

MATAGORDA POLICE 100 CLUB

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 17, 1998

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, when we go on the August break I will attend a number of events back in my district and one which I will be very proud to attend will be the Matagorda County 100 Club Awards banquet. This group provides assistance to the families of law enforcement personnel who are slain on the job.

I can think of no better example of how people can freely work together to provide assistance to those who are in need, and who are most deserving of the help of their neighbors. Officers slain in duty give their lives to protect the liberties of the citizens. Our Nation has a strong tradition of local law enforcement, a tradition which would fail without the courage and willingness of men and women to put their lives on the line by working as state and local law enforcement agents.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to commend the 100 Clubs and the brave men and women who serve as local law enforcement agents.

TRIBUTE TO LUTHER H.
BATTISTE, III

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 17, 1998

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my good friend Luther H. Battiste, III, as he retires from the City Council of Columbia, South Carolina.

In 1983 he was elected to represent the newly created City Council District One. During his 15 years on the Council, he was re-elected three times and served two terms as Mayor Pro Tempore. Mr. Battiste is one of the first two African Americans to serve on the Columbia City Council.

During his tenure, he spearheaded the effort to acquire and renovate Eau Claire Town Hall, strongly supported the annexation of the Greenview, Fairwold and Belvedere communities, and initiated the idea for the establishment of public housing on Arsenal Hill, that project has become a national model for quality and innovation. He developed the concept of utilizing the park system for music concerts, chaired the committee that produced the implementation of the Congaree Vista Zoning Overlay, and devised the policy banning City of Columbia investments in South Africa. He also co-sponsored the establishment of the first City of Columbia Minority Business Enterprise Program, strongly opposed the proliferation of community care homes and cellular towers and strongly advocated the preservation of city neighborhoods and the establishment of programs to stimulate middle income housing.

He has been praised by many in his community, and described as "one of the most articulate and thoughtful members of [the] Council." He leaves behind a legacy in city neighborhoods, housing, cultural enhancement, downtown revitalization, and equal access and opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join with me in wishing my very good friend Luther J. Battiste, III, well, as he leaves the Columbia city council.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NATIONAL
PARKS AIR TOUR MANAGEMENT
ACT OF 1998

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 17, 1998

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce today the National Parks Air Tour Management Act of 1998.

I am joined in the introduction of this legislation with a number of distinguished colleagues.

These Members include the Chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, BUD SHUSTER from Pennsylvania, the Chairman of the Resources Committee, DON YOUNG from Alaska, the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee, BOB SMITH from Oregon, the Chairman of the National Parks Subcommittee, JIM HANSEN from Utah, the Ranking Member of the Transportation Committee, Mr. OBERSTAR, the Ranking Member of the Aviation Subcommittee, Mr. LIPINSKI, as well as Mr. ENSIGN and Mr. GIBBONS from Nevada.

Mr. Speaker, this very distinguished group of Members worked tirelessly to get us to this point today.

This legislation represents an agreement which strikes a balance between air tour and environmental concerns, Native American interests, and jurisdictional areas between the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Park Service.

The bill seeks to promote safety and quiet in national parks by establishing a process for developing air tour flight management in and around our national parks.

This legislation ensures that the FAA has sole authority to control airspace over the United States and that the National Park Service has the responsibility to manage park resources.

These two Agencies, under this legislation, will work cooperatively in developing air tour management plans for air tour operators and will both share the fundamental responsibility to ensure that air tours over national parks and tribal lands are conducted in a safe, efficient, and unintrusive manner.

Mr. Speaker, let me also acknowledge Senator JOHN MCCAIN for his leadership on this issue. I know that Senator MCCAIN has been active on this for several years, has chaired a number of Senate hearings, and is moving similar legislation in the other body.

There has also been a number of oversight hearings here in the House. Mr. OBERSTAR, former Chairman of the Aviation Subcommittee held a joint hearing with the National Park Subcommittee in July of 1994.

Last year, Chairman HANSEN and I held a field hearing in St. George, Utah. We heard from a number of very impressive witnesses representing different views and opinions.

At that time, it appeared that it would be extremely difficult to be able to reach a consensus on how to handle air tours over our national parks.

However, with resolve and determination, differences have been worked out and we

have crafted legislation that is acceptable to all concerned.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the entire National Parks Overflights Working Group for their dedication and cooperation in the development of this legislation.

This Working Group was selected by the Administration last year to develop a plan for instituting flight management over national parks.

For more than a year, working group representatives of the air tour, environmental, and Native American communities—along with the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Park Service negotiated.

A number of meetings were held here in Washington as well as other parts of the Country.

This group developed a basic framework for the management of air tours at national parks and recommended that Congress capture this approach in legislation.

The Working Group consists of Mr. Charles Maynard from Sevierville, Tennessee and the Friends of the Great Smoky Mountains. Mr. Alan Steven from Twin Otter International located in North Las Vegas, Nevada.

Mr. Chip Dennerlein from the National Parks and Conservation Association. Mr. Tom Chapman representing the interests of general aviation.

Mr. Andy Cebula from the National Air Transportation Association. Mr. David Chevalier from Blue Hawaiian Helicopters.

Mr. Richard Deertrack from Taos, New Mexico representing the Native American interests. And, Mr. Boyd Evison, former National Park Superintendent and Regional Director.

Mr. Speaker, all of these gentlemen provided the expertise, insight, and wisdom that helped us develop this consensus legislation.

This is an outstanding bill which will ensure that ground visitors and the elderly, disabled and time-constrained traveler may continue to enjoy the scenic beauty of our national parks for generations to come.

A TRIBUTE TO MR. JOHN KLINE

HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 17, 1998

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding gentleman from my district, who has dedicated many hours to the betterment of his community, Mr. John Kline.

John Kline, a resident of the Clearing community, has dedicated many long hours in the past three years to working in the garden outside the Clearing Branch of the Chicago Public Library. The garden holds a special significance both to the community and myself because it uniquely displays plants and wildflowers native to the region. Mr. Kline is dedicated to the betterment of his neighborhood and is consistently in tune with the interests of the members of the community.

Mr. Kline's plight to restore native plants and wildflowers to the environment stems from his desire to give people an idea of what the land looked like when he was young. Mr. Kline cultivates such native wildflowers and plants as: wild phlox, white aster, wild strawberries,

and native violet, the Illinois state flower. Bringing this native vegetation back to an environment that is now urban, has not been an easy task. For example, Mr. Kline has had to replace the garden's urban soil. Mr. Kline has upheld his strong determination to complete his vision for the garden, diligently researching native plants and remaining patient with the garden. Mr. Kline is growing non-native flowers such as tulips to provide some color to the garden, while he is waiting for the soil to become rich enough for a complete native garden.

Mr. Kline's hard work and dedication to the 225 square foot library garden was featured in a recent article in the Chicago Tribune. Mr. Kline has also received the Library Volunteer Recognition Award in 1996 and 1997 for his hard work and numerous volunteer hours.

I hope that you will join me in recognizing Mr. John Kline's strong dedication to the betterment of the people of his community, as well as the land on which they live.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRAGIC
PORT CHICAGO EXPLOSION: OP-
PORTUNITY TO CLEAR THE
NAMES OF CONVICTED SAILORS

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 17, 1998

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, today is the 54th anniversary of the terrible explosion and loss of life at Port Chicago Naval Weapons Station during World War II. A number of survivors, their families and community supporters are gathering today at a memorial on the site of the explosion to mark the anniversary and continue the effort to clear the names of sailors that were wrongly convicted of mutiny after refusing to resume loading munitions in the aftermath of the tragedy.

I was proud to write the law in 1992 that established a National Memorial at the site of the explosion and where the ceremony today is being held.

A little over a half century ago this site was a vital supply center during the crucial phase of World War II in the Pacific. From this site, the munitions that liberated much of Asia from totalitarianism were shipped, and the history of the world was changed.

But as we know, we remember Port Chicago today for another reason as well. Fifty-four years ago tonight, one of the largest pre-nuclear explosions in world history occurred right here. Two supply ships, a supply train, and hundreds of brave and dedicated sailors were vaporized. The devastation was unparalleled in the history of World War II here in the United States with the singular exception of Pearl Harbor.

Today, most of the scars of WWII have healed, and from the ashes of that war a new Asia has arisen. But not all the scars are healed.

For several years, as many of you know, I have been leading an effort, along with the help of our colleague Representative PETE STARK and our former colleague Ron Dellums, to close the books on the one remaining issue in the Port Chicago story: purging the convictions of the sailors who did not return to ship loading operations immediately following the explosion.

Those sailors were neither traitors nor deserters, as some have suggested. They sought the same post-traumatic leave as was allowed their white officer counterparts—leave they were denied because of their race. They sought remediation of the unquestionably hazardous conditions involved in loading the ships which undoubtedly contributed to the events leading to the explosion, including the dangerous competition among loading crews provoked by officers.

Now, along with 40 or our colleagues in the House of Representatives, I am seeking the personal intervention of President Clinton to clear these records. As many of you know, the Navy has already acknowledged that race was an important factor in many aspects of life in the Navy and at Port Chicago in 1944. Their race denied black sailors the opportunity to serve in combat situations. They were assigned to loading operations exclusively because of race, and they were subjected to hazardous conditions in those loading operations because they were black. And ultimately, they were denied equal treatment from the Navy after the explosion solely because of their race.

Their convictions were wrong because they resulted from a system that the highest military officials of this nation now acknowledge was racially biased against black people. The time has long passed for these convictions to be overturned. As the San Francisco Chronicle editorialized on March 1 of this year:

The United States should be a strong enough country to acknowledge that it makes mistakes, especially in the fervor of a world war, and its harsh judgment of these men was indeed a mistake.

That is why the State Legislature unanimously voted to ask President Clinton to intervene: when race taints one aspect of an issue, when it creates the context in which a condition exists, it is a factor in what results from those conditions. That is why these convictions must be expunged.

Whenever I speak out on behalf of the Port Chicago sailors, there is always someone who writes to criticize my efforts. But recently, someone wrote with another perspective that I want to share with you today, a man in Rancho Mirage, California, whose late uncle, a long-time Navy man, was severely injured by the Port Chicago explosion. Here is what he wrote:

[I]t certainly is understandable that those who were loading the ammunition and who were treated so shabbily by their superiors (almost as if they were completely expendable fodder) would definitely not want to go back into the situation. I wouldn't either. These men deserve to have their names cleared and their dignity restored. I don't doubt that my uncle would have wanted the same thing.

So, on this 54th anniversary on this historic tragedy, let us both recall the bravery and sacrifice of those who served and those who died here at Port Chicago in pursuit of peace and justice. And let us include a prayer for those who served here and who still seek justice from the government they risked their lives to defend.

I will continue my efforts to secure a fair hearing and justice for the sailors of Port Chicago, and their families and survivors, and with the support of the survivors, their families, the families of the victims and the community at large we will secure that justice that has eluded these men for a half century.

THE FOOD SAFETY ENFORCEMENT
ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 1998

HON. JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 17, 1998

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker today I, along with a host of my colleagues, am introducing the Food Safety Enforcement Enhancement Act of 1998. I believe that one of this government's fundamental responsibilities is ensuring that Americans have the safest food possible.

The recent outbreaks of E. coli across the country have caused illnesses and at least one death. A woman in her 90s from Washington County, Maine, died after becoming infected.

The outbreak has shaken the confidence of American consumers. Americans are stunned when they learn that the Secretary of Agriculture does not have the authority to demand a recall of contaminated meat. The Secretary cannot impose civil fines on a company that knowingly or repeatedly violates food-safety laws.

Consumers, farmers and ranchers are all asking that more be done to prevent food-borne contamination and that something be done to stop the spread of contaminated meat once it is discovered.

The legislation, developed with the United States Department of Agriculture, and introduced as a companion to a bill sponsored by Senator HARKIN, would give the Department some common-sense powers.

It requires notification of the USDA when contaminated meat or poultry products are discovered. It gives the Secretary the authority to recall contaminated meat and poultry as soon as it is discovered. It also gives the Secretary the authority to levy civil penalties on slaughterhouses and processors for violations of food safety laws.

I view this as the beginning of a process to identify ways to foster improvements in the meat and poultry food chain that can lead to improved public safety, enhanced consumer confidence and acceptance by producers, processors and consumers of their shared responsibilities in ensuring that Americans continue to enjoy the safest and most abundant food supply in the world.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING SHORTAGE
AND FEDERAL MORTGAGE PRE-
PAYMENTS

HON. MARTIN OLAV SABO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 17, 1998

Mr. SABO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my serious concerns about the critical shortage of affordable housing across our country and its devastating impact on a growing number of people—particularly in my home city of Minneapolis and in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The Twin Cities have a rental housing vacancy rate of less than 2 percent—5 percent is considered full occupancy.

The lack of sufficient new production of affordable rental housing is now being exacerbated by the increasing number of federally-subsidized mortgages that are being prepaid.