June 24, 2005

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — Extensions of Remarks

E1333

prize of $10,000. Ten other organizations shared $40,000 in grants.

THREE HONORABLE CATHILEEN “CATHY” ANDERSON, HOLLYWOOD CITY COMMISSIONER

HON. PATRICK J. TIBERI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 22, 2005

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, June 22, 2005, I was not present for rollcall votes 299, 300, 301, and 302, and 303.

Had I been present I would have voted “yea” on rollcall votes 299, 300, 301, and 302, and “nay” on rollcall vote 303.

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE CATHILEEN “CATHY” ANDERSON, HOLLYWOOD CITY COMMISSIONER

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 23, 2005

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a trailblazer and community icon in South Florida politics, Hollywood, Florida City Commissioner Cathileen “Cathy” Anderson. Commissioner Anderson is celebrating her 30th year of uninterrupted service as a member of the City Commission, making her the longest serving member in the history of that body.

The first woman to serve on the Hollywood City Commission, she was originally appointed in June of 1975 to fill the unexpired term of Thomas Wohl, a Broward County native, Anderson justifiably takes great pride in a family history that is intertwined with the history of our state—all the way back to 1896, when her great grandfather and great uncle traveled on the first Flagler train to Broward County. That pioneering spirit has since been a family tradi-

Mounting Evidence of Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative’s Negative Impact

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 23, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, at a recent Senate hearing on the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, Senator NORM COLEMAN wisely asserted that “if you studied the Constitution, you would find a section entitled, ‘The Law of Unintended Consequences.’ But it might as well be there.”

Indeed, in the course of policymaking, un-

intended consequences can arise. It is thus the responsibility of lawmakers and policy practi-

tioners to account for and mitigate these un-

foreseen effects. This seems to be the case as it relates to the Bush Administration’s pro-

posed Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. The Initiative will require all travelers to and from the Americas, the Caribbean, and Bermuda to have a passport to enter or re-enter the United States in order to strengthen border security. However, the Initiative is to be imple-

mented in region specific phases, with travel to the Caribbean being affected by the end of 2005. Travel to Canada and Mexico will not be affected until the end of 2007—two full years later. It is expected that the early requirements will have negative implications for the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.

A recent article in the New York publication CaribNews points to growing evidence of the Initiative’s substantial negative impact. The article cited forecasts released by the World Travel Tourism Council (WTTC) which re-

calculated that as much as $2.6 billion of travel related export earnings, and 188,000 travel and tourism jobs could be lost in the Caribbean due to the Initiative.

These are sobering statistics, especially considering what the Caribbean has been through in the last year. As most of us know, the Caribbean was devastated by destructive hurricanes and extreme flooding in late 2004. The region incurred billions of dollars in dam-
age, and is only now starting to recover. In particular, the vital tourism sector is just start-
ing to get back on its feet. If true, the fore-

casts by the WTTC spell further hard times ahead for our neighbors in the Caribbean.

The American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) also cited statistics from the WTTC during the recent Senate hearing, where it stated that several Caribbean nations will be “seriously impacted” by the Initiative. The ASTA provided statistics that show nearly 80 percent of U.S. visitors to some islands, such as Jamaica, do not currently utilize passports. With passport processing times of up to 2 months, and processing fees which can ex-
ceed $100.00, scores of U.S. tourists may choose vacation options that entail less hass-
le. The group further added that imposing the new requirements on the Caribbean earlier than other regions would likely cause a “diplomatic controversy.”

ASTA also asserted that the early require-

ments will have negative implications for com-

ponents of the U.S. travel industry, such as cruise ships, airlines, and travel agents, due to the forecasted reduction in U.S. travelers to the region. ASTA highlighted the particular case of the cruise industry, where unlike land based travel, substantial advance booking is commonplace.

With many cruise packages to the Car-

ibbean costing as little as $400.00, the $100.00+ passport processing fees that WHTI would necessitate, would represent an additional 25 percent in the original vacation price. With such a large and unexpected increase, many U.S. travelers may cancel their existing reservations. With over 3,578 cruises ships visiting the region in 2004, representing 6,380,021 in total passenger potential, this is no small consequence.

Also of note, the Advanced Notice for Pro-

posed Rulemaking (ANPRM) process for the WHTI—where the public and industry are pro-

vided the opportunity to give their input and concerns on the proposal—has yet to be initi-

ated by the appropriate government authori-

ties. This is the case despite the fact that the new travel requirements for the Caribbean are set to go into effect in little more than 6 months. Even if the process does proceed, most entities in the U.S. travel industry will not have the time, or budget, to adequately inform the public by the Dec. 31, 2005 deadline. As such, the travel industry is urging the Adminis-

tration to push back the timetable for the WHTI, especially as it relates to the Carib-

bean.

Mr. Speaker, all these facts, statistics, and opinions suggest that with the proposed Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative we are getting a lot more than we bargained for. Fortunately, we have an opportunity to make the appro-

riate modifications to ensure that this policy not only strengthens the security of the Amer-

can people, but also protects the interests of the American traveler, and the economic inter-

ests of the United States and our regional neighbors. More than an opportunity, it is an obligation.