

IN HONOR OF DENNIS WEBER FOR HIS SERVICE TO DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AND OUR NATION

**HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 20, 2001*

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Dennis Weber, Commander of the California chapter of the Disabled American Veterans for his service to his community, his country and as a proud member of the Armed Services.

Mr. Weber, a true Californian, was born on February 21, 1948 in Los Angeles, California. Upon graduating from high school Mr. Weber enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. While serving with the 3rd Marine Engineer Battalion near An Hoa, Mr. Weber's platoon was ambushed by the Viet Cong. As platoon leader and while severely wounded, Mr. Weber encouraged his men to stand strong against the ambush and managed to lead his platoon to safety. Unfortunately two of his men were killed in the battle. After spending a year in the hospital recovering from his wounds Mr. Weber was medically discharged and returned to Los Angeles where he immediately began serving his country's needs in the Los Angeles city government.

During Mr. Weber's year as Commander he has lead the organization in assisting veterans in filing more than 16,000 claims for VA benefits, assisted in transporting more than 49,000 veterans to medical appointments covering over 1 million miles, and his given veterans countless amounts of emotional support.

The State of California and this nation is proud to have Mr. Weber as a native son. Mr. Weber is an example of the finest product of this nation and I want to thank him for his professionalism, initiative and unwavering devotion to veterans. As commander of the California chapter Mr. Weber's performance has truly been in keeping with the highest tradition of the Disabled American Veterans, the state of California, and the United States of America.

Colleagues, please join with me as we honor Mr. Dennis Weber with his wife Pam for his outstanding contributions to our nation.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE RITCHIE VALENS

**HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 20, 2001*

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the late Ritchie Valens, who was inducted into the Rock of Roll Hall of Fame on March 19th. Although Valens died over forty years ago, his presence is still strongly felt in my congressional district, especially in the Northeast San Fernando Valley where he grew up. The recognition he is receiving brings honor to his entire community.

A pioneer in the history of rock and roll who helped shape American music, Valens is con-

sidered to be the first Chicano rock and roll star to cross over into mainstream America with his hits, "Come On, Let's Go," the ballad "Donna" and the flipside, "La Bamba" which is still heard all over the world. At age seventeen, his career ended tragically when he died in a plane crash along with rock and roll legend Buddy Holly and fellow rocker the Big Bopper (J.P. Richardson) on February 3, 1959.

Valens achieved success and stardom at a younger age than many of rock's superstars, including John Lennon, Paul McCartney and Bob Dylan. The music Valens made is as vibrant today as it was when his hits were released in the late 1950's.

Born Richard Steve Valenzuela, Valens began his music career by imitating the earliest rock and roll artists, especially Elvis, Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, Fats Domino, The Penguins and The Drifters. Like so many of that era, Valens was caught up in the excitement of rock and roll. The performer with the greatest influence on his music, however, was Little Richard. Ritchie would entertain visitors in his household with his versions of Little Richard's "Ooh My Soul." He joined The Silhouettes, a typical high school garage band that played the popular tunes of the day at high school sock hops, church dances and local parties. Playing for the Silhouettes helped Valens realize that making music was what he wanted to do more than anything else.

In 1987, Columbia Pictures released the film *La Bamba*, written and directed by admired Chicano playwright Luis Valdez, which immortalized Valens' brief life. The movie rejuvenated his music nearly thirty years after his death. A whole new generation of fans grew to love Valens' as his hits were re-recorded and performed by the East Los Angeles Chicano group, "Los Lobos," for the *La Bamba* soundtrack. This contemporary band went on to become a musical phenomenon, in large part because of Valens' achievements in the early days of rock and roll.

Since the release of the movie *La Bamba*, Valens' contributions to rock and roll have been honored many times: he received a star on the Hollywood walk of Fame, The United States Postal Service recognized his life and career with a commemorative postage stamp, the Ritchie Valens Recreation Center was formally dedicated at a park in his hometown of Pacoima, and he was inducted into Hollywood's Rock Walk for his contributions to pop music. Additionally, an annual music festival, "The Legend Lives On," is held in his honor.

It was an honor to work with Valens' family, friends and fans to urge the recording industry to name this outstanding artist to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Although long overdue, Valens' inclusion is richly deserved and is cause for great celebration in Pacoima today.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the late Ritchie Valens, rock and roll's first Chicano star!

TRIBUTE TO CALIFORNIA MARITIME PRESIDENT JERRY ASPLAND

**HON. GEORGE MILLER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 20, 2001*

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of my colleagues another milestone in the seventy-two year history of the California Maritime Academy, located in the City of Vallejo in my district of California. In furthering its mission of supporting the maritime interests of the United States, Cal Maritime receives federal assistance, primarily in the form of its training ship, the T.S. Golden Bear. Many of its graduates become licensed officers on merchant marine vessels, or in the U.S. Navy or Coast Guard. As a federally designated regional maritime academy for the Western states, Cal Maritime is the maritime college of choice for students from California, Washington, Alaska, Hawaii, Arizona, and other western states.

On June 30, 2001, California Maritime Academy President Jerry A. Aspland will retire, completing five years at the helm of this fine institution. President Aspland, a Cal Maritime graduate, had previously retired from his position as President of Arco Marine, Inc., when the California State University system called him to begin a second career as one of the nation's leading maritime educators. He assumed the position of President of Cal Maritime on July 1, 1996.

President Aspland's tenure has been marked by numerous advances for the institution. Cal Maritime has become fully involved with the CSU system, as its twenty-second campus. Enrollment has nearly doubled. Numerous improvements to their facilities have been completed on his watch, including the recent opening of a new, state-of-the art laboratory building, infrastructure and technology replacement and upgrading, seismic retrofits, and the acquisition of additional training vessels. Ground will be broken soon for a new technology center on the campus. A second annual summer training cruise has been introduced, thereby doubling the number of training billets. Academic programs have been expanded, and further options are in the planning stages. Under his leadership, Cal Maritime was the first U.S. maritime academy to receive preliminary approval for having its educational program meet the requirements of the international Standards for Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping. A new strategic plan has just been published, and the institution is in readiness for its next academic accreditation visit scheduled this fall.

By any measure the Aspland years at the California Maritime Academy have been years of accomplishment in every aspect of this distinguished academic institution. I invite my colleagues to share my great pride in all that Cal Maritime has contributed and continues to contribute to its students, graduates, and to the maritime interests of the United States.

Finally, on behalf of the constituents of my district and my colleagues here in this chamber, I wish to extend to President Jerry Aspland our deeply felt appreciation for all that