HONORING LEE LEONARD FOR A DIStinguished Career in Journalism

TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2005

Mr. LEONARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the important contributions of Lee Leonard, a long-time journalist who has spent his career in journalism. Lee’s dedication to his profession has been evident in his work as a correspondent for United Press International and as a newspaper reporter. He has covered numerous stories, including the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the Watergate scandal. Lee’s journalistic peers have recognized his work with numerous awards and honors, including a Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of the Watergate scandal. His dedication to the craft of journalism has not only earned him respect among his peers but also the admiration of the public.

HONORING PATRICK J. TIBERI OF OHIO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2005

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, a most distinguished career in journalism is coming to an end with the retirement of Columbus Dispatch statehouse reporter Lee Leonard. The dean of the Ohio Capitol press corps, Lee’s career has spanned five decades, with most of that time spent covering state government and politics in Columbus.

Lee began his journalism career with United Press International in Boise, Idaho in 1962 and spent six years with UPI in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania covering state government. He moved to Columbus in 1969 and became manager of UPI’s Statehouse bureau. Lee has covered 11 national political conventions, interviewed former presidents Eisenhower and Carter and was voted one of UPI’s 20 most respected bylines in a national survey of subscribing newspaper editors. Among his many awards and honors is a first place prize from the Press Club of Cleveland in 2001 for politics and government writing.

For the last 15 years, Lee has reported for the Columbus Dispatch. He is a living Statehouse encyclopedia who is widely respected and admired, both by his journalistic peers and those in state government. It’s not surprising that “Just call Lee” has become a common refrain at the Dispatch offices whenever a question has arisen about state government.

As a former state legislator who has enjoyed many dealings with Lee over the years, I am glad to join his family, friends and colleagues in wishing him a long and active retirement.

HONORING THE DEDICATION OF REVEREND EDWARD L. HAYES

TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the important contributions of Reverend Edward L. Hayes.

Reverend Hayes, who was born in 1948, is a long-time Texan. He attended school in the San Antonio area and later became a graduate of the Guadalupe Seminary. In 1982 Reverend Hayes was ordained to the ministry at Shiloh. He served as Pastor at St. Frederick Baptist Church for nine years before moving to St. Stephen Baptist Church in October of 1994.

A dedicated and passionate member of our local community, Reverend Hayes has worked tirelessly as the MLK Commission Chairman for San Antonio and has been instrumental in the Meals on Wheels for Christian Senior Services program. His dedicated community service has helped those who need it the most.

It is important to recognize the good work of spiritual leaders in our community. The service and leadership of people like Reverend Hayes is important, especially for the elderly or less fortunate among us. Reverend Hayes spends his days providing not only community guidance, but also leading by his good example. Reverend Edward Hayes and his wife Rice have three children and one grandchild. Rice Hayes is a local teacher at the Judson School District.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have this opportunity to recognize the contributions of Reverend Edward L. Hayes.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES PROTECTION ACT

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN OF MARYLAND
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2005

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud today to introduce the Federal Employees with Disabilities Protection Act.

The Federal Employees with Disabilities Protection Act (FEDPA) simply states that in cases where federal jobs are contracted out, a federal employee should not lose his or her job if that employee is an individual with a significant physical or developmental disability and had been hired under a program designed for individuals with such disabilities.

The FEDPA was drafted to respond to a particular situation that occurred at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland in the fall of 2003. This hospital, which is in his district. "And this [policy] will undercut that goal."

Bush has strongly defended “competitive sourcing,” calling it one of his most important management initiatives. He says forcing government workers to compete with private contractors for their jobs promotes government efficiency and saves taxpayer dollars—even if the jobs stay in-house. An OPM report by the National Academy of Public Administration expresses criticism: “And this [policy] will undercut that goal.”

But in one important way the 21 workers in the hospital scullery are different: All are mentally retarded, but are employed by state agencies that promote the employment of people with disabilities.

To their supporters, the administration’s requirement that they be replaced misses the point that government employment has always been about more than the bottom line. Through various policies and laws, federal agencies for decades have gone out of their way to hire members of certain populations, from veterans to disabled people to welfare mothers and students.

“There are different goals of the federal government, and one of those goals is to get different people into real jobs,” said Representative Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), who met last month with the scullery workers at the hospital, which is in his district. “And this [policy] will undercut that goal.”

Bush has strongly defended “competitive sourcing,” calling it one of his most important management initiatives. He says forcing government workers to compete with private contractors for their jobs promotes government efficiency and saves taxpayer dollars—even if the jobs stay in-house. An OPM report by the National Academy of Public Administration expresses criticism: “And this [policy] will undercut that goal.”

We are confident that the savings and service benefits expected from this effort will soon follow,” Clay Johnston III, OMB’s
But they are retarded, and they need help. Some of them have very good social skills. Severt said. “Some of them can speak well. I live in a group home and I have to pay the rent there,” said Shapiro, her dark curls tucked neatly under a hairnet. “And I have to work, or else they’ll ask me to leave. I don’t want to leave my friends. I don’t want to leave my house. It’s too nice.”

The work isn’t easy. The employees, clad in blue uniforms and white plastic aprons, remove trash and utensils from used trays as they navigate across a water-slicked tile floor. Many wear earplugs to block out the drone of the industrial dishwasher that cleans the dishes and trays that pass through it on a conveyor belt before the workers retrieve and stack them in neat piles. Shifts begin at 5:30 a.m. and finish as late as 7 p.m. James, another former Rock Terrace student, has worked in the kitchen for 22 years. That is long enough for him to earn several promotions and enough money to buy a house in Hagerstown, where he lives with his parents.

“I started out when I was 16 years old and just kept working. The jobs just flew by. I didn’t get to keep my job. When I was in school, I was pretty wild. They got me in the job... and I’ve been doing good ever since here.”

Randy Severt, a teacher at Rock Terrace, said more than 300 students have interned or worked at the hospital since the school formed a partnership with the institution in 1979. The Navy got reliable, long-serving employees for hard-to-fill positions. The students, who earn between $9.42 and $12.80 an hour, are given an opportunity to work, learn about money management and become more self-sufficient.

Proving employment opportunities is a long-standing goal of the federal government. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 banned discrimination against disabled people in federal hiring and required agencies to develop affirmative action plans to hire more people with disabilities.

Most of the scullery workers joined the hospital under a federal hiring authority that allows agencies to take on people with mental retardation as provisional employees, then convert them to permanent status due to two years of satisfactory service. The government employed 1,734 mentally retarded workers in 2000, about one-tenth of 1 percent of the 18 million-strong federal civilian workforce. (According to the Office of Personnel Management. Overall, more than 120,000 disabled people worked for the government that year, more than 7 percent of the federal workforce.)

If the hospital scullery work goes to a private contractor, it will mean a big adjustment for many workers who, due to circumstances and disability, do not cope well with change, Severt said.

“They have problems finding jobs on their own. They will not travel. They locate well for themselves and they don’t have a lot of skills,” Severt said. “Some of them can speak well. Some of them have very good social skills. But they are retarded, and they need help every step of the way. They just don’t adapt.”

Hospital officials say the quality of the work isn’t at issue. “They’re very loyal employees,” said Cmdr. Martie Slaughter, the hospital’s nutrition manager. “I’ve only been here for two years and they are like my family.”

In similar competitions across the government, the in-house bid has triumphed more often than not, a lesson that has triumphed the OMB. Even in the cases where the private sector has won, the employees often have gone to work for the contractor. But the scullery employees are at a decided disadvantage.

“If you are special needs, you have a great need for greater supervision,” Slaughter said. “And we all know that supervision costs money.”

Jerry Leener, whose son Mike, 27, has worked at the hospital for eight years, said that the church focused on the bottom line should realize there is little to be gained by contracting out the work. Displaced employees would turn to government entitlement programs, including federal disability payments, Medicaid and food stamps.

“If our kids lose their jobs, the federal government is still going to have to compensate them,” Leener said. “I mean, they’re going to be coming out of federal funds. So we haven’t had a cost saving as it relates to these kids. What’s more, we’ve displaced them from the community jobs here. They love being a part of this.”

Military officials have been sympathetic but unmoved. Slaughter said that early on in the process of shifting service away from the hospital, he made the decision.

As recently as two weeks ago, Navy officials said they were weighing the situation. Parents of the workers grew nervous as parents of some workers have written to Navy officials and members of Congress seeking help, but with no concrete results.

As recently as two weeks ago, Navy officials said they were weighing the situation. Parents of the workers grew nervous as the December deadline loomed for the hospital to submit its bid to keep the scullery jobs in-house. They were told that a decision on whether a contractor would take over could come as soon as March.

Then on Oct. 2, 10 days after Van Hollen’s visit to the scullery and after inquiries by The Washington Post, Navy officials passed the word internally that they had been directed to temporarily stop working on the job competition that had not been cancelled, but postponed until further notice, “an internal e-mail said.

Parents said they were given a vague explanation that the job competition had gone on longer than current law permits. A provision in the recently passed 2004 Defense Appropriations bills blocks new funding for single-function job competitions that have exceeded 24 months, and multifunction competitions that have exceeded 30 months. Navy officials at the hospital did not respond to two requests for more information about the decision.

“I have a suspicion that they were starting to feel political pressure and decided to put it on hold, and that maybe this thing would blow over,” said Leener, who added that he remains uncertain about whether his son’s job is safe. “We took it as a big victory, believe me, but it’s a temporary one.”

Trent Duffy, an OMB spokesman, said agencies may cancel job competitions that jeopardize protected groups such as veterans or disabled people. “It is permissible for agencies to make that determination and cancel a competition because these protected populations could, potentially lose their livelihoods,” Duffy said. “They absolutely have that discretion under the law.”

Van Hollen, who wrote a letter to Bush urging him to halt the study, said he reviewed the Navy’s decision as little more than political expediency. He still believes competitive sourcing is “a one-size-fits-all contracting-out policy that does not take into account other important goals of the federal government,” he said.

“I still think it’s an example of their policy run amok,” Van Hollen said. “There’s no doubt what happened here. You want to applaud the Navy for reversing its decision, but you can’t have an employee or a member of the press visit every site where you’ve got . . . contracting out going on with model programs.”

CONGRATULATIONS TO WESTINGHOUSE WARRIORS CITY BASKETBALL TITLE

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS
OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 5, 2005

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, on February 26 the young men of George Washington High School’s basketball team, lead by coach Quitman Dillard, won the Chicago Public League’s City Championship in the last six seasons.

The game was never really in doubt and second place Simeon could never get any closer than eight points in the second half.

By a score of 67-52, Westinghouse clinched their place at the top of the Chicago Public League. According to press reports, one of the Navy’s top high school basketball proving grounds.

The 72 team Chicago City league is reportedly used by some college coaches as a benchmark for the success of their recruiting efforts.

The Westinghouse team was powered by DeAndre Thomas, rated by many as the best high school player in Illinois. Thomas scored 29 points, snagged 9 rebounds and had three assists.

However, the victory was definitely a team effort. Westinghouse had 23 assists.

Marquis Johnson scored 14 points and secured 11 rebounds and Corey Caston each scored nine points. Caston had 7 assists.

Mr. Speaker, Westinghouse Career Academy, which serves the Austin, South Lawndale and West Garfield Communities, is a public school lighting its way to the top in every category.

Eighteen percent of its almost 1400 students are enrolled in honors classes. They were City champs in the C–CAP culinary arts competition.

Westinghouse students have earned nine medals in Academic Decathlon competition.

Tonight, Mr. Speaker, I salute Westinghouse Career Academy and Principal Dr. Lana C. Bibbs.

The Westinghouse Warriors are setting an example for the entire school by now setting their sights on the next task: the State finals. All Chicago wishes them the very best.

The Westinghouse Warriors have, through their hard work, their determination and their talent, achieved a remarkable record.

Congratulations to the Westinghouse team, their coach and to each of these outstanding young athletes individually.