

are truly blessed to count her as our friend and neighbor.

DESIGNATION OF THE "EUGENE J. MCCARTHY POST OFFICE BUILDING"

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 1997

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise with the support of the Minnesota delegation in the U.S. House, to introduce H.R. 2836, a bill to designate the U.S. Post Office Building in downtown St. Paul, MN, as the "Eugene J. McCarthy Post Office Building."

Eugene J. McCarthy served as a U.S. Representative from Minnesota's Fourth Congressional District, the seat that I've been honored to represent. He also served for many years as a U.S. Senator from the State of Minnesota. He served for over two decades in Congress and was a much celebrated candidate for the Democratic nomination for President of the U.S. in 1968. Gene McCarthy's role in this 1968 campaign was the catalyst that set in place major change in United States and global policy in Southeast Asia and electoral politics in our Nation.

Eugene McCarthy was a teacher in the public schools in Minnesota and a professor at St. John's University in Collegeville, MN. He was also an instructor of economics at the College of St. Thomas in St. Paul and a distinguished author of numerous books on subjects ranging from children's literature to history and most renowned for his poetry.

The State of Minnesota is the home of many great leaders, however, few have touched as many lives as Minnesota's Eugene McCarthy. Senator McCarthy is a tireless leader and throughout his recent illness his fighting spirit persists. Therefore I, as well as, the Minnesota delegation and the people of the great State of Minnesota want to honor the accomplishments and service of this historic Minnesota leader from the area of St. Paul, MN, that catapulted him onto the national stage and into the U.S. Congress.

I welcome the support of my colleagues and this Nation in recognition of the career and public service of this great American.

WALTER CAPPS WAS A JOYOUS MAN

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 1997

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, on October 28 the House of Representatives lost an extraordinary Member. That loss was felt here, and it was felt across the country. Earlier in October the gentleman from California, Mr. Capps, had visited this Member's home State of Nebraska and the city of Omaha, where he was born and grew up. Not surprisingly, Nebraskans responded enthusiastically to his warm and generous spirit. This Member commends to his colleagues the piece by Roger Bergman which appeared in the Omaha World-Herald on November 8, 1997.

[From the Omaha World-Herald, Nov. 8, 1997]
WALT CAPPS "WAS A JOYOUS MAN"

(By Roger Bergman)

Even as the lights were coming back on in our house and around Omaha on Oct. 28, another kind of light was being extinguished. Our friend—really a member of the family—Congressman Walter Capps was dead. He suffered a heart attack in Dulles Airport in Washington, D.C.

It seemed impossible that someone so vital—so full of life and with so much to offer—could be claimed by darkness so suddenly, so unexpectedly, so early. Even at 63, even after barely surviving a head-on collision with a drunken driver more than a year ago, Walt Capps was not someone you expected to die. My wife, Dr. Wendy M. Wright, a Creighton University theology professor for whom Capps was an intimate friend and mentor, expressed it well: "He was such a joyous man."

During his recent visit to his native Omaha to attend family and high school reunions and to speak at his boyhood church and at Creighton University, Walt remarked to me that no less a figure in Western civilization than St. Augustine had written both "The Confessions" and "The City of God," respectively classics of spiritual autobiography and political theology.

A longtime and influential professor of religious studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara, Capps was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives less than a year ago. As he said in his lecture Oct. 12 at Creighton, he was trying in his own way and however modestly to bridge the gap between spiritual values and the concerns of public life. That an accomplished scholar and master of the lecture hall would even consider such a challenge at the time in a career when most of us would be thinking of retirement attests to his insatiable thirst for life generally and to his faith in the democratic ideal specifically.

It was also Augustine who proclaimed that a Christian should be an "alleluia from head to foot." Walter Capps was such a man.

And his joy in life and hope for America in a time of cynicism about politics was infectious. After spending the evening of Oct. 12 listening to the congressman speak enthusiastically of the quality of people he was getting to know in Washington and of the genuine care and concern of so many elected officials and their often young and idealistic staffs to do the right thing, one Creighton political science professor remarked that she had not felt so hopeful about Congress for years. Although 15 years my senior, Walt, with an almost boyish verve for an overwhelmingly difficult job, made me feel somewhat jaded by comparison.

Perhaps some of Walt Capps' hopefulness came from the healing and reconciliation he saw taking place in his course on the Vietnam War. Vets who had never told their stories before were invited to share the podium with him. Students whose fathers were unknown to them personally were sent as emissaries of the class to the Vietnam Memorial in Washington to touch those precious names on the black marble. Sen. Bob Kerrey, Nebraska's then-governor, took an active role in the class for years, becoming a close friend to Capps and mentoring him into political life.

Capps quoted Kerrey in his lecture at Creighton. Politics is often defined as the art of compromise. But Kerrey, reported Capps, described politics as the art of the possible.

The congressman's own philosophy corresponded well with that. Especially after his near-fatal crash in 1996, he said he woke up every morning just grateful for the new day and the opportunities it offered.

He approached his legislative role in Washington in the same spirit: Whatever small advance I can help to make for the general welfare of the people of this country, let me be ready to do it. Not a bad philosophy for the rest of us.

Of Capps' 14 books, the most recent was on the Czech playwright and president, Vaclav Havel, another fine intellect who responded to the call of public service. Havel's most recent book is titled "The Art of the Impossible." Walter would have appreciated that perspective on self-government, too. One of his own books was significantly titled, "Hope Against Hope."

But Walt Capps was not merely a dreamer. He wanted to make a difference. And so he put up with the arduous demands of the campaign trail (and the insults of his opponent, which he did not return) and the daily frustrations of an idealist in the powerbroking world of the national capital. If he tilted at windmills, it was only after being sure it was for the good of his own constituents and the country generally.

Like a combination of Don Quixote, St. Augustine, and Vaclav Havel, our friend Walter Capps dreamed a possible dream. He believed that citizens could govern themselves despite deep moral and ideological disagreements. Perhaps felled by the strenuous schedule that belief demanded of him as a citizen-representative, Walt Capps is a reminder to all of us that democracy has no sidelines.

Professor Capps—he took a leave of absence from his university post rather than give it up entirely—had a more personal dream, too. After several terms in Congress, he wanted to return to the University of California at Santa Barbara to teach about democracy.

Democracy, he said, is not something we inherit as a lifeless monument from the past. It is something we create and recreate every day. Or at least that is the challenge.

He will not be able to fulfill that personal dream—to the loss of all of us, but especially to those UCSB students who will know of him only by reputation. My wife and I are immensely grateful that our children, his godchildren, were touched by his life.

But like the image of a flame that lingers in the mind's eye even after the wick has been snuffed, Walter Capps' joyous, hopeful, generous spirit will linger long after his life has gone out.

May he rest in peace. And may the rest of us get to work.

VETERANS DAY IS AMERICA'S DAY

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 1997

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend to my colleagues an article that was published in the Charleston Gazette of Charleston WV. The article was written by a constituent of the Third Congressional District of West Virginia and a national vice commander of the American Legion, Mr. Robert Vass, Sr., of Huntington, WV.

I am sure that many of my colleagues spent yesterday the same way that I did, visiting with constituents to celebrate Veterans Day. Entire communities come together on November

11 each year to honor those who have served our Nation in the Armed Forces. Veterans Day is an opportunity to remember those who have given their life in service and to remind ourselves of our responsibility to care for those veterans who still need assistance.

As Mr. Vass writes, veterans continue to serve our Nation, even after leaving the military. Not only are they ready to serve in time of war, they remain active in times of peace. Veterans and active-duty personnel alike are active in our communities by volunteering at hospitals, sponsoring scouting and athletic programs for youths, providing scholarships or students and donating thousands and thousands of hours in volunteer service in their communities.

I share my good friend's column with my colleagues because it reminds us that Veterans Day is not just a day for veterans and their families; it is America's Day. It is a day for Americans to "express appreciation for the contributions of all veterans upholding the values for which these patriots sacrificed." And it is a day for all Americans, to be like veterans, and to involve themselves in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I have included a copy of Bob Vass column and ask that it be printed following my statement.

[From the Charleston Gazette, Friday, Nov. 7, 1997]

VETERANS DAY IS AMERICA'S DAY—HOLIDAY
HONORS THOSE WHO SACRIFICED

(By Robert E. Vass, Sr.)

I'm proud to be one of countless Americans who in the tradition of the citizen-soldier fighting for America's independence, served in our nation's armed forces. I served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II.

Veterans Day, Nov. 11, is not only my day; it is American's day. On this day, in events ranging from solemn to spectacular—in sprawling cities and in small towns—Americans will honor those who sacrificed for freedom.

Men and women of all races, creeds and social stations have stood in harm's way in World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon, Panama, Grenada and the Persian Gulf. More than a million of them, including my wartime contemporaries, forfeited all of their tomorrows in their youth so that the core values of our nation—freedom, justice and equality—might grow old.

A simple gesture of gratefulness is all veterans want on Veterans Day. Whether you a veteran or not, you can poignantly express appreciation for the contributions of all veterans by upholding the values for which these patriots sacrificed.

I and my comrades in the American Legion support traditional American values here and in thousands of other communities nationwide. We carry on a tradition of community service dating back to the Legion's founding in 1919.

We advocate policies upholding law and order, a strong national defense, a full accounting of those listed either as missing in action or as prisoners of war, and just compensation for veterans, with service-connected disabilities. The latter includes thousands of Gulf War veterans who went to the region healthy and returned with ailments of mysterious origin.

We volunteer in Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals. We help veterans file claims for benefits. We sponsor programs which instill traditional values in young people, including Scouts, high school ROTC, American Legion Baseball, American Legion Boys State and Boys Nation, Junior Shoot-

ing Sports, and the National High School Oratorical Contest.

West Virginia Legionnaires last year donated 38,436 hours of service to their communities, awarded \$63,664 worth of scholarships to 70 deserving West Virginia students, and donated 459 pints of blood to West Virginia blood collection centers.

Above all, consistent with our support for the Constitution, Legionnaires believe "we the people" must have a voice in how our nation is governed. On this premise, the U.S. Senate should do what the House did in June: Pass a constitutional amendment to return to the people the right to protect the flag of the United States from physical desecration.

Ordinary citizens must reinforce America's core values through service to God and country and participation in our governance. That's what the American Legion is all about on Veterans Day and every day. And that's what we all must be about on Veterans Day and every day.

Veterans Day is America's day.

SCHOOL CHOICE

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 12, 1997

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Wednesday, November 12, 1997, into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

SCHOOL CHOICE

Education has always been a defining issue in American politics and a matter of the highest importance. Everyone believes that in America every child should get a good education. Politicians of all stripes have yearned to be known as "education presidents" or "education governors". The often heated debates swirling at the local school board level also testify to how central an issue education is at all levels of government.

Now a further debate within this larger education debate is taking place in statehouses and schoolhouses across the country. That debate is over school choice. At a fundamental level, school choice involves giving parents the ability to select which schools their children attend. But despite the relatively simple definition, school choice involves many different and competing options, and the debate is heating up.

WHAT IS SCHOOL CHOICE?

School choice encompasses a broad spectrum of educational initiatives and models, from modest tinkering to expansive reorganizations. The most popular include school vouchers and charter schools.

School vouchers provide assistance to families, often in the form of coupons, to be used to pay either a portion or the entire cost of private school tuition. Cleveland and Milwaukee have voucher programs supported with taxpayer dollars. These programs are targeted to low-income families. In Indianapolis there is a limited voucher program funded through private funds.

Charter schools are independent public schools usually started by parents, teachers, and administrators. These schools are freed from some of the bureaucratic rules and regulations that drag down performance, but in return they are responsible for meeting certain standards. Over the past several years there has been an intense debate in the Indiana state legislature over the issue of some charter schools possibly restricting admission.

CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE

Currently in Congress the school choice debate is a popular topic and will certainly continue to be a lightning rod for years to come. Supporters claim that choice injects competition and accountability into the educational system. They ask why the poor should not have the same chance at better schools as the well-to-do. They believe that choice will, through competition, prod the public schools to get better.

American parents are deeply concerned about the quality of their children's education, and are searching for ways to improve the system. School choice is one such option. Billed as a way to increase parents' control over where their children enroll while also creating incentives for reform in our public schools, the numerous school choice proposals promise to shake up our educational system. In this day and age, when we often hear calls to increase the efficiency and responsiveness of government, the free enterprise themes that characterize school choice proposals resonate with many Americans.

Opponents, on the other hand, argue that choice, at its least, unduly weakens public schools and, at most, is unconstitutional. They argue fairness: since States will never have the money to help all the poor children who want it, most poor children will never be able to take advantage of the choice, and they will be left behind in a public system more starved for money than ever before. For them, public funds should be spent to improve public schools, not spent to help students leave them.

Critics also argue that most Americans do not want tax dollars subsidizing private schools, and they believe that vouchers create instant church-state problems. They say that using public funds for religious-affiliated schooling is a violation of the First Amendment's separation of church and state which is at the center of the American political heritage.

Critics also point to the practical difficulties in implementing school choice. In urban areas, where there are not only more schools to choose from but also greater accessibility to public transportation, it is easier to implement school choice reform. Could this work in rural southern Indiana where schools are often separated by at least an hour's drive? What about parents unable or unwilling to choose, or troubled students who are less desired by the schools? How do you find enough resources to make choice really meaningful, so even the poorest or worst behaving or lowest achieving student would have a chance to enroll in a good school?

ASSESSMENT

When it comes to the education of American children, I believe we should be willing to experiment and creatively address the challenges of making sure they receive the world-class education they deserve. The idea of school choice is certainly an attractive one, at least in general. By allowing parents to send their children to any school in any neighborhood, many schools will shape up and bright students can shop around to escape inferior schools.

But I also believe that choice is not a cure-all for American schools. It must not stand as a substitute for a strong commitment to a sound education for all of our children. If school choice is going to be an effective alternative, we must address the fundamental