

Olathe, Colorado for their group's dedication to building a more civil community through strong companionship. Recently, the chapter celebrated one-hundred years of fellowship and service to the community. As they mark this impressive milestone, I would like to recognize their outstanding commitment to promoting the community before this body of Congress and this nation today.

The Rebekahs started nationally in 1851 to encourage loyal relationships with God, while simultaneously building strong relationships in the community. The Rebekah chapter in Olathe was chartered in 1904 by a petition of twenty-seven of the original thirty-two charter members. They created a loyal group that provides companionship for each other as members. Additionally, they created a body committed to a better citizenship by teaching strong moral character. Since 1913, the Rebekahs have been meeting twice a month in the same building of the Olathe Community Center.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the staying power and service to others the Rebekahs have demonstrated over the years. Their commitment to a strong community is apparent through their kind work and I congratulate the Rebekahs on their anniversary.

IN LASTING MEMORY OF EUGENE FARRELL

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 20, 2004

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life and legacy of Eugene Farrell from Dermott, Arkansas who passed away on July 3, 2004. As a dedicated member to the City of Dermott, Mr. Farrell's life was full of honors and achievements.

Mr. Farrell was a selfless public servant, serving not only as Mayor of Dermott from 1988–1999, but also as a Quorum Court member. For his dedication and loyalty to the City of Dermott and Chicot County, I will forever be grateful.

I am deeply saddened by the death of Mr. Farrell. His passing will leave a huge void on the Chicot County Quorum Court, the City of Dermott, and in the lives of many friends. My heart goes out to his wife of 59 years, June Barrett, and their four children, Sheila Brannon, Linda Fowler, Buddy Farrell, and Brian Fowler. I extend my sincerest sympathies to them and can only hope that we find some solace in the lasting legacy of Eugene Farrell as his spirit lives on in each of us.

RECOGNIZING MR. F.E. WHITNEY

HON. ED WHITFIELD

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 20, 2004

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. F.E. Whitney of Hopkinsville, Kentucky.

F.E. Whitney has faithfully served his country, his community and his fellow citizens through a lifetime of public service.

Mr. Whitney's family settled in Hopkinsville in 1897. He was born in 1916. He graduated from Kentucky State University in 1937 and returned to Hopkinsville where he still resides today.

Mr. Whitney is a member of what Tom Brokaw termed "The Greatest Generation", serving his country honorably in World War II.

Mr. Whitney has been an involved citizen in Christian County and Hopkinsville, Kentucky for over 50 years. He became a member of the Kentucky Association of Realtors in 1958 and was later accepted as a member of the National Board of Realtors. He was the first African American member.

Some of F.E. Whitney's many accomplishments include serving the public as a Realtor and Small Business Owner when he established F. E. Whitney Real Estate Agency, Inc. in 1948. This business remains in operation today.

F.E. Whitney served 21 years on the Hopkinsville City Council. In 1973, he served as Mayor Pro Tem. In 1977, he was elected to the Christian County Fiscal Court where he served over 20 years. Mr. Whitney has served the Pennyrile Area Development District, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, The Pioneer's and his church. He has been an activist for civil rights.

F.E. Whitney was honored by Christian County and the State of Kentucky when the I-24 Welcome Center was named in his honor.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. F.E. Whitney embodies the spirit, commitment and sacrifice that we all should strive for in our daily lives. He has not only made a success out of his life, but he has also been a gift to our community. I am proud to represent him in the Congress. On behalf of the citizens of the First District of Kentucky, we thank him for his service and we bring his accomplishments to the attention of this House.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 4855

HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER, JR.

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 20, 2004

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was joined by Mr. Boswell of Iowa in introducing legislation to create an Independent National Security Classification Board to review current standards and procedures for the classification of information for national security purposes and make recommendations for needed changes.

Today's classification system is broken. The Executive Branch exerts almost total control over what should or should not be classified. There is no self-correcting mechanism in the system. The Executive Branch has a little known group that can review classification issues, but it is seldom used and open only to Executive Branch employees, not to Members of Congress or the public.

The bottom line is: there is no independent review of the classification decisions by the Executive Branch.

With no chance of unbiased review, classification decisions are ready and ripe for abuse. Agencies wishing to hide their flaws and politicians of both parties wishing to make political points can abuse the existing classification guidelines to their advantage. This needs to change.

William Leonard, Director of the Information Security Office, acknowledged in a recent speech that the classification system for national security has lost touch with the basics; that some agencies don't know how much information they classify, or whether they are classifying more or less than they once did; whether they are classifying too much or too little. He called today's classification system "a patchwork quilt" that is the result of a hodgepodge of laws, regulations and directives. "In reality," he said "the Federal Government has so many varieties of classification that it can make Heinz look modest . . ."

The most recent evidence that the system is broken can be found in the forthcoming 9–11 Commission report and last week's Senate Intelligence Committee Report on Iraq pre-war intelligence. But the problems of declassification also plagued the Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities Before and After the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001, on which Mr. Boswell and I both served. All of these reports show the problems that arise from a "need to know" rather than a "need to share" culture of overclassification.

Even more important than the information that is published in these reports is the information withheld from the public and redacted from the reports. These reports demonstrate a serious imbalance of power between the public and the officials who make the classification decisions. They raise troubling questions about whether those who control the classification of information for national security purposes have misused this authority to shield officials from the glare of public accountability and to stifle public debate about politically sensitive parts of the war on terrorism.

This legislation establishes an Independent National Security Classification Board. The Board would be made up of three individuals, knowledgeable in national security classification, appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate.

The task of the Independent Board would be to review and make recommendations on overhauling the standards and process used in the classification system for national security information. The Board would submit proposed new standards and processes to both Congress and the Executive Branch for comment and revision, and then implement the new standards and process once they have had the opportunity to comment. The Board would then begin to implement the new system, reviewing and making recommendations on current and new national security classifications, subject to Executive Branch veto that must be accompanied by a public, written explanation.

The balance in this proposal assures that the public and Congress have access to an independent Board for national security classification matters while leaving undisturbed the Commander in Chief's constitutional prerogative in military and foreign policy matters through the power to appoint the Board and to veto the Board's classification decisions.

This bill was introduced in the Senate by a bipartisan group of Senators and it is our hope that this bill will attract bipartisan support in the House. However, with so little time left in the legislative session and in recognition of the importance of these issues, Mr. Boswell and I, both members of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, felt it was important to get this bill into the process now. I urge Members to support this bill.