Mr. Speaker, please join me today to honor William Shively for all he has done to help others. We wish him and his family all the best in his retirement and in all his future endeavors.

RESIGNATION OF NATIONAL FOREST SUPERVISOR GLORIA FLORA

HON. GEORGE MILLER OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 1999

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, Gloria Flora, forest Supervisor of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest in Nevada resigned last week, citing relentless "fed-bashing." Since becoming Supervisor of the largest national forest in the lower 48 just over a year ago, Ms. Flora has become embroiled in disputes over grazing, endangered species protection, and road closures. One of these disputes resulted in Elko County residents, including public officials, illegally rebuilding a forest road without federal permits, an act which in turn triggered a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service emergency listing of the bull trout. At the forefront of these disputes are extremists whose radical anti-government stance has translated into several instances of intimidation and harassment of federal land managers and acts of violence against public servants and property.

It is deeply distressing that public servants who are administering and enforcing the law are subjected to such hostile circumstances that they are forced to leave their jobs and homes. We should keep in mind that federal land managers like Ms. Flora are charged with enforcing laws passed by the Congress and entrusted with public lands and natural resources that belong to all the people of this country.

For twenty years, the wise use movement in its various forms—the Sagebrush rebellion, states' rights, county supremacy—has fostered hostility and hatred toward officials enforcing the laws of Congress. Rather than perpetuating the distrust and disdain for the government and its laws, I urge my colleagues to use their good offices to create a climate of decency and cooperation.

Mr. Speaker, while I deeply regret that Ms. Flora has chosen to resign, I sincerely hope that we take this opportunity to express our support for her and for the many Forest Service employees who share her concerns. I submit Ms. Flora's letter to her fellow employees.

OPEN LETTER TO EMPLOYEES OF THE HUMBOLDT-TOIYABE NATIONAL FOREST

November 8, 1999

There is no easy way to say goodbye to a group of hard-working, dedicated employees and friends. But the time has come when I must do just that. The best part of working on this Forest is watching each of you perform your work so well. The results speak for themselves in the outstanding land stewardship and exemplary business practices found on this Forest.

I have become increasingly troubled by the difficult conditions that so many of us face in the state of Nevada. We now accept as commonplace unwarranted criticisms of and verbal attacks on federal employees. Officials at all levels of government in Nevada participate in this irresponsible fed-bashing.

The public is largely silent, watching as if this were a spectator sport. This level of anti-federal fervor is simply not acceptable. It is not like this in other places! As you know, I recently visited the Intermountain West: Montana, Idaho, Utah and Wyoming. Yes, there are arguments and strong local opinions that are political, but they usually stay within the bounds of reason. As tensions escalate, others weigh in with their opinions and the media does a depth investigative reporting. There is a sense of balance, even in the fiery rhetoric, and acts, regardless of the origin, are repudiated openly by reasonable community members. Constructive collaborative discourse is recognized as the methods to resolve complex natural resource issues. Yes, things may get heated but all people have a voice.

The attitude towards federal employees and federal laws in Nevada is pitiful. People in rural communities who do respect the law and accept responsibility for complying with it are often rebuked or ridiculed. They are compared to collaborators with the Vichy government in Nazi-controlled France! People who support the federal government or conservation efforts are treated with contempt and under legal actions. These things are not compatible. By speaking out, I believe that it is best to keep turning the other cheek. It is deeply distressing that public servants who have been harassed, called before kangaroo courts, or had their very lives threatened. It disturbs me to think that two million people in this state watch silently, or worse, in amusement, as a small percent of their number break laws and trounce the rights of others with impunity. Worse yet, there are elected officials who actively support these offenders. Those whose responsibility it is to help us enforce the laws passed by Congress and do our business as taxpayers seem to have a reason why action must be postponed.

The jibridge situation is just another example of how certain elements would rather fence and excoriates the federal government than work towards a solution. These people need an "evil empire" to attack. When a member of the United States Congress joins forces with those who use the power of the office to stage a public inquiry of federal employees followed by a political fundraiser, I must protest. This member and others continue to do this, and I continue to believe that it is best to keep turning the other cheek. Enough is enough. I am not promoting conflict, I'm simply advocating that our agency demands fairness and common decency. It's time to speak up.

But speaking up and continuing to work here are not compatible. By speaking out, I cannot provide you, my employees, with a safe working environment. And to date, I have not been able to convince others that the current situation is unacceptable and requires a proactive response. I refuse to continue to participate in this charade of normalcy.

Equally troubling is our limited ability to perform the mission of the Forest Service under these conditions. As stewards for public lands, entrusted with protecting and restoring natural resources for present and future generations, we must be able to perform those functions in a collaborative and cooperative manner. The health of the land is paramount.

I am choosing to leave for my principles, for personal well-being, and so I can actualize my commitment to natural resource management in a setting where respect and civil discourse is the norm. I have no definite plans. I am not seeking special treatment from the agency. I will stay at least until the end of the year to help ensure a smoother transition to new leadership.

I know that I've worked throughout the Interagency Committee to present to law enforcement personnel, elected officials, and school boards the methods to resolve conflicts. As a small percent of our state in this country, we do our business as taxpayers. And, throughout this school year, Gotlieb will be hosting a series of Child Safety Programs that will provide parents with free copies of their children's fingerprints along with Polaroid pictures to present to law enforcement personnel in the event of an emergency.

Further, as my Deputy Chief of Staff, Brian Lance Gotlieb has served as my liaison to the Board of Education and School Construction Authority for the last three years. In addition, he is primarily responsible for the intake and resolution of constituent concerns in my Community Office located in the Sheepshead Bay section of Brooklyn.

Gotlieb, who credits his late mother, Myrna, with teaching him the importance of helping others and being active in the community, created the highly successful organization Shorefront Toys for Tots in 1995. Founded in his mother's memory, Shorefront Toys for Tots has helped bring Chanukah cheer to more than 7,500 underprivileged children in the Shorefront community.

A student at the Rabbi Hillel Harlen Day School and its Talmud Torah High School division, Gotlieb packed and delivered Passover packages to aid needy senior citizens.