

attached to the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps/Division 911 as Personnel Officer at Naval Training Command, Great Lakes, Scout Leader with the Berwyn Air Explorer Post #777, an Emergency Service Disaster Agency volunteer and American Red Cross Disaster Assist Team volunteer serving the citizens of the greater Chicago area. His wife, Diane, and his daughters have come to expect and appreciate this kind of commitment. These efforts are important not only in the organizations which benefit directly from his participation but in the example which is set for his friends, family and colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, even though the sands of the Persian Gulf have passed through the hourglass, it is important that we remember that time in our history. I am thankful for Ed Korczynski's participation in that important mission, and I appreciate his continued involvement in the betterment of our lives.

PROVISION TO HELP PRESERVE VETERANS' FAMILY FARMS INCLUDED IN VETERANS' OPPORTUNITIES ACT OF 2001

**HON. LANE EVANS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2001

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, in the 106th Congress, I introduced H.R. 5271, the Veterans' Family Farm Preservation Act, to make it possible for more wartime veterans and their survivors to qualify for pension benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) without being forced to sell their family farms and ranches. I am pleased that the provisions of this legislation have been included in the Veterans' Opportunities Act of 2001, H.R. 801, a bipartisan bill introduced on February 28, 2001. This legislation will also benefit low-income veterans who seek to obtain health care from VA.

The productivity of America's family farms is undisputed. Family farms and ranches feed our Nation. Family members and unpaid workers account for 70% of farm labor in the United States. While America's family farmers and ranchers are unmatched in their productivity, they have little or no control over many factors which determine the economic results of their labor.

Veterans who have gone in harm's way and placed their lives on the line by serving our nation in the Armed Forces should not be asked to relinquish their family farm in order to qualify for veterans' benefits. Unfortunately, that is what is occurring today. H.R. 801, which House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Chris Smith and I introduced together with J.D. Hayworth, Benefits Subcommittee Chairman and Ranking Democratic Subcommittee Member Silvestre Reyes, includes provisions to address this problem. I urge Members to support this bipartisan effort.

Pension benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are payable to wartime veterans who are totally and permanently disabled due to a non-service connected medical condition. A small, but important number of these disabled wartime vet-

erans own family farms or ranches, which provide the livelihood for their families. Most family farms in the United States are very small. Over 75% of family farms have less than \$50,000 in gross annual sales. After deductions for costs of operating the farm or ranch, the net income of the family farmer is much lower. Farmers receive an average of 20 cents for every dollar of produce sold. In 1995, the average net farm income for very small farms was \$510. The average net farm income for small farms with gross sales between \$50,000 and \$250,000 averaged \$14,335. Clearly most family farmers have modest annual income.

In determining eligibility for pension benefits, VA is required to consider not only the family income, but also the family's "net worth." Currently, unless VA determines that the land can be sold at "no substantial sacrifice", the value of farm and ranch land is included in determining net worth. Some veteran farmers are "land rich." While having little or no liquid assets, the value of their land makes their "net worth" appear larger on paper.

Family farms are important not only for the food and fiber they produce, but also for the values they represent. Family farms should not be considered as simply substitutes for liquid bank accounts or other liquid assets. In good years, family farms and ranches provide an adequate income. In bad times, adverse crop conditions or illness, the income and liquid resources of family farmers and ranchers are quickly depleted. Wartime veterans have made a substantial sacrifice on behalf of our Nation by serving in the Armed Forces. We should not ask them to sacrifice their family farms in order to receive the assistance they have earned by their wartime service.

I believe that an operating family farm can never be liquidated without substantial sacrifice on the part of the veteran. It is never reasonable to require a veteran to sell his or her means of future livelihood in order to obtain pension benefits or VA health care. If the farm is sold, the assets which in future years can be expected to generate income for the veteran and the veteran's dependents, are permanently lost.

Under H.R. 801, farm and ranch land owned by the veteran and the veteran's dependents would be excluded in determining net worth. The bill would also exclude land used for similar agricultural purposes, such as timberland, Christmas tree farms, or horticultural purposes.

During the past century, the number of family farms in our country has declined dramatically. When a veteran is required to sell his or her farm in order to receive necessary VA assistance, another family farm may be lost forever. No veteran should be called on to make this additional sacrifice. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 801. America's family farmers and ranchers deserve the relief which this legislation will provide.

TRIBUTE TO THE REVEREND DOCTOR BENNETT WALKER SMITH, SR.—ST. JOHN BAPTIST CHURCH

**HON. JACK QUINN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2001

Mr. QUINN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored today to pay tribute to my friend, Rev. Dr. Bennett Walker Smith, Sr. for his forty years of service in the ministry.

As Pastor of Saint John Baptist Church on Goodell in the City of Buffalo, Rev. Smith leads one of the largest and most vibrant congregations in all of Western New York. His steady message of service to God and community has inspired us all.

Throughout his remarkable life, Rev. Smith has been actively engaged in social and political change which has served to enhance the lives of all people, and African Americans in particular. His early years in the civil rights movement were shared with the late Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the late Reverend Ralph Abernathy, and the Reverend Jessie Jackson.

Within our Western New York community, Rev. Smith has taken a truly active role in the enhancement of the City of Buffalo. Under his leadership, St. John Baptist Church has built McCarley Gardens and the St. John Senior Citizens Tower, over 300 units in all, which provide housing for our community's seniors. It has also constructed the St. John Christian Academy that provides outstanding educational opportunity to over 250 students. I am honored to be working with him and St. John Baptist Church toward the completion of the next project, a Family Life Center that will provide a host of educational, health, and social services to our community.

In recognition of his service Rev. B.W. Smith has been honored as a member of "Who's Who in Religion," Ebony's "100 Most Influential Black Americans," and by the NCCJ, and has received the prestigious Evans-Young Award from the Buffalo Urban League.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to join with the congregation of St. John Baptist Church and our entire Western New York community in recognition of the commitment to God, dedicated service, and leadership of Rev. Dr. B.W. Smith. I am honored to bring his great work to the attention of my colleagues and to this honorable body.

**GUN VIOLENCE**

**HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2001

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, one year ago another special life was taken by gun violence in this country. Kayla Rollins was killed in her first grade classroom by a six year old boy who brought a loaded gun to school. The time has come and gone to end these senseless acts of gun violence by passing meaningful gun safety legislation.

The political pandering over this issue must end. How many children should we allow to become victims to gun violence? It's time for Congress to do the responsible thing and pass commonsense gun safety legislation. Kayla Rollins' family, as well as all families who lost a loved one to gun violence, deserve action.

Mr. Speaker, I submit for the RECORD a statement from Kayla Rollins's mother pleading for the Congress to pass immediate gun safety legislation.

Statement By Mrs. Rollins—March 1, 2001

Hello. I am Veronica McQueen. I am Kayla's mother. These are hard times for me and Kayla's brothers, sisters and her father, and for the rest of my family. Kayla's death was devastating. There is not a day that goes by I do not cry as I go on with my life without my daughter. A part of my heart went with her. It is so hard for me to think that I will never see her smile, laugh or play again. I can never hold her and kiss her again, or see her grow up, get married and have a happy life. The gun that killed my daughter in her first grade class room was a gun that could be loaded by a six year old child, concealed by a six year old child, and held and fired by a six year old child. Please, don't ever forget that. This is proof that there is need for gun safety devices and gun control. I come here today, two days after what would have been her seventh birthday. I am a mom with a terrible tragedy, and I hope it never, ever happens again. Thank you.

#### HBCUs DESERVE PARITY

### HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 1, 2001*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, as a graduate of North Carolina A&T University, one of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), I cannot help but rise to express my shock over the outrageous decision by the majority members of the Committee on Education and the Workforce to exclude HBCUs from the new 21st Century Competitiveness Subcommittee. I know that my friends across the aisle have no intention of riding on the media coattails of what some people perceive as this past fall's denial of minority voting rights; nevertheless, the misguided decision to separate HBCUs as well as Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Tribally Controlled Colleges (TCCs) from non-minority higher education institutions on this subcommittee seems to play right into the hands of those who suggest that last fall's events were part of a concerted effort to deprive minorities of our right to vote.

Furthermore, placing these institutions of higher education into a new select education subcommittee which shares jurisdiction with juvenile delinquency, welfare, and child abuse seems to suggest that minority education is more social experiment than higher education program. I cannot tell you how disappointed I am to find out in the 107th Congress that my education is now considered second rate by those in the majority. I join with my fellow Democratic Caucus members in urging the Speaker of the House and the Majority in the

#### EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

House to restore HBCUs, HSIs, and TCCs to their appropriate status as equal institutions of higher education.

#### REMARKS HONORING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACE CORPS

### HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 1, 2001*

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Peace Corps and to join in the celebration of this wonderful organization's 40th anniversary.

Since its founding in 1961, few government initiatives have captured the imagination of the American people like the Peace Corps. Born out of President John F. Kennedy's bold vision for the future, the Peace Corps has served to promote world peace and friendship for four decades.

Remarkably, since 1961 over 160,000 Americans have joined the Peace Corps, serving in 134 countries and bringing hope to millions of people around the world. By working to bring clean water to villages and towns, teaching children, helping start new small businesses and stopping the spread of dangerous diseases, Peace Corps volunteers have served as our nation's ambassadors of "good will" to the rest of the world.

I am pleased to have Philip Peredo, a former Peace Corps volunteer, serve on my staff in my District Office in Hackensack, New Jersey. As a Peace Corps volunteer from 1998 until just last year, Phil taught English language classes at Neijiang Teacher's University in the Sichuan Province of the People's Republic of China. The lessons Phil taught his students about America will long endure, just as the lessons he learned from his students will stay with Phil for the rest of his life.

Whether they are in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Central Asia, Eastern and Central Europe, or Central and South America, Peace Corps volunteers continue to make our world a better place.

For their idealism, for their commitment to achieving real progress for the less fortunate, I salute all Peace Corps volunteers, past and present. I wish the Peace Corps continued success in sharing America's promise with people around the world.

#### THE SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFIT RESTORATION ACT

### HON. MAX SANDLIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 1, 2001*

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation addressing a serious issue for retired teachers and government employees across America. These public servants, after a lifetime of educating our youth and working for the taxpayers of America, find that their reward is a significant reduction in their Social Security benefits. It is time to end

*March 1, 2001*

this penalty and give these retirees the benefits they are due.

Retirees drawing a benefit from a private pension fund do not have their Social Security benefits reduced. Why should we do this to civil servants? We should be encouraging able and intelligent people to teach our children and work for the government, not discouraging them by slashing their retirement benefits. We must bring equity to the Social Security benefits of private sector and public sector retirees.

This legislation, the Social Security Benefit Restoration Act, will bring this equity to retirement benefits. This bill will simply eliminate the public sector benefit penalty enacted in 1983 and allow all civil servants to draw full Social Security benefits.

I urge my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring this legislation. For every retired government employee and retired teacher in your district experiencing reduced Social Security benefits, I urge your support for this bill.

#### HONORING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACE CORPS

### HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 1, 2001*

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the 40th anniversary of the Peace Corps. Since 1961, over 161,000 Americans have offered their energy to improving conditions in over 134 nations around the world.

Reflecting the rich diversity of the United States, Peace Corps volunteers share a common spirit of service, dedication, and idealism. Peace Corps volunteers must participate in intensive language and cross-cultural training to help them better adapt to their new communities. In addition to learning the local language and adapting to new cultures, volunteers also help improve their surroundings. Corps volunteers work to bring clean water to underdeveloped communities, teach children, start new small businesses, and stop the spread of AIDS. The Peace Corps always goes about its mission with the knowledge that, with assistance, developing nations can take control of their own destiny.

Because the University of Wisconsin-Madison has been a leading producer of Peace Corps volunteers for over a decade, the Peace Corps has chosen to commemorate their 40th Anniversary at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Many of the first to serve in the Peace Corps were alumni of the UW-Madison. Since 1961, more than 2,500 alumni have dedicated a minimum of two years of their lives to help developing countries around the world. Almost 200 current graduate students, faculty, and staff have served in the Peace Corps. The Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVS) are an extremely active group in the 2nd Congressional District and a vital force in the Peace Corps community.

Forty years later, the Peace Corps continues to fulfill its promise by sharing one of our most precious resources: its citizens. The work of these volunteers has helped engender positive changes around the world. We, as