

July 11, 2000

Christi, and their children, Nicolas and Benjamin.

HONORING LIEUTENANT DENNIS SLOCUMB ON HIS RETIREMENT AFTER 32 YEARS OF SERVICE

**HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 11, 2000*

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to congratulate Lieutenant Dennis Slocumb on his retirement after 32 years of service with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Mr. Slocumb has devoted his career to protecting the lives of all Californians, and in doing so, I would like to pay tribute to Dennis who has exemplified the notion of public service and civic duty.

Lieutenant Slocumb entered the Sheriff's Department in 1968, and during his 32 years of service he assisted the community as a patrolman, a press liaison and lieutenant detective. His most recent assignment was to serve as the president of the Los Angeles County Professional Peace Officers Association, representing over 6,000 law enforcement professionals.

Upon his retirement from the Sheriff's Department, Lieutenant Slocumb will be honored by his community and his colleagues to serve as executive vice president with the International Union of Police Associations in Alexandria, Virginia.

What makes these accomplishments even more remarkable is that Dennis is a devoted husband and father of one. Lieutenant Slocumb's role as a public servant to the people of his community and all Californians will not go unnoticed. Dennis truly lived the life of a model police officer and he has earned the right to say that he's made a difference.

It is with this, that I would like to honor Mr. Slocumb and his efforts to make his community a better place to live. His dedication and know-how have distinguished him greatly. The citizens of California owe Dennis a lot of gratitude and I wish him well.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE TOMMIE J. ROBINSON

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 11, 2000*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to stand before you to commemorate the memory of the late Tommie J. Robinson. Robinson was one of Bolton, Mississippi's oldest residents.

Robinson, a homemaker, died of heart failure on June 23, 2000. She was 106 years old. To many, Robinson was the town historian. People from all around would come to her and say, "What was life like in Mississippi 50 years ago?"

A devoted wife and mother, Robinson worked very hard to make her community a better place for future generations. Formerly a

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

13845

member of Asbury United Methodist Church, Robinson later became a member of Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church until her death.

Robinson was an advocate for education in the black community. She encouraged black youth to seek higher education, and promoted the importance of reading. Robinson was very well known for her acute spelling ability. Many of her neighbors and friends would rely on her keen spelling abilities and challenge her to test her knowledge. She always proved triumphant.

Mr. Speaker, Tommie J. Robinson has touched the lives of many people. She will be missed, and she will always be remembered by the people of Bolton as one who loved the state of Mississippi.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PARTICIPANT ADVOCATE BILL

**HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 11, 2000*

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, today Senator HARKIN and I are pleased to introduce legislation to create an Office of Pension Participant Advocacy within the Department of Labor. This is an idea whose time is long overdue. Over the last several decades, and particularly since Congress enacted the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, our pension system has grown increasingly complicated and less "employee-friendly". Even in the best of circumstances, pension law is complex. But, when employees or retirees have questions or problems, understanding and maneuvering through our pension system can be a nightmare.

I, and many other members of Congress, have long believed that individuals need a single easy place that they can turn to when they have problems with our pension system. Currently, pension issues are handled by a variety of agencies, including the Department of Labor, Department of Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, as well as several other agencies. Finding the right agency itself can be a challenge. In addition, these agencies often are not set up to help with individual problems and concerns. The IRS and Treasury Departments primarily focus on tax abuses, not individual inquiries. For many years, the Department of Labor had little or no staff to help individuals with specific problems. Even though the Department has worked hard in the past five years to develop a team of "benefit advisers", there is no clear statutory mandate for this program, nor clear directive that the Department should provide an easy and accessible entry point for individuals with pension problems. The American people need a simple place to go to address their pension concerns. There is no need or reason to seek out expensive lawyers when an individual has a particular pension problem which may involve a small amount of money dollar-wise, but mean the difference between a decent and an impoverished retirement to that person.

The Office of Pension Participant Advocacy would establish a clear Congressional man-

date that the Department of Labor should be the entry point for individuals with their pension problems. We are not talking about creating a new bureaucracy, but streamlining and improving the existing system. Under our legislation, the Department of Labor would establish an Office of the Pension Participant Advocate that would be headed by a senior executive with demonstrated expertise in pension participant assistance. The Office would evaluate the efforts of existing entities to assist pension plan participants and promote the effectiveness of our pension system by increasing awareness of the importance of pensions and ensuring that the pension benefit rights of individuals are protected. The Pension Participant Advocate annually would report to the Administration and Congress on policy issues it has encountered and make recommendations for resolving them.

We hope this bill will receive widespread bipartisan support. Over the past several years, a bipartisan group of members and outside organizations has expressed concern about the shortcomings of our current pension assistance system. We hope this bill will provide a meaningful and cost effective solution to the system's current inadequacies and look forward to working with our colleagues towards its enactment.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. RUBEN HINOJOSA**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 11, 2000*

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I hosted Labor Secretary Alexis Herman in my Congressional District who was meeting with local officials and community members. Our late return to Washington resulted in my missing the following votes on H.R. 4461, making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001:

Roll No. 373, on agreeing to the Coburn amendment that sought to prohibit the use of any funding for drugs solely intended for the chemical inducement of abortion. Had I been present I would have voted no.

Roll No. 374, on agreeing to the Royce amendment that sought to reduce by one percent each amount that is not required to be appropriated or otherwise made available by a provision of law. Had I been present I would have voted no.

Roll No. 375, on agreeing to the Crowley amendment that prohibits the FDA from taking actions that restrict the purchase of prescription drugs in Canada and Mexico by United States citizens. Had I been present I would have voted aye.

Roll No. 376, on agreeing to the Royce amendment that sought to prohibit any funding to award any new allocations under the market access program or pay salaries of personnel to award such allocations. Had I been present I would have voted no.

Roll No. 377, on agreeing to the Coburn amendment that prohibits the FDA from taking any action to interfere with the import of drugs