

of color, creed, or religion, but happen across the Nation. He is following the law when he protects good law enforcement, as well.

As indicated by Sandy Bernard, who was president or is president of the 150,000 member American Association of University Women, in an editorial in the *Houston Chronicle* on Monday, April 12, 1999, "For more than a year Lee has done an outstanding job as the Acting Assistant Attorney General, enforcing our Nation's civil rights laws effectively, fairly, and vigorously. His work on behalf of women is impressive, and he is moving forward."

We cannot ask Bill Lann Lee, Mr. Speaker, to change the laws that he has to enforce. What we can simply do is say, do your job. He should be confirmed and confirmed now.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD a copy of the article in the *Houston Chronicle* of Monday, April 12, 1999.

The article referred to is as follows:
GET PAST POLITICS, APPROVE BILL LANN LEE
NOMINATION

Civil rights laws are designed to protect equal opportunity, but these laws are meaningless without a strong leader to enforce them. That leader is Bill Lann Lee. The Senate must confirm Lee as assistant attorney general for civil rights if we are going to guarantee equal protection for all.

For more than a year, Lee has done an outstanding job as the acting assistant attorney general enforcing our nation's civil rights laws effectively, fairly and vigorously.

His work on behalf of women is impressive. He has challenged public-sector employment practices that have excluded women from many traditionally male jobs. He has enforced Title IX—the law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education—in many federal training and educational programs.

As chair of the National Task Force on Violence Against Health Care Providers, created after the murder of Dr. Barnett Slepian, he has vigorously protected reproductive health care providers. He has made prevention and prosecution of hate crimes a top priority of the division under his leadership.

Prior to his current position, Lee worked for two decades as a civil rights attorney and a champion of equal opportunity. He negotiated settlements in cases that successfully broke down workplace barriers, especially those that kept women from advancing. Lee made a name for himself by bringing about positive change through the law and building consensus and partnerships—something we need more of in Washington.

So what is the problem? It comes down to politics. In 1997 the Senate, Judiciary Committee held up Lee's nomination though he was clearly qualified for the job. Some senators thought that Lee would support "un-constitutional" affirmative action policies. Yet these policies are the law of the land. In fact, Lee has strictly adhered to recent Supreme Court rulings on affirmative action.

If our elected officials have an issue with the law, they should not take it out on those appointed to uphold the law. Interestingly, recent votes in the House and Senate have been supportive of affirmative action. It seems the Senate Judiciary Committee would rather hold the nation to its own agenda than allow a vote where the outcome may be disagreeable to them.

The American Association of University Women was sure of Lee's ability when he was first nominated a year ago, and we are only more convinced today. Lee's 23-year history of fighting discrimination and working for justice speaks for itself. His excellent work over the past year should be rewarded with a confirmation so he can continue his job.

By confirming Bill Lann Lee, the Senate will demonstrate that it can rise above political pettiness and prove its commitment to advancing civil rights for everyone.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform the nation of a continuing injustice. I rise to tell the nation of an attorney with impeccable credentials and qualifications to be the next Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the United States Department of Justice. I rise today to remind you of the story of Bill Lann Lee.

It is now more than two years since his appointment to fill the position of Assistant Attorney General. Yet, his appointment to be the next Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division has been frozen for more than two years in the Senate. The Senate has refused to complete the confirmation process.

Mr. Lee is one of the country's leading civil rights attorneys, with a long and distinguished history of defending the rights of all Americans. Mr. Lee's distinguished legal career has spanned more than 23 years. He has tirelessly spent his career seeking equal opportunity for all people and working diligently against discrimination in all forms, including employment, housing, voting and education. Mr. Lee has extensive experience in civil rights law.

Yet despite all these accomplishments, his confirmation remains unfinished. A man whose experience in civil rights law includes extensive work in employment discrimination, health care, prevention of lead poisoning in poor children, access to public transportation, and equal access to education.

I know first hand Mr. Lee brings a reasoned approach to his post. He has served the interests of his client, the American people without hesitation. During the last two years, he has served the nation as the Acting Assistant Attorney General. He has won my respect with his straightforward approach and on many occasions he has responded to the needs of the 18th Congressional District. Mr. Lee came to Houston to participate in a Town Hall Meeting on Hate Crimes.

During his two years as Acting Assistant Attorney General the Civil Rights Division has enforced the laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, and other factors. Known as a skilled consensus builder, he has tirelessly worked to improve civil rights for all Americans.

Bill Lann Lee brings the kind of practical experience and leadership to the Justice Department that is needed. His leadership of the Civil Rights Division has included many issues including the monitoring of elections and investigating the police as well as protecting citizens with disabilities. One needs to look no further than events in Jasper, TX and New York City to see the leadership of Bill Lann Lee.

I praised President Clinton in 1997 when he made this appointment and I continue my support today. It is long past the time that the Senate should have taken action to confirm

Bill Lann Lee as the nation's Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to complete this process. Congress needs to reaffirm its commitment to civil rights and we can send no greater sign than to confirm Bill Lann Lee.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are again reminded not to refer to the personal conduct of the President of the United States.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 11 a.m.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 11 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 11 a.m.

□ 1100

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. EWING) at 11 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Reverend James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

We are thankful, gracious God, that with all our differences of tradition and experience, and with the contrasts between us that mark our individuality, we are still bound together by Your creative spirit. We are grateful, O God, this spirit can unite us and make us whole, that this spirit can show us the way to live in harmony and concord, that this spirit can show us the power of faith and hope and love. Breathe into our hearts and souls, O God, this spirit of unity and peace, and may we so learn to live our lives that we testify to the wonder of Your grace. Bless us this day and every day, we pray. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. COSTELLO led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.