

COMMEMORATING THE CENTENNIAL OF RAISING THE U.S. FLAG IN AMERICAN SAMOA

HON. PATSY T. MINK

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2000

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, today I express my heartiest congratulations to the people of American Samoa and to Samoans living in Hawaii and throughout the United States in recognition of the Centennial of the Raising of the United States Flag in American Samoa.

Flag Day, which is celebrated on April 17th, is the biggest holiday in American Samoa and is observed by Samoans throughout the world. The importance of this holiday is a reflection of the pride the people of Samoa take in their affiliation with the United States.

Samoans have demonstrated their loyalty and commitment to the United States through service in our Nation's wars. In fact, the per capita rate of enlistment in the Armed Forces among American Samoans is among the highest in the United States.

For more than 30 years, the Samoa Flag Day Festival has been observed in Hawaii. It is a celebration of our shared history, of the contributions Samoans have made to our Nation and to the State of Hawaii, and of the rich culture and traditions of Faasamoa. The Festival includes sports competitions, cultural demonstrations, singing, dancing, and food.

I take this opportunity to send my warmest aloha to my esteemed colleague, the Honorable ENI FALEOMAVAEGA, and to all the people of American Samoa.

COLORADO STATE SENATOR
MARYANNE TEBEDO

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2000

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take this moment to recognize the career of one of Colorado's leading statesmen, State Senator MaryAnne Tebedo. In doing so, I would like to honor this individual who, for many years, has exemplified the notion of public service and civic duty. It is clear that Senator Tebedo's dynamic leadership will be greatly missed and difficult to replace.

Elected to the Colorado Senate in 1988, she was the chairman of the State of Veterans Military Affairs Committee and served on the Finance Committee. She also served as parliamentarian. She worked hard on issues concerning concealed weapons, State boards and highways.

Senator Tebedo received many honors. In 1992 she received the NFIB Guardian of Small Business Award, the CACI Business Legislator of the Year Award. She was also honored by Freedom Magazine as a Human Rights Advocate.

This year marked the end of Senator Tebedo's tenure in elected office. Her career embodied the citizen-legislator ideal and was a model that every official in elected office should seek to emulate. The citizens of Colorado owe Senator Tebedo a debt of gratitude and I wish her well.

HONORING SAM SMITH

HON. GEORGE R. NETHERCUTT, JR.

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2000

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, today, I honor Sam Smith, a great citizen from the State of Washington.

Dr. Sam Smith retires, this year, after fifteen years as President of Washington State University. His hard work and leadership transformed WSU from a single campus in Pullman to a nationally recognized, statewide university. Dr. Smith increased student access to Washington State University by establishing WSU Learning Centers in eleven counties and expanding WSU's presence in underserved areas with branch campuses in Spokane, the Tri-Cities and Vancouver.

Dr. Smith also presided over the most successful fundraising campaign in the history of Washington State University. Campaign WSU, the university's first comprehensive fund-raising effort, raised more than \$275 million and had the highest alumni-giving rate of all public universities in the country.

Dr. Smith led academic programs and research efforts that resulted in Washington State University's recognition in national rankings as one of the best public universities in America, including a ranking, last year, as the most wired public university in the nation.

Dr. Smith was president in 1998 when the Washington State Cougar football team was Pac-10 champion and competed in the Rose Bowl for the first time in 67 years.

I thank Dr. Smith for his service to Washington State University and Washington State and ask that he and his wife, Pat, remain friends with both in their retirement as both remain friends with them.

THE CASE AGAINST BIGOTRY

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2000

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I recently saw an editorial of such eloquence and passion that I believe it should be shared with the membership of this body. Since we from time to time deal with issues involving the rights of gay and lesbian people, I believe it is extremely important for the Members to read this mother's cry for justice and I hope that it will factor into the decisions we make in the future.

[For the Valley News (White River Junction, VT/Hanover, NH, April 30, 2000)]

(By Sharon Underwood)

As the mother of a gay son, I've seen firsthand how cruel and misguided people can be. Many letters have been sent to the Valley News concerning the homosexual menace in Vermont. I am the mother of a gay son and I've taken enough from you good people.

I'm tired of your foolish rhetoric about the "homosexual agenda" and your allegations that accepting homosexuality is the same thing as advocating sex with children. You are cruel and ignorant. You have been robbing me of the joys of motherhood ever since my children were tiny.

My firstborn son started suffering at the hands of the moral little thugs from your

moral, upright families from the time he was in the first grade. He was physically and verbally abused from first grade straight through high school because he was perceived to be gay.

He never professed to be gay or had any association with anything gay, but he had the misfortune not to walk or have gestures like the other boys. He was called "fag" incessantly, starting when he was 6.

In high school, while your children were doing what kids that age should be doing, mine labored over a suicide note, drafting and redrafting it to be sure his family knew how much he loved them. My sobbing 17-year-old tore the heart out of me as he choked out that he just couldn't bear to continue living any longer, that he didn't want to be gay and that he couldn't face a life without dignity.

You have the audacity to talk about protecting families and children from the homosexual menace, while you yourselves tear apart families and drive children to despair. I don't know why my son is gay, but I do know that God didn't put him, and millions like him, on this Earth to give you someone to abuse. God gave you brains so that you could think, and it's about time you started doing that.

At the core of all your misguided beliefs is the belief that this could never happen to you, that there is some kind of subculture out there that people have chosen to join. The fact is that if it can happen to my family, it can happen to yours, and you won't get to choose. Whether it is genetic or whether something occurs during a critical time of fetal development, I don't know. I can only tell you with an absolute certainty that it is inborn.

If you want to tout your own morality, you'd best come up with something more substantive than your heterosexuality. You did nothing to earn it; it was given to you. If you disagree, I would be interested in hearing your story, because my own heterosexuality was a blessing I received with no effort whatsoever on my part. It is so woven into the very soul of me that nothing could ever change it. For those of you who reduce sexual orientation to a simple choice, a character issue, a bad habit or something that can be changed by a 10-step program, I'm puzzled. Are you saying that your own sexual orientation is nothing more than something you have chosen, that you could change it at will? If that's not the case, then why would you suggest that someone else can?

A popular theme in your letters is that Vermont has been infiltrated by outsiders. Both sides of my family have lived in Vermont for generations. I am heart and soul a Vermonter, so I'll thank you to stop saying that you are speaking for "true Vermonters."

You invoke the memory of the brave people who have fought on the battlefield for this great country, saying that they didn't give their lives so that the "homosexual agenda" could tear down the principles they died defending. My 83-year-old father fought in some of the most horrific battles of World War II, was wounded and awarded the Purple Heart.

He shakes his head in sadness at the life his grandson has had to live. He says he fought alongside homosexuals in those battles, that they did their part and bothered no one. One of his best friends in the service was gay, and he never knew it until the end, and when he did find out, it mattered not at all. That wasn't the measure of a man.

You religious folk just can't bear the thought that as my son emerges from the hell that was his childhood he might like to find a lifelong companion and have a measure of happiness. It offends your sensibilities

that he should request the right to visit that companion in the hospital, to make medical decisions for him or to benefit from tax laws governing inheritance.

How dare he? you say. These outrageous request would threaten the very existence of your family, would undermine the sanctity of marriage.

You use religion to abdicate your responsibility to be thinking human beings. There are vast numbers of religious people who find you attitudes repugnant. God is not for the privileged majority, and God knows my son has committed no sin.

The deep-thinking author of a letter to the April 12 Valley News who lectures about homosexual sin and tells us about "those of us who have been blessed with the benefits of a religious upbringing" asks: "What ever happened to the idea of striving ... to be better human beings than we are?"

Indeed, sir, what ever happened to that?

(Sharon Underwood lives in White River Junction, VT)

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HAROLD E. FORD, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2000

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, May 18, I was unable to cast a vote for final passage on H.R. 4205, the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2001 and 6 amendments.

For rollcall vote No. 202, the Skelton amendment, I would have voted "yes."

For rollcall vote No. 203, the Sanchez amendment, I would have voted "yes."

For rollcall vote No. 204, the Moakley amendment, I would have voted "yes."

For rollcall vote No. 205, the Cox amendment, I would have voted "yes."

For rollcall vote No. 206, the Buyer substitute amendment to the Taylor amendment, I would have voted "no."

For rollcall vote No. 207, the Taylor amendment, I would have voted "yes."

For rollcall vote No. 208, Final Passage of H.R. 4205, I would have voted "yes."

Mr. Speaker, on Monday, May 22, I was unable to cast votes for H.R. 3852, the deadline extension for construction of a hydroelectric project in Alabama, S. 1236, the deadline extension for construction of the Arrowrock Dam hydroelectric project in Idaho, and H. Con. Res. 302, concerning a National Moment of Remembrance to Honor Men and Women of the U.S. Who Died in Pursuit of Freedom and Peace.

For rollcall vote No. 211, H.R. 3852, I would have voted "yes."

For rollcall vote No. 212, S. 1236, I would have voted "yes."

For rollcall vote No. 213, H. Con. Res. 302, I would have voted "yes."