

The commitment and drive exhibited by Peggy continues to greatly benefit our community. She understands that one must remain politically active in order to bring about improvements in our society. She has been out in the trenches struggling to ensure that competent, qualified, and concerned people hold the elected positions in her community. She continues to function as an active member of the Breukelen Tenants Association.

In describing Peggy, I would have to use the words, motivated, cooperative, and charitable. The needs of other people are paramount to Peggy. I commend Peggy Rodgers and pray that she will succeed in all future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO U.S. ARMY COMMAND
SERGEANT MAJOR RONALD W.
BEDFORD—A REAL AMERICAN
HERO

HON. TERRY EVERETT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 4, 1999

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, our society has cheapened the name of heroes today by elevating millionaire movie, music and sports stars while ignoring those Americans who perform unselfish acts of courage and sacrifice. I wish to pay tribute to an American whose character and actions truly define heroism.

On September 2, the 54th anniversary of VJ-DAY, U.S. Army Command Sergeant Major Donald W. Bedford, began a 1,500 mile journey from Mobile, Alabama to Washington, DC. His trek, which takes him through six states and the District of Columbia, is remarkable because it is entirely on foot. But CSM Bedford is not walking this enormous distance to set any record. Instead, he is striding the 71-day route to bring attention to and raise funding for the construction of a national memorial to honor America's greatest generation of heroes—those who fought in World War II.

Bedford, an ex-airborne infantryman now stationed at Fort Rucker, Alabama in my congressional district, came up with the idea of the walk after learning that there was no national memorial for the 16 million Americans who served and sacrificed to liberate the world from Nazi and Japanese occupation in World War II. His efforts to help raise money for the on-going World War II Memorial fund have gained the support of the Non-Commissioned Officers Association, and the praise of former Senator Bob Dole, who chairs the World War II Memorial Committee.

CSM Bedford's journey of 2,792,000 steps will take him through 144 cities and 15 military installations before he arrives at Arlington National Cemetery on November 11. From there, he will cross Memorial Bridge, pass by the Lincoln Memorial, and then proceed to the spot on the national mall where the World War II Memorial will be built next year.

I salute CSM Bedford for his personal sacrifice and dedication to America's greatest generation and I join all Americans in welcoming him to Washington this Veterans' Day.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JULIA CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 4, 1999

Ms. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent Monday, November 1, 1999, and Tuesday, November 2, 1999, and as a result, missed rollcall votes 550 through 556. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall vote 550, "yes" on rollcall vote 551, "no" on rollcall vote 552, "yes" on rollcall vote 553, "yes" on rollcall vote 554, "yes" on rollcall vote 555, and "yes" on rollcall vote 556.

WITHDRAW COSPONSORSHIP OF
H.R. 2528

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 4, 1999

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, today I withdraw my cosponsorship of H.R. 2528. I was an original cosponsor of H.R. 2528, the Immigration Reorganization and Improvement Act of 1999, because I support any effort to jumpstart—or better put, restart—the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Chairman HAROLD ROGERS, Chairman LAMAR SMITH and Representative SILVESTRE REYES have worked diligently to fashion a restructuring bill and are doing what they believed best moves us toward that end. I had concerns about the bill when I first signed on. But I felt it was important to support efforts to restructure the INS. I had hoped H.R. 2528 would move in a direction addressing my concerns. However, at this stage I find that the current status of the bill falls short of meeting the elements necessary to make it a meaningful reform that will place the INS on solid footing to effectively address its obligations.

History has shown that the INS does not receive the resources necessary to carry out its duties in the area of services and adjudication. This is why the backlog of pending naturalization applications grew to approximately 2.0 million and currently stands at approximately 1.4 million. Far too many of those backlogged applicants waited or have been waiting over 2 years for their cases to be adjudicated. The backlog and delay in other adjudication areas—adjustments of status and the green card replacement program, for instance—are as bad if not worse than for naturalization. As such, my primary concern pertains to the financing mechanisms within the INS for the services and adjudication functions of the agency. Current law and its implementation fail to meet this challenge. And H.R. 2528 falls far short as well. So long as we continue to require fees collected from immigrants for a particular service to pay for non-fee activities, we will always run into budgetary problems and services will suffer. H.R. 2528 authorizes no funds whatsoever for backlog reduction or asylum and refugee processing. This additional strain on already stretched resources, with no additional funding, will only exacerbate the backlogs as well as undermine the United States' ability to meet the protection needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

I am also seriously concerned that H.R. 2528 does not go the necessary mile to en-

sure that these newly independent agencies of the Department of Justice's immigration until function properly under the oversight and direction of a principal executive. While autonomy for the enforcement and service agencies will allow them to perfect and specialize in their areas of responsibility, too much distance between them could foil the ability of the Department of Justice to direct, coordinate and integrate the overlap in enforcement and service functions. The latest version of H.R. 2528 improves upon the original bill by adding an Assistant Attorney General as that principal in charge. However, it maintains three separate legal and policy offices which will lead to multiple interpretations of immigration, refugee and asylum law. This structure will bear three bureaucracies instead of one and cultivate confusion among the three arms of the agency.

I am committed to continuing to work with the authors of H.R. 2528 along with the Immigration Subcommittee members and the Clinton administration to strengthen the structure of the INS so that it can finally, rightfully handle all duties under its charge. The people of America who must turn to the INS for services—and who happen to pay the taxes and fees to fund this and all other government operations—deserve no less.

TRIBUTE TO LEVI PEARSON

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 4, 1999

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, this Saturday, November 6, 1999, the South Carolina Department of Archives and History will dedicate a historic marker to honor Levi Pearson, a leader in the civil rights movement in Clarendon County, South Carolina. Mr. Pearson personified great courage, leadership and perseverance in his role as a plaintiff in *Pearson v. County Board of Education* (1948) which led to the historic May 17, 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing separate and unequal schools. Recordings of the civil rights movement in South Carolina rank him among the state's most outstanding pioneers for equality in education. Many local and national events, news articles, books and television documentaries recognize his role in the struggle which led to the Supreme Court's decision. Simple Justice by Richard Kluger and Stepping Stones to the Supreme Court by Benjamin F. Hornsby, Jr. are two publications that depict many of the details of Mr. Pearson's trials.

For background, Mr. Speaker, I wish to enter for the record information from an article which was written as a tribute to him when he was inducted into the South Carolina Black Hall of Fame:

"An obscure country farmer, Levi Pearson never dreamed that his legal action on behalf of black children in Summerton, South Carolina would figure in the historic May 17, 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision outlawing separate and unequal schools. They are role models and an inspiration to all who value freedom and justice. As a partner, in the Clarendon County insurrection led by the Rev. Joseph Albert Delaine, Levi Pearson had unshakable faith in the victory of justice over an entrenched social order that seemed all but immovable.