

It is my privilege to recognize Stanton College Preparatory School for its outstanding achievements.

TRIBUTE TO RUTH GALANTER

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 17, 2003

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to my dear friend, Ruth Galanter, on the occasion of her retirement from the Los Angeles City Council. Ruth is an amazing, passionate and intelligent person who has accomplished so much in her political career without ever compromising her impeccable integrity or diminishing her idealism. I have had the pleasure of working with her since the 1970's when she was a prominent environmental activist and later as a member of the California Coastal Commission. I not only respect her professionally, but I value her friendship and advice.

Elected in 1987 to the Los Angeles Sixth City Council District, Ruth has spent the last 15 years shaping and improving the city of Los Angeles. Ruth was President Pro Tem for 4 years and became president of the council in 2001. She is admired and well-respected by her friends, colleagues and associates. In addition to her legendary success in solving constituent problems and her well-known legislative prowess, Ruth has made a name for herself protecting the environment. She spearheaded the city's recycling program, authored the city's major water conservation programs and led the effort to fluoridate the city's water supply. She also directed the city's conservation efforts to ensure an adequate safe water supply for the next century.

Early in her tenure, Ruth created a network of Community Planning Advisory Committees which assisted her in significant land use decisions throughout the city. Also, as chair of the Council's Committee on Commerce, Energy and Natural Resources, she worked to negotiate the challenges posed by electricity deregulation and the current energy crisis facing the State. And, as the city council's expert on aviation and airport issues, Ruth's futurist vision has improved the quality of life for all who live in southern California. She knows that the decisions made today regarding airport capacity and other transportation services directly impact our quality of life today and in the future.

Born in New York City, Ruth received a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Michigan and a Masters Degree in Urban Planning from Yale. Los Angeles has been blessed to have her at the helm, and I am proud to call her my friend.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me in thanking Ruth Galanter for all she has done and wishing her continued success in all her future endeavors.

INTRODUCTION OF PUERTO RICO
KARST CONSERVATION ACT OF
2003

HON. ANÍBAL ACEVEDO-VILÁ

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 17, 2003

Mr. ACEVEDO-VILÁ. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduced the Puerto Rico Karst Conservation Act of 2003. This bipartisan legislation is a common sense legislative approach that will protect a vital ecosystem in Puerto Rico, the Karst Region. The region is comprised of a unique geological and hydrological system of limestone caves, sinkholes and underground rivers, collectively known as karst, and is widely valued to the livelihood of Puerto Rico.

The Karst Region of Puerto Rico, located along the North and Northwest coasts of the Island, has many outstanding features. This region is home to the largest remaining tropical rainforests in Puerto Rico, and has a greater density of tree species than anywhere else on the Island. These forests provide habitat to a wide array of plants and animals, too many of which are endangered or threatened. In fact, the Karst Region has been identified as a secondary habitat for the restoration of the Puerto Rican parrot, a bird that is among the ten most endangered birds in the world, and the existence of which has plummeted to only 24 birds in the wild.

In addition to the extraordinary flora and fauna of the Karst Region, the water and watersheds are the most unique feature of the Karst Region. While rivers and streams are widespread throughout Puerto Rico, the vast majority of the water in the Karst Region flows underground. Where this water flows out of the ground, from springs and along the coast, it provides fresh water to nearly one-quarter of the Puerto Rico population. In addition, specific manufacturing and industrial sectors, such as the pharmaceutical industry, rely on the Karst Region's supply of clean water for their business. Without a doubt, the Karst Region sustains a large percentage of wildlife, human life, and the economy of Puerto Rico.

Yet Puerto Rico has among the highest population densities of any jurisdiction in the United States. Large, undeveloped tracts of land are becoming increasingly less common on the Island. However, the Karst Region has remained rural in nature, and has not been beset by the development and growth of the rest of Puerto Rico. The hills and unique geology of the Karst Region have forestalled similar population growth. Unfortunately, threats to the Karst Region are growing. Continued population growth will create increasing pressure on the conservation of this important region. Development of roads, resorts and other infrastructure in the region would fragment wildlife habitat, reduce water quality, and would reduce the preserved nature of the Karst Region for the rest of time.

But the Puerto Rico Karst Conservation Act will help conserve the lands and waters of the Karst Region, and stave off the threats of development. This bill, I believe, is an ideal piece of preservation policy. It places the responsibility of conservation and management not with any single entity, but requires that lands in the Karst Region be acquired and managed in a cooperative fashion.

Using funds collected in a fund established on the books of the U.S. Treasury, the Karst

Fund, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will distribute grants to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, conservation organizations and others for the purpose of acquiring and managing lands for conservation in the Karst Region. Acquired lands, purchased only from willing sellers, may only be managed for conservation, and the bill includes provisions that will protect those lands from development. Resources in the Karst Fund are derived from the existing programs of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Forest Legacy Program, from receipts generated from the Caribbean National Forest and GSA sale of property in Puerto Rico, from donations, direct appropriations, and from interest derived in the Fund. While the U.S. Forest Service is authorized to acquire lands, authority that in fact exists in current law, the agency focus will be on technical assistance and management guidance rather than actual land acquisition.

It is my belief that this bill is the most appropriate manner of approaching the conservation needs of the Karst. The Federal Government can bring important resources and experience to the table, yet the land will be primarily acquired and managed by local entities, who are best able to relate to, understand, and advocate for the conservation of the lands of the Karst Region.

I am proud and honored by the support that this bill has gained from my colleagues. Congressman JIMMY DUNCAN of Tennessee has joined me, along with six of my distinguished Democratic colleagues, to introduce this bill in the House, and I greatly appreciate their support. In addition, Senator TOM HARKIN and Senator RICHARD LUGAR, recognizing the vital importance of protecting the Karst Region, have introduced companion legislation in Senate. Their support is essential to the eventual success of this bill, and I appreciate their leadership on this issue.

Protecting the Karst Region of Puerto Rico is a large and important task. However, this legislation that I have introduced today will enable resources to be brought to the protection and conservation of the lands and water of the Karst Region. As many regions in the United States are now suffering due to a lack of water resources, affording this protection to the Karst Region will help ensure water quality and availability into the future. The cooperative nature of this conservation effort will, in my mind, enable it to succeed, and through this unique partnership, the magnificent and unique Karst Region will be preserved for this, and future generations of Puerto Rico.

COMMENDING MEDGAR WILEY
EVERS AND MYRLIE EVERS-WIL-
LIAMS FOR THEIR LIVES AND
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SPEECH OF

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 16, 2003

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Medgar Wiley Evers and Myrlie Evers-Williams. These two great Americans fought tirelessly for equality and justice. It is because of efforts such as theirs that I can stand before you today as the first African-American woman to serve in Congress from the State of Ohio.