

the House of Representatives, Robert Matsui won the deep respect and affection of everyone who ever worked with him. When he first ran for Congress, in 1978, he pledged to bring to the office "a new form of statesmanship." For more than 25 years, on a daily basis, he fulfilled that promise, and his constituents honored him for it. This past November they returned him to the Congress for his fourteenth term, with 71 percent of the vote.

Bob Matsui was a third-generation Japanese American. Like so many of us, he was part of a family that had come to the United States for the great opportunities this country offers, to build a better life for their children. Because Bob Matsui's family was Japanese-American, however, he and his parents were taken from their home in Sacramento in 1942, following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. They were interned for more than three years at Tule Lake, in one of the "relocation centers" specifically created for Japanese Americans. Bob Matsui himself was very young at the time—barely 6 months old at the time of internment, not yet 4 years old when the war ended but he felt deeply the confusion and anguish of the adults around him. Yet he never lost faith in his country and in himself. Inspired by the Kennedy administration to enter public service, he dedicated his professional life to serving and protecting the rights of all Americans, first as a lawyer and then as a public official. He served 8 years on the Sacramento City Council before entering the Congress. But the experience of his early childhood never left him, and in 1988 he was instrumental in ensuring enactment of the Japanese American Redress Act, which offered recognition of the terrible, unconstitutional wrongs done to Japanese Americans.

As a senior member of the House Ways and Means Committee, Bob Matsui worked unstintingly to assure the safety net for those most in need: children, seniors, the disabled, the poor and others who needed an advocate. As the ranking minority member of the Social Security Subcommittee, he was one of the Social Security system's best-informed and most eloquent advocates in the Congress. No one understood better than he the indispensable role that Social Security plays in assuring basic standards of security and dignity to Americans when their working years are over, and no one was more dedicated to keeping the system intact. Robert Matsui believed in the social insurance system that Rockefeller created to care for retirees, but we as a society expanded to care for younger citizens in need, the disabled, widowed and survivors. He made politics personal, and because he cared so deeply for others, he was able to be a real leader in this realm. His voice will be sorely missed.

Congressman MATSUI leaves a legacy of extraordinary integrity, commitment and strength. It is fitting that in his memory Bob Matsui's family and friends have established The Matsui Foundation for Public Service, which will carry forward the principles to which he dedicated his life. I express my deepest sympathies to his wife, Doris Okada, his son Brian, daughter-in-law Amy, and granddaughter Anna, and thank them for sharing him with us these many years.

U.S. FOREST SERVICE PLANNING REGULATIONS

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, on December 22, 2004, The U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service published a final rule that will streamline the process used by the Forest Service in revising forest management plans.

I am pleased that the Department completed work on this important regulation. Ultimately, this rule will help local forest managers provide future generations with healthier forests, cleaner air, cleaner water and more abundant wildlife through more efficient management of our forests and grasslands. I am also pleased that this regulation builds upon one of the important lessons we learned during consideration of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act in the 108th Congress: emphasis on actual forest management rather than administrative paperwork. This will result in our forest managers being able to undertake important forest health projects rather than be overburdened with administrative processes.

Although the final planning rule is very comprehensive, I would like to point out several key components: It will for the first time incorporate implementation and outcome assessment into the forest planning process, which will ensure that the forest planning process is a dynamic one that can quickly adjust to changing conditions. As we learned with the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, a dynamic management system allows the Forest Service to address the most time-sensitive forest health issues such as wildfire, invasive species, or disease. It incorporates meaningful public participation throughout the planning process, and ensures that the best available scientific information will be used in decision making. It contains a process that will fairly and objectively allow us to see whether the Forest Service is getting the job done. This reporting process will rely on independent reviews of Forest Service land management, will measure actual results against intended outcomes, and will incorporate an audit process to produce publicly available results. Finally, and most importantly, this rule will streamline the planning process, which in turn will save the Forest Service both time

and money. The current forest plan takes between 5 and 7 years; under the new regulation the anticipated timeframe is between 2 and 3 years. These savings in both time and money will allow our land managers to more quickly complete on-the-ground projects to improve the health of our Nation's forests.

For too long our Nation's forests have been imperiled because of a planning process that is too cumbersome and takes too long, and usually results in forest plans that are out-of-date by the time they are finished. I applaud the efforts of the U.S. Forest Service to streamline our Nation's forest planning process to reduce red tape and paperwork. I am hopeful that this final rule will provide further tools for the U.S. Forest Service in appropriately managing our Nation's forests.

MAKING A COMMITMENT

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, as we begin a new Congress, I am hopeful that the Senate will consider and pass sensible gun safety legislation for the benefit of our families, communities, and police officers. The 109th Congress has the opportunity to act together on a bipartisan basis to pass legislation that will make our streets safer for all Americans.

In order to achieve a reduction in gun violence, we must commit ourselves to enacting legislation that supports this goal. The 108th Congress missed numerous opportunities to have a positive impact on safety in our communities across the nation. In the last Congress, we did not close the gun show loophole, we did not reauthorize the 1994 assault weapons ban, and we failed to make needed improvements to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System that would have made it more difficult for convicted criminals to gain access to guns.

Combating gun violence also requires a commitment to funding effective gun violence prevention and enforcement programs. Unfortunately, the Fiscal Year 2005 omnibus appropriations bill signed by the President in December eliminated much of the funding for one of these programs, known as Project Safe Neighborhoods.

The Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative focuses on increased enforcement of existing gun laws, vigorous prosecution of crimes committed with handguns, and gun violence prevention education. The project supports organizations working against gun violence and has provided over \$1 billion in funding to help prosecute gun crimes, hire personnel, provide training, and assist with community outreach activities. It is critical that we provide adequate resources to programs like the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative in order to more effectively address the gun violence epidemic in this country.