

Americanism in Hollywood movies or the perception of industry bias against conservatives and Republicans.

The movement has grown over the past few years from gatherings of a few dozen to one last month that drew more than 600 to a billionaire's California estate, Mr. Boone said.

People familiar with the movement credited Mr. Sinise, whose roles range from the blockbuster movie "Forrest Gump" to the TV show "CSI: New York" for helping organize the movement.

Sinise spokeswoman Staci Wolfe said the actor was traveling with a band to entertain U.S. troops overseas and was unavailable for an interview. She would say only: "He is not registered with any political party."

Participants said Friends of Abe is not partisan, but rather functions as a support group where Republicans, Democrats and independents alike can discuss issues they care about. And the low-key gatherings at restaurants and homes have given conservatives a safe place to meet and express their views, they added.

"A Friend of Abe is someone who has reverence for those who serve in our military and believes that American liberal democracy is a unique success, different from others, and it's worthy of the respect of our popular culture . . . of Hollywood in particular," said screenwriter Lionel Chetwynd, who helped organize Friends of Abe luncheons when they began 4 years ago.

Mr. Chetwynd said Friends of Abe generally find themselves at odds with the rhetoric of their hard-left colleagues in Hollywood.

Craig Haffner, a producer who also attended the gatherings, said Friends of Abe is "not a political action group; people are gravitating to it because they love their country."

While the group is not organizing any political activities, some of its members are taking action into their own hands.

Actor Jon Voight, Mr. Boone, Mr. Chetwynd and Mr. Haffner have stepped forward and actively campaigned for Mr. McCain's presidential bid. Mr. Boone said he talked to McCain campaign staffers last week about how he and other stars can help. Supporters now are assembling a formal organization for Mr. McCain in Hollywood, a few of the leaders said.

Meanwhile, many want to produce more movie and theater projects with a positive American message and stronger emphasis on positive cultural values instead of films that paint America as "the great Satan," Mr. Boone said. Mr. Chetwynd said such efforts have been under way for several years, well before the Friends of Abe luncheons began.

Actor Kelsey Grammer, a Republican, is aware of the group but won't comment further, his publicist said.

David Horowitz, another Hollywood conservative and founder of the Los Angeles-based Center for the Study of Popular Culture, said the group is serving a good purpose but he worries its members won't be aggressive enough.

"There's a kind of . . . intellectual terror in this town. People are terrorized; they're afraid to say what they think. So what Gary is doing to provide aid and comfort to its victims is admirable, and I applaud him for it," he said. "But my concern is it's not going to be much more than that."

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE "MIDWEST SCHOOLS DISASTER RELIEF ACT"

HON. PHIL HARE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 2008

Mr. HARE. Madam Speaker, the Midwest has been hard-hit by record flooding in recent months, disrupting the lives of the farmers, homeowners, and families of my Illinois Congressional District. Flood damage to schools alone is expected to reach nearly \$100 million, and as a result some schools will not open in the fall. Those schools able to open their doors are desperately trying to get ready for the upcoming school year, but repairs and cleanup are ongoing.

Moreover, many schools will see an influx of flood-displaced students, while others will face financial challenges due to the loss of students and property values where the schools are located. I have heard from several regional superintendents in my district, particularly Mr. Ralph Grimm of West Central Community Unit School District No. 235 in Henderson County, with concerns that this situation will make it difficult for them to make ends meet in the coming school year.

To address short- and long-term needs, immediate education disaster assistance for flood-impacted schools is necessary to ensure that students continue to receive a quality education in the aftermath of this disaster. As such, I proudly introduce the Midwest Schools Disaster Relief Act.

Similarly to the assistance Congress approved after Hurricane Katrina, this bill would:

Authorize funds to restart school operations. These monies could be used on transportation assistance, to replace damaged textbooks and computers, rent temporary classroom sites, hire additional staff for counseling services, clean up school buildings, and other services and activities.

Authorize funds for schools to accommodate any displaced students they enroll.

Prohibit the loss of students due to displacement to count against schools when Federal funding is calculated for the next academic year.

Waive the Federal requirement that schools maintain their share of financial responsibility in providing education services.

Ensure the needs of homeless students displaced by flooding are met through the Education for Homeless Youth program.

The natural disasters of May and June 2008 have adversely affected the economy, agriculture, critical infrastructure, and school districts of the Midwest. As weather-damaged schools prepare to welcome students back in just a few short weeks, we simply cannot stand by and watch our children receive a lower-quality education solely because they live in an area where flooding or storms occurred.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

WORLD WAR II MARINE GRADUATES HIGH SCHOOL

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 2008

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, James DeLeon is one this year's 2008 high school graduates. The difference is he is 83 years old.

He was born in Goliad, Texas, and when World War II broke out he dropped out of Ganado High School, lied about his age and joined the U.S. Marine Corps. His 16-year-old brother, Charlie, did the same thing a few weeks later.

James was part of the 6,000 Marines sent into battle at Guadalcanal in the South Pacific in 1942. There, they seized the island's airport and never relinquished it. He was also in the invasion of Okinawa—the site of one of the fiercest battles of World War II—where he remained until the end of the war. He had served 34 months in the Marine Corps.

Then, James returned to Texas and married his sweetheart, Susie Marie Elizondo; raised seven children and worked for 36 years at the Port Arthur, Texas, Texaco refining plant. Recently, his daughter Theresa located a lost letter from the Marines to Ganado High School dated 1947 stating that DeLeon met all the requirements to earn his diploma. She mailed it to the current principal and James was then honored with his own graduation ceremony.

James DeLeon is yet another successful member of the Greatest Generation that answered America's call in time of need.

And that's just the way it is.

THE DAILY 45: MIGUEL LEON-FREGOSO

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 2008

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, everyday, 45 people, on average, are fatally shot in the United States.

I have another story of unnecessary violence. This time the location is in the city of San Diego. According to reports, 27-year-old Miguel Leon-Fregoso was with a group of friends at a bar early this morning when, upon leaving, he was involved in a verbal altercation outside. Minutes later a man shot Miguel in the face. Thus, in yet another quick, mindless instance—another young life has been taken.

Americans of conscience must come together to stop the senseless death of "The Daily 45." When will Americans say "enough is enough, stop the killing!"

HONORING THE LIFE OF ROBERT L. "BOB" CHANDLER

HON. TRAVIS W. CHILDERS

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 2008

Mr. CHILDERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today with deep sadness to honor the passing of a great leader, colleague and dear friend,