

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONGRATULATIONS TO SEIU ON 25 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, October 29, 2000

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, October 28th, I had the privilege of attending the 25th anniversary celebration of an organization which has led the way in offering improved opportunities and a better quality of life for working men and women, the Service Employees International Union. Honored at the event were President and Co-founder John "JJ" Johnson and all the Charter members of Local 617. The program featured union members, friends and supporters, including Newark Mayor Sharpe James; former President Curtis Grimsley; Patricia Ford, SEIU International Executive Vice President; Carol Graves, Essex County Registrar; and Thomas Giblin, Essex County Democratic Chairman.

Three decades ago, when public sector employees in my home city of Newark, New Jersey, and throughout the nation had not yet begun to organize, Service Employees International Union took the historic initiative of chartering Local 617. In February 1976, Local 617 began to negotiate with the Newark Board of Education for its first contract. When no satisfactory results were reached, the members voted to strike. With strong support from the Newark community, members remained on strike for 12 days. SEIU President Curtis Grimsley and Executive Vice President John Johnson met with Governor Brendan Byrne and requested his intervention to reach a settlement of the dispute. The strike ended with an understanding that both parties return to the table and bargain in good faith and agree to binding mediation.

Since 1976, Local 617 and Local 3 jointly negotiated contracts with the Newark Board of Education. After the contract was settled in 1976, President Curtis Grimsley and Executive Vice President John Johnson were subpoenaed to appear in court, and a fine was imposed on Local 617. Personal fines were imposed on President Grimsley and Executive Vice President Johnson and they were placed on two years probation because of the strike. In 1977, Local 617 organized the City of Newark Crossing Guards, who went on strike after there was no progress during negotiations. A contract was eventually reached after Mayor Kenneth Gibson met with the Union leadership. That same year, Local 617 established a Community Service Plaque Award for Community involvement to be presented to a student from each of the Newark High Schools.

The Local also successfully petitioned to represent the Bus Attendants of the Newark Board of Education. In 1978, there was a 3-day strike which led to approval of a benefit package for the membership consisting of pre-

scription drugs coverage, dental care, vision care and temporary disability, benefits which members still enjoy today.

In 1990, Local 617 organized the Newark Pre-school Employees. That year, 250 workers went on strike with the support of the parents and the community. This strike, lasting 7 weeks, was the longest in the history of Local 617. Since that time, SEIU has been certified to represent additional units, which include Community Day Nursery, Christ Church Day Care Center, Mary E. Wheeler Willis Educational Center, Irvington Housing Authority, HOPES, Irvington Crossing Guards, City of Newark Department of Public Works, City of Newark 911 Communication Operators and the Jersey City Head Start Program. The Union also obtained an affiliation agreement with the International Union, which merged Local 305 of the Newark Housing Authority into Local 617. The Local has also affiliated with Joint Council 33, the Eastern Conference of Service Employees, the New Jersey AFL-CIO, Essex West Hudson Labor Council, the Industrial Union Council, the Council of Union Employees, and the A. Randolph Institute.

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues here in Congress join me in congratulating Local 617 of the SEIU, an organization which has grown from 25 members in 1969 to over 3000 today, as they continue to champion the rights of working men and women.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, October 29, 2000

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 572, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

HONORING JIM MOUER OF SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, October 29, 2000

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I pay tribute to a truly outstanding citizen of Sacramento, Jim Mouer. He will be retiring after over 45 years of service in the baking industry and 21 years of working for BCTGM Local 85. As his friends and family gather to celebrate on Saturday, October 28, I ask all of my colleagues to join with me in saluting his remarkable career.

Jim Mouer was born on September 27, 1935 at County Hospital on Stockton Boulevard in Sacramento. He graduated from Sacramento High School in June 1954. After attending Sacramento City College, Jim went on

to work as a bakery apprentice at Hearts Bakery. His career continued as a baker with several employers, including his own bakery with his father. He eventually joined Continental Bakery (Wonder Bread) in 1960.

After 19 years with Wonder Bread, Jim went on to become Secretary/Treasurer of the Bakers Union, Local 85. Since then, he has guided the Union in contract negotiations and related matters.

In addition to his work with BCTGM Local 85, Jim Mouer was instrumental in the rebirth of the Coalition of Organized Labor, an organization dedicated to the sharing of ideas and uniting the labor community. In 1984, Jim and fellow labor leaders Chuck Brooks, Obie Brandon, and Tom Lawson recognized the need to organize various local unions with the intent of creating a better working relationship among the various labor groups. The Coalition was able to achieve numerous goals including promoting Union Solidarity, establishing coordinated boycott actions, and educating members.

In retirement, Jim will have the opportunity to spend more time with his strong, growing family. He and his wife Audrey have six children, ten grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, as Jim Mouer's friends and family gather to celebrate his retirement, I am honored to pay tribute to a truly remarkable citizen of Sacramento. His contributions to our area have indeed been commendable. I ask all of my colleagues to join with me in wishing him and his family continued success in all their future endeavors.

IN MEMORY OF RONALD RONNY FINGER AS THE COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOL 2000 BACK TO SCHOOL GALA HONOREE

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, October 29, 2000

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, today I honor the memory of an extraordinary man, Ronald Jack "Ronny" Finger of Houston, whom is being honored posthumously at the Communities in School Back To School Gala in Houston, Texas on November 4, 2000. His passing was a tremendous loss for his family, including his wife Linda and their three children, Scott, Jan, and Cristina, and his friends. But, we are all richer in spirit and community for the time he was with us.

A distinguished businessman and dedicated community advocate, Ronny Finger contributed in countless ways to building a better future for Houston, especially the city's Jewish community, the arts, and education.

Born in Houston to Hyman and Bessie Finger, he graduated in 1960 from the University

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

of Texas and served as a lieutenant in the Navy. Two years later, he joined his brothers Marvy and Jerry in the Finger Cos., a major developer of real estate and multifamily housing. During the 1970s he was the president of the Houston and Texas Apartment Associations and Vice President of the National Apartment Association.

Ronny became fervently involved with Communities in School (CIS) after visiting the CIS program at Austin High School in 1992. He was so impressed by the effectiveness of this program he joined the CIS Board of Directors in 1994, and he and his wife, Linda, underwrote the CIS program at Key Middle School from 1997 to 2000. The CIS Dropout Prevention Program provides children with needed school supplies, tutoring, family counseling or assistance, or a safe haven during the after-school hours. During the 1999-2000 school year, 74 Houston area schools participated in the CIS program and served nearly 29,000 at-risk children. These students had a 98 percent graduation rate, a 98 percent stay in school rate, and 80 percent saw a marked improvement in academics, behavior, and/or attendance.

Ronny Finger was also a dedicated and valuable member of the Museum of Natural Science Society, Houston Symphony Society, Anti-Defamation League, Houston Women's Area Center, and the Salvation Army. And, he was a dear friend to my family and me. Mr. Speaker, I honor the memory of Ronny Finger. He is missed, but his commitment to our youth and community live on as a tribute to his life.

REVEREND HOWARD'S HISTORIC
ROLE AT BETHANY BAPTIST
CHURCH

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, October 29, 2000

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, today—Sunday October 29th—marks a very special occasion at the historic Bethany Baptist Church in Newark, New Jersey, with the conclusion of a three-day installation celebration for the new pastor, The Reverend Dr. M. William Howard, Jr. I was pleased to be among the many well-wishers who attended the solemn morning worship service to officially welcome Reverend Howard, under whose dynamic leadership Bethany Baptist will continue to flourish and to reach even greater heights.

Bethany Baptist, the oldest African American Baptist Church in Newark, was founded in 1871. Underscoring the church's strong emphasis on community involvement and cultural commitment, the building itself was designed to resemble an African hut. Ministries of the church include a senior citizen center, AIDS ministry, hospice program, computer literacy program, prison ministry, race track ministry for jockeys, a farmer's market, support for foster children, and missionaries in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean.

Reverend Howard served as President of New York Theological Seminary, a graduate school of theology committed to increasing the capacity of church workers as they strive to

make a positive difference in their congregations and their communities, from 1992 to 2000. In recognition of his work, the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations named NYTS the recipient of its Award for Excellence for the year 2000. Prior to assuming the presidency at NYTS, Rev. Howard was for 20 years a member of the national staff of America's oldest Protestant denomination—The Reformed Church in America. He also served as moderator of the World Council of Churches/Programme to Combat Racism, President of the National Council of Churches, and President of the American Committee on Africa. An activist for social justice at home and abroad, Reverend Howard was a leading participant in the movement against apartheid in South Africa for two decades. His strong moral stand prompted the former apartheid government to deny him a visa to visit South Africa. When Nelson Mandela made his first visit to the U.S., Reverend Howard chaired the committee which organized the interfaith worship service at the Riverside Church at which Mr. Mandela was welcomed to New York. In 1979, during the hostage crisis in Iran, Dr. Howard conducted Christmas worship for Americans being held captive at the U.S. embassy, and in 1984, he chaired the delegation which along with the Reverend Jesse Jackson succeeded in obtaining release of a U.S. Navy pilot being held prisoner in Syria after having been shot down during a bombing mission over Lebanon. His work has taken him to Cuba, the former Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, Central America and the Middle East.

Reverend Howard, a native of Americus, Georgia, is a graduate of Morehouse College and Princeton Theological Seminary. He holds several honorary degrees, keys to cities and awards from many organizations. A member of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity and the Council of Foreign Relations, he has served as Secretary of the Association of Theological Schools, a member of the New York City Board of the Enterprise Foundation, and a commissioner of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues in Congress join me in congratulating Reverend Howard and his wife Barbara Jean, who are the parents of three children, as he officially assumes this new leadership role at the historic Bethany Baptist Church.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VERNON J. EHLERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, October 29, 2000

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 573, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay".

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
BELARUSAN-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, October 29, 2000

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Belarusian-American Foundation on the auspicious occasion of its 50th anniversary. I am very proud of the fact that Central New Jersey is home to a significant Belarusian-American community. I happen to be very close to one particular member of the Belarusian-American community in this area: my wife, Sarah.

While we are here to celebrate, we must also recognize that Belarus has not made the successful transition to democracy like Poland, Slovakia, and as recently as this month, Serbia. Over nearly a decade of independence, the promise of democracy, freedom of expression and association, and the flowering of a national identity have not come to pass for the Belarusian people. The fault for this sad state of affairs rests, as all of us know, with President Aleksandr Lukashenka. The President has illegally extended his term of office beyond the legally mandated expiration date. Throughout his tenure, President Lukashenka has monopolized the mass media, undermined the constitutional foundation for the separation of powers, used intimidation and strong-arm tactics against the political opposition, suppressed freedom of the press and expression, defamed the national culture, maligned the national language and eroded Belarus's rightful position as a sovereign nation.

Worse, just two days before the Parliamentary elections held on October 15, President Lukashenka issued a fresh denunciation of market reforms. And, I am disappointed and disturbed that the Parliamentary elections almost exclusively involved candidates who back Lukashenka. Clearly, not a single OSCE condition for free and fair elections was met. This past week, Representatives GEJDENSON and SMITH introduced a Resolution condemning the October 15 elections. I will try to ensure that this bill reaches the House floor in the remaining days of this Congress. And today, I again express my strong condemnation of these "sham" elections.

For at least four years, I and other Members of Congress have been working to address Lukashenka's abuses of power. In 1996, I introduced a Resolution expressing concern over the Lukashenka regime's violations of human and civil rights in direct violation of the Helsinki Accords and the constitution of Belarus, and expressing concern about the union between Russia and Belarus. That Resolution also recognized March 25 as the anniversary of the declaration of an independent Belarusian state. A year later, I worked with leaders of the International Relations Committee to include language in the State Department Authorization bill, which passed the House, calling for our President to press the Government of President Lukashenka on defending the sovereignty of Belarus and guaranteeing basic freedoms and human rights.

For years now, the Belarusian-American community has been trying to inform the