

tricks as they did just last summer when they tried to get a \$50 billion tobacco tax credit put into the balanced budget agreement. As you know, we fought back, and we repealed that \$50 billion tax credit. But that episode is just an example of what we might expect when the tobacco settlement that is now under discussion comes before Congress this year.

It is obvious that stopping our children from buying cigarettes needs to be a part of the solution. But first we must have our merchants comply with the already existing age laws that in many States are already on the books. Thanks to people like Carol Wagner at the Mid-Bergen Health Center in Bergen County, New Jersey, Carol runs a sting operation with local teenagers. She and those teens are helping win this war. The local sting operations show that merchants in Bergen and Hudson Counties, two counties that I represent in New Jersey, have already reached the national goal for the year 2000 by reducing sales to minors by 80 percent.

So what then is an industrious kid to do when the stores that sell cigarettes over the counter check for age I.D.? Well, according to the U.S. Surgeon General, these young teenagers are 10 times more likely to then go to secret vending machines to buy their cigarettes, and they know which diners, hotels, bowling alleys, gas stations and restaurants in town have those cigarette vending machines.

Our towns have tried to fight back by banning cigarette machines everywhere in their communities, but the tobacco companies make 16½ million dollars on under-aged smoking in New Jersey alone. That is why they have spent millions of dollars to bottle up these local ordinances, in many cases frivolous and expensive lawsuits they know that our local towns cannot afford to contest.

The only way to save our towns from these lawsuits is to make it part of a Federal law that any American community, if they choose to, can ban cigarette vending machines from their community.

This week I am informally introducing the Stop Kids From Smoking Act, a bill to ban all cigarette vending machines in places where children under the age of 18 have access, and for the 10 towns in my district that already ban cigarette vending machines from any part of their towns, the bill will contain a provision that allows them to have this total ban of cigarette vending machines remain valid and effective in their communities as long as they choose to keep these bans alive.

The congressional hearings that began this month should focus more attention on the tobacco companies' marketing strategy to children beyond the R.J. Reynolds memo that was recently released. Once we have that information, Congress must not delay in passing a wide-ranging tobacco settlement that will protect our children.

My Stop Kids From Smoking bill will help. That is why I am encouraging all of my colleagues on the Democrat and Republican side of the aisles to cosponsor this important bill. We need to stop kids from buying cigarettes at local unattended vending machines, and we need to do it now.

—————
MOURNING THE PASSING OF A
DEAR FRIEND, FORMER CON-
GRESSMAN RICHARD WHITE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in tribute to Richard C. White, former Congressman for the 16th District of Texas. Congressman White passed away last Wednesday, February 18, in El Paso, Texas. It is with deep sorrow and condolences to his family that we mark the passing of this dear friend, exceptional leader and fine human being.

During his 74 years of life, he exemplified the highest attributes that all of us here in Congress and back in our respective districts respect and admire, the attributes of leadership, vision, integrity, humility and public service.

Early in his life, Richard White showed a concern and a commitment to his community and his country. He entered military service as a marine in World War II and saw action in the Pacific theater. While fighting in the battles of Bougainville, Guam and Iwo Jima, he was wounded in action, and his service to his country was marked with honor and high decoration, receiving the Purple Heart.

Upon returning to the States, this veteran began advocating as an outstanding lawyer for the people of El Paso. In 1949, he heeded the call for even greater community service. Congressman White launched the beginning of a distinguished career as a public servant.

He served first in the Texas Legislature from 1955 to 1958. In the beginning, he worked hard to improve the quality of life along the border. Focusing on health care and environmental issues, he established a nursing school at the University of Texas at El Paso and created the Hueco Tanks State Park.

As a native Texan and a third generation El Pasoan, Congressman White remained close to his roots. After his successful terms in the State House, he returned to El Paso. He practiced law for a short time and served as a chairman of the El Paso Democratic Party prior to announcing his candidacy for the U.S. Congress in 1964.

Richard White then served in this body from 1965 to 1983. I know that during his years here in Washington he built many friendships. Many of you were his colleagues and remember his strong advocacy on behalf of his district and the well-being of this Nation. His work on the Committee on Armed Services reflected his strong commit-

ment to national security, and this was reflected in his unwavering support for El Paso's Fort Bliss Army Post, and in the drafting of the reorganization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff language. In addition, he brought the needs of El Paso and the border to the forefront of Congress as he created the Chamizal Border Highway and the Chamizal National Memorial.

□ 1245

In addition, he served with distinction in the Interior and Insular Affairs Committees, the Post Office and Civil Service Committee, and the Science and Technology Committee.

Congressman White was a true citizen-legislator. During his 18 years representing El Paso, he served with distinction and determination. Moreover, his accomplishments were marked by a reputation as a person of the highest character and for always conducting himself as a gentleman.

Despite having attained seniority and earning the respect and admiration of his peers, he nevertheless left this Congress to return to his family in El Paso. The proud father of 7 children, he was devoted to spending more time with them.

Nonetheless, seeing the need to always contribute towards the betterment of El Paso and the citizens of El Paso, he remained active in numerous community affairs and lent his support to the 16th District as a mentor and a civic leader.

I can personally say that Congressman White was a long time friend to me and to my family. He inspired us with his leadership, and I appreciated his many insights and willingness to offer his continued assistance on behalf of our community.

Congressman White leaves an enormous legacy of concern for his constituents and a commitment to doing everything in his power to help those whom he served. Richard White personified the meaning of honorable public service. He made the most of his life by touching the lives of those around him. As Congressman, legislator, attorney, friend, citizen, husband and father, he led a life of dignity and unselfish commitment. He worked hard. As we mourn his passing, let us all remember that his many accomplishments will be a benchmark for those of us here in Washington today.

Mr. Speaker and fellow Members of Congress, I will soon introduce legislation to name the El Paso Federal Office Building in his honor. I will ask for your support in this endeavor as a permanent monument to his proud record of public service and fierce drive to help his community and to work for the greater good of this Nation.

I thank you, and I want to wish his wife, Katherine and all his children well, and God bless the White family.

—————
NATURAL DISASTER IN MAINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1998, the gentleman from Maine