

RECOGNIZING CONTRIBUTIONS OF
FATHERS

SPEECH OF

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 15, 2010

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 1389, which recognizes the important role that fathers play in the lives of their children. While Father's Day is celebrated once a year, the responsibility of being a father never ceases.

According to U.S. Census Bureau data from 2009, over 24 million children live apart from their biological fathers. That is 1 out of every 3 children in the United States. Nearly 2 out of every 3 African American children live apart from their biological fathers. While we honor biological fathers, we should also remember the many men that serve as father figures in the lives of children across the country. These truly special individuals consist of grandfathers, uncles, adoptive fathers, step-fathers, and anyone else who provides a parenting role. No one requires them to assume this responsibility, but they do so selflessly and without complaint.

Children with involved fathers are less likely to have behavioral problems, abuse drugs, and live in poverty. A child with an involved father is more likely to stay in school, go to college, and be successful later in life. Clearly, the presence of father figures in homes across the country is absolutely critical to the healthy development of our young people.

We also owe special recognition to the single fathers in California's 37th District and across the country. These fathers work longer and harder to ensure that their children have the resources and care they need to experience a fulfilling childhood and to grow into well-rounded adults. Many of these single fathers work extra hours just to put food on the table and meet their children's needs.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, we should pay tribute to the fathers who are unable to be with their children this Father's Day. These individuals include the men serving overseas in our military, fathers that are working to provide for their families, fathers that are incarcerated, and fathers that live far away from their children.

Will Rogers, Jr. once said that his "heritage to his children wasn't words or possessions, but an unspoken treasure, the treasure of his example as a man and a father." This sentiment perfectly sums up the importance of fathers and their role in the lives of our nation's youth.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H. Res. 1389 and recognizing the important role that fathers play in their children's lives.

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN LAW
SCHOOLS LETTER REGARDING
NON-DISCRIMINATION

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 2010

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I recently received a letter from the Asso-

ciation of American Law Schools regarding recent Congressional consideration for expanding non-discrimination policies. I ask unanimous consent to have the attached letter inserted into the Congressional Record on the Association's behalf.

ASSOCIATION OF
AMERICAN LAW SCHOOLS,
Washington, DC, May 26, 2010.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI: We write today regarding your important efforts to extend anti-discrimination principles to access to military service. We hope that the following comments will be of assistance to you and to the House as it considers this reform.

Non-discrimination principles form a critical foundation for our democracy. The promise of opportunity for all and the aspirations of individuals to achieve underpin the character of American society. Without question, military service has played an important role over several generations in supporting the idea of individual improvement. Through specific training, as well as the development of personal characteristics such as discipline and responsibility, the military has been a path to greater capabilities and a better life for many young Americans. Military service has itself provided knowledge and has often led individuals to higher education. Beginning with the GI Bill of Rights after World War II, educational benefits provided to returning combat veterans created a potentially transformative educational path for individual veterans, and, in the process, strengthened the nation's capacities for innovation and productivity. In our law schools over the last 60 years we have seen the powerful effects of military experience and of this national assistance for veterans. We also understand that for many Americans military service has been a meaningful way to participate in our democracy.

Today, however, military service is not open to all who wish to serve our country. We hope that this year the Congress will act to provide equal access to military service, by extending non-discrimination principles to the many who are now discouraged or prevented from serving because of the current "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

BRIEF BACKGROUND OF THE AALS

Formed in 1900 for the purpose of improving the legal profession through legal education, the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) is a voluntary membership organization of 171 law schools. AALS membership has been regarded as an important indicator of the quality of a law school. The AALS pursues our purpose of strengthening legal education through two principal vehicles (1) a membership process which periodically evaluates law schools, and (2) programs for law teachers and administrators, designed to encourage innovation, further strong teaching and excellent curricula and foster a climate of inquiry through teaching and research that will strengthen the law and the legal profession.

Only rarely does the AALS speak in the legislative process or seek to address a court in the context of a case before it. We consider doing so only in circumstances where our core educational values or the educational programs and related judgments of member schools are strongly implicated. We regard the issue before you now as one of those moments.

A HISTORICAL LOOK AT NON-DISCRIMINATION
PRINCIPLES

A neutral look at our national history on issues of discrimination since the end of World War II makes clear that each of the

watersheds in 20th century non-discrimination law were not the obvious decisions that one could assume in retrospect, but rather were hotly contested. The House that passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 had only twelve female members. At the time of the vote on the historic legislation, there were nine minority members in the House, all of them male. One was an Asian American from the young state of Hawaii (World War II veteran Spark Matsunaga, who was twice wounded in battle while serving with Japanese-American segregated units sent to war while many family members of his fellow soldiers had been assigned to relocation centers on the West coast). Three were Latinos, representing districts in Texas, New Mexico, and California. The remaining five were all African-Americans from northern states. And the House and history would have to wait for nine more years before the first post-Reconstruction African American from the South was seated in the House of Representatives.

Ending racial segregation in the military took Presidential action. It was President Eisenhower's view that federal institutions should be at the forefront of upholding the ideal of racial equality. Then as now, discrimination on the part of the federal government is fundamentally and deeply troubling. As a revered military leader, Eisenhower as President was able to bring about implementation of President Truman's 1948 Executive Order to desegregate the military. The Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 gave women permanent status in the Army, Navy, Marines (and later Air Force and Coast Guard) and from the 1960's through the present women have been granted further access to opportunity in the military.

AALS NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES

The AALS acted to require its members to avoid discrimination based on race or color in 1951. Nineteen years later, in 1970, a requirement of non-discrimination covering women was added to the AALS By-Laws. Two decades ago the AALS membership acted to include discrimination based on sexual orientation in the list of prohibited categories of discrimination for AALS member schools. AALS Bylaw § Section 6-3 states that each member school undertakes to "provide equality of opportunity in legal education for all . . . enrolled students . . . without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age disability or sexual orientation." The concept of non-discrimination is critical to our democracy and crucial to the training of lawyers who, among others, act as stewards of democratic ideals. The role of law and lawyers in our society is to further the orderly conduct of the society, including the resolution of disputes, and to construct respect for the law and to establish and ensure the qualities that will engender that respect, such as fairness, level playing fields, and equality of opportunity. Inherently then, law schools place a high priority on trying to instill in lawyers their civic responsibilities and their role in furthering democratic values.

The application of non-discrimination principles to career opportunities for law students became and remains a particularly troublesome issue in the wake of passage of the Solomon Amendment in 1996. In light of that federal law, the AALS fashioned a compromise in the application of its own non-discrimination principles. That compromise allows military recruiters on law school campuses but requires member schools to "ameliorate" that presence and make clear the inconsistency between the schools' non-discrimination policies and the military's