

June 29, 2000

of Brooklyn. I want to take this opportunity to recognize the achievements of Warren Bell, one of Brooklyn's finest residents and entrepreneurs.

PRIBILOF ISLANDS TRANSITION
ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 26, 2000

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in support of this important legislation, sponsored by the gentleman from Alaska. As Members of this body know, the Chairman of the Committee on Resources is a forceful advocate for his Alaska constituents.

The bill before the House today has improved in numerous respects from the version reported by the Committee last April. As a result of changes made to accommodate NOAA's concerns, it is my understanding that the Administration supports the bill as amended.

The history of our involvement in the Pribilof Islands, as is the case with many Alaska matters, is long and complex. Prior to the purchase of Alaska in 1867, Aleut Natives had been enslaved by the Russians to exploit fur seals. In 1910, Congress passed a law which regulated the seal harvest and provided federal support for the Native residents of the islands of St. Paul and St. George. With the Fur Seal Act of 1965, and substantial amendments to that Act in 1983, Congress has attempted to provide for a transition from federal management to local control and self-sufficiency on these remote islands.

Clearly, it is vital that the government meet its obligations to the people of the Pribilofs, including the timely completion of environmental cleanup of contaminated federal property. With the changes that have been incorporated, this legislation is intended to responsibly close out the U.S. obligations and liabilities on the Pribilof Islands as established under the Fur Seal Act.

In an attempt to strike a responsible balance in this bill, there are now caps on the amounts authorized for the economic assistance grants to the Native entities and local governments. At the request of the Minority, auditing and reporting requirements have been included for these grants. Minority concerns have also been addressed by language stating that funds authorized by this bill should not supplant NOAA appropriations as enacted in FY 2000. NOAA programs such as severe weather forecasting and the management of commercial fisheries benefit every region of the country. This language affirms the intent of Congress that funding for concluding the transition in the Pribilofs should not come at the expense of other important NOAA programs.

Mr. Speaker, I again commend the gentleman from Alaska and his staff for working with all interested parties to improve this legislation. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3417 as amended.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CLEVELAND POLICE OFFICER
WAYNE ALLAN LEON

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 28, 2000

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, today I honor the memory of Cleveland Police Officer Wayne Allan Leon, badge number 1338. Officer Leon was tragically killed in the line of duty on Sunday, June 25. He was just 32 years old.

Wayne Allen Leon was appointed to the Cleveland Police Department in the 110th Academy Class, February 1, 1994. He graduated from the police academy on June 9, 1994, and was assigned to the Third District, basic patrol. He soon distinguished himself as a police officer, going well beyond the call of duty to serve the public, in ways that were recognized by his peers and superiors. As an officer of the law, he dedicated his life to serve and protect the citizens of the state of Ohio and of this great nation. Quick with a smile, earnest, honest, sincere and extremely dedicated are but a few of the qualities that distinguished Officer Leon. He held his office with great professionalism, bravery and dignity, earning the respect and love of his colleagues and the community he served. He was awarded the Department's highest award—the Medal of Honor—after he and his former partner broke up a drug buy on November 1, 1998. The community mourns the death of a great role model.

As a committed man of faith and family, Officer Leon will be greatly missed by his wife Grace, their children Justin, age 5, Gabrielle, age 4, and Nicholas, age 2. His father, retired Cleveland Police Lieutenant Duane "Jake" Leon, brothers Dean, Tony, and Jake, and his parents-in-law Sam and Maryann Scampitilla, also survive him. I take this opportunity to express my deepest condolences to the family.

It is a terrible tragedy when a police officer falls in the line of duty protecting the public and serving his or her country. Officer Wayne Leon exemplified the very best police departments have to offer. He will be missed by all.

I ask the House to join me in commemorating this model public servant and dedicated family man. The State of Ohio and the Nation owe him a great debt of gratitude. My fellow colleagues, please join me in honoring Officer Wayne Allen Leon.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FUEL
EXCISE TAX RELIEF ACT (FETRA)

HON. MAC COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 28, 2000

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Fuel Excise Tax Relief Act (FETRA), for a moratorium on Federal fuel excise taxes until March 31, 2001.

Fuel is not a luxury, it is a necessity for Americans. It is necessary for a dad commuting to his job or a soccer mom picking up her children. Higher fuel costs don't stop at

13295

the pump because the cost of shipping is built into the price of every product purchased by families and businesses across the country.

There is not one Member in this Chamber whose constituents are not daily suffering sticker shock when they go to the gas pump, and wondering why, for the past 6 months, nothing has been done about gas prices.

A few months ago, Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson admitted he had been asleep at the switch, and promised Americans that prices would soon decline, thanks to his arm-twisting of OPEC.

Perhaps we should be asking if Mr. Richardson was twisting OPEC's arm the wrong direction and convincing the oil states to restrict production. Certainly, 3 months later, gas prices did not go lower, but went higher.

These skyrocketing fuel prices are borne on the backs of working families across this country, because they have an impact on the cost of every product or service that depends upon transportation.

I am concerned that high fuel prices could affect the economy, just as they did after the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979. Both resulted in higher interest rates and recessions.

Congress must take both short-term and long-term action now.

Presently, the United States is dangerously dependent upon foreign oil. We must work more aggressively with OPEC to increase supply. We must explore the use of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to temporarily increase the supply. We should allow environmentally responsible oil drilling to increase domestic supply.

We should also take steps to ensure that our environmental regulations protect the environment without driving independent producers and refiners out of business. When they are gone, competition decreases, and prices rise.

We can also encourage the use of mass transit and build new systems. Tax and investment incentives will help further develop technology for fuel cells, electric cars, hybrid cars, and alternative fuel vehicles.

All of these responses take a while to affect prices at the pump. But there is one act Congress can take to provide immediate relief to America's working families.

This would be to pass the Fuel Excise Tax Relief Act (FETRA) which imposes a moratorium on Federal fuel excise taxes until March 31, 2001. I will shortly be introducing this legislation with several colleagues, and I invite your support.

FETRA would provide relief to every American of every income strata. It would reduce transportation costs which affect the price of every good or service purchased by consumers. It imposes a moratorium on the federal fuel excise taxes: cutting 18.3 cents per gallon on gasoline, 24.3 cents per gallon on diesel, and 4.3 cents per gallon on aviation jet fuel.

The FETRA tax moratorium will be effective upon enactment and end March 31, 2001. This will give the new administration and new Congress time to draw up something that has been lacking the past 8 years—a coherent energy policy.

FETRA also holds the transportation trust funds harmless from any revenue shortfalls,