

I want to begin today with a quote from Chief Joseph, a man who lived in North-eastern Oregon and traveled the lands of the Columbia and Snake River Basin:

The Earth was created by the assistance of the sun, and it should be left as it was . . . I never said the land was mine to do with it as I chose. The one who has the right to dispose of it is the one who has created it. I claim a right to live on my land, and accord you the privilege to live on yours.

This legislation is called the Salmon Planning Act. It provides for the planning that will be necessary to save the endangered salmon and steelhead populations in the Snake River if the Bush administration continues to deny funding to recovery efforts.

For centuries, salmon has been recognized as a symbol of the Northwest lifestyle and a mainstay of the economy. Both commercial fishermen and the sport fishing industry rely on consistent runs of salmon and steelhead. Generations of northwesterners have grown up with fishing as a part of their lives.

Beginning in the early 1960s, a series of 4 dams were constructed on the Lower Snake River. The dams provided energy, water for irrigation, and a barge system for transporting goods between the inland and ocean ports. Since then, the 12 genetically distinct populations of salmon and steelhead, native to the Snake River, have dropped to such an extent that every one of those populations is either functionally extinct or listed under the endangered Species Act.

Scientific studies have shown that declining salmon runs represent the declining health of the overall ecosystem in the Columbia and Snake River basin. Independent studies by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Fish and Wildlife Service have shown an ecosystem in peril.

Additionally, numerous treaties with Native Tribes in Oregon, Washington, Alaska, and the Canadian Government have committed our government to ensuring the continued viability of salmon runs. Failure to do so could expose taxpayers to billions of dollars in litigation and compensatory fees.

Last year the National Marine Fisheries Service released a biological opinion regarding the Columbia and Snake River Basin and developed the Salmon Recovery Plan, which would avoid breaching the dams. I support this plan and hope that we can continue to make every effort to develop a workable solution without breaching the dams.

However, the current administration has so far failed to allocate any funds to implement this plan. Full funding of the restoration measures called for in the Salmon Recovery Plan will cost an estimated \$1.2 billion per year for the region as a whole. The administration has chosen to sacrifice the salmon and the economy of the Northwest in favor of large tax refunds.

The Salmon Planning Act will provide for a thorough peer review of the Salmon Recovery Plan of 2000 by the National Academy of Sciences to ensure the scientific credibility of its findings. In addition, the Salmon Planning Act calls for a study by the General Accounting Office of the effects of potential dam breaching if recovery efforts fail.

The GAO study would detail the effects of dam removal on every sector of society that is

impacted. In addition to the fishing and scientific community, dam removal would affect energy, transportation, agriculture and the local communities.

The GAO study will also address the potential liability of the American taxpayer that may result from our failure to fulfill our treaty obligations should our salmon and steelhead populations become extinct.

Passage of the Salmon Planning Act by itself will not result in the breaching of the dams. Let me repeat that, this act will not result in breaching the dams. Congress will need to address this issue again in the future. This bill does, however, provide the planning that will be necessary for Congress to make an informed decision.

The window of opportunity to save our valuable salmon and steelhead resources is quickly closing.

IT IS TIME FOR CONGRESS TO
SPEAK UP

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 23, 2001

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, last week, the House of Representatives attempted to consider campaign finance reform. While the House ultimately decided not to consider the legislation because of a ridiculous rule, it is significant that campaign finance reform has come to the floor for a vote before election reform has even been debated. I was the first to point out that it does not matter how much money we spend on our campaigns, or for that matter, how much money we do not spend on our campaigns, if votes still do not count.

It is clear to me that after last year's farce of an election, in which it was discovered that thousands of Americans nationwide had their right to vote stripped from them, Congress would have acted by now. But Congress has not acted.

Congress remained silent when the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released its findings that minority voters were more likely to have their votes thrown out than non-minority voters. Congress remained silent when thousands of voters testified to civil rights groups such as the NAACP, the National Council of La Raza, the ACLU, and this Committee, discussing the many problems they faced at the polls last November. Congress still remains silent, while Americans become more cynical by the day.

The debate that needs to commence is not on how much money we spend on our campaigns. Instead, the debate should focus on how much money we are not spending on our elections. My home county, Broward County, may not purchase the best voting machines on the market because it cannot afford it. We need to be talking about how to get Broward County, and every other county in this country, the needed funds to improve their election systems.

Mr. Speaker, contrary to what many argue, the need for election reform is much more than a civil rights issue. Rather, the need for

election reform is a challenge to our democracy. It is a challenge that calls on us to reaffirm our commitment to the principles and ideals that our country's founding fathers died defending. It is a challenge that burns at the heart of every American who believes in our country's democratic heritage. It is a challenge that we cannot back down from, and it is a challenge that we will not back down from. Finally, it is a challenge that must be overcome before history repeats itself.

TRIBUTE TO THE NAVAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE

HON. JIM SAXTON

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 23, 2001

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding organization. The responsibilities of this highly regarded, but little known agency cover the waterfront, from counterintelligence to criminal investigations, from force protection to infrastructure protection. They are the protectors of our protectors.

I am referring to the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS)—on watch to protect and serve sailors, Marines, and their families, wherever they may be, whether it's Chicago, Illinois; Split, Croatia; or a ship in the Persian Gulf.

Recently, the outstanding efforts of the NCIS were highlighted in a case that has hit very close to home for those of us who live and work in the Washington, DC, area. A Navy sailor, a rising star, a beloved daughter, Lea Brown was abruptly taken from our midst in a vicious killing in Fort Washington.

The Washington, DC, Field Office of the NCIS dedicated over 30 agents to the case, developing leads within hours that led to the arrest of several suspects by the Prince George's County Police Department. The clear message to criminals preying on sailors and Marines is, "You will be caught; you will be brought to justice." I know that I join the men and women of the naval service, as well as those of Prince Georges County, Maryland, in expressing my thanks for the tireless efforts of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to enclose this article from the Washington Times and submit my congratulations to the men and women of NCIS for a job well done.

[From the Washington Times, July 7, 2001]

NAVAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICE WORKS FAST
WITH OTHER AGENCIES

(By Brian DeBose)

The Washington Field Office of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) is no stranger to working with local and federal police agencies.

Most recently NCIS, the criminal investigation arm of the U.S. Navy, is working with Prince George's County police on a high-profile homicide case that revealed an organized crime ring in Fort Washington.

The NCIS was investigating the disappearance of Navy Petty Officer Lea Anne Brown, as a missing persons case when Prince George's police found her body and that of her boyfriend, Michael Patten, June 12 in Accokeek.