

HONORING BEN ALEXANDER

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 11, 2000

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, this coming January, the Colorado State Board of Education will lose a tremendous leader in Mr. Ben Alexander. Serving as a Member-at-Large since January, 1999, Ben has developed a reputation throughout Colorado for his work in the education reform movement.

Ben initially entered public service in the Colorado General Assembly. Elected as a state senator, he crafted meaningful education reform legislation as the chairman of the Education Committee. One particular bill involved increasing the per pupil expenditure for charter school students to more closely parallel that of their government school counterparts. I remember fondly, serving beside Ben on the Senate Education Committee. Clearly he has earned the title of "Statesman," and I'm proud to call him a friend.

Throughout his distinguished public service, Ben has consistently worked to promote better teacher training and evaluation. Colorado's Governor, Bill Owens, recognized Ben's innovation and leadership and tapped him as a key player in Colorado's education reform movement. He worked hard with Governor Owens to implement the Colorado Student Assessment Program, a plan that measures the progress of Colorado students toward content standards in reading, writing, math, and science.

Mr. Speaker, in 1818, Thomas Jefferson said, "A system of general education, which shall reach every description of our citizens from the richest to the poorest, as it was the earliest, so will it be the latest of all the public concerns in which I shall permit myself to take an interest." This quotation embodies Ben Alexander's career in public service. We will dearly miss his service on the State Board of Education.

 TRIBUTE TO THE U.S.S. "COLE"
HON. DONALD A. MANZULLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 11, 2000

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, as we reflect on the tragic attack on the U.S.S. *Cole* and those brave American service members who lost their lives while serving their country and protecting the freedoms we Americans all enjoy, I submit for the RECORD a poem written by one of my constituents, Kathy K. Mecklenburg of Rockford, IL. Kathy's simple poem captures the heartfelt sentiments of all Americans regarding the tragedy and heroism surrounding this event. It is my privilege to place it in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

THE COLE TRIBUTE

This lone destroyer held no fame—
 Now, history will enroll,
 And fate forever changed the lives
 Aboard the U.S.S. *Cole*.

To Aden she sailed into port

For loading vital petrol;
 But, terrorists had other plans
 To harm the U.S.S. *Cole*.

She peacefully sat docked and still
 Before the dreadful, loud toll,
 Which blew a forty-foot long hole
 Inside the U.S.S. *Cole*.

No time for general quarters sound—
 The blind attack was brute cold,
 Our sailors had no time to fight
 To save the U.S.S. *Cole*.

The terrorists had rammed her side
 And precious cargo they stole,
 For seventeen would lose their lives
 Aboard the U.S.S. *Cole*.

And, now we grieve and wonder still
 For kindred, sacrificed souls,
 Whose lives served freedom's cause for all
 Those on the U.S.S. *Cole*.

Now, God, please hear our simple prayer
 And draw these souls to Thy fold,
 As we salute these sailors brave
 Who served the U.S.S. *Cole*.

—Kathy K. Mecklenburg, Rockford, Illinois,
 October 2000.

 KEEP THEM OUT!
HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 11, 2000

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn the violations of the Voting Rights Act that have been reported in Florida on November 7. Election Day 2000 is a day that will live in infamy, in every American's mind who cares about the concepts of Democracy, Justice, and Equality. Thousands of votes, mostly African-American, students, and senior votes, were disqualified, and effectively, disenfranchised. Despite higher than ever turnouts of minorities and seniors, we had higher than ever rates of disqualified and disenfranchised voters, and that my colleagues is unAmerican. Bob Herbert of the New York Times has shed light on some of the egregious tactics employed by Florida elections officials attempting to keep Americans from voting, in the December 7 issue of the New York Times. I respectfully request that it be placed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, to highlight the despicable tactics employed to keep American votes from being cast and counted in the 2000 election. This article reflects much of the sentiment of African-Americans and other Americans who share these concerns about this crisis in our Democracy.

KEEP THEM OUT!

(By Bob Herbert)

The tactics have changed, but the goal remains depressingly the same: Keep the coloreds, the blacks, the African-Americans—whatever they're called in the particular instance—keep them out of the voting booths.

Do not let them vote! If you can find a way to stop them, stop them.

So here we go again, this time in Florida. It turns out that the state of Florida is using a private company with close ties to the Republican Party to help "cleanse" the state's voter registration rolls. Would it surprise anyone anywhere to learn that the cleansing process somehow managed to im-

properly prevent large numbers of African-American voters from voting in the presidential election?

Gregory Palast, a reporter with the online magazine Salon, has done a number of articles on this. He noted that the company, ChoicePoint, and its subsidiary, Database Technologies Inc. (DBT), came up with a "scrub list" of 173,000 names. These were the names of people registered to vote in Florida who, according to ChoicePoint, could be knocked off the rolls for one reason or another.

There was good reason for Florida to be concerned about the integrity of its voter registration rolls. In 1997 the mayor of Miami was removed from office because widespread fraud had occurred in the election. The following year a law was passed requiring counties in Florida to purge the rolls of duplicate registrations, the names of deceased persons and felons.

So far, so good. The problems developed when the state turned to ChoicePoint, which compiles and sells vast amounts of frequently shaky information about individuals. (ChoicePoint, which acquired DBT last May, was fired by the state of Pennsylvania for breaching the confidentiality of driving records.) With this private outfit in the picture it soon became clear that top Republican officials would be trying to reap a partisan political advantage from a law designed to correct an egregious wrong. And that partisan advantage would be realized in large part by trampling on the voting rights of minorities.

Over the spring and summer ChoicePoint was forced to acknowledge that 8,000 voters it had listed as felons had in fact been guilty only of misdemeanors, which would not have affected their right to vote. What is maddening is that when such an erroneous list of names gets into the hands of county election officials, as this one did, it is very difficult—often impossible—to find out what's correct and what's not correct.

That snickering you hear is from Republican operatives who know that these kinds of foul-ups, because they are based on criminal records, will disproportionately affect minority voters.

ChoicePoint eventually came up with a "corrected" list of 173,000 names of people it targeted as ineligible because they were deceased, or were registered more than once, or had been convicted of a felony.

But it was a lousy list, riddled with mistakes. And in an interview with me yesterday, Marty Fagan, a ChoicePoint vice president, said there had never been any expectation that the list would be particularly accurate. Remember now, we're talking about a list that would be used to strip Americans of the precious right to vote.

Mr. Fagan said the list focused on people who "might" have been deceased, or might have been listed twice, or "possible felons." He said it was "important to know" that the information needed to be "verified" by county election officials.

That was interesting, because ChoicePoint came up with 58,000 people—people registered to vote—who would fall into the category he calls "possible felons." How in the world were county election officials supposed to check out each and every one and find out if they were felons or not?

They couldn't. They didn't. The horror stories about perfectly innocent black voters being turned away from the polls because they had been targeted as convicted felons started coming in early on the morning of Nov. 7, Election Day. And they're still coming in.

Blacks turned out to vote in record numbers in Florida this year, but huge numbers were systematically turned away for one spurious reason after another.

The tactics have changed, but the goal remains the same.

EXPRESSING SORROW OF THE
HOUSE AT THE DEATH OF THE
HONORABLE JULIAN C. DIXON,
MEMBER OF CONGRESS FROM
THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

SPEECH OF

HON. THOMAS M. DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 8, 2000

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in expressing my condolences to the family of Congressman JULIAN DIXON. His sudden death is a great loss for his family, for Los Angeles County, and for Congress.

For nearly 11 terms, JULIAN DIXON spent his career serving others. He was a strong supporter of civil rights and education issues throughout his career. He served on the Intelligence, Ethics, and Appropriations Committees with dignity and fairness.

I will remember JULIAN DIXON for his passionate concern for the people of the District of Columbia, JULIAN was born in Washington, DC, and although his political career was spent serving California, he never forgot his roots. For many years, JULIAN DIXON served as the chairman of the full committee on the District of Columbia, and demonstrated his extensive knowledge of the city and the major issues affecting its residents. He continued that work while serving on the Appropriations Subcommittee on the District of Columbia.

But most of all, I will remember what a great help JULIAN DIXON was to me when I first became chairman of the District of Columbia Subcommittee. He played a key role in helping me to craft meaningful reform. His expertise and friendship were a great source of comfort to us during those early days of the 104th Congress.

JULIAN DIXON will be greatly missed.

CONCERNING IRS TECHNICAL AD-
VICE MEMORANDUM RELATED
TO THE LOW-INCOME HOUSING
TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

HON. NANCY L. JOHNSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 11, 2000

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned that the Internal Revenue Service is taking a position in audits that has the possibility of undercutting all we have been trying to accomplish with the low-income housing tax credit program.

Recently, a series of five IRS technical advice memoranda (TAM) were released under the Freedom of Information Act. These TAMs gave IRS national office legal advice to revenue agents auditing a particular low-income

housing developer. The TAMs involved what costs may be included in the eligible basis of a property for the purpose of determining the amount of low-income housing tax credit that are allocated by a state housing finance agency.

The TAMs are very technical, but they are inconsistent with current industry practice and have the potential of retroactively disallowing substantial amounts of credits that have already been allocated and used to finance affordable housing around the country. I am concerned that retroactive tax treatment to investors will have the effect of shaking the confidence that has been built up over the years in this program. Perhaps equally troubling is that the position the IRS has taken in these TAMs could change the economics of future affordable housing and could frustrate the goals of the low-income housing tax credit program to provide good quality housing to lower-income working people and senior citizens at the most reasonable rent possible.

Since the low-income housing program is essentially a block grant program to the states operated through the tax laws and is fully subsidized, the position the IRS has taken in the TAMs will not save the Treasury any revenues. It simply will force the states to allocate the available credits differently and run the risk that the properties built in the future will not be able to be rented at rental rates as low as they are today.

It is truly unfortunate that the first guidance from the IRS on these issues comes in the form of technical advice memoranda, purportedly limited to an individual taxpayer, rather than in the form of regulations after full opportunity for review and public comment on how the rules for allocating basis will affect the policy goals of the low-income housing tax credit program.

I would urge the Treasury Department immediately to announce initiation of a regulation project on the subject of eligible basis and to give the project expedited treatment. We cannot afford to allow allocation of credits and construction of affordable housing to be hindered by the cloud of these TAMs.

I would urge my colleagues to learn more about this issue. It may be necessary for us to act quickly in the next Congress to respond to these TAMs in order to protect the viability of the low-income housing credit.

TRIBUTE TO NEIL STAEBLER

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 11, 2000

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, last weekend a former colleague passed away, Neil Staebler of Michigan.

Neil Staebler was the embodiment of the democratic person.

His career in the public arena combined a belief in the importance of the involvement of citizens at the grassroots and the fullest integrity and honesty of political leaders of all levels of government.

Having achieved financial security in the world of business, Neil Staebler joined with G.

Mennen Williams and Martha and Hicks Griffiths in an effort to transform the Michigan Democratic Party into a modern and progressive institution based on broad citizen participation. Perhaps even sooner than they anticipated, this small group succeeded. Soapy Williams became Governor, Martha Griffiths went to Congress, and Neil Staebler began a decade as State Democratic Chairman. In that capacity he spread a message of the importance of people becoming involved in political affairs to every town and virtually every hamlet in Michigan.

Neil Staebler deeply believed that government must be the people's servant, not its master. While there were, of course, many differences between the parties over policies during the Williams-Staebler era in Michigan government, no one questioned the honesty and degree of commitment of the political leadership or the caliber of people—Phil Hart and so many, many others—brought into public life in the executive, and judicial branch.

The famous chronicler of Presidential elections and politics, Theodore White, summed up Neil Staebler so very well: "one of the most moral men in American politics."

It was my deep privilege to know Neil Staebler over a period of almost four decades. Like for so many other younger men and woman who came into politics in the 1960's, I entered at a time when public service beckoned as an important calling. John F. Kennedy became the most famous inspiration for a new generation. Neil Staebler stood tall among those, many of whom like him had served in World War II, who led the endeavor to help the America of the post war period implement its promise of freedom and equal opportunity for all its citizens.

Neil Staebler's generation left this Nation a legacy that it must not forget. He was so proud to have served, no matter for only one term, in the Congress of the United States. We who serve here now join in sending our deepest condolences to his beloved wife of 65 years, Burnette, to his children, Michael and Elizabeth, and to all the Staebler family. They have so many reasons to be proud of the life of Neil Staebler.

HONORING PROFESSOR EUGENE
SMITH

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 11, 2000

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my good friend, Professor Eugene Smith, on the occasion of his retirement after nearly sixty years of teaching in some of the finest schools and universities in the country.

Gene was a born teacher. After earning his Bachelor of Science in mathematics education in 1941, Gene began teaching junior and senior high school mathematics in Ohio's public schools. During World War II, Gene taught math, gunnery and tactics at the Officer Candidate Prep School at Fort Still, Oklahoma. After the war, Gene returned to Ohio where he served in the public schools until 1959. During that time, Gene returned to school himself to