

TRIBUTE TO BISHOP SAMUEL C. MADISON ON THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL PEOPLE'S CONVOCATION, HIS 61ST ANNIVERSARY AS MINISTER, AND 10TH ANNIVERSARY AS BISHOP AND CHURCH LEADER

HON. MELVIN L. WATT

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an exemplary leader, Bishop S.C. Madison, who is celebrating the 75th anniversary of the United House of Prayer for All People's Convocation, his 61st anniversary as minister and his 10th anniversary as bishop of the United House of Prayer. Bishop Madison is an exceptional leader who has championed the causes of eliminating poverty, inadequate and unaffordable housing, unemployment, illiteracy, economic disparities and spiritual deprivation. The magnitude, depth and substance of his contributions to improve human welfare and social reform have brought him national acclaim.

The leadership of Bishop C.M. Grace, Bishop W. McCollough and Bishop S.C. Madison has had a positive impact on the growth of the United House of Prayer since its earliest existence in tents and storefront locations. Currently, under the leadership of Bishop Madison, there has been expansion to 135 congregations in 26 states. The church's massive, nationwide building program has resulted in construction of over 800 units of low and moderate income housing. These housing complexes are located in New Haven, CT; Washington, DC; Norfolk, VA; Charlotte, NC; Augusta, GA; Savannah, GA; and Los Angeles, CA. More than 100 units have been developed for senior citizens.

The extraordinary success of Bishop Madison has led to numerous honors and awards from national, state, and local organizations. Academic institutions have presented honorary degrees to him acknowledging his outstanding achievements in helping to overcome deplorable conditions that plagued people and cities. He has received Doctor of Humane Letters from the Saturday College of Washington, DC and Bowie State University of Bowie, MD.

Bishop Madison continues to demonstrate outstanding leadership, dispense an abundance of love and philanthropy and support causes for young people and the elderly. Bishop Madison's ministry promotes higher education, exercises business acumen, improves the spiritual fiber of society and maintains the United House of Prayer as a beacon of light for those who need inspiration and a safe haven from the harsh realities of life.

It is my pleasure to stand before the House to pay tribute to Bishop S.C. Madison as he marks 61 years in the ministry and 10 years of service as the outstanding role model and leader of the United House of Prayer for all people.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

DEBT-FOR-NATURE AGENDA OF BANK REGULATORS AT THE FDIC AND OTS

HON. JOHN T. DOOLITTLE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 20, 2001

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, in the 106th Congress, I chaired a Task Force formed by then-Chairman DON YOUNG to examine whether bank regulators at the FDIC and OTS used their powers to leverage privately owned redwood trees, known as the Headwaters Forest in California, from an individual.

The task force, which included Representatives POMBO, THORBERRY, BRADY, and RADANOVICH, undertook an 8 month review of the debt-for-redwoods matter. We held one terribly long hearing on the subject on December 12, 2000.

In the 107th Congress, Chairman HANSEN continued work on the subject and dedicated staff to draft a staff report to summarize the evidence of the FDIC and OTS redwoods debt-for-nature scheme and conclusions drawn from the oversight work. The report exposes how banking regulators took on an unauthorized, political agenda of leveraging redwood trees.

A member of the Task Force, Representative POMBO, inserted the text of the staff report into the RECORD on June 14, 2001. Just as important as the report itself, is the collection of evidence and documents, appended to the report. Those documents validate the accuracy of information presented in the report. Today, for the benefit of my colleagues, I have put those appendices into the RECORD. The Financial Services Committee should review this information as they deal with re-authorizing the FDIC and the OTS. These entities are clearly out of control, and I want to summarize why this is so.

Bank regulators at the FDIC and OTS have very specific statutory charges. They are to recover money from the owners of banks and thrifts when the institutions fail. This system keeps depositors whole through federally-backed insurance funds and collects money from the banks' owners if they failed to properly manage the bank. I emphasize, bank regulators are to recover money.

We found boxes of evidence that clearly showed that the bank regulators at the FDIC and OTS deviated from their statutory charge and actually concocted a scheme, in concert with the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, to obtain redwood trees from an owner of the failed bank. The scheme was initiated, promoted, and lobbied by radical EarthFirst! ecoterrorists. It was embraced by FDIC lawyers and facilitated by FDIC's outside counsel, and it was sanctioned at the highest levels of the agency.

The cornerstone of the scheme was to bring legal and administrative actions that the regulators believed and knew would fail against Mr. Charles Hurwitz, a 24-percent owner of a failed bank called United Savings of Texas. The bank regulators own written analysis of their claims said if the redwoods were not involved, their lawyers would have "closed out" the case. That means they would have dropped the case, period.

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Instead, the bank regulators and their lawyers synthesized the redwood for bank claims scheme with politicians in Congress and with outside environmental groups. They then met, at a critical juncture, with the Office of the Secretary of the Department of the Interior where the shocking and incredible realization was noted by one participant in the meeting: if we drop the suit we "undercut everything."

Even before this startling evidence was uncovered by the task force, a U.S. District Court judge, the Honorable Lynn Hughes compared the tactics of the FDIC and OTS to that of the mafia.

Since the time when the report was placed in the RECORD by Mr. POMBO, the OTS administrative proceeding has been decided by the OTS administrative judge. In a 200 plus page opinion after reviewing 29,000 pages of transcripts and 2,400 pages of exhibits for over seven years, the OTS judge ruled against the agency on every single claim.

This ruling validates the inescapable conclusion that the bank regulators at the OTS and the FDIC still fail to acknowledge: their claims totally lack of merit and were brought for the political reason of obtaining "the trees"—the redwoods—at no cost to the government. The staff report sets out the evidence supporting this conclusion.

This is an atrocious abuse of governmental power, and one that my colleagues and the agency should understand. For that reason, I have placed the evidence we collected—in its raw form—into the RECORD today.

I am doubly disturbed about what the bank regulators did, because the Committee on Resources and the Congress have the legal authority to decide what land is acquired and what the conditions of the acquisition should be, not banking regulators. Bank regulators clearly brought their claims for the environmentalists, for the Department of the Interior, and for the White House, not in furtherance of banking laws. Their decision was political and the disposition by the OTS judge again proves the point. These documents are even further validation.

When we asked the bank regulators at our hearing if their banking claims had anything to do with redwoods, they said, "No." The staff report documents just how the bank regulators were deeply involved in the redwoods agenda—and how they cooperated to get "the trees." The report shows how they switched their recommendation after meeting with the Department of the Interior. Right before they were to decide whether to pursue the claims, they obviously understood, "If we drop [our] suit, [it] will undercut everything." Those are words are from the notes of a meeting between the FDIC and the Department of the Interior. Those words put the bank regulators squarely inside the redwoods agenda.

The bank regulators were thick into redwoods early in the process. They hired outside counsel based on the supposed expertise to handle a "unique" settlement involving the redwoods. Their outside counsel even acted as a conduit between FDIC lawyers and the environmental groups that lobbied for the redwoods.

There is so much evidence detailed in the staff report, which is why I am grateful that my colleague, Representative RICHARD POMBO,