

Daniel started with me shortly after completing law school, wanting to learn as much as possible about the workings and intricacies of Capitol Hill. Despite being confronted with challenges and pressures most would fold under, Daniel persevered and became a valued part of my Washington, DC, office.

Like so many capable and hard working young congressional staff members, Daniel is moving on to work as an attorney. Although my staff and I are saddened to see him leave, Daniel's commitment to the legal process, his passion for public service, and his vigorous pursuit of perfection will serve his clients and his profession well.

Daniel tackled every task head on, from helping with day-to-day operations, to aiding with the daunting legislation and constituent demands of post-September 11 life on the Hill. His contribution to our office and his work for the people of Middle Tennessee will be missed.

U.S. HAS LONG TRADITION OF HELPING MUSLIMS, AS SHOWN BY 1952 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO NEARLY 4,000 MECCA PILGRIMS

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call the attention of the House of Representatives to the fact that our nation has a long history of helping Muslims. While we are familiar with the actions America has taken in recent years to intervene for the benefit of Muslims in Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo, among numerous other locations around the world, America is hardly new to coming to the aid of people of the Islamic faith.

In particular, I would like to call the attention of the House to an instance brought to my attention by an alert constituent, Mr. Leonard Mulcahy of Wyoming, Pennsylvania. In light of recent events, Mr. Mulcahy recalled seeing an article in the July 1953 issue of National Geographic magazine about the U.S. Air Force assisting nearly 4,000 Muslims in 1952, and he was kind enough to provide me with a copy of that issue of the magazine.

Mr. Speaker, the article states that in August 1952, "with the opening of the hadj only a few days away, nearly 4,000 desperate Moslems found themselves in Lebanon . . . with air tickets but no reservations. Commercial lines, flooded with applications, could take only a few." As you may know, Mr. Speaker, the hadj is the annual pilgrimage to Mecca which each Muslim is expected to undertake at least once in his or her life if possible.

The article continues, "To help in the emergency, American Ambassador Harold B. Minor asked the United States Air Force to fly 14 C-54s from Libya and Germany. Quickly a shuttle service was set up; in 75 flights 3,763 pilgrims were transported 900 miles from Beirut to Jidda in time to begin their hadj. In gratitude, the Mufti of Lebanon ordered prayers for Americans in all mosques, and King Abdul Aziz al Saud presented Arab robes to 86 airmen."

The article also states, "The Air Force accepted no money for the pilgrim passages. Fares collected by commercial airlines, for flights they were unable to complete, went to Moslem charity."

Mr. Speaker, I would again like to thank Leonard Mulcahy for making sure that America's assistance to the Muslim pilgrims in 1952 is not forgotten. Despite our imperfect history, Americans can be proud that ours is a generous and tolerant nation, and I believe the fact that we provided this type of assistance to thousands of Muslims nearly half a century ago helps to illustrate that fact.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION TO PROTECT THE VOTING RIGHTS OF ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY MEMBERS WHOSE HOME OF RESIDENCE IS AMERICAN SAMOA

HON. ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce federal legislation to protect the voting rights of active duty military members whose home of residence is American Samoa.

Since 1977, active-duty service members serving overseas or on the United States mainland have been excluded from fully participating and voting in both general and runoff Federal elections in American Samoa due to several factors, including local law that requires active duty military members to register in person, limited air and mail service between the U.S. mainland and American Samoa, and delays in the preparation of new ballots in the case of runoff elections.

However, under the provisions of 42 U.S.C. 1973ff-1, Federal law states that:

Each State shall—

(1) permit absent uniformed services voters and overseas voters to use absentee registration procedures and to vote by absentee ballot in general, special primary, or runoff elections for Federal office;

(2) . . .

(3) permit overseas voters to use Federal write-in absentee ballots . . . in general elections for Federal office."

American Samoa law requiring uniformed service voters to register to vote in person is contrary to the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act. The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act recognizes that there is a considerable cost involved for a service member, and often a spouse, to travel to his/her home of residence to register to vote. Federal law also recognizes that active duty service members have little to say about where they are stationed. Yet, wherever they are sent, and whatever dangers they may encounter, Federal law recognizes that our service members are fundamentally entitled to the right to vote.

Mr. Speaker, the discrepancy that exists between Federal and territorial law must be addressed. Soldiers from American Samoa serving in the active-duty military should be afforded a fair opportunity to vote in American Samoa as required by federal law.

The fact of the matter is our military men and women place their lives on the line to protect our freedoms. The least we can do is ensure that their fundamental right to vote is also protected. Now more than ever, when our country is at war, and our nation is in crisis, we should make every effort to afford our service members and their dependents the right to vote.

To ensure that American Samoa's election laws comply with Federal law, I have suggested that a division should be created within our local election office to deal specifically with absentee ballot and registration procedures. I also believe that the territory needs to reconsider matters pertaining to run-off elections.

Under territorial law, it is nearly impossible for absentee voters to cast votes in a run-off election because local law mandates the run-off election to be held two weeks after the general election. This local mandate discriminates against active service members and other absentee voters. To address this problem in terms of Federal elections, I believe the best solution is to establish non-partisan primary elections during an election year in the event that there are three or more candidates running for Congress.

Primary elections in the summer followed by general elections in the fall will afford all of our qualified voters an equal opportunity to cast their ballots. This will also ensure that our active duty service members are afforded the same rights and privileges as every other American serving in the U.S. Armed Services.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and I look forward to its timely passage.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, because I had to return to my district to handle very urgent business, I missed a number of rollcall votes. Had I been present, I would have voted 'yea' on rollcall votes 505 and 508. On rollcall votes 506, 507 and 509, I would have voted "nay".

INTRODUCTION OF THE SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT (SPACE) ACT

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, the United States is an economic powerhouse. We work to keep the economy strong and to maintain a high standard of living for the people who reside here. Yet we have a drain on the economy estimated to be \$137 billion annually, a drain that goes unchecked and relatively unpublicized because it is not a "glamorous topic." This drain is spreading, continually invading our natural spaces and crowding out our native flora and fauna.