

THOMAS B. EVANS, JR.

Washington, DC, May 26, 1997.

Hon. CHARLES B. RANGEL,  
Rayburn House Office Building, Washington,  
DC.

DEAR CHARLIE, A good friend of mine, Omer Eissa, recently died in a tragic automobile accident in Sudan where he was visiting a brother who was very ill.

Omer was always a great friend of the United States and hosted Arthur Mitchell and Dance Theatre of Harlem at the Sudanese Embassy on several occasions. You may recall the time we sat in the Presidential Box with the Reagans to watch Dance Theatre perform at the Kennedy Center.

I believe Omer's wife would very much appreciate it if you included some remarks about him in the Congressional Record (a draft statement is attached).

Let's get together one of these days when Alma and Mary Page are in town. She joins me in sending our warmest regards to you both.

Sincerely,

Tom.

WELCOMING REAR ADM. NORMAN  
T. SAUNDERS TO FLORIDA

**HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 1997

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome Rear Adm. Norman T. Saunders to south Florida as the new Commander of the Seventh Coast Guard District and Maritime Defense Command Seven.

Admiral Saunders, in his 30 plus years of service, has represented the U.S. Coast Guard with distinction. Before joining the Seventh District, Admiral Saunders served as chief in the Office of Law Enforcement and Defense Operations. In this capacity, Admiral Saunders directed several Coast Guard programs including enforcement of laws and treaties, operational and military readiness, intelligence, and investigative and security activities. The success of these programs is a testament to the leadership of Admiral Saunders.

Admiral Saunders is the recipient of numerous decorations including two awards of the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V", two awards of the Coast Guard Commendation Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V", and the Coast Guard Achievement Medal.

Mr. Speaker, the Seventh District, which encompasses 1.8 million square miles in the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea, plays a vital role in deterring illegal narcotics from entering our streets and communities. Keeping illegal narcotics out of the hands of our youth is one of the many difficult challenges the Coast Guard and the Seventh District face everyday. In addition, the Seventh keeps illegal immigrants from entering the United States. Since 1992, over 43,000 Cuban and 58,000 Haitian migrants have been interdicted by the Seventh. Whether it's fighting the war on drugs or illegal migrant interdictions, I am certain Admiral Saunders will continue the great work of the Seventh District in keeping our shores and waterways clear of any potential dangers.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Florida congressional delegation, I welcome Admiral Saunders and his wife Chris to south Florida and urge my colleagues to pay tribute to a

man who continues to serve his country with honor.

A TRIBUTE TO WALTER BETAR

**HON. BUD SHUSTER**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 1997

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Walter Betar, a long time servant of the Altoona Area School District within my congressional district. Mr. Betar will be retiring from the Altoona Area High School where he has dutifully served as principal for 25 years of his 41-year career with the district. Please join me in wishing him the best of luck as he begins to pursue new challenges in his retirement.

Mr. Betar graduated from the Altoona Area High School in 1950. Upon graduation he was accepted at the Pennsylvania State University where he went on to earn his B.A. in the General Arts and Sciences. He then attended the Indiana University of Pennsylvania where he earned a Masters of Education in guidance and counseling. In 1958, during his own academic pursuits, he began his distinguished career in education as a Social Studies instructor at the Altoona Area High School. Mr. Betar would soon move on to administrative positions within his field, first serving as a guidance counselor and then serving as the Director of Federal Programs. During this time he continued to lead by example by continuing his own education, attending Shippensburg State College and the University of Pittsburgh. In 1972 Mr. Betar became Principal of the Altoona Area High School, the very school he had graduated from 22 years earlier.

His 41 years of service with the Altoona Area School District is truly testament to his dedication to the field of education and our community. His lifelong commitment to generations of students is not only commendable but more importantly it has played a valuable part in shaping generations of our youth. Students rely heavily on their educators as role models in their development and we have been very lucky to have such an outstanding example and leader in Mr. Betar.

Mr. Speaker, I will close by once again asking you to help me pay tribute to Mr. Walter Betar on his retirement. His life has been one of service and dedication to others and I am honored to have him as one of my constituents. I would like to thank Walt for his commitment to others and for making our community a better place to live. I wish him the very best in all that he pursues.

SPANISH PEAKS WILDERNESS ACT  
OF 1997

**HON. DAVID E. SKAGGS**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 1997

Mr. SKAGGS. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a bill to give permanent protection as wilderness to the heart of the Spanish Peaks area in Colorado.

The bill is cosponsored by my colleague from Colorado, Mr. MCINNIS. I greatly appreciate his assistance and support.

The mountains now usually known as the Spanish Peaks are two volcanic peaks in Las Animas and Huerfano Counties whose Native America name is Wayatoya. The eastern peak rises to 12,683 feet above sea level, while the summit of the western peak reaches 13,626 feet. The two served as landmarks not only for native Americans but also for some of Colorado's other early settlers and for travelers along the trail between Bent's Old Fort on the Arkansas River and Taos, NM.

With this history, it's not surprising that the Spanish Peaks portion of the San Isabel National Forest was included in 1977 on the National Registry of Natural Landmarks.

The Spanish Peaks area has outstanding scenic, geologic, and wilderness values, including a spectacular system of over 250 free standing dikes and ramps of volcanic materials radiating from the peaks. The State of Colorado has designated the Spanish Peaks as a natural area, and they are a popular destination for hikers seeking an opportunity to enjoy an unmatched vista of southeastern Colorado's mountains and plains.

The Forest Service reviewed the Spanish Peaks area for possible wilderness designation as part of its second roadless area review and evaluation—known as RARE II—and in 1979 recommended designation as wilderness of 19,570 acres. Concerns about private land inholdings in the area prompted Congress, in the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1980, to instead provide for its continued management as a wilderness study area.

A decade later, the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1993 included provisions for long-term management of all the other wilderness study areas in our State's national forests, but meanwhile questions about the land-ownership pattern in the Spanish Peaks area had prompted the Forest Service to change its mind about designating it as wilderness. That, in turn, led to inclusion in the 1993 wilderness bill of a requirement for its continued management of that area as a wilderness study area for 3 years—until August 13, 1996. The 1993 bill also required the Forest Service to report to Congress concerning the extent of non-Federal holdings in the likelihood of acquisition of those holdings by the United States with the owners' consent.

The required report was submitted in 1995. It indicated that within the wilderness study area, there were about 825 acres where the United States owned neither the surface nor the mineral rights, and about 440 acres more where the United States owned the surface but not the minerals. Since then, through voluntary sales, the United States has acquired most of the inholdings. Today only 188 acres of inholdings remain, and 80 of those acres are held by the Wilderness Land Trust, which plans to transfer them to the Forest Service. So the way is now clear for Congress to finish the job of protecting this outstanding area by designating it as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The bill I am introducing today would designate as wilderness about 18,000 acres of the San Isabel National Forest, including both of the Spanish Peaks as well as the slopes below and between them. This includes most of the lands originally recommended for wilderness by the Forest Service, but with boundary revisions that will exclude some private lands.

The lands covered by this bill are not only striking for their beauty and value for primitive