, 2012

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5326) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013, and for other purposes:

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chair, I oppose H.R. 5326, the FY13 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations and am deeply concerned about provisions included in the bill that will roll back important civil rights protections and undermine key protections for youth in the juvenile justice system.

SECTION 540: EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION RIDER TO UNDERMINE THE AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT

Despite passage of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, ADEA, forty-five years ago, older workers continue to face discrimination in the workplace. They are demoted, denied promotions and fired simply because of their age. While the ADEA provides important protections, older workers continue to be hard hit during these difficult economic times. The challenges they face are substantial. As com-

pared to their younger colleagues, older workers have greater difficulty finding new employment and are twice as likely to be out of work for 99 weeks or longer. The EEOC reports that the number of age discrimination charges filed increased by over 70 percent between 2006 and 2011. And according to the AARP, 60 percent of workers interviewed report experiencing or witnessing age discrimination in the workplace.

The protections afforded older workers have been under assault in recent years. In 2009, the Supreme Court rolled back workplace protections for older workers in *Gross v. FBL Financial* decision. In this case, the Supreme Court held that victims of age discrimination must meet a higher burden than other forms of workplace discrimination when bringing a claim. Rather than having to prove age was a motivating factor for an adverse employment action, older workers are now required to show age was the decisive factor when raising an ADEA claim.

The bill before us today would be another significant setback for older workers in this country. H.R. 5326 would prohibit funds made available by the Act to be used to implement, administer, or enforce the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's, EEOC, final regulations on Disparate Impact and Reasonable Factors Other than Age under the ADEA published in March 2012. According to the EEOC, the rider in H.R. 5326 "would undermine vigorous enforcement of the nation's age discrimination laws at a time when older workers are particularly vulnerable."

The EEOC regulation at issue should not be controversial. It gives employers greater clarity on how to avoid unlawful disparate impacts under the ADEA. This clarity should be welcomed not rejected. EEOC's intent behind the regulation is straightforward, "to bring . . . existing [EEOC] regulation into conformance with . . . Supreme Court precedent and to explain the meaning of RFOA [Reasonable Factor Other than Age] defense to employees, employers, and courts."

Eliminating this regulation would create new confusion on what standards—even outdated ones—might apply in its stead. As a result, H.R. 5326 would create legal uncertainty and uneven results in these cases and would also eliminate important tools for EEOC to use to help employers comply with their obligations under the law.

Instead of spending time rolling back the rights of older workers and creating more legal uncertainty for those who are victims of age discrimination, Congress should be fighting for the rights of older workers in the workplace and working together on a bipartisan basis to reverse the Supreme Court's decision in *Gross v. FBL Financial Group*.

I am also deeply concerned that H.R. 5326 would fund the EEOC at a level which is \$7 million less than the President's request. Last year, the agency received nearly one-million discrimination charge filings—the fourth straight year of record filings. The EEOC must have the resources necessary to combat workplace discrimination and retaliation. Without it, workers will see longer waits as case backlogs increase and the agency's ability to enforce nondiscrimination protections will be undermined.