

MARKING THE 100 YEAR CELEBRATION OF THE CITY OF FIRTH, IDAHO

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2005

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join with the townspeople of Firth, Idaho, in celebrating the city's 100th anniversary. This important milestone has been reached through the hard work and tenacity of the early settlers as well as the foresight and spirit of today's citizens.

The town of Firth officially came into existence in 1905 when Lorenzo Firth and his wife gave a plot of land for the town site and an acre for a one-room school house. The 4-room brick building which replaced that first school still stands on the original site, and the city has grown and prospered through the years. Some of the businesses which flourished in the early years of Firth included: a bank, barbershops, drug store, butcher shops and grocery stores, a lumberyard, harness shop, blacksmith shop, hardware store, theatre, grain mill, and potato warehouses. The original Firth Mill and Elevator continues to do business today. Collet's Bar and Grill is proud to have served the residents of Firth for over 75 years. Anthony's Auto and the Stop and Shop Grocery are early businesses still serving customers in the city.

The community's economy has its base in agriculture. Grain, hay, potatoes, and cattle were raised on the farms around Firth. Early civic organizations in Firth were the Riverview Grange, the Lions club, and the Firth Homemakers club. Three religious groups were significant in the success of the City of Firth: the Swedish Baptist Church; the Lutheran Church (which held its early services in the Swedish language); and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Community leaders who have been committed to the success of the City of Firth include Rudolph E. "Bud" Rogers who served as mayor for 16 years and Sam Collet, a city councilman for almost 29 years. Credit goes to these civic minded individuals and others like them who were dedicated to making the City of Firth a great place to live, work, raise families, and educate children.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate everyone who has been involved in the "100 year celebration of the City of Firth". I know many of the citizens of Firth and have enjoyed their friendship over the years. I wish Mayor Kress, the City of Firth, and all its citizens well as they continue toward their second hundred years.

TRIBUTE TO SOL STETIN

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2005

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call your attention to the life of a wonderful man, who sadly passed recently, Mr. Sol Stetin.

It is fitting that he be honored, in this, the permanent record of the greatest freely elect-

ed body on earth, for his lifelong dedication to the labor movement.

Sol was born in Poland on April 2, 1910 to Hymen and Fanny Stetin. Shortly after his birth, the Stetin family decided to migrate to America and subsequently settled in Paterson, NJ. The Stetin family had to work hard during the turbulent years of the Great Depression which led Sol to take a job with a local dye shop in the "Silk City." It was not long after Sol began working, that he became witness to the atrocities being committed by warehouse managers and business owners. Appalled by inhumane working conditions and lack of worker rights, Sol decided to lead strikes and arrange union campaigns.

The Federation of Dyers, Finishers, Printers, and Bleachers of America was the first organization Sol helped form and the first forum for him to express his concerns for the American laborer. Later, he went on to work with the CIO's Textile Workers Organizing Committee (TWOC), he worked to build the TWOC into a permanent union under CIO standard. His work-ethic was unparalleled and his stellar reputation earned him the office of secretary-treasurer of the Textile Workers Union of America. In just 4 years, Sol climbed to the rank of President and immediately began managing the workers' rights campaign in the South.

Sol Stetin then decided to lead a merger with the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and Textile Workers Union, now known as UNITE/HERE. He served on the Executive Council of the AFL/CIO and as Executive Vice-President of the Amalgamated, until his retirement. True to Sol's nature, retirement could not slow him down. Instead of relaxing, Sol used his free time to found the American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark in Haledon, NJ. For Sol, the museum was the ultimate tribute he could offer to union members and it solidified his personal dedication to labor education.

In addition to Sol's many professional achievements, his personal accomplishments should not and cannot be overlooked. He was the devoted husband of Frieda and the proud father of two daughters, Sondra and Myra. He leaves behind five exquisite grandchildren and five beautiful great-grandchildren.

I have had the privilege to know and work alongside Sol Stetin. We shared many of the same concerns and opinions on workers rights, not to mention the same passion for our hometown, Paterson, NJ. I can say without reservation that the work of individuals like Sol will live on in the hearts of those whose lives were enriched by his work.

Mr. Speaker, the job of a United States Congressman involves so much that is rewarding, yet nothing compares to recognizing the efforts of devoted activists like Sol Stetin. I ask that you join our colleagues, Sol's family and friends, and most importantly, the countless American workers Sol has touched throughout his years of work within the labor community in recognizing the outstanding service of Sol Stetin.

THE MORTGAGE INSURANCE FAIRNESS ACT OF 2005

HON. PAUL RYAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2005

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I along with my colleague Congressman WILLIAM JEFFERSON, have introduced the Mortgage Insurance Fairness Act. Our bill would allow residential mortgage borrowers to deduct as an itemized deduction for mortgage insurance premiums for private mortgage insurance, FHA insured mortgages, VA insured mortgages and GRH insured mortgages. Residential mortgage borrowers with annual incomes of \$100,000 or less would be eligible for this tax deduction.

Nationwide, mortgage insurance is a critical factor in allowing minorities and middle income families to become homeowners. Mortgage insurances covers 57 percent of mortgage purchase loans made to African American and Hispanic borrowers and 54 percent of the loans to borrowers with income below the median income. This legislation will benefit the 12 million American families who presently use mortgage insurance.

In Wisconsin alone, this legislation would benefit 124,000 families. Insured mortgages made up 35 percent of home purchase loans in Wisconsin and cover 49 percent of home purchase loans by minorities and low income home buyers.

Mr. Speaker, homeownership is a vital part of creating safe communities and a vital part of our Nation's economy. I urge my colleagues to join us in promoting homeownership and support this important bill.

LEGISLATION COMPELLING VOTES OF THE EX-IM BOARD OF DIRECTORS IS BAD POLICY

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2005

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to raise my concerns about a proposal being floated that would compel the Ex-Im Board of Directors to bring up and vote on every proposal for Ex-Im Financing, whether or not the proposal met the basic—congressionally mandated—conditions for approval.

This would be a bad policy in general, and particularly with respect to industries which affect our national security, such as, the semiconductor industry.

Legislation compelling the Board of Directors to vote on a particular application for Ex-Im financing—and one that the Chairman has carefully considered and rejected—is bad policy and threatens to subvert the structure, policies, and procedures of the Export-Import Bank. The Chairman is responsible for bringing financing proposals before the full Board of Directors and ensuring that only those financing proposals which meet the statutory criteria are presented for a vote. If a deal fails to meet the basic criteria for financing, then it should not be brought up for a vote. To do otherwise would ignore Export-Import Bank legal requirements and procedures, and completely and inappropriately politicize Ex-Im financing.