

"We used to be the ones who said 'Gotcha!' Now people can talk to us before they get into trouble."

Carpenter, who formerly headed the New Kensington Community Development Corp., where he won praise for clearing and reusing vacant lots, joined HUD last summer. In this job he's been able to pull together people he could not have assembled in his old job.

For example, a group of American Street area residents and representatives of a community development corporation there were working together earlier this year, hoping to obtain funding to design projects for property acquisition and housing preservation.

Carpenter, according to Santiago Burgos, director of the American Street Empowerment Zone in North Philadelphia, was able to help people working in the area "think through to design a project to consolidate those goals." Carpenter helped them see that they needed money for pre-development and environmental testing. Their improving planning made it easier to identify and get funding, Burgos said.

In addition, Carpenter brought in the right people as advisers and consultants, Burgos said, and "shortened the learning curve" for the community people, moving things forward faster.

Such projects are close to Carpenter's heart.

"Frankly, it's one of Philadelphia's biggest disgraces—what happens to vacant land once the building is torn down. The city essentially abdicates responsibility. They do not clean it, they do not maintain it, they do not cite the owners for not maintaining it.

"For a developer driving by here, the first gut-recoiling reaction is, 'Why would I even build here if the people who live here tolerate this? What would they do to my store? What would they do to my business?'"

Although the problem is vast, Carpenter said—in the city there are about 40,000 vacant buildings and 30,000 vacant lots, most privately owned—he thinks it can be tackled.

"Having the HUD seal of approval gets people to listen to me," he said.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. J.C. WATTS, JR.

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 30, 1999

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I was granted a leave of absence for Monday, June 29, 1999. Following are the Suspension votes I missed and how I would have voted:

On Passage of H. Con. Res. 94: On rollcall vote No. 259, I would have voted "yea."

On Passage of H. Res. 226: On rollcall vote No. 258, I would have voted "yea."

On Passage of H.R. 2280: On rollcall vote No. 257, I would have voted "yea."

Lastly, I would have voted "yea" for H.J. Res. 34; H.R. 1568; H.R. 2014 and H.R. 1327 all passed by voice vote.

IN RECOGNITION OF COACH RAY SMOOT ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT AFTER 41 YEARS AS A TEACHER, COACH AND PRINCIPAL

HON. BOB RILEY

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 30, 1999

Mr. RILEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Coach Ray Smoot on the occasion of his retirement from a teaching career that has spanned 41 years.

Ray Smoot has served children from kindergarten through high school. He has been a teacher, a coach and a principal. Today, he will retire as Principal of Talladega High School in Talladega, AL.

Ray Smoot had to work hard for his education, and he has always promoted the importance of education. He might have chosen another field, but he wanted to teach. Now he can take pride in knowing that he has made a difference in the lives of so many people, helping them to see the value of education and recognize their potential.

I salute Ray Smoot on his outstanding career.

IN HONOR OF VINCENZO MELENZIO

HON. PAUL RYAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 30, 1999

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Vincenzo Melenzio for his assistance to the United States forces during World War II.

Mr. Melenzio, or "Enzo," was an Italian navy radioman who after the Germans had taken over the Italian Government, defected and volunteered for action against the Germans with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).

Mr. Melenzio was employed by the OSS for four months in the winter of 1945 as a behind-the-lines radio operator. He served with the OSS 2677th Regiment along with approximately 750 Italian partisan led by 9–10 Americans.

On May 11, 1945, Mr. Melenzio received a certificate of appreciation for his services from Col. Russell D. Livermore, commander of all Special Operations Units in the Mediterranean area. Furthermore, the United States Army, in a memo to the Italian Navy, recommended Mr. Melenzio for the bronze medal.

It is appropriate that Mr. Melenzio be recognized for his bravery, and for his service to both the United States, and to the international community at large.

THE HOLOCAUST ASSETS COMMISSION EXTENSION ACT

HON. RICK LAZIO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 30, 1999

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Speaker, as we approach the new millennium, it is right and proper that

we look forward to the bright future before us. Yet mileposts like these, like old photographs, evoke reflection on the past, not just of our triumphs but also our tragedies. Today I want to draw our attention back to the past, back to one of the most tragic chapters in all of human history, to the Holocaust and its aftermath.

The horrors of the Holocaust are well known: six million Jews murdered, along with millions of others deemed "undesirable" by Adolf Hitler and his followers. It is often overlooked, however, that the Holocaust was not only one of the largest mass murders in history, but also the largest organized theft in history. The Nazis stole, plundered, and looted billions of dollars of assets. A half-century later we still lack a full accounting.

One year ago, Congress passed and the President signed legislation creating the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States. The Commission has two goals. The first is to conduct original historical research into the question of what happened to the assets of Holocaust victims that came into the "possession or control" of the Federal Government. This research will also include a review of work done by others looking into the matter of assets that passed into non-Federal hands, commodities that included gold, non-gold financial assets, and art and cultural property. The second is to recommend to the President the appropriate future action necessary to bring closure to this issue.

As a member of the Commission, I feel compelled to address the question, "why now?" Why, as we look forward to the new millennium, are the resources of the United States and 17 other nations being devoted to learning the truth about the treatment of Holocaust victims half a century ago?

The answer is simple. Holocaust survivors are aging—and dying. If we are ever to do justice to them, and the memory of the six million Jews and millions of other victims who perished, we must act quickly. The intransigence of the Swiss and others has inflamed passions and energized advocates throughout the world. Justice delayed is justice denied. And with the end of the Cold War, we have the opportunity to look at the immediate post-World War II period with a fresh perspective.

Even if the world were so inclined, it is now impossible to pretend that justice was done. We know too much. We know that in Europe banks sat on dormant accounts for five decades; that insurance companies evaded their responsibilities to honor policies held by victims; that unscrupulous art dealers sold paintings that were extorted from Jews who feared for their lives; and that gold from Holocaust victims was resmelted, often becoming the basis for financial dealings between large corporate entities.

The Holocaust Commission Act assumes a sunset date of December 1999. Because of the delay in starting a new enterprise from scratch and because of the enormous volume of archival and other resources that need to be examined, it is clear that the commission must have more time and more funding to accomplish its mission.

Therefore, in acknowledgment of this need, I am introducing the Holocaust Commission Extension Act. This act will do two things: extend the sunset date of the Commission to