

volunteerism. Remembered by her friend Mr. Lewis Heldt for "all of her accomplishments over her long, active lifetime," as well as for her efforts in her role as Honorary Chairperson for the last Fallen Timbers Battlefield fund drive, Ruth Quackenbush Dodge and her good works will truly be missed. We extend to her son David, her five grandchildren, and her six great-grandchildren our deepest condolences. At the same time, we celebrate her remarkable accomplishments and honor her memory by trying to live by her exemplary pioneering and socially responsible spirit.

SUPPORTING RAILROAD FAMILIES

HON. JOHN P. MURTHA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2001

Mr. MURTHA. Mr. Speaker, as a co-sponsor of the Railroad Retirement and Survivors Improvement Act of 2001, I urge the House of Representatives to pass this legislation—it marks a vital opportunity to strengthen the retirement benefits for thousands of railroad families.

This legislation modernizes and strengthens the retirement system which has covered railroad workers for 65 years. It provides more secure benefits at lower costs to employers and employees, has the support of both rail management and labor, and provides the kind of solid retirement support we need for the 673,000 retirees and beneficiaries.

Among the key elements of this legislation we debate today are:

- provides for increased responsibility by the railroad industry for the financial health of the Railroad Retirement system

- the legislation improves the benefits for retirees and their families; in particular it makes major improvements in benefits for widows and widowers—a key in meeting today's high costs in areas like energy and health

- reduces the current early retirement age of 62 with 30 years of service to age 60 with 30 years of service

- tax rates are substantially reduced for employees

- and currently it takes 10 years to vest for retirement benefits, but this reduces it to 5–7 years, much more similar to other industries.

This reform legislation is the result of 2½ years of negotiations and it will build on the stability of the railroad retirement system, the fairness of retirement benefits, and the need to make adjustments to help retirees meet their needs.

This bi-partisan legislation is fair, is needed, and is long overdue. I urge the House of Representatives to overwhelmingly pass this legislation and the Senate to do likewise.

SHARK PROTECTION ACT OF 2001

HON. ENI F.H. FALÉOMAVAEGA

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2001

Mr. FALÉOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Shark Protection Act of 2001.

Last year Congress passed and President Clinton signed Public Law 106–557, the Shark

Finning Prohibition Act. The goal of that law is to prohibit the activity known as shark finning—the catching of live sharks, removing their fins, and throwing the carcasses back into the water, retaining only the fins.

The practice of shark finning had been prohibited in all U.S. waters except in the Pacific Ocean. Last year's bill prohibited in the U.S. Pacific removal of shark fins and discarding of the carcasses, having custody of shark fins without the corresponding carcasses on board a fishing vessel, and the landing of shark fins without the corresponding carcasses by any vessel.

I had hoped to also prohibit vessels from being in U.S. waters with shark fins on board and the selling of shark fins without the corresponding carcasses in last year's bill, but that was not practical for two reasons. Article 17 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea grants all vessels a right of innocent passage through the territorial seas of other member states. A prohibition of the loading and unloading of shark fins without the corresponding carcasses is permissible under subsection (g) of Article 19 of the Convention, but it appears that any attempt to restrict passage of vessels solely transiting our waters would be in conflict with this international treaty to which the United States is a party.

I believe Congress can, however, prohibit the offering for sale, selling, and purchasing in interstate or foreign commerce of shark fins without the corresponding carcasses anywhere within our national jurisdiction, and that is what this bill does. This might arguably be included as a prohibited act under Section 301(1)(G) [16 U.S.C. 1857(1)(G)] of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, which makes it unlawful for any person to "ship, transport, offer for sale, sell, purchase, import, export, or have custody, control, or possession of, any fish taken or retained . . .". I am concerned that the definition of "fish" found at Section 3(12) of Magnuson-Stevens [16 U.S.C. 1802(12)] includes only whole fish (including sharks), but not parts of fish. The bill I am introducing today would clarify this point by prohibiting the selling of shark fins without carcasses.

Mr. Speaker, the practice of shark finning is continuing to this day in the Pacific. Earlier this year, after passage of the Shark Finning Prohibition Act, a non-fishing vessel entered the port of American Samoa with shark fins on board. This "cargo" was not seized based on the "innocent passage doctrine" noted above. As long as shark fin soup is so popular in many parts of Asia that people are willing to pay \$100 for a bowl of the soup, the problem will continue. We need an international ban on shark finning. Public Law 106–557 initiated a process to accomplish this, and I look forward to receiving from the Administration a report later this year on this important area, as required under that law.

I want to do all I can to stop the wasteful practice of shark finning, and I urge my colleagues to join me by supporting this bill.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JACK QUINN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2001

Mr. QUINN. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 286, 287, 288, and 289 I was unavoidably de-

tained in the district while at Georgetown University on family educational business.

A TRIBUTE TO WALTER BURKS

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2001

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I will be unable to attend the homegoing services for your husband, father, brother, and my friend, Walter Burks. Please accept this letter in my absence.

I observed Walter Burks from a far as a teen, working in the campaigns of the late Ambassador Carl Stokes, and the Honorable Congressman Louis Stokes. I came to admire this man some called the "Silver Fox" (silver for the hair color and fox for his leadership skills), as he lead the Department of Personnel of the City of Cleveland, in the cabinet of then Mayor Carl B. Stokes. My summer internship in the Department of Public Utilities gave me more opportunities to see him in action. He seldom raised his voice and understood the important roll he played in assuring that everyone had access to employment opportunities with the City of Cleveland.

As I matured and decided to run for public office, Walter was always there to support and encourage me. After public office, Walter, even in his private business continued to work to improve the lives of the people of his community. His housing developments are testament to that work.

My only regret is that I didn't have a chance to say goodbye. So Walter, since I know you are looking down upon us, Thank You, I Love You, and God Bless You. Rest well and if we do as you have done, we will meet again.

I join with the residents of the 11th Congressional District, who mourn the lost of a great civic leader, political activist, family man, and friend.

[From the Cleveland Plain Dealer]

WALTER BURKS, 77, WAS BUILDER, CIVIC LEADER, POLITICAL ACTIVIST

(By Richard M. Peery)

Plain Dealer Reporter

SHAKER HEIGHTS.—Walter Burks, 77, a developer and political activist who built more than 200 homes in Cleveland, died Thursday at University Hospitals.

Burks was a former trustee of Cleveland State University. He served on the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections and the State Board of Education. Mayor Carl B. Stokes appointed him personnel director and chairman of the Civil Service Commission.

In 1974, he formed Burks Electric Co. and participated in commercial and public building projects, including the rebuilding of the Regional Transit Authority's Shaker rapid line.

Burks was born in Cleveland. He attended East Technical High School and studied engineering at Penn College.

Drafted into the Marine Corps during World War II, he was a sergeant in an engineers unit on Eniwetok and the Marshall Islands in the Pacific. After the war, he and his first wife, Cynthia, built a home on E. 147th St. in Mount Pleasant. Although banks refused to lend to nonwhites in that area, he obtained financing from a black insurance company. He later helped friends build homes nearby.