

But Dick Harpootlian, chairman of the South Carolina Democratic Party, offered a different animal analogy: "Birds of a feather flock together."

"If David Duke and those kinds of folks are showing up at those meetings, they obviously have some interest in them," he said.

"There's a fight for the heart and soul of the Republican Party. Is it the party of Lincoln or the party of extremes? So far, the extreme's winning."

U.S. Rep. Robert Wexler, D-Fla., is calling on members of Congress to denounce the Council of Conservative Citizens. "They can hide behind whatever curtain they want to hide, but we know what they are," Wexler said in a telephone interview.

Baum said the debate has devolved into a kind of '90s McCarthyism, where guilt by association is the order of the day.

"Really, Trent Lott's involvement wasn't other than what he would do with any larger constituent group," Baum said. "I mean, to us it's sending a signal that any political figure should not meet with conservatives. I mean, they did this with the Christian Coalition; they did it with the pro-life movement. They've tried to demonize them."

The Council of Conservative Citizens meeting last Saturday in Columbia was supposed to be open. But when members learned an Associated Press reporter planned to attend, the executive board voted to close the partition.

"They're all afraid," Mrs. Bell said. "People are afraid they'll lose their job if their name comes out."

But Wheeler exhorted the back-room crowd to "look at our duty. . . ."

"The war for the hearts and the minds of the people must be won before the political war can be won."

**DEFENDANTS DENY WOMAN'S CLAIM OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN HOUSE DEAL**

INDIANOLA, MISS. (AP)—The defendants in a federal racial discrimination lawsuit have asked the U.S. District court to dismiss the case.

The suit, filed by Sunflower County assistant district attorney Felecia Lockhart, claims Community Bank of Indianola and others conspired in 1995 to prevent her from purchasing a home in a predominantly white neighborhood. Lockhart is black.

Defendants include Community Bancshares of Mississippi, which does business as Community Bank of Mississippi; Freddie J. Bagley, the bank's president in Indianola; Thomas Colbert and James T. Mood.

In documents filed this week, the defendants denied any wrongdoing and asked that the lawsuit seeking \$1.5 million in damages be dismissed. Lockhart brought the action following an unsuccessful attempt to purchase the house from Mood, an officer at the bank in Indianola, and his wife.

Lockhart claims Mood was coerced into breaching the contract to sell the House and that, specifically, "certain shareholders and/or directors" of the bank were objecting to the deal.

In seeking dismissal, the defendants said they had dealt with Lockhart at all times in a non-discriminatory manner.

They claim Lockhart wrote a letter to Mood wrongfully accusing him of breach of contract, demanding repairs he could not pay for and demanding he compensate her for more than \$2,800 of unspecified expenses in the sale contract.

Defendants also maintain that Mood was warned that "further steps" would be taken if he failed to hand over the more than \$2,800.

They also said none of Mood's superiors at the bank "ever said one word to him about attempting to get out of the sale, much less coerced or sought to pressure him."

**STATEMENT ON THE PEACE PROCESS IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

**HON. RICK LAZIO**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the ongoing peace process in Northern Ireland. For nearly a year now, we have walked down a path leading toward the permanent resolution of the more than 30 years of acrimony in Northern Ireland. The "Good Friday Peace Agreement" was hailed internationally as "the best chance in a generation for peace," and was passed last April with a remarkable 85 percent majority. As is often true with any worthwhile endeavor, the road to our ultimate goal may not always be smooth, nor direct. It is now, however, during this time of uncertainty and difficulty, when progress seems painstakingly slow and obstacles appear overwhelming, that our efforts should be redoubled. We should take heart in the accomplishments of this past year and weigh carefully the actual value of realizing a permanent peace before allowing any one stumbling block to derail this important process.

The recognition given to John Hume, head of the SDLP, and David Trimble, First Minister of the Northern Ireland Assembly, in receiving the Nobel Peace Prize was a reassuring step toward memorializing the extraordinary achievements made by the proponents of peace. We should not forget, however, the many other people, without whom this process would not have even been possible. Prime Ministers Bertie Ahern and Tony Blair, Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein, British Secretary Mo Mowlam and many others, on both sides of the issue, as well as the Atlantic, were instrumental in propelling the cause of peace in a region weary of constant strife. We should also remember the 3,200 people who have lost their lives during more than three decades of violence; for their memories will serve us well in motivating all people who are concerned, as I am, with enhancing the efforts to bring a lasting tranquility to Ireland. This Tranquility is of special concern to the people of New York, the State for which I hold the honor of representing, as we have one of the largest Irish populations outside of their homeland.

Unfortunately, along with this timely recognition of accomplishment, there must also be the increased vigil of those that would attempt to destroy the peace process that has been so carefully cultivated. We are reminded, yet again, of the cost of not succeeding by the tragedy which occurred just days ago, when Mrs. Rosemary Nelson was brutally murdered by a loyalist paramilitary group. Mrs. Nelson was an important participant in the peace process, an accomplished barrister, and a mother of young children. Her murder was a cowardly act that illustrates so clearly that the time has long passed for these last few violent

thugs to heed the demands of the overwhelming majority of their countrymen and lay down their arms, once and for all.

The complexity of the discord in Northern Ireland that has proven so baffling to peace seekers for a generation, will not be solved by the mere signing of one document. It will only be realized by a thorough adherence to and completion of the measures outlined in the Good Friday Agreement and mandated by the people of Ireland. As the first anniversary of the agreement approaches, all sides have the opportunity, if not the obligation, to make real progress toward its implementation. The paramilitary factions must be demobilized and disbanded immediately if there is to be a genuine and lasting peace. All parties to the process must now rely on the increased dialogue and the new, conciliatory tone of the talks to transform any future disagreements from violent altercations into intelligent debate and then, hopefully, lasting harmony. A harmony that will one day remove the ubiquitous and pernicious words "The Troubles" from the vernacular of a generation of Irish, both in their homeland and in America.

**LANDOWNERS EQUAL TREATMENT ACT OF 1999**

**HON. DON YOUNG**

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 17, 1999

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, today Congressman TAUZIN, Congressman POMBO and I, joined by more than 20 cosponsors, are introducing the Landowners Equal Treatment Act of 1999. The purpose of this bill is to insure that private property owners are compensated when their land must be used by the federal government as habitat for endangered or threatened species. The United States Constitution in the 5th Amendment states "nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation." The Supreme Court has said that the right to be compensated for the taking of private property for a public use is a fundamental constitutional right on the same level as the right to free speech and free exercise of religion.

There are some in our country who no longer revere or respect the rights of private property owners. Their view is that using land for wildlife habitat is more important than protecting the right to own and control the use of private property. However, the purpose of our bill of rights is prevent the current whims of the majority from infringing on the rights of each individual in our country to certain liberties and freedoms guaranteed in our constitution. One of the most important of these is the full rights of ownership of private property, which includes the right to use and enjoy the fruits of ownership of property.

Over the last several years, bills have been introduced to insure that property owners are protected by requiring compensation when property is taken, to insure that property owners have the right to bring suit to protect their own property rights, and to make property rights lawsuits less cumbersome. Certainly, landowners can file suit for compensation