

INTRODUCTION OF "THE AMERICAN LAND SOVEREIGNTY PROTECTION ACT"

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 1, 1999

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, today, on behalf of myself and 126 cosponsors I am introducing the American Land Sovereignty Protection Act. Last Congress, this bill, known as H.R. 901, passed the House by a vote of 236-191. I am confident that this Congress will pass the American Land Sovereignty Protection Act.

H.R. 901 will: (1) prevent the Executive Branch from using World Heritage Site, Biosphere Reserve, and RAMSAR designations to guide domestic land use policies without consulting Congress, (2) restore meaningful Congressional oversight of these programs, (3) protect the rights of owners on non-federal lands adjacent to or intermixed with these land reserves, and (4) protect our domestic land use decision-making process from international interference.

United Nations' land designations, such as UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites, currently take place without the approval of Congress and virtually no Congressional oversight. The Constitutional power of Congress "to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States" cannot be bargained away by the President in a Treaty.

International land use designations, such as the Biosphere Reserve program, also enable the Executive Branch to implement international treaties, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, without ratification by the United States Senate. For example, a prime objective of the biosphere reserve program is to create a national network of biosphere reserves that will implement Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Biosphere Reserve program is not authorized by a single U.S. law nor is it even governed by an international treaty. That is wrong. Executive branch appointees cannot and should not do things that the law does not authorize.

Congress must act to keep international commitments from interfering with Constitutional rights, such as the right to own property, guaranteed all American citizens. Our system may be messy at times, but it is designed to protect rights that Americans value, rights which are only a dream for citizens of many other countries. Otherwise, the rights of our citizens and the boundary between public land managed by the government and private property can be too easily ignored.

The public and local governments are almost never consulted about creating World Heritage Sites and Biosphere Reserves. Designation efforts are almost always driven by unelected federal bureaucrats. Despite claims to the contrary by proponents of these programs, World Heritage Sites and Biosphere Reserves face strong local opposition.

So that everyone understands, my concern is that the United States Congress—and

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therefore the people of the United States—have been left out of the domestic process to designate Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage sites. This legislation restores the Constitutional role of Congress in governing lands belonging to the United States thereby making the people of this country relevant in this process.

The American Land Sovereignty Protection Act requires that Congress approve international land designations in the United States on a case by case basis, because according to the United States Constitution, Congress possesses the ultimate decision-making power over lands belonging to the people of the United States.

HONORING NEW PENSACOLA CHIEF OF POLICE, JERRY W. POTTS

HON. JOE SCARBOROUGH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 1, 1999

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, today I wish to share with my colleagues the outstanding accomplishments of a great Floridian, Mr. Jerry W. Potts, Chief of Police in the City of Pensacola, Florida.

Chief Potts' professional and personal life have been characterized by excellence, leadership and service to others. The resume he has compiled is extraordinary. He embarked on his long and successful career in public service in 1965 when he joined the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division.

Chief Potts began his law enforcement career in 1973 when he joined the Pensacola Police Department as a dispatcher. Jerry quickly worked his way up the ranks being promoted to police officer, Sergeant, Assistant Chief of Police, and early this year, Chief of Police.

Jerry Potts' service to others goes beyond law enforcement. Chief Potts has always been involved in our community. He has served on the Judges' Task Force for Children, the Mayor's Task Force on Community Values, and the Board of Governors for Fiesta of Five Flags.

Mr. Speaker, by any measure of merit, Chief Potts is one of America's best and brightest law enforcement professionals, and he will continue to be an asset for Northwest Florida in his new role. And a father of two young boys, I sleep better at night knowing that our streets are safer and that our children are protected because of his life-long efforts.

Chief Jerry Potts has devoted his life to preserving the public safety enjoyed by the people of the City of Pensacola and the entire State of Florida. We are grateful for his continuing public service.

TRIBUTE TO ASSEMBLYWOMAN CARMEN E. ARROYO

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 1, 1999

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and to pay tribute to

Assemblywoman Carmen E. Arroyo, an outstanding individual who has dedicated her life to public service.

Born in Corozal, Puerto Rico, Carmen moved to New York City in 1964 after graduating from Corozal High School and Sixto Febus Business School, where she received her Secretarial-Bookkeeper degree. She has shown the importance of life-long learning as she has continued to take post-graduate courses. In 1978 she received her Associate of Arts Degree from Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College and in 1980, at the age of 44, she earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree from the College of New Rochelle. I have known her personally for many years, and I am very familiar with her background, experience, character, and personality. She is a person of the highest personal and professional integrity.

Mr. Speaker, when Carmen moved to New York, she worked long hours in a factory in order to bring her seven children from Puerto Rico. In 1965, they joined her in New York, but, unable to find day care services, she was forced to receive public assistance for nine months, during which time she organized the welfare mothers of her community and founded the South Bronx Action Group (SBAG) in 1966. The South Bronx Action Group received funding and Carmen served as the Executive Director. She expanded the notion of tenant advocacy to include interrelated employment, health, adult education, and welfare services. Today, the SBAG is still operating.

In 1978, Carmen became Executive Director of the South Bronx Community Corporation, where she was responsible for implementation of policy and overall supervision of program budgeting. As Executive Director, she implemented a successful feeding program where over 400 senior citizens and drug addicts were served hot meals on a daily basis. Under her leadership, the SBCC had the largest Summer Youth Employment Program in New York City, employing over 5,000 each year. Carmen was also instrumental in raising funds from public resources and private foundations. She initiated a grant for funds under Section 202 of the Federal Housing Act and received two grants totaling over 8.4 million dollars to construct 194 housing units for senior citizens. Carmen was also instrumental in the development of private housing for working class families in the South Bronx. As a result of that, she became the first Puerto Rican woman housing developer in New York State.

In 1978, Carmen was elected Female District Leader of what today is the 74th Assembly District, which she served until 1993. She served as Member and President of Community School Board 7 from 1973 to 1993. She served as member of the Lincoln Hospital Advisory Board for 17 years and in 1973 was appointed by former Governor Nelson Rockefeller to the NYS Medicaid Council, on which she served a 4-year term. She was also Member and Chairperson of Planning Board One for 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, in February 1994, Carmen won a special election and became the first Puerto Rican Woman elected to the New York State Assembly.

This is the kind of issue that should be discussed in the classrooms. Assemblywoman