

TEXAS

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 1, 2000

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is a special day in Texas because tomorrow, March 2, is the first Texas Independence Day of the new millennium. In 1836, 164 years ago today, the Republic of Texas was born.

Let me set the stage for what happened 163 years ago. On March 1, 1836, 54 delegates representing settlements across Texas gathered for the Convention of 1836 at the small farm village of Washington-on-the-Brazos.

From the beginning, it was an event marked by haste and urgency. Mexican forces under Santa Anna were closing in on the defenders of the Alamo. On March 2, the day after the opening of the convention, the delegates declared the independence of Texas from Mexico. Within days of that announcement, the Alamo would fall, the first in a chain of defeats for the small Texas Army, which would nevertheless emerge victorious at the battle of San Jacinto, 6 weeks later, on April 21.

Mr. Speaker, what were these brave Texans fighting for? Up to the point when they gathered at Washington-on-the-Brazos, it was simply to restore the Mexican Constitution of 1824, which had been suspended by Santa Anna.

On the night of March 1, however, a group of five men stayed up late into the night, drafting the document that would be approved the next day by the full convention. This document, which echoed the lines of its American counterpart, was the Texas Declaration of Independence.

It started off in much the same way, with the words, "When a government has ceased to protect the lives, liberty and property of the people." It spoke of the numerous injustices inflicted upon the settlers of the state of Coahuila y Tejas: the elimination of the state's legislative body, the denial of religious freedom, the elimination of the civil justice system, and the confiscation of firearms being the most intolerable, particularly among Texans.

Finally, it ended with the declaration that, because of the injustice of Santa Anna's tyrannical government, Texans were severing their connection with the Mexican nation and declaring themselves "a free, sovereign, and independent republic . . . fully invested with all the rights and attributes" that belong to independent nations; and a declaration that they "fearlessly and confidently" committed their decision to "the Supreme Arbiter of the destinies of nations."

Over the next two weeks, a constitution was drafted and an interim government was formed, despite daily reports from the front detailing the collapse of the Alamo and subsequent advance of the Mexican Army through Texas. On March 17, 1836, the government was forced to flee Washington-on-the-Brazos on the news of the advance of Santa Anna.

Just over a month later, however, independence would be secured in the form of a victory over that same army by Sam Houston, a delegate at the very convention, and his courageous fighters at the battle of San Jacinto.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

Mr. Speaker, let me remind folks from Tennessee that Sam Houston served in this Congress from the State of Tennessee. I have at times told my friends from Tennessee "The best of Tennessee immigrated to Texas in the 1830's."

From that point on, Texas was firmly established in the community of nations; and for 10 years she stood as an independent nation, until President James K. Polk signed the treaty admitting Texas to the United States in 1845.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the Congress and the whole country will join us in a day that in Texas we celebrate, our schoolchildren celebrate, Texas Independence Day.

A TRIBUTE TO DR. H. ROBERT AND LYLA DAVIS

HON. WILLIAM F. GOODLING

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 1, 2000

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to recognize the lifelong achievements of two of my constituents Dr. H. Robert Davis and Lyla Townsend Davis.

Dr. and Mrs. Davis have lived and worked in Pennsylvania's 19th Congressional District for most of their lives. Over those decades they have been dedicated to ensuring a better future for our young people in Cumberland County. From his years as a family physician to his service as School Board President, Dr. Davis promoted the health and well being of families throughout the community. Of course, his wonderful wife, Lyla, was always at his side, providing love and support and just as much hard work. The Davis's have truly been an inspiration to all who know them.

On March 4, the Bubbler Foundation will honor Dr. and Mrs. Davis for their years of community service. I am pleased to be among the many members of their family, church, friends, and community to recognize and congratulate them for their extraordinary efforts.

PROVIDING TARIFF RELIEF FOR MACHINERY AND COMPONENTS USED TO MANUFACTURE DIGITAL VERSATILE DISCS (DVDs)

HON. MAC COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 1, 2000

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce today legislation that would provide tariff relief on machinery and components for use in the manufacture of digital versatile discs (DVDs).

DVD, using cutting-edge optical disc technology, provides consumers the highest quality audio and video reproduction. Used both in DVD players as part of a home theater system and in DVD-ROM-equipped computers, these discs have grown enormously in popularity since their introduction in 1997. I have used this technology myself and certainly under-

stand its rapid growth. In the short time since the introduction of DVD hardware, demand for discs that play on these machines has grown from 8 million annually to an expected 394 million in 2000. In fact, it is expected that DVD technology will replace both videocassette tapes and video laser discs as the preferred medium for presentation of movies in the home.

There are at least 17 domestic producers of DVDs, including such electronics and entertainment companies as Time Warner, Panasonic, Sony, and JVC. Panasonic is also a major employer in the state of Georgia, with over 1000 employees in my district alone. In 1997, Panasonic opened the first disc replication facility in the United States to dedicated exclusively to the production of DVDs. Nine hundred Panasonic employees in the United States now produce over four million video discs per month for such movie companies as Universal, Fox, and Paramount. In total, companies in the United States produce 16.6 million discs a month, all using imported machinery.

DVDs are the "next generation" recorded video media in the marketplace, succeeding video laser discs (VLDs) that were produced in the early 1990s. These machines consist of several components (including a master recording system, injection mold machine, laser encoder, and finishing line) that function together to produce DVDs. Machines that produce DVDs use essentially the same technology as machines used to produce VLDs—a laser encoder creates the desired pits on optical disc media (plastic or glass disc substrates). Recent advancements in technology enable DVDs to hold more recordings on smaller discs than VLDs.

In 1994, Congress passed new, duty free tariff legislation for VLD manufacturing machines. This legislation helped companies like Time Warner (WEA Manufacturing) create and save jobs in the U.S. that were being lost as a result of foreign production of CDs and VLDs. Importantly, this legislation did not adversely affect any U.S. industry because optical disc technology, such as that used in VLDs and DVDs, was first developed overseas and there was no domestic production.

Shortly after passing duty free legislation on VLDs, however, home video entertainment shifted to DVDs. Companies shifted production of VLDs to DVDs using substantially the same systems, and companies like Panasonic began manufacturing DVDs in the U.S. DVD manufacturers import the machines used to make DVDs, purchasing them from the same foreign companies that produced VLD manufacturing machines. Under the established legal principal that legislation should be interpreted to take into account advancements in technology, DVD manufacturing machines should be classified under the same duty free provisions as VLD manufacturing machines. Customs, however, has ruled that DVD manufacturing machines are not classified under the duty free provisions for VLDs, and that the components of DVD manufacturing machines should be classified under 11 separate tariff headings, with an average duty of three percent. This ruling has had the effect of negating the benefits of Congress' 1994 legislation on VLDs.