

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND JAMES
COFFEE

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 8, 2001

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Reverend James Coffee's 38 years as Pastor of the Community Baptist Church in Santa Rosa, California.

Reverend Coffee came here in the midst of the Nation's civil rights struggle—and from the start he has fought to break down barriers between the races. He established the Bridge Builders Organization, a group seeking racial reconciliation and the Diversity Forum, a group meeting to understand and embrace the diversities among us. He's served as President of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebration Committee, and is a founding member of the 100 Black Men of Sonoma County.

Service on Citizens Against Domestic Violence, the Salvation Army Advisory Board, and Citizens For Balanced Transportation highlight Reverend Coffee's commitment to civic life. He is recipient of numerous honors from service clubs and professional organizations, including a community builder award presented to him on Diversity Day two years ago. Because of his strong belief in the power of education, Reverend Coffee established a scholarship and a mentoring program at Community Baptist Church.

Mr. Speaker, Reverend Coffee is truly the perfect embodiment of one of his favorite sayings, "Make a difference one day at a time." For 38 years Reverend Coffee has made a difference—with strength and persistence, with humor and compassion every day of his life.

IN HONOR OF POLICE CHIEF
DOMINIC V. MEUTI

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 8, 2001

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Police Chief Dominic V. Meuti who is celebrating his retirement from the police force after 50 years with the Bedford Heights' Police Department.

Police Chief Meuti has a long and distinguished career with the city of Bedford Heights and is believed to be the longest-serving active police chief in the country. Mr. Meuti began his service in 1951 as a 21-year-old mechanic. Earning just \$1.25 an hour, he accepted the position after only a few months of police work under his belt.

As chief, Mr. Meuti performed countless jobs to make sure the city ran smoothly. In the

winter, he acted as the Service Department, and plowed the snow using his beat-up Chevy. In the summer, he patrolled the tiny village in his own car. Chief Meuti's dedication to his job was displayed with the countless hours of work he performed. During his tenure, the community has grown to over 11,000, and the force has expanded to 38 full-time officers.

Police Chief Meuti's life, however, is not consumed with the police force. His office is filled with family photographs and he remains extremely active in his local community. His kind spirit and warm smile attract people to him. He has served his community selflessly for 50 years and is an inspiration to many.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring a great man on his retirement. For 50 years, Police Chief Dominic V. Meuti has dedicated his life to public service. His love and dedication to his community will be greatly missed.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON HR. 1836,
ECONOMIC GROWTH AND TAX
RELIEF RECONCILIATION ACT OF
2001

SPEECH OF

HON. MAX SANDLIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 25, 2001

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, today, Congress will approve a significant tax relief package, outlining a fiscal path that promises lower taxes but creates a less certain budget picture. I believe Americans need tax relief, and I will support this tax cut bill because it is the best we can produce at this time. In many crucial respects, however, the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Act is flawed. In some cases, promised tax benefits are delayed for several years, while additional valuable tax credits for education and inducements for personal savings expire only a few years after enactment. Politics, however, is built on principled compromise between different policy positions and, in voting in favor of this bill, I will not let the friend of the perfect be the enemy of the good.

The Economic Growth and Tax Relief Act provides significant tax relief for millions of Americans by correcting the marriage penalty and eliminating the estate tax. I support eliminating the estate tax and correcting the marriage penalty. The burden imposed on working families and some family businesses by these two taxes far outweighs the moderate revenue generated for the federal government. Although this bill addresses both of these items, the tax relief is either incomplete or delayed over an unreasonable length of time.

I favor an immediate fix to the marriage penalty—a penalty that causes half of all married couples to pay an average of \$1,100 in

federal income tax—by doubling the standard deduction for married couples effective 2002. As an original cosponsor of legislation to eliminate this penalty, I have met with many married couples throughout my district who, as a result of committing to marriage, pay a higher percentage of federal income tax. Unfortunately, the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Act delays full implementation until 2005, putting off much needed relief for millions of families. Bipartisan majorities on several occasions have supported an immediate repeal, correcting this costly quirk in the federal tax code.

A key priority I have championed since my first campaign for Congress is the elimination of the federal estate tax. One of the first bills I introduced as a Member of Congress was legislation to repeal the federal estate tax. Taxing a small business or family farmer after the owner has passed is the ultimate disincentive to small business and to a family's dream to pass down a business, profession, or craft to future generations. On three separate occasions over the past two years, the House of Representatives approved legislation to completely repeal the estate tax. During each vote, I stood with those who believe the government should not tax a life's hard work. Today, I again join my colleagues in pursuing the elimination of this tax.

Although bipartisan majorities support the elimination of the estate tax, I am frustrated with the delaying tactics and extended timelines contained in the final bill. As part of a series of tricks to hide the true cost of the tax cut, Republican negotiators have stretched estate tax repeal over the next decade. In fact, complete repeal will not take effect until after 2011, outside the ten-year budget framework and thus removed from our budget agreement and congressional rules. This clever trick unfairly postpones complete relief and disregards our budget plan—a document that is a roadmap to fiscal integrity. My own bill would immediately repeal the estate tax, a much preferable approach to implementing an incremental, decade-long reduction that does not provide full relief until 2011. Fiscal truth telling is paramount to maintaining the trust of the American voter. By backloading several popular tax measures, Congress risks a return to deficit spending and an erosion of public confidence in the budget process.

Throughout the tax debate, I have stood with a coalition of fiscally responsible Democrats—the Blue Dog Coalition—emphasizing a responsible budget plan that retires the debt, strengthens Social Security and Medicare, addresses our common priorities and provides meaningful tax relief. The Blue Dog Coalition demands fiscal honesty and a candid assessment of the projected long-range federal budget surplus, which is at the root of our efforts to pass significant tax relief. Earlier this year, the House rushed through a tax plan prior to establishing clear guidelines to reduce our \$5 trillion national debt. I opposed this approach.

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