

Throughout his life, dedication and hard work have been synonymous with this outstanding public servant.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Chief VanderEyck for his years of public service and in wishing him and his wife, Jacqueline, good health and happiness in the years ahead.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK TEXAS FOR 100 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE OF KILLEEN AND BELL COUNTY, TEXAS

HON. CHET EDWARDS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2001

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, today I congratulate the First National Bank Texas for 100 years of service to the people of Killeen and Bell County.

Originally known as the First National Bank of Killeen, it was organized with capital stock of \$25,000 on Feb. 27, 1901.

It has provided uninterrupted service to Central Texans through two World Wars, the Great Depression, the construction of Fort Hood, the Cold War, 18 U.S. Presidents and the dawn of a new millennium. The bank also has been a trendsetter: the city's first elevator was located in its lobby in the 1960s and the bank introduced the first automated teller machine to the area in the 1970s. The bank continues to innovate in the areas of retail and Internet banking.

Today, February 27, 2001, the bank, now known as First National Bank Texas, will celebrate its 100th year anniversary with a community-wide celebration.

The bank, the oldest bank in Bell County, has had its ups-and-downs but ultimately it has flourished over the years. It now employs more than 1,100 Texans across the state, with 690 in Bell County. The bank is one of the largest nongovernmental employers in the area. Modern reminders of early bank leaders C.R. Clements and Will Rancier are with us today in the form of the C.R. Clements Boys and Girls Club and Rancier Avenue.

I ask Members to join me in offering congratulations to the First National Bank Texas on a century of growth and service to Central Texas families and businesses.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SSI MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2001

HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2001

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, many States have decided to increase the amount of money welfare recipients can earn before their Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefit is reduced. This strategy pro-

duces two very beneficial effects: It rewards and promotes employment and it helps working families escape poverty. Unfortunately, the primary Federal program that helps low-income disabled and elderly Americans has not pursued a similar strategy. In fact, the income exclusions for the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program have been frozen in time for nearly thirty years.

In 1972, a general income exclusion (GIE) for SSI was set at \$20 a month, meaning the first \$20 of outside income did not count dollar for dollar against the SSI benefit amount, which is currently \$530 a month for an individual. This GIE is usually applied to Social Security income, which of course is based on past employment. In addition, an earned income exclusion was also established in 1972 to allow a disregard of the first \$65 a month, plus half of the remaining earnings. Neither of these provisions, which reward past and current work efforts, have been increased in the past three decades. If they had kept pace with inflation over that time period, the GIE would be worth \$80 a month and the earned income exclusion would be set at \$260 a month.

I am introducing the SSI Modernization Act to reduce these work disincentives, as well as to decrease obstacles to saving and pursuing an education. The bill would increase the GIE to \$40 a month and the earned income exclusion to \$130 a month, and then index those amounts to inflation in future years. To encourage individuals to save for their future, the bill also would increase the SSI asset limit from \$2,000 for an individual and \$3,000 for a couple to \$3,000 for an individual and \$4,500 for a couple. Furthermore, the legislation would increase the disregard level for small amounts of income received on an irregular basis, and it would simplify the treatment of educational grants and scholarships under SSI income and asset rules. Finally, the bill would postpone eligibility redeterminations for SSI recipients turning 18 years of age, if they are attending a secondary school and are under the age of 21. This last provision recognizes that applying a work-based eligibility standard (under which adults are considered) is not appropriate for a disabled youth still attending high school.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this effort to update the SSI program and to increase incentives for working, saving and pursuing an education. Having waited almost thirty years to address many of these issues, we cannot afford to wait any longer to reward work and to improve the quality of life for our Nation's disabled and elderly.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING REPRESENTATIVE NANCY HOLLISTER

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2001

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I commend the following to my colleagues:

Whereas, Representative Hollister will serve as vice-chairwoman of the House Energy, and Environment Committee.

Whereas, Representative Hollister has been named to two other committees—Public Utilities, and Retirement and Aging.

Whereas, Representative Hollister has continuously demonstrated her commitment and love for her family, her community and her country, I am honored to call her a friend.

TRIBUTE TO REABER NELL LUCAS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 27, 2001

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, although death is a part of life, often times it becomes difficult to accept. Last week, Ms. Reaber Lucas, a dear friend of mine, passed away. Ms. Lucas was born on July 4th, 1946 in Amite County, MS to Willie, Sr. and Ora Lee Wesley Harden Lucas, who both preceded her in death.

Reaber graduated from Bettye Mae Jack High School in Morton, MS and attended Milwaukee Area Technical College where she studied Social Work. Later she attended Jackson State University majoring in Accounting. Utilizing her background in Accounting and Social Work, Reaber served as Branch Director, Division of Community Services for the State of Mississippi Department of Human Services, until her retirement in 1997. Reaber thoroughly enjoyed serving as a community activist as an active member of the Hinds County Federation of Democratic Women and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Reaber devoted her life to Christ at an early age, and joined Rose Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Meadville, MS. After the family moved to Morton, MS, she joined Christian Triumph Missionary Baptist Church. While Reaber lived in Milwaukee, WI, she became a member of St. Matthews Methodist Church. After relocating to Jackson, MS, she continued to be faithful to God and became a member of New Hope Baptist Church under the leadership of Reverend Dr. Jerry Young, where she continued to serve until her death.

One of the many attributes Reaber possessed, was her ability to empower and organize. Reaber's energetic work ethic and responsibility to her community was the primary reason for many of the African-American elected officials, myself included, currently representing Jackson, Mississippi. Reaber believed that African-Americans should have a voice and the only way to insure that was to help them exercise their right to vote.

Mr. Speaker, it's only fitting that I recognized Ms. Lucas during Black History Month. Without her assistance, I can't be certain that I would be here today as a Member of Congress. Reaber was an asset to her family, community, city and state. She will be truly missed.