

“RAILROAD MAN” RETIRES

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 1, 2005

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and wish well in retirement Warren Weber, of Sacramento, CA. Mr. Weber served with the California Department of Transportation for over 40 years, and 8 as the Chief of Caltrans Division of Rail.

Warren graduated from California State University, Los Angeles, and pursued his master's degree in Public Administration at California State University, Sacramento. He began his career in the Urban Planning Department, at the Division of Highways. He moved through the ranks at the California Department of Transportation and served as a Supervising Transportation System Analyst, Chief of Rail Planning and Corridor Studies, Assistant Director of Legislative and local government affairs, and finally Chief of the Division of Rail.

Throughout the years Warren was responsible for various activities. He developed the State Rail Plan coordinating his efforts with various public and private organizations.

MARY DOLLISON—A MOTIVATING PERSONALITY

HON. MIKE PENCE

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 1, 2005

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, Mary Dollison, of Muncie, Indiana, sees people's needs and selflessly works to help them. Yet her generosity does not stop there. Mary motivates others to do the same. In this way, she continues to dramatically improve children's lives, and as a result, transform the entire Muncie community. The Muncie Star Press newspaper publicly recognized her outstanding community service on December 31, 2004, when they declared her the “Person of the Year” for her work with Motivate Our Minds (MOM).

What began in 1987 as a group of 20 children in her living room has grown into a program of 350 to 400 students who meet for after-school activities in MOM's permanent facility in downtown Muncie. Starting MOMs and shepherding it to its present form was not always easy, though. Over the years, Mary dealt with major budget shortfalls, the lack of a permanent building, and numerous other potential roadblocks that would have caused other people to give up.

Fortunately, Mary persisted, and succeeded. MOMs secretary Lenella Maxwell says of her, “She is just a very giving and loving person. She has a heart for children. She loves God very much, and her family is important to her. She has a very contagious smile. It's just like magic watching when she works with children. She can bring out the best in them. She has a heart of gold, and she wants to just help people.”

Mary recently told the Muncie Star Press, “I'm not happy not working with kids. My reward is just hearing young people or children come back and tell me stories that I've made a difference in their lives. The goal is still the same, help improve the lives of people, and I

think education is one of the ways that we can help do that.”

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mary Dollison for her tireless service to the Muncie community. She truly makes the community, and the world, a better place.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 1, 2005

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, February 17, 2005, I was unable to vote on the Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree to H. Res. 91, Honoring the life and legacy of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri (rollcall 39). Had I been present, I would have voted “yea.”

AIR FORCE VACANCIES

HON. CLIFF STEARNS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 1, 2005

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, as the United States fights the war against terrorism, some members of the Senate have put politics above the needs of our men and women in uniform by not acting on the nominations of a number of high level Air Force positions. The Air Force continues to play a central role in winning the war on terrorism. Yet, on December 8, 2004, the Senate returned four Presidential nominations to the Air Force without action.

The nominations included two nominations for promotion to the rank of lieutenant general as commanders of Numbered Air Forces, one lieutenant general nomination to a key position in the USAF Headquarters Staff, and one nomination to the rank of general as Commander of the Air Combat Command, the largest Air Force combatant command. I call upon the Senate to immediately act on these nominees.

I also ask for unanimous consent to include in the RECORD a letter from the Air Force Association to President Bush urging leadership of the Executive and Legislative branches to resolve these issues at once. Our fighting men and women deserve no less.

AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION,
Arlington, VA, January 25, 2005.

The PRESIDENT,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We are a nation at war . . . a war against global terrorism. On December 8, 2004, the Senate returned four Presidential nominations to the United States Air Force without action. The nominations included two nominations for promotion to the rank of lieutenant general as commanders of Numbered Air Forces, one lieutenant general nomination to a key position in the USAF Headquarters Staff, and one nomination to the rank of general as Commander of the Air Combat Command, the largest Air Force combatant command. Today, the leadership of this four star command is temporarily being provided by a lieutenant general at a time when our Air Force is heavily engaged in the Global War

on Terrorism. The acting commander is scheduled to take command of a key Numbered Air Force in the Pacific, but this move has also been delayed pending Senate confirmation of the original nominee.

It is reported that the Senate Allied Services Committee has vowed to keep holding nominations of Air Force senior officers until the Pentagon cooperates more fully in regard to the recent issues surrounding the procurement of air refueling aircraft, which now average 43 years of service. These procurement activities resulted from the Air Force implementation of the refueling replacement acquisition strategy directed by the House Armed Services, House Appropriations, and Senate Appropriations Committees.

Despite the fact that the Secretary of the Air Force and the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition have tendered their resignations in order to remove the accountability argument, we still find no action on the general officer nominations. In addition, the USAF is now being led by an Acting Secretary—and on an equally serious note, the Acting Secretary wears three other critically important hats: that of the Under Secretary of the Air Force, the OSD Space Acquisition Chief, and the Director of the National Reconnaissance Office. He will soon add a fifth critical hat as he takes on the responsibilities of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition.

This vacuum in senior civilian and uniformed leadership has a deleterious impact on our Air Force and the morale of those who serve, and it is adversely impacting the many fine leaders who are committed to serving their nation. Leaving key positions unfilled for lengthy periods can have a significant impact on the ability of the Air Force to execute its mission. Lack of consistent senior leadership and supervision, which led to criminal prosecution, was cited recently in the case of an acquisition official who served approximately 50% of her time without confirmed appointed leaders above her.

Our Air Force faces not only the demands of today's Global War on Terrorism, but is now entering a critical period where the Military Services are engaged in the Quadrennial Defense Review, planning for the future force, and supporting the Base Realignment and Closure efforts in shaping our infrastructure. These activities will result in key decisions that will directly affect the efficiencies and effectiveness of our U.S. Military. The Air Force and its sister services must also address Presidential Budget Decision 753—a critical decision document which will have significant impact on our current and long term force structure and weapons systems effectiveness. These activities require full-time, focused leadership.

It is imperative that we move forward on nominating and confirming the required civilian and uniformed leadership of our Air Force in this especially critical time. We respectfully urge the leadership of the Executive and Legislative Branches to come together to resolve these issues without delay. The leadership requirements of our Air Force must be addressed now so that it can meet its responsibilities in addressing today's critical challenges. Our nation and those who serve it deserve no less, and our future security requires it.

Respectfully,

STEPHEN P. CONDON,
Chairman of the Board.