

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

ON THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

HON. NICK J. RAHALL, II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 14, 2005

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to affirm that we are one Nation under God. For over 225 years the moral fiber of this Nation has been built not upon the law of man, but rather upon the law of God.

The roots of the Pledge of Allegiance go back to Francis Bellamy, a Baptist minister who wrote the original Pledge in August 1892. It was still an "unofficial" pledge until June 22, 1942, when the United States Congress included the "Pledge to the Flag" in the United States Flag Code. On December 28, 1945, the Pledge to the Flag received its official title as our Nation's Pledge of Allegiance.

The last change in the Pledge of Allegiance occurred on June 14, 1954 (Flag Day), when Congress added the words, "under God," to the Pledge of Allegiance.

Although today, U.S. District Judge Lawrence Karlton ruled that the pledge's reference to one nation "under God" violates schoolchildren's right to be "free from a coercive requirement to affirm God." Judge Karlton then issued a restraining order preventing the recitation of the pledge at three separate elementary schools where the plaintiff's children attended school. Will this judge also take away American schoolchildren's milk money emblazoned with the words, "In God We Trust?" Will this judge deny our schoolchildren hearing the ringing words of our Declaration of Independence, which intones the Almighty throughout this sacred document?

A restraining order to prevent children from reaffirming their faith in God and Country? How absurd! Can you imagine the police storming an elementary school and handcuffing a 9-year-old child for uttering "under God"?

President Eisenhower said at the time, "In this way we are reaffirming the transcendence of religious faith in America's heritage and future; in this way we shall constantly strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our country's most powerful resource in peace and war."

As President Eisenhower stated, God is America's most powerful resource. In his presence, we remain attentive of the character and spirit of our Nation, and we are determined to fashion a better and brighter future for the generations that follow. Only under the watchful eye of God can all we hope for be accomplished and all we dream of come true.

For 58 years, schoolchildren and billions of men and women across this Nation have gazed upon our Flag, the Star Spangled Banner, and proudly recited their pledge to their home and the greatest Nation on Earth, and I can think of no better way to begin each and every day, as we do in the House of Representatives, with these 31 words.

As an editorial from the Register-Herald, of my hometown of Beckley, West Virginia, best summed up last year:

Children cannot be compelled to recite the Pledge or even listen to it, if they don't wish to.

The Supreme Court will sooner or later have to delete the phrase or else rule in its defense, an action requiring only this: respect for constitutional language and a grain of common sense.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. ROGER DESJARLAIS

HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 14, 2005

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my good friend, Broward County Administrator Roger Desjarlais who will retire this month following seven and a half years of service to the people and residents of Broward County.

In 1998, after more than twenty years of distinguished service in Lee County, Florida, Roger Desjarlais was appointed Broward County Administrator by the Board of County Commissioners. Throughout his tenure, his dynamic leadership style, exemplified by his track record of work with local, State, and Federal officials and business and community leaders, has proven effective throughout his time in Broward County.

Mr. Desjarlais has accomplished a great deal during the past seven and a half years: improving key services, providing critical infrastructure improvements in unincorporated areas of Broward County, and implementing multi-million dollar expansion programs for Port Everglades and Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport at Dania Beach. He has managed this and more, expanding programs and levels of service, all while developing a balanced budget with reduced millage rates for the past seven years in a row.

Mr. Speaker, Roger Desjarlais' capable and collaborative style has been outstandingly successful and has greatly benefited the people of Broward County. Although he has decided to pursue new opportunities, his work has not gone unnoticed, and I am certain that Roger will remain an active participant in his community, State, and Nation.

IN MEMORY OF THOSE LOST IN KATRINA—LET US ENSURE NO ONE IS ABANDONED AGAIN

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 14, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, Hurricane Katrina and the tragedy that followed forced

many people to revisit an issue that had been ignored by this Nation for far too long—the high rate of poverty in the United States.

There is no question that one of the root causes of the tragedy that occurred in New Orleans was poverty. The people with the economic means to do so left the city prior to the storm. Those left in the city were unable to flee because they could not afford to do so, thereby forcing them to ride out the storm in their homes or in the shelter of "last resort." Many of those left behind were from predominantly low-income areas, such as the city's ninth ward.

Ironically, the day after Hurricane Katrina ravaged New Orleans, the Census Bureau reported that nearly 30 percent of the city's residents were living in poverty, making it the second poorest city in the Nation. Meanwhile, the overall poverty rate for the Nation increased for the fourth year in a row. An additional 1.1 million Americans fell into poverty last year, bringing the total number to 37 million.

It is clear that although many residents of New Orleans waited for days to be rescued from flood waters, they, and millions of other Americans, were abandoned by this administration a long time ago. Programs designed to alleviate poverty and assist working families struggling to make ends meet have seen their funding cut in recent years. Critical programs such as child care assistance, job training, low-income housing assistance, and after-school programs have seen their budgets reduced in favor of tax cuts for the wealthy.

Meanwhile, the Republican leadership plans to continue to pursue its irresponsible plan to further dismantle what is left of this country's safety net by making additional cuts to entitlement programs. Many of these programs are going to provide critical services to the survivors of Hurricane Katrina.

Repairing the damage from Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath will take more than repairing broken levees and rebuilding homes and businesses. If we truly want to ensure that the death, destruction, and human suffering that was caused by the storm and its aftermath does not happen again, we need to remove the hurdles that force people to live in poverty.

We should work to ensure that all workers receive a livable wage so that they are able to support themselves and their families. Also, we need to guarantee that every American has access to all of the educational opportunities that are available so that all of our citizens have the means to live a better life. Finally, when families fall behind and need additional assistance to get them through tough times, we need to ensure that the Federal Government has the resources to assist our most vulnerable citizens.

Let us use the tragedy that occurred in the Gulf region as a catalyst for eradicating poverty in this Nation. In memory of those who were lost in the storm and its aftermath, and for the survivors, let us do everything we can to ensure that no one is abandoned again.

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