

The unnecessary Iraq war has diverted precious resources away from domestic emergencies. Our brothers and sisters here at home are waiting to re-build their lives and homes.

That is why the Green Amendment is so important.

Specifically, the Green Amendment would extend the safety-net of FEMA housing assistance until December 31, 2007 and thereafter transfer eligible households to HUD's tenant-based rental assistance program. Through this amendment, Section 8 vouchers would also be available to households in trailers and mobile homes.

If we do not adopt this amendment, over 120,000 families housed in FEMA-funded trailers, mobile homes and who barely cope in other rental assistance situations could be thrown into further chaos and homelessness when current assistance ends in August. This would further compound the dire affordable housing situation relating to low-income, elderly, and disabled evacuees across the country.

The region is still not back to normal. Consider the fact that there are 51 percent fewer hospital beds in New Orleans than were available pre-Hurricane Katrina according to data released by the NAACP.

Public infrastructure and public institutions are operating below capacity. In New Orleans, only about one-third of the public schools have re-opened. These statistics are staggering.

It is not only a responsibility but a moral duty to do all in our power to restore the dignity and quality of life to all citizens of the Gulf Coast region regardless of their socio-economic, cultural and political status. They are counting on us. I urge my colleagues to support the Green Amendment.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HOUSE
VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1433, The District of Columbia House Voting Rights Act.

I want to encourage my colleagues to vote to extend full representation to the District of Columbia as well as to the state of Utah. The District of Columbia has long been recognized as one of the most Democratic jurisdictions in the Nation. Utah, by contrast, gave President Bush his largest margin of victory in the 2004 presidential elections. Extending rights to both sides of the spectrum would be the most politically neutral way to ensure proper and sufficient representation for all of our citizens.

Regarding the residents of the District of Columbia, they have the full burden of Federal taxation and military conscription. These reasons alone should give the residents of the District of Columbia equal voting rights. In addition, voting rights have been extended to overseas voters, as well as to those in Federal enclaves within a State. Fairness and justice demand that Congress do the same for the citizens of the District, who are subjected to all Federal laws.

Madam Speaker, some argue that the Framers never intended to give the District

voting rights in Congress. In reality, however, the Founding Fathers never actually spoke about the District's rights because it was little more than a contemplated entity at the time. In fact, Congress has plenary power to address the welfare of the District and its residents.

Another concern voiced by those who oppose the bill claim that the residents of the District will demand more rights. This is not necessarily true. However, if the District were to demand more rights, then it would be strictly a legal question and should therefore be reserved for the courts—not the House—to decide what is permissible and what is not.

The District now has a little over half a million people, which was probably never contemplated by the Framers more than 200 years ago. It is my belief that the Framers of the Constitution would probably not support the idea that citizens of the United States are paying Federal taxes without fair and just representation in Congress.

Madam Speaker, it truly is telling and somewhat shameful when several prominent international groups such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the U.N.'s Committee on Human Rights have all advocated for DC residents to obtain equal voting rights. Shouldn't we do the same? I think so. I hope the rest of my colleagues share in this belief and vote favorably on the passage of H.R. 1433.

HONORING LOUISIANA EMPLOYER
BASF-SHREVEPORT

HON. JIM MCCRERY

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2007

Mr. MCCRERY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the hard work and dedication of a local Louisiana manufacturer. The manufacturer that I am recognizing has demonstrated innovation in manufacturing operations and business growth, as well as, a commitment to community involvement.

BASF-Shreveport, located within my district in Louisiana, was established in 1985 to manufacture and package prescription and over-the-counter pharmaceutical products, liquids, tablets, and creams. Some of their well-known products include ibuprofen, acetaminophen, and silver sulfadiazine burn cream. The economic impact that BASF brings to North Louisiana is significant. The facility employs more than 167 people with an annual payroll of 13.4 million. This local manufacturer has made noteworthy advances in productivity throughout their organization resulting in substantial growth. Because of these accomplishments, BASF-Shreveport will be honored by the Manufacturing Extension Partnership of Louisiana (MEPOL), with the third annual Platinum Award for Continued Excellence, PACE Award.

MEPOL, a non-profit business resource based at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, serves to provide business and technical assistance to emerging and established manufacturing firms throughout the State of Louisiana. Since 1997, MEPOL, based on a philosophy of education, encouragement, and empowerment, has worked with manufacturers

such as BASF-Shreveport to increase their productivity and profitability.

Working with MEPOL, BASF-Shreveport identified an area of their production that could benefit from the principles of lean manufacturing. Production volume, due to increased demand from their customers, was creating a significant bottleneck in the printing department, where the name of the medication is printed on the tablets. Three days after the printing department completed the quick changeover/set-up reduction training and implementation suggested by MEPOL, the site was able to cut the changeover time required for batches from 2 hours to 17 minutes. This modernization resulted in BASF's increased throughput in the printing areas by 57 percent, allowing it to meet the customer's needs more efficiently. Their dedication to excellence is the reason that they are the recipients of MEPOL's second annual PACE award.

BASF also participates in numerous charity organizations throughout the community including the United Way, March of Dimes and the Salvation Army. I congratulate BASF-Shreveport on being a respected leader in manufacturing whose commitment to advancement and continued success has led to this outstanding achievement.

TRIBUTE TO DR. LEONARD K.
PETERS

HON. DOC HASTINGS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize one of the true leaders of the national science community, Dr. Leonard K. Peters. Dr. Peters came to Washington state in 2003 to assume the role of Director of the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. During his tenure, the Lab oversaw an impressive growth in business and Len led the world-class PNNL staff to enhance relationships with research universities in the Pacific Northwest. Len has a long history of establishing successful public-private relationships in the science and education sectors.

Dr. Peters came to PNNL from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University where he served as Vice Provost for Research and managed Virginia Tech's ambitious research portfolio with diverse projects ranging from biotechnology to transportation materials. Prior to his time at Virginia Tech, Dr. Peters spent almost twenty years at the University of Kentucky where he served as a professor and eventually as acting Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies. Dr. Peters is a distinguished manager and educator and an accomplished researcher in atmospheric chemistry.

As Dr. Peters assumes a new role at Battelle, he will continue to lead and serve in the Tri-Cities area through community outreach programs. He is already actively involved in the region's educational community through his service on the Advisory Board for Washington State University's College of Engineering and Architecture, and the Board of Directors for Heritage University. Locally Dr. Peters chairs the Tri-City Industrial Development Council and serves on the boards of Kadlec Medical Center, the United Way of Benton and Franklin Counties, and Junior Achievement of

the Greater Tri-Cities. Dr. Peters is a committed leader who shares his tremendous experience and talent with the Washington state community.

I want to recognize Dr. Len Peters for his leadership and vision during the past 3½ years at PNNL. On behalf of the people of Washington, I wish him all the best in his new position and say thank you for his continued service to our State.

WILLING-SELLER LEGISLATION
FOR CERTAIN NATIONAL TRAILS
SYSTEM UNITS

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2007

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, I am today introducing legislation to allow people who want to do so to sell lands for inclusion in certain units of the National Trails System.

The bill is identical to ones introduced in previous Congresses by my former Republican colleagues from Colorado, Representatives Beauprez and McInnis. It is cosponsored by Representatives EHLERS, KILDEE, KIND, BALDWIN, LEVIN, and PETRI. I greatly appreciate their assistance and support.

Current law prohibits people who own land associated with several units of the Trails System from selling those lands to the federal government for inclusion in those units.

The bill would revise that to allow such sales from willing sellers.

The Trail System units covered by the bill are the Oregon National Historic Trail, the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail, the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the Iditarod National Historic Trail, the North County National Scenic Trail, the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, and the Nez Perce National Historic Trail.

Madam Speaker, this bill would make a small but important adjustment to current law. I think it deserves the support of all Members of the House.

INTRODUCING THE LEGAL
SERVICES BENEFIT ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2007

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join my Subcommittee Ranking Member Mr. CAMP in reintroducing the Legal Services Benefit Act.

Many employees and retirees lost access to affordable preventive legal services when the tax-preferred status of qualified group legal plans sunsetted in 1991. This bill corrects that historic wrong and ensures that millions of workers and retirees have access to employer provided group legal service plans.

Group legal service plans provide employees with low cost, basic legal services, including assistance with the purchase of a home, the preparation of a will, probate services and

the resolution of domestic conflicts, such as child support collection. With evictions and mortgage foreclosures on the rise, legal plans can also help keep employees in their homes and focused on their jobs.

The Legal Services Benefit Act will restore the historic pre-tax treatment of group legal services under Section 120 of the Internal Revenue Code. This change to the tax code will again make legal service plans affordable for both employers and employees, and will provide access to legal services for millions of middle-income Americans who might otherwise let legal troubles get out of hand.

I thank many of my colleagues on the Ways and Means Committee who have already joined us as original cosponsors of this bill, and I urge all members to support this important legislation that will help workers and businesses across the Nation.

RECOGNIZING THE CORNERSTONE
CLUBHOUSE IN PHOENIXVILLE
FOR THEIR "BEYOND THE
LABEL" CAMPAIGN

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2007

Mr. GERLACH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend the Cornerstone Clubhouse in Phoenixville, PA for their ongoing "Beyond the Label" campaign to raise awareness of the many illnesses and challenges people with mental health disabilities face.

The Cornerstone Clubhouse is an important resource for the people struggling with mental health problems in Phoenixville and the surrounding communities of Chester County. The organization's purpose is to promote early intervention and recovery from mental illnesses by offering a support system that helps them find employment and residential living opportunities and deal with daily life issues.

Individuals with mental health disabilities join the Clubhouse and then visit the facility on a voluntary basis to raise awareness of these disabilities by passing out informational materials and writing newsletters. On any given day, up to 40 people can be found at the Clubhouse and this interaction with others helps these individuals develop the valuable social, work and life skills needed to be successful.

So, Madam Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to join me in acknowledging the dedication and hard work of the Cornerstone Clubhouse in Phoenixville and its successful "Beyond the Label" campaign, which has been an important tool in the community to raise awareness and shine a light on the struggles people with mental illnesses face everyday.

COMMISSION ON SLAVERY
ESTABLISHED IN ROMANIA

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, 200 years ago, the movement for the abolition

of slavery achieved a major victory with the passage of a British law banning the trade in slaves—an anniversary that is getting heightened attention with the release of a new movie chronicling those events. Ending the trade in slaves was not the same as actually ending slavery, but it was a critical beginning to the end.

Other developments have also caused us to revisit the legacy of slavery in our own country. This includes the decision by the legislature of the Commonwealth of Virginia to apologize for that state's role in the slave trade, and reports that Maryland and Missouri are considering similar steps.

With a view to our own country's painful and complicated history of slavery, and as the first African-American Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, I was particularly interested to learn about commemorations held on February 20th in Romania, marking the beginning of the end of slavery in that country. In the case of Romania, however, slaves were not kidnapped and transported from a faraway land. Instead, those enslaved were Roma, a people that had settled in Romania by the 14th century.

This ethnic group—somewhere around 1,000 years ago—migrated to Europe from what is now India. Today, Roma make up the largest ethnic minority in the European Union, conservatively estimated at 10 million people.

Romania, with an estimated 2 million Roma, has the largest Romani minority on the continent. And in that country, beginning in the 14th century and ending with the establishment of the modern Romanian state in 1864, slavery to the crown, to nobility, and to the monasteries was the exclusive status of Roma.

To be clear, Roma were not serfs; they were slaves, bought and sold like chattel. In 1837, the great Romanian historian and statesman Mihail Kogalniceanu described their situation as follows:

On the streets of the Iasi of my youth, I saw human beings wearing chains on their arms and legs, others with iron clamps around their foreheads, and still others with metal collars about their necks. Cruel beatings, and other punishments such as starvation, being hung over smoking fires, solitary imprisonment and being thrown naked into the snow or the frozen rivers, such was the fate of the wretched Tsigan [Rom]. The sacred institution of the family was likewise made a mockery: women were wrested from their men, and daughters from their parents. Children were torn from the breasts of those who brought them into this world, separated from their mothers and fathers and from each other, and sold to different buyers from the four corners of Romania, like cattle. Neither humanity nor religious sentiment, nor even civil law, offered protection for these beings. It was a terrible sight, and one which cried out to Heaven.

Unfortunately, it appears that the history of slavery in Romania—and the impact of slavery on the lives of Roma—has received little scholarly attention. As a corollary, little is taught in Romanian schools about this important chapter in the nation's history.

I was very heartened, therefore, to learn that Romanian Prime Minister Calin Popescu-Tariceanu announced on February 20 that the Romanian Government will establish a commission to study the enslavement of Roma. The National Agency for Roma will play a central role in setting up this commission, and the