

IN HONOR AND RECOGNITION OF
KEN WARREN

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 26, 2009

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of Ken Warren, on the occasion of his retirement as director of the Lakewood Library after 25 years of dedicated service to our community. In his capacity as director of the Lakewood Library, Ken worked to promote and develop innovative projects and programs hosted at the Lakewood Library and throughout the Lakewood community.

Ken Warren has maintained an enthusiasm for books and the power of the written word since his childhood. His interest in community issues began when he was a teen, as editor of an underground paper at his parochial high school. He is founding member of the Lakewood Observer and has made the publication a critical instrument of exchange of ideas and opinions on important civic and community issues.

During his tenure as director, the Lakewood Library underwent major expansions and improvements, including the complete interior and exterior renovation of the main library building, the development of a new technology center, public auditorium, a children's wing, and an inspiring display of murals that grace the walls throughout the facility. Ken has consistently reached out to the citizens, agencies and community leaders of Lakewood creating strong working relationships and friendships throughout the city. His legacy is highlighted by his unwavering advocacy and innovation in promoting and implementing literacy and learning programs, connecting the library to the public schools.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition of Ken Warren, whose tenure at the Lakewood Library is framed by integrity, kindness, love for learning, passion for the written word, and above all, an unbridled commitment to the betterment of the entire Lakewood community.

WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE
IMPROVEMENT ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 23, 2009

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1211, "Women Veterans Health Care Improvement Act." I would like to thank my colleague, Congresswoman HERSETH SANDLIN, for introducing this bill, and providing leadership on this important issue.

In the wake of the recent Democratic Presidential victory, we witnessed an historic time in our electoral system. Now is the time to address the major ongoing disparities that exist for our minority and women. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton once said, "There cannot be true democracy unless women's voices are heard. There cannot be true democracy unless women are given the

opportunity to take responsibility for their own lives. There cannot be true democracy unless all citizens are able to participate fully in the lives of their country." And today, there cannot be true democracy unless women receive the same care and treatment in the military as their male counterparts. In addition to the health care reform debate, H.R. 1211 "Women's Veterans Health Care Improvement Act" will be an essential piece to the health care reform bill.

As the 111th Congress and 44th President of the United States undergo swift actions to reform our health care system it's important we get reform right! It will be a long-term problem if we don't implement the right kind of change now, which needs to include all Americans of every race, every gender, and in every condition. Without comprehensive reform, our government will have failed to serve our people in a time when the people elected for change.

This legislation will expand and improve health care services available to women veterans, especially those serving in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Women Veterans Health Care Improvement Act requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to: (1) study barriers encountered by women veterans to the provision by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) of comprehensive health care; (2) assess all health care services and programs provided by the VA for women veterans; (3) provide graduate education, training and certification for mental health professionals who provide counseling, care, and services to women veterans suffering from sexual trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); and (4) carry out a pilot program of child care for certain women veterans receiving health care from VA facilities.

For 19 out of the past 22 fiscal years, appropriated funds for medical care were not provided to the Department of Veterans Affairs before the commencement of its new fiscal year, causing the Department great challenges in planning and managing care for enrolled veterans.

By providing the access and care for women in the military, we will meet the vital obligation to provide health care to all veterans. Congress must take action in ensuring our veterans who return home sick, injured, or even healthy will receive the quality health care they deserve. As acts in an unprecedented time, I urge my colleagues to set aside the bickering and come together on a united front to ensure all of our citizen's happiness in a quality health care system. Only then can we live out the true meaning of our country, democracy.

RECOGNIZING BLACK EUROPEAN
SUMMIT: TRANSATLANTIC
DIALOGUE ON POLITICAL INCLUSION

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 26, 2009

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution recognizing the first "Black European Summit: Transatlantic Dialogue on Political Inclusion" and ensuing Brussels Declaration.

The Black European Summit (BES) was held in Brussels, Belgium at the European Parliament on April 15th and 16th. The historic 2-day Summit brought together political and intellectual minority leaders from the United States and Europe to exchange information on the roles of racial and ethnic minority policy-makers in developing and supporting policies and initiatives to address racism, discrimination, and inequality.

The event was hosted and organized by myself, Harlem Desir, Member of the European Parliament; Joe Frans, President of the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent and a former Swedish Parliamentarian; Claude Moraes, Member of the European Parliament and President of the European Parliament All Party Group on Anti-Racism and Diversity; and Glyn Ford, former Member of the European Parliament.

Participants included Parliamentarians, Congressional representatives, local and nationally elected officials, academics, representatives from European and international institutions, civil society, the private sector, and media from Black and other minority backgrounds.

During the Summit we exchanged information and best practices on addressing structural barriers that impact minority political participation, including implementing initiatives that address racism and discrimination.

Like in the United States, it was noted that despite the numerous contributions of minorities to European society, minorities still face the daily challenges of racism and discrimination. This includes being the targets of violent hate crimes, many of which in recent years have resulted in death. Existing inequalities in education, housing, and employment remain a problem and racial profiling is often a norm. Obstacles for addressing these problems, include the lack of minorities in leadership positions and the rise of racist and xenophobic political parties seeking to implement non-inclusive policies.

Summit participants committed to addressing these issues by adopting the Brussels Declaration, which calls for: (1) concrete action to assist ethnic and racial minorities in obtaining full access to participation in the political sphere and relevant areas of decision making, especially in the development and implementation of policy initiatives to address racial and ethnic discrimination and inequality; and (2) to support future opportunities to exchange and share perspectives in these areas through a sustained transatlantic dialogue.

As I continue to work on these initiatives, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this Resolution Recognizing both the Black European Summit and Brussels Declaration and encourage them to review the statements and submissions from the Helsinki Commission's Black Europe and Racism in the 21st Century Hearings at www.csce.gov and recently introduced Resolution on Black Europeans. Additionally, I would like to submit the following background materials on the Brussels Declaration and Black Europeans for the official record.

BLACK EUROPEAN SUMMIT—TRANSATLANTIC
DIALOGUE ON POLITICAL INCLUSION
BRUSSELS DECLARATION

Preamble

We, as members of the public, private, and voluntary sectors from Europe and the United States of America convening in Brussels, Belgium from the 15 to 16 of April for

the Black European Summit: Transatlantic Dialogue on Political Inclusion, draw attention to the need for coordinated strategies to address racism and discrimination;

We recognize the democratic, multi-ethnic and multi-racial nature of our countries' diverse societies;

We reaffirm the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and recalling that all individuals are born equal in dignity and rights;

We remain concerned that the political and legal systems in some of our societies do not reflect the racial and ethnic diversity within our societies, which then contributes to the continuation of racism and discrimination;

We recognize that the full access of racial and ethnic minorities to participate in the political sphere and relevant areas of decision making at the levels of national, regional, and locally elected government appropriate to each nation is critical to combating racism and inequality and ensuring our democratic societies;

We therefore note the need for concrete strategies to: increase the representation and influence of racial and ethnic minority policymakers; jointly seek solutions to racial and ethnic minorities increased participation in decision-making in the development and implementation of policy initiatives to address discrimination and inequality; and support opportunities to exchange and share perspectives in these areas through the continuance of a transatlantic dialogue to realize these goals.

We today resolve that we will endeavor to enact initiatives to eradicate racial and ethnic discrimination through:

Continuing a transatlantic dialogue that includes cultural exchanges between American and European racial and ethnic minority groups, including youth; focuses on the development of opportunities for racial and ethnic minority political leadership and participation in the policymaking process; and fosters the exchange of information on best practices to implement and enforce anti-discrimination measures and achieve racial equality;

Joining forces over the coming months to develop common goals and objectives in each of our decision-making bodies to recognize Europe's Black and racial and ethnic minority populations for their historical and present-day contributions and acknowledge past injustices;

Promoting racial and ethnic minority participation at all levels of national, regional, and local government through the education of civil and political rights, including the legislative process and advocacy of legislative issues relevant to racial and ethnic minority communities, development of targeted professional development and hiring strategies, increased youth and community outreach, and self-organization and other empowerment initiatives;

Reaffirming our continued cooperation and commitment to work with our governments, international institutions, civil society, private sector, and other partners to improve institutions so that they are fully participatory and reflect the democratic principles of equality, justice, and celebration of the strengths of our countries' diversity.

AS EUROPE VEERS RIGHT, MINORITY PARLIAMENTARIANS COUNTER

WASHINGTON—With far-right and anti-immigrant parties making worrying advances in recent elections across Europe, minority lawmakers and leaders called today for the political process to be more inclusive of minorities.

Following April's "Black European Summit: Transatlantic Dialogue on Political In-

clusion" in Brussels, Belgium, minority political and intellectual leaders today adopted a declaration calling for increased efforts to include racial and ethnic minorities in the political process. (Please find attached a copy of the Brussels Declaration).

I was very pleased to have the opportunity to work on these initiatives with my European colleagues," said U.S. Congressman and Helsinki Commission Co-Chairman Alcee L. Hastings (D-FL). "Whether speaking about voting and civil rights, increasing minority elected officials and diversity in policy staff, or responding to discriminatory policies, we have common issues. While I have been able to share the many successes we have had in the United States in terms of minority political participation, most recently evidenced by President Obama, one need only look at the lack of diversity in the U.S. Senate and staff in Congressional offices and many government agencies to know that we can be doing more. It is one reason I fully support this transatlantic declaration."

"Despite the global significance of President Obama's historic election, the reality is that our elected leadership does not reflect the diversity of origins of people in our nations" said Summit co-organizer Harlem Desir, Member of the European Parliament (MEP). "This has contributed to a lack of inclusion of minorities in the planning and implementation of the very policies that impact us. Despite some successes, the overall results of recent elections are simply further evidence that we must do more to ensure the representation of the diversity of our society."

"In Britain we had never elected fascists in a national election until now. Whilst in the past there have been far-right MEPs from other countries, such as France, this election saw new groups gaining seats across Europe, and thus a worrying threshold has been crossed," said Summit co-organizer and President of the European Parliament All Party Group on Anti-Racism and Diversity, Claude Moraes MEP. "We will have to tackle the pernicious growth of far-right racist parties head-on, at both the grass-roots and parliamentary levels, and an integral part of this lies in encouraging the full inclusion of minorities in the political process."

U.S. Helsinki Commissioner Congressman G.K. Butterfield (D-NC), a former Judge known for his work supporting voting rights, who participated in the Summit, added, "it is clear by the outcome of the European elections that too few people are taking part in the political process at a potentially great risk to democracy. As I have learned from my work in the U.S., it is critical to remedy this situation rather than preserve a status quo that repeatedly elects lawmakers who do not represent the diverse interests of the population."

"These concerns for minority representation are exactly why we adopted the Brussels Declaration," said Summit co-organizer Joe Frans, Vice President of the United Nations Working Group on Experts of People of African Descent. "The declaration calls for the full and equal participation of non-White citizens of Europe with African, migrant, and other backgrounds in our countries' democracies. With more racist, xenophobic, and anti-Muslim parties making political gains, immigration and anti-discrimination policies are going to be further scrutinized, which will impact how persons of different races, ethnicities, and religions, are viewed and treated. Implementation of the Brussels declaration in this current climate is of the utmost importance."

THE DEATH OF FARRAH FAWCETT

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 26, 2009

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, thank you for letting me stand before you today in order to mourn a great American icon, Farrah Fawcett. She died today, Thursday, June 25, 2009, shortly before 9:30 a.m. after battling cancer. She was 62.

I would also like to express and send my condolences to her family and friends. I know the actress fought a very public battle with cancer and I am proud to say that this beautiful, talented and courageous woman was an American legend, icon and a TEXAN.

Mary Farrah Leni Fawcett was born on Feb. 2, 1947, in Corpus Christi, Texas. Her father, James William Fawcett, was an oil pipefitter who later founded a pipeline construction company and a custodial service. She enrolled at the University of Texas in Austin, where she initially planned to study microbiology but later switched her major to art.

Farrah Fawcett is a true Hollywood success story. Winning a campus beauty contest got her noticed by an agent, who encouraged her to pursue acting. After graduating, she moved to Los Angeles and her healthy style and beauty was immediately noticed. She quickly got roles in various television commercials and also made appearances in some TV series.

Eventually, she came to the attention of the highly successful producer Aaron Spelling, who was impressed by her beauty and vivacious personality which won her a role in the TV series "Charlie's Angels" (1976). She played a private investigator who worked for a wealthy and mysterious businessman, along with two other glamorous female detectives. The show immediately became the most popular series on television, earning record ratings and a huge audience. All three actresses became very popular, but Farrah became by far the best known.

She was America's sweetheart, and found herself on every celebrity magazine and pursued by photographers and fans. While she enjoyed the success and got along well with her co-stars (both of whom were also of Southern origin), she found the material lightweight. Also, the long hours she worked were beginning to take a toll on her marriage so the following year, when the show was at its peak, she left to pursue a movie career.

September 2006, Fawcett, who at 59 still maintained a strict regimen of tennis and paddleball, began to feel strangely exhausted. She underwent two weeks of tests and was told the devastating news: She had anal cancer. Farrah fought a long, difficult brave battle against the cancer for three years and we must admire her determination and strength through it all. According to the American Cancer Society, an estimated 5,290 Americans, most of them adults over 35, will be diagnosed with that type of cancer this year, and there will be 710 deaths. She was able to give many people hope for a cure while documenting her own personal battle, so we must continue to search for a cure for this abhorrent disease that is cancer.

I would just like to leave her friends and family and all Americans who have lost a loved one with this poem by Henry Van Dyke: