

HONORING EARL V. JONES, SR.

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2005

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great American and Pittsburgher, Mr. Earl V. Jones, Sr. Mr. Jones is a constituent of mine and the founder of the worldwide Peace on Earth Campaign.

The Peace on Earth Campaign is centered on community leaders and the many volunteers in the community who do their part day in and day out. Local firefighters, police and paramedics have co-sponsored Mr. Jones' project which is showcased by a flag designed by Mr. Jones himself. The flag and symbol for the world peace campaign is a dove and globe in red, black, brown, yellow, and white to acknowledge the ongoing struggle for world peace.

In a post-9/11 world where terrorism and war surround us, Mr. Jones' Peace on Earth Campaign is a symbol for all nations to strive towards. The Peace on Earth campaign has been recognized and endorsed by President George W. Bush, former President Bill Clinton and Former Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

Mr. Jones organizes numerous events to promote community involvement in the Peace on Earth Campaign. One of the many events Mr. Jones' organization promotes is a highly successful student essay program in our public schools. Each essay is designed to bring awareness of the theme of peace on Earth to the youth of the world.

With his efforts to promote the noble goal of peace on Earth, Mr. Jones truly epitomizes the American values of peace, community, and brotherhood. I commend Mr. Jones on his countless hours of volunteer work spent as the ambassador and organizer for the Peace on Earth Campaign.

RECOGNIZING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2005

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend U.S. Ambassador to Armenia John Evans for properly labeling the atrocities committed by the Ottoman Empire against the Armenians as genocide and to urge the President to follow his example and accurately characterize this crime against humanity in his commemorative statement next month.

Ambassador Evans recently completed his first U.S. visit to major Armenian-American communities to share his initial impressions of Armenia and our programs there. During his public exchanges with Armenian-American communities throughout the United States late last month, Ambassador Evans declared that "the Armenian Genocide was the first genocide of the twentieth century."

By employing this term, the Ambassador is building on previous statements by Presidents Reagan and Bush, as well as the repeated

declarations of numerous world-renowned scholars. In effect, Evans has done nothing more than succinctly name the conclusions enunciated by those before him.

In 1981, President Reagan issued a presidential proclamation that said in part: "like the genocide of the Armenians before it, and the genocide of the Cambodians which followed it—and like too many other persecutions of too many other people—the lessons of the Holocaust must never be forgotten . . ." President Bush, himself, has invoked the textbook definition of genocide in his preceding April 24th statements by using the expressions "annihilation" and "forced exile and murder" to characterize this example of man's inhumanity to man.

Furthermore, Evans' remarks correspond with the signed statement in 2000 by 126 Genocide and Holocaust scholars affirming that the World War I Armenian Genocide is an incontestable historical fact and accordingly urging the governments of Western democracies to likewise recognize it as such. The petitioners, among whom is Nobel Laureate for Peace Elie Wiesel, also asked the Western Democracies to urge the Government and Parliament of Turkey to finally come to terms with a dark chapter of Ottoman-Turkish history and to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

The Ambassador's declarations also conform to the summary conclusions of the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) when it facilitated an independent legal study on the applicability of the 1948 Genocide Convention to events that occurred during the early twentieth century. The ICTJ report stated that "the Events, viewed collectively, can thus be said to include all of the elements of the crime of genocide as defined in the Convention, and legal scholars as well as historians, politicians, journalists and other people would be justified in continuing to so describe them."

The Armenian people's ability to survive in the face of the repression carried out against them stands as a monument to their endurance and will to live. Therefore, it is critically important that the United States speak with one voice in condemning the horrors committed against the Armenians. Only by working to preserve the truth about the Armenian Genocide can we hope to spare future generations from the horrors of the past.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I join the Armenian Caucus Co-Chairs, Representatives Frank Pallone and Joe Knollenberg, in applauding the statements of Ambassador Evans and others, and in urging the President to reaffirm the U.S. record on the Armenian Genocide.

IN HONOR OF ROBERT MANCUSO

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2005

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Robert J. Mancuso, C.E.C., Executive Chef for the world-renowned Sardine Factory Restaurant on Cannery Row, who has been named Chef of the Year by the Monterey Bay Chapter of the American Culinary Federa-

tion. Mancuso won high honors at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, graduating in 1990. He also earned an associate's degree in culinary arts, and in April of 2003, he received the prestigious Certified Executive Chef certification from The American Culinary Federation.

His career has taken him to prominent restaurants throughout the United States, giving him a strong background in the diversity of dining styles in this country. According to Mancuso, "California is a culinary mecca and as the Executive Chef at The Sardine Factory, I will have the opportunity to strengthen American cuisine by working with individual agriculture growers. The resources are here—coastal seafood, fresh vegetables, and prime poultry."

His outstanding talents have won him numerous national and international culinary awards, including 13 gold medals in national and international competitions. He is a member of Les Toques Blanches, an honor society of chefs in the United States. In 1996 he was on the Culinary Olympic Team USA, representing 25,000 chefs from the American Culinary Federation.

In addition, Mancuso is a regular participant in fundraising for charity events in the local community and has mentored many students in the culinary field. Mr. Speaker, I wish to honor Chef Robert Mancuso for his many accomplishments, for his dedication to his art, and to express my sincere gratitude for his service to the community.

RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE 341ST DISTRICT COURT JUDGE ELMA T. SALINAS ENDER

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the important achievements of Judge Elma T. Salinas Ender in Laredo, Texas of my Congressional District.

Appointed as Judge of the 341st District Court by Governor Mark White, Judge Elma T. Salinas Ender became the first Mexican-American woman appointed and elected to a district court bench in state and U.S. history. Her knowledge and commitment that she has brought to the bench has made her an inspiration too many.

Professional activities include: member of the Governor's Juvenile Standards Task Force; the Funding/Judiciary branch of Government in Texas; State Bar of Texas; and has served on the Texas Bar Association council for "Women in Law." Judge Salinas Ender is involved in numerous civic and community activities, i.e. Laredo 1010 Youth Task Force; Communities in Schools; and Leadership Laredo.

She holds a Juris Doctor degree from St. Mary's University School of Law in San Antonio, Texas. Judge Salinas Ender is a fine example to women in our community, demonstrating what hard work and dedication can accomplish.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have this opportunity to recognize the contributions of Judge Elma T. Salinas Ender.

INTRODUCING THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT ACT

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 16, 2005

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, today Congresswoman NORTON and I have introduced the "Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act". A detailed summary of the bill's provisions is attached.

The bill organizes four regional commissions under a common framework, thereby providing a more uniform method for distributing economic development funds throughout the regions most in need of such assistance. It reauthorizes the Delta Regional Authority and the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority and creates two new regional commissions: the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission and the Southwest Border Regional Commission. Both of these latter commissions have been proposed in legislation introduced in the previous Congress and are designed to address problems of systemic poverty and chronic underdevelopment in those regions. Every county or parish that is currently included in a commission through enacted or proposed legislation is similarly included in that same commission under this bill. While the bill follows the successful organizational model of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), it does not include the ARC or the Denali Commission (a wholly intrastate commission) in its framework.

Regional commissions provide vital assistance to the development of the Nation's most chronically poor and distressed regions. They are true federal-state partnerships, bringing together federal, state, and local governments to expand the economic and development opportunities of a chronically distressed region. These regions typically experience rates of poverty and unemployment that are more than 150 percent of the national average. Further, some of these areas lack the transportation and basic public infrastructure necessary to support business development, and importantly, create jobs in the region.

The regional commissions are designed to assist areas in overcoming chronic economic distress by focusing on the distressed region as a whole. By recognizing that systemic economic distress follows geographic and natural resource realities, rather than arbitrary state or political subdivision borders, the commissions are able to concentrate their efforts over the entire region—regardless of state lines. One way that federally designated regional commissions work within the region to overcome the effects of chronic underdevelopment is through investment in infrastructure, including transportation, telecommunications, and other basic public infrastructure. The commissions also assist the region in obtaining job skills training, entrepreneurship, technology, and business development. Through these efforts, commissions work to improve the economic development of these systemically distressed regions.

Regional commissions also supplement the state share of other federal programs to en-

sure that areas that do not even have the economic means of meeting a required state or local funding share are not denied the opportunity to participate in these programs. Regional commissions assist in local development planning by helping provide local development districts with the resources and expertise necessary to formulate and follow a comprehensive, strategic regional development plan. Often it is the local development planning that is the key for the successful implementation of economic and infrastructure development programs.

The Regional and Economic Infrastructure Development Act is modeled after the statute authorizing the ARC. The ARC has demonstrated that regional commissions are successful in fighting chronic underdevelopment and poverty. Since the ARC's creation in 1965, employment in the thirteen-state region has grown by nearly 66 percent. In contrast, in the decade preceding its creation, employment in the region had declined by 1.5 percent. Further, the poverty rate of the region has been cut by more than one half—from 31.1 percent in 1960 to 13.6 percent in 2000.

As the Nation continues to suffer through a weakened economy, the need for these commissions becomes even more important. In February 2005, the national unemployment rate reached 5.4 percent. Further, since January 2001, the number of people unemployed increased from 6 million to 8 million—an increase of 2 million people, or 33 percent. Moreover, workers who have lost their jobs are having more trouble finding new jobs. The average length of unemployment is now almost 20 weeks, and more than one in five unemployed workers have been out of work for more than six months.

As the economy continues to struggle, it is these historically depressed regions—the regions that have already been struggling—that suffer a disproportionate share of the burden. Now, perhaps more than ever, there is a greater need for these regional commissions. This bill recognizes the importance of the regional commissions to these chronically distressed areas. The bill strengthens the commissions by establishing a uniform organizational structure, under which an affirmative vote of a commission requires a majority of state members plus the affirmative vote of the federal cochairperson. With this voting structure, the bill ensures that the federal and state roles in a commission are equal and interdependent, thereby promoting a true federal-state partnership.

In addition, the bill establishes a coordinating council for the regional commissions consisting of representatives from all the commissions, including the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Denali Commission. The coordinating council is directed to meet biannually to discuss issues facing regions that suffer chronic distress and successful strategies for promoting regional development. While the council will assist the commissions in promoting regional development, it has no decision-making authority over any of the commissions.

Finally, the bill authorizes sufficient funds for each commission so that a commission will have the means available to fulfill its mission of promoting economic and infrastructure de-

velopment. The bill authorizes \$30 million for each commission in fiscal year 2006 (the amount currently authorized for the Delta and Northern Great Plains Regional Authorities) and increases that authorization by \$5 million for each successive year through fiscal year 2010.

Frankly, I am concerned about this Administration's lack of funding for existing regional commissions and lack of interest in promoting economic development programs that create jobs and improve communities. In its fiscal year 2006 budget proposal, the Administration proposes \$6 million for the Delta Regional Authority and only \$1 million for the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority. Further, the Administration's budget proposes to dismantle 18 different economic development programs and instead "consolidate" these programs into a formula-based program housed in the Department of Commerce. Presently these 18 programs include funding for grants and other economic development activities that total \$5.5 billion. The new program will be funded at \$3.7 billion—a reduction of nearly \$2 billion in economic development program funds!

It is time that we affirm our commitment to regional economic development by authorizing these commissions and providing the funding necessary from them to break the cycle of chronic distress in these regions. I believe this bill will help us do that.

SUMMARY OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT ACT

The Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act organizes four regional commissions under a common framework, thereby providing a more uniform method for distributing economic assistance throughout the regions most in need of such assistance. It reauthorizes the Delta Regional Authority and the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority and creates two new regional commissions: the Southeast Crescent and the Southwest Border Regional Commission. Both of these latter commissions have been proposed in legislation introduced in the previous Congress and are designed to address problems of systemic poverty and chronic underdevelopment in those regions. Every county or parish that is currently included in a commission through enacted or proposed legislation is similarly included in that same commission under this bill. While the bill follows the successful organizational model of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), it does not include the ARC or the Denali Commission (a wholly intrastate commission) in its framework.

PURPOSE

To organize the regional commissions in the lower 48 states (with the exception of the Appalachian Regional Commission) under a common framework, providing a more uniform organization structure among the commissions and a more uniform method for distributing economic assistance throughout the country.

COMMISSIONS

The bill reauthorizes the Delta Regional Commission and the Northern Great Plains Regional Commission, and creates the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission and the Southwest Border Regional Commission. The Delta Regional Commission and the Northern Great Plains Regional Commission are composed of the same states, counties, and parishes included in the existing