

Representatives to join me in honoring Don Hunsucker.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 21, 1998

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to introduce two bills—one to authorize the Mongaup Visitor's Center, and the other to extend the Upper Delaware Citizen's Advisory Counsel.

Mr. Speaker, as you may know, in 1978, along with out good friend and colleague JOE MCDADE, I introduced Federal legislation establishing the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The property proposed as the location of the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River's primary visitor facility—the Mongaup Visitor Center—is owned by the State of New York's Department of Environmental Conservation. The property was acquired by the State in 1986 as part of a much larger purchase of a 10,000-acre tract intended to provide habitat for a population of wintering bald eagles. New York State legislation authorizing Federal development of the property as a visitor center by means of a long-term lease was passed in 1993. A legislative support data package was prepared in 1994 for Federal legislation authorizing development of the site, to appropriate funds for development and to increase the Upper Delaware's operational base to provide for year-round operation.

The site for the Mongaup Visitor Center contains abundant natural and cultural resources and this proposal will identify and develop strategies to protect the Mongaup area's natural resources, including: wintering bald eagles; upland forest; hemlock and laurel gorges and steep slopes; riverine and flood plain forest, and a mile of river front with natural sand beaches. The possible presence of prehistoric elements will also be evaluated.

The visitor center will benefit the community in many respects. It will serve as an educational asset, a local museum, a class room, and meeting place. Bordered by the Delaware River, the Mongaup River and New York State highway route 97 in the town of Deerpark in Orange County, NY—it is the only center of its kind within an hour's drive from New York City. Both the proposed visitor center, Mongaup site and the Upper Delaware Valley have enormous unrealized potential to provide both the local and visiting public with an exceptional experience.

I am also introducing a bill that will extend the Upper Delaware Citizens Advisory Council for another 10 years. The Upper Delaware CAC provides an excellent forum for citizens of the Upper Delaware to have an opportunity to impact and interact with the National Park Service and Department of the Interior.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to help pass these two measures which will benefit the State of New York on economic, environmental and educational levels.

TRIBUTE TO MAJ. GEN. MAX BARATZ ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. STEPHEN E. BUYER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 21, 1998

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to a distinguished and dedicated military officer who has served this nation with great honor and distinction. Major General Max Baratz, the Chief, Army Reserve, will retire on May 24, 1998 after more than four decades of dedicated and exemplary service in the United States Army and the Army Reserve. Today, I'm proud to take a few minutes to highlight the extraordinary career of Major General Baratz.

His career began in 1956 as an infantry officer. After serving as a platoon leader in the 1st Infantry Division, he carried his love of country and commitment to duty to the United States Army Reserve. As a drilling reservist, he became an engineer officer and served in a variety of staff and leadership positions to include the command of company in an Engineer Training Group and service as an Engineering Battalion Commander.

In November 1976, as a full colonel, Major General Baratz was selected to be the 416th Engineer Command's Chief of Staff. Mr. Speaker, I need not remind you or my distinguished colleagues that only a handful of Army Reservists ever attain or surpass this prestigious rank, and even fewer achieve the rank of major general. But Major General Baratz was no ordinary Army Reservist, and he is no ordinary citizen—soldier.

In 1979 Major General Baratz was selected as a Brigadier General in the Army Reserve.

In November 1983, after 11 years of service in the 416th Engineer Command, the Army selected him as commander. President Reagan was well aware of the asset he had in Max Baratz, and nominated him for his second star—a nomination, I might add, that the other body prudently and expeditiously confirmed. During his tenure of more than three years as the commander of the 416th, also found the time to serve on the Army Reserve Forces Policy Committee, first as an alternate member in the 5th Army Area, and then as the principal member from the 4th Army Area. In the closing days of his command, he was selected to be co-chairman of the Army Reserve Forces Policy Committee, a position he held until December 1990.

In 1991, during Operation Desert Shield, Major General Baratz was called to active duty to serve as the Deputy Commanding General for Reserve Affairs for the same United States Forces Command. He personally oversaw the mobilization of almost 85,000 Army Reservists in support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Major General Baratz was personally responsible for one-third of the entire Defense Department's reserve component mobilization to support the Gulf War, and was a major factor in the success of our national efforts in the region. I am thoroughly convinced that, without Major General Baratz personally in charge, our efforts would have been far more difficult and problematic. Those soldiers were the lifeline for the ground forces, and the successful completion of their mission is a testament to the great abilities of this military leader.

Shortly after the Gulf War, Major General Baratz was again called to active duty to be Deputy Commanding General of the United States Army Reserve Command. In this capacity, he was personally responsible for the training and readiness of almost all Army Reserve units in the continental United States. In 1994 he was selected to be the Chief, Army Reserve.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that most people do not know the full scope and awesome responsibilities that come with this position. As the Chief, he oversees Army Reserve policy development and interaction with the Department of the Army and Department of Defense staffs. He is also the Commanding General of the United States Army Reserve Command, as well as the Deputy Commanding General for Reserve Affairs for the United States Forces Command. In short, he is the focal point for virtually all Army reserve component issues.

It should come as no surprise that Major General Baratz was as dedicated and professional in this assignment as he was in all his others. He oversaw a dramatic, and at times, painful reorganization of the Army Reserve that was accomplished, first and foremost, with the needs of the Army and the nation in the forefront of his mind. While its size was being reduced by over one-third, its utility was increasing dramatically. Under his direction, Army Reserve units were the first into and the last out of Haiti. Also, over 70 percent of the Army's reserve component mobilization in support of Operation Restore Democracy came from the Army Reserve. Furthermore, Major General Baratz' efforts were accentuated during the successful deployment of over 15,000 Army Reservists to Bosnia, a figure representing 74 percent of the Army's reserve component mobilization. In fact, more Army Reservists have been mobilized in support of peace keeping efforts in Bosnia than were mobilized during the Vietnam conflict. Under Major General Baratz, the United States Army Reserve is better trained and more relevant to the nation than, perhaps, at any time in its distinguished history.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we all should say a prayer of thanks for Max Baratz and his desire to serve his country for over four decades and under nine different presidents. The United States Army is an institution that prides itself on leadership by example. The example Max Baratz has set ensures that we will always have dedicated men and women ready to take up the cause of our great nation wherever and whenever required. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me to present the distinguished credentials of Major General Max Baratz before the Congress today. However, something tells me that we, as a nation, have not heard the last from him. This tireless patriot may be retiring, but rather than a "farewell," he leaves saying, "until we meet again."

DRUG FREE BORDERS ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. PHILIP M. CRANE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 19, 1998

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3809, the Drug Free Borders Act of 1998.

I am pleased that the House is taking up this important legislation which was reported by the Committee on Ways and Means on Thursday, May 14, by a bipartisan vote 29-0. I believe that H.R. 3809 will lead to a stronger and a more effective Customs Service better able to interdict illegal narcotics while still facilitating passengers and cargo through major land and sea ports.

H.R. 3809 would increase the authorization for the U.S. Customs Service drug enforcement efforts by an additional \$232 million over the President's request for fiscal year 1999. Within two years, H.R. 3809 would add 1,745 additional Customs inspectors, canine enforcement officers, special agents, intelligence analysts, and internal affairs agents to our Southern border with Mexico, our Northern border with Canada, southeast Florida seaports, and major metropolitan locations. It will target areas where significant drug smuggling, drug transportation and distribution networks, and money laundering operations exist.

I am proud to help rebuild our nation's defense against drug smugglers that prey upon our children. In H.R. 3809, we have the ability to give Customs the tools it needs to meet this national goal. We must work to stop illicit drug use by strengthening the ability of the Customs Service to stop the flow of heroin, cocaine and other drugs into our country. Stopping drugs from entering the country and preventing drugs from getting into the hands of our children must be a high priority of this Congress as well as the Customs Service.

H.R. 3809 would also correct significant problems with the overtime and night time pay of Customs Officers and would devote any savings to additional drug enforcement. The Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade, which I am privileged to Chair, held hearings on March 11, 1997, May 15, 1997, and again most recently on April 30, 1998. These hearings, at which the General Accounting Office, Department of the Treasury's Office of the Inspector General, as well as the National Treasury Employees Union testified, shed light upon some disturbing practices resulting from previous Congressional legislation and arbitral rulings. They found that in certain circumstances Customs pays its officers overtime, which is two times their regular rate of pay, when those officers are not even working. In some instances, Customs officers are also paid night pay for hours worked at noon or one in the afternoon.

H.R. 3809 would not only resolve these problems but would use any overtime and night pay savings to pay for additional overtime for those officers already working to interdict cocaine, heroin and other drugs illegally entering the United States. This bill would also give Customs more flexibility in the operation of the fiscal year cap on overtime pay and at the same time allow Customs officers the opportunity to earn even more overtime.

H.R. 3809 seeks to ensure that the Customs Service is not prevented from performing its legitimate drug interdiction efforts or that the integrity of the Customs Service is diminished. Customs must have every tool in its arsenal to ensure the integrity of its Customs officers. Specifically, granting the Secretary of the Treasury the authority to rotate up to 5 percent of Customs officers to new permanent duty locations each year starting in fiscal year 2000, will help guarantee the integrity of Customs officers and is similar to the authority

Customs currently has for its special agents. This provision would become effective after the conclusion of the current contract between Customs and its union to ensure that it does not abrogate the terms of that contract, as some have argued it would.

H.R. 3809 also addresses another serious weakness in the ability of Customs to interdict illegal narcotics. That weakness is Customs' current inability to implement certain measures while labor negotiations drag on, as they have for nearly four years in one case. The bill would allow the Commissioner of Customs to immediately implement any proposed changes without waiting 90 days for the parties to bargain. This would mean that Customs could respond in time to the dangerous changing tactics of drug smugglers. Contrary to statements made by the bill's opponents, this bill would not interfere with the union's bargaining rights or with other rights of the union, such as redress before the Federal Service Impasse panel. This bill gives Customs the flexibility to get to the battlefield on time and win the war on drugs.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3809 and stop drugs from destroying the lives of our children and grand children.

BROWN TREE SNAKES THREATEN HAWAII

HON. NEIL ABERCROMBIE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 21, 1998

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring an article in the June/July 1998 National Wildlife Federation magazine to the attention of Congress.

The article, entitled "A State Without Snakes Keeps a Wary Eye Out for an Alien Invader," describes the threat that Hawaii faces from the brown tree snake. As explained by the article's author, the brown tree snake has already devastated the ecology of Guam, and it is one of the most frightening alien species threatening Hawaii today. If it manages to become established in Hawaii, the snake could decimate Hawaii's entire bird population, as it has already done on Guam. It is also known to attack babies, eat pets, and cause frequent electricity outages by climbing power lines.

Numerous programs in both the public and private sectors have been organized to contain and control the brown tree snake population. They deserve our support. Hawaii has unique and endangered plant and animal species, many of which would be threatened if the snake succeeded in establishing itself in the Hawaiian Islands. It is possible, but unlikely, that this event may have already occurred. Because there are no natural predators, one pregnant snake could establish this species on the islands.

As we move toward consideration of appropriations in the weeks ahead, I look forward to sufficient funds being approved by the House for brown tree snake research and eradication.

[From National Wildlife, June/July 1998]

(By Anne Rillero)

A STATE WITHOUT SNAKES KEEPS A WARY EYE OUT FOR AN ALIEN INVADER

Fred Kraus lifts a piece of corrugated metal, inspecting the ground beneath it.

"You have to think like a snake," he says, while considering places where a reptile might hide. In the middle of a Honolulu suburb, this wooded ravine offers unlimited possibilities: waist-high grass, tangled brush, rodent burrows, illegally dumped trash, even clumps of houseplants growing wild.

As the alien species coordinator for Hawaii's Department of Land and Natural Resources, Kraus is investigating a report of a snake seen by a boy playing in these woods. The brown-colored snake climbed a tree until it was level with the eyes of the boy, who turned and ran.

Throughout much of the United States, such a snake sighting would attract little attention. But in Hawaii—except for the harmless, earthwormlike Brahminy blind snake, which was introduced to the state from Asia—there are no terrestrial snakes. So any sighting suggests frightening possibilities. Given the Aloha State's subtropical climate and lack of predators, some of the world's most venomous snakes could easily become established there.

Kraus is particularly concerned about the threat of an infestation by *Boiga irregularis*, the brown tree snake. The cause of a devastating ecological catastrophe on the island of Guam, it is considered one of the most frightening alien species threatening Hawaii today.

Biologists believe the first brown tree snakes arrived in Guam after World War II as stowaways on cargo ships from one of their homelands: northern Australia, Indonesia, New Guinea or the Solomon Islands. Free of the natural controls of their native habitat and finding abundant prey for every stage of their lives, the snakes multiplied at an astonishing rate. Some areas of Guam are now infested with as many as 12,000 brown tree snakes per square mile and bird life of any kind is rare on the Pacific island.

An extraordinary climber, the snake devours eggs, hatchlings and adult birds. It has decimated 9 of Guam's 12 native forest birds, pushing 3 species into extinction. Another imperiled creature, the Marianas fruit bat, is also close to extinction because of snake predation.

"The brown tree snake is capable of adapting to many tropical areas," says Thomas Fritts, a biologist with the U.S. Geological Survey who has been studying the species since 1984. Sightings of the reptiles have been reported in Okinawa, Wake Island, the Marshall Islands, Tinian, Rota, Diego Garcia, Texas and Spain. Biologists believe that most or all of these snakes originated on Guam.

Known for its bulging eyes and large head, an adult brown tree snake averages four to seven feet in length. It is a voracious nocturnal hunter that kills by constricting its prey with a mild venom injected with its back teeth. On Guam, it has snatched chickens and pets from yards and has even attacked babies asleep in cribs. Guam's public health records indicate that 74 toddlers were treated for snake bites between 1989 and 1995.

To date, the reptile has not caused any human fatalities. But it has caused other problems for people. According to authorities at Guam's electric companies, the climbing snakes frequently short out power lines, causing an average of one electric outage every three days.

Because the brown tree snake is light sensitive, it coils into concealed hiding places by day. When it selects an airplane wheel well or outgoing cargo as its hiding place, the reptile can hitchhike to new habitats.

Since 1981, seven brown tree snakes have been found in Hawaii. All were captured or dead upon discovery, but some other reported snake sightings have not been resolved and authorities worry whether they can effectively stop the reptile from slithering in the state.