

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Stephanie Hull for her accomplishments with the Girl Scouts of America and for her efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Girl Scout Gold Award.

INTRODUCTION OF THE STATE SECRET PROTECTION ACT OF 2008 PROTECTING NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE RULE OF LAW THROUGH SAFE, FAIR, AND RESPONSIBLE PROCEDURES AND STANDARDS

**HON. JERROLD NADLER**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 13, 2008*

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, the state secrets privilege is a common law doctrine that allows the Government to protect sensitive national security information from harmful disclosure in litigation.

This privilege was first recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1953 case of *U.S. v. Reynolds*, a case brought by the widows of three civilian engineers against the U.S. Government for negligence in a military airplane crash. The Government refused to produce an accident report of the crash, claiming that disclosure of the report would reveal secret military information harmful to national security. The Court accepted the Government's state secret claim and allowed the Government to withhold the report without ever reviewing it. When the report was discovered through an internet search 50 years later, it did not reveal any secret military information but, instead, showed the Government's negligence in the crash.

Unfortunately, *Reynolds* is not the only instance where the secrecy claims have been abused. Exaggerated claims of national security were made in an effort to conceal information about U.S. conduct in Vietnam and the bombing of Cambodia in the "Pentagon Papers" case and to prevent prosecution for the unlawful sale of arms to Iran and the funneling of proceeds from those sales to the Nicaraguan Contras. In the "Pentagon Papers" case, *N.Y. Times Co. v. United States*, 403 U.S. 713, Solicitor General Griswold warned the Supreme Court that publication of the information would pose a "grave and immediate danger to the security of the United States." Eighteen years later, he acknowledged that he had never seen "any trace of a threat to the national security" from publication of the information and that "there is very rarely any real risk to current national security from the publication of facts relating to transactions in the past, even the fairly recent past."

What these examples teach is that when a government is allowed to escape accountability by hiding behind unexamined claims of national security, it often will, making judicial oversight of state secrets privilege claim critical to our constitutional system of checks and balances. Unfortunately, in the years following *Reynolds*, courts have proven reluctant to test Government claims of secrecy, often failing to examine evidence independently and accepting the Government's secrecy claim at face value.

Concerns about the lack of judicial oversight of the state secrets privilege have increased

as the current administration has responded to cases challenging the most troubling aspects of its "war on terror"—including rendition, torture, and warrantless wiretapping—with blanket claims that these cases must be dismissed outright, before any discovery can proceed. As a result, injured plaintiffs have been denied justice and the courts have failed to address fundamental questions of constitutional rights. Take, for example, the case of Khaled el-Masri, a German citizen who was kidnapped, rendered to a CIA black site, and tortured before the administration realized that it had the wrong man. There is extensive public evidence supporting Mr. El-Masri's case, including a Council of Europe report verifying the accuracy of Mr. El-Masri's claims and the administration's public disclosure and defense of the rendition and interrogation of terror suspects as a valuable tool in its "war on terror." Yet the administration successfully argued that Mr. El-Masri's case should be dismissed before any discovery could occur based on the state secret privilege.

The transformation of a governmental privilege to withhold specific items of evidence into a claim of absolute immunity, and the overall lack of consistency in how courts handle state secret claims, requires Congressional reform. In 1980, Congress enacted the Classified Information Procedures Act—known as CIPA—to provide courts with clear statutory guidance on handling secret evidence in criminal cases. Congress also authorized courts to review and rule upon sensitive materials under the Freedom of Information Act and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. For the past several decades, courts have effectively and safely applied these laws—under the procedures and standards articulated by Congress—to protect sensitive information while also respecting the rule of law and providing fairness and justice to litigants.

It is time to enact procedures and standards for civil cases similar to those that we already have provided for criminal cases. Many have called for this reform, including the American Bar Association, which recently issued a report calling upon Congress to enact procedures and standards that promote meaningful, independent judicial review and "bring uniformity to a significant issue on which courts have adopted divergent approaches." The bipartisan Constitution Project has similarly urged us to "craft statutory language to clarify that judges, not the executive branch, have the final say about whether disputed evidence is subject to the state secret privilege," reminding us that "reforms are critical to ensure the independence of our judiciary and to provide a necessary check on executive power."

In a recent hearing held by the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties, which I chair, experts like retired Federal judges Patricia Wald and William Webster supported legislative efforts to require independent judicial review. According to Judge Webster:

"As a former Director of the FBI and Director of the CIA, I fully understand and support our government's need to protect sensitive national security information. However, as a former federal judge, I can also confirm that judges can and should be trusted with sensitive information and that they are fully competent to perform an independent review of executive branch assertions of the state secrets privilege. Judges are well-qualified to re-

view evidence purportedly subject to the privilege and make appropriate decisions as to whether disclosure of such information is likely to harm our national security."

The State Secret Protection Act of 2008 provides much-needed reform by establishing rules and standards for determining state secret privilege claims. The act will strengthen national security by ensuring that legitimate secrets are protected from harmful disclosure, and it will strengthen the rule of law by preventing abuse of the privilege and maximizing the ability of litigants to achieve justice in court.

Modeled on CIPA, but adjusted for civil litigation, the State Secret Protection Act provides for secure judicial proceedings and other safeguards to protect valid state secrets. Under the act, a judge may not blindly rely upon assertions of secrecy and harm contained in an official's affidavit. Judges must review the information that the Government seeks to protect, along with any other evidence or argument relevant to the claim, to determine whether the harm identified by the Government is reasonably likely to occur. Where this standard is met, a judge may not order disclosure of the information. The judge must, however, consider whether a non-privileged substitute can be created that would allow the litigation to continue.

If a substitute is possible—for example, a redacted version of a document or a summary of the information—the government has the choice of producing the substitute or having the court resolve the issue to which the evidence is relevant against it, as happens in CIPA. Where there is no possible substitute, the judge may issue appropriate orders, including dismissing a claim or finding for or against a party on a factual or legal issue. The act allows the Government to raise a claim of privilege to avoid answering allegations in a complaint but prevents premature dismissal of claims before all issues of privilege are resolved and the parties have the opportunity to conduct non-privileged discovery.

Through these procedures and standards, the act allows parties the opportunity to make a preliminary case and provides courts with the flexibility to craft solutions that protect valid state secrets from harmful and serve the interests of justice. Congress has clear constitutional authority to establish rules of procedure and evidence for the courts, and reform of the state secrets privilege in civil litigation is long overdue. I urge all of you, my colleagues in the House, to join us in this important effort.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE CENTRAL VALLEY HEALTH NETWORK

**HON. DENNIS A. CARDOZA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 13, 2008*

Mr. CARDOZA. Madam Speaker, it is with the greatest pleasure that I rise today in recognition of the Central Valley Health Network as they celebrate their tenth anniversary. Comprised of 13 private, non-profit community health center systems, the Central Valley Health Network currently operates 116 clinic sites throughout 20 counties in California, providing high quality health care to those most in need.

In the 10 years since its inception, the Central Valley Health Network has provided families throughout the region with health care that is cost-effective, accessible, comprehensive, coordinated, compassionate, and culturally competent. Serving more than 530,000 patients, the Central Valley Health Network facilitates 2.1 million patient visits annually, providing care for low-income individuals, of which 75 percent are at or below the Federal poverty level, 50 percent of whom are enrolled in Medi-Cal, and 35 percent who are uninsured. Combined, it is the chief health care system for low-income families throughout the Central Valley, and in many communities the Central Valley Health Network's clinics are the only primary health care option available.

The Central Valley of California consistently experiences far greater physician shortages and dramatically increased rates of chronic diseases than other regions in the State. To address these imbalances, the Central Valley Health Network's mission is to support their member community health center systems in the effective delivery of high quality accessible health care with a special focus on advocacy for attaining optimal health for the medically underserved. Furthermore, the Central Valley Health Network's presence in the region has made a significant impact in local economies, generating over \$200 million in Federal funds and creating over 2,000 jobs.

The Central Valley Health Network contributes greatly to the improvement of the overall quality of life for families throughout the Central Valley of California. Madame Speaker, I respectfully ask my colleagues to rise and join me in thanking everyone involved with the Central Valley Health Network for the work they do each and every day to provide the people and families of our communities with essential health care services. There is no more important or rewarding work than helping a fellow citizen in need, and through their dedicated and compassionate efforts, thousands of lives have been touched. We all owe them a great debt of gratitude, and I am proud to represent their efforts in Congress.

HONORING KAREN BASS

**HON. LAURA RICHARDSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 13, 2008*

Ms. RICHARDSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the newly elected speaker of the California State Assembly, the Honorable Karen Bass. It is with great pride and pleasure that I applaud her accomplishments and wish her much future success.

At the end of this legislative year, Karen Bass will break glass ceilings in California and across the Nation by becoming the first African-American woman speaker of a State legislative body. Speaker-elect Karen Bass, who is respected on both sides of the aisle, received unanimous vote of the members to become the first Democratic woman elected to this position in California's history.

Throughout her career, public service and social justice have been the common threads around which her life revolved. Understanding the importance of education, Speaker-elect

Bass taught as an adjunct instructor at her alma mater, California State University, Dominguez Hills. She also served as the clinical instructor at the Southern California School of Medicine and as the project director for the health careers opportunity program. A graduate of the University of Southern California's, USC, School of Medicine-Physician Assistant Program, Speaker-elect Bass worked in our country's largest trauma center, Los Angeles/USC Medical Center. It was here that she witnessed firsthand the havoc wreaked upon the community by the crack cocaine epidemic.

In 1990, Speaker-elect Bass took action by leaving the medical profession and founding the Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment. She served as its executive director for 14 years. After the 1992 civil unrest in Los Angeles, the coalition united and succeeded in transforming the social and economic conditions in south Los Angeles.

Speaker-elect Bass turned to politics when she concluded that the best way to implement change was to become an elected official herself. At the time of her election, there were no other African-American women in the California legislature, but her leadership potential was recognized immediately. During her first term, she was appointed majority whip during the 2005–2006 legislative session. During her second term, she became the first woman and first African-American appointed to the position of majority leader.

As vice chair of California's Legislative Black Caucus, Speaker-elect Bass pressed for the creation of the State of Black California Report, which measured economic and social conditions of California's African-American population. The Speaker-elect also created the People's Council to engage citizens in the debate on public policy and the political process. The Council was composed of four commissions, which examined education, environment, small business, and health issues in the State.

Always reaching for the highest goals, I am certain that Speaker-elect Bass will lead the California State Assembly with the same commitment and dedication that she has demonstrated throughout her entire career. In closing, Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring the achievements of Speaker-elect Karen Bass and wishing her continuing success.

HONORING ERMA ROLLE

**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 13, 2008*

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Erma Jean Rolle, a passionate effective advocate for the needs of minorities, women and children. Moreover, we note her strong commitment to God, her family, her church and her community.

Erma Jean Rolle was born in Little Rock, Arkansas moving to Milwaukee Wisconsin where she graduated from North Division High School. After graduation, she moved to New York with big dreams and goals to be accom-

plished. Erma joined the New Lots Community Church where she served as: an Elder; Clerk of the Consistory; President of the Women's Ministry; Youth Ministry Leader; member of the Women of Faith choir; Confirmation teacher; Vice-President of the Women's Brooklyn Classical Union; Music and Worship Committee; and a member of the Racial Justice Task Force.

As a community activist, Erma has served on Community Board #5, Vice-President of the Meadow Wood at Gateway Condominiums and Treasurer for the Jamaica Armory Gun Club. Moreover, she helped to organize and start the East New York Drum & Bugle Corps for sixty boys and girls. In addition, she was part of a committee that marched to stop domestic violence against women in the sixties and seventies.

In 2001, Erma retired from the New York City Board of Education as a bus driver. In that same year, she celebrated another milestone—graduating from the College of New Rochelle with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology.

Erma Jean Rolle is a role model for African-American families, especially hers. She has four children; Marshall, Cheryl, Fernanda, and Cassandra. She is also the proud grandmother of James, Kadrian, Brandon, and Kyran. In her leisure time, Erma enjoys going to the rifle range, shopping, bowling and traveling.

Ms. Rolle lives a full and productive life gathering comfort from one of her favorite Biblical passages (Isaiah 40:31): "But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

Madam Speaker, I am proud to cite Erma Jean Rolle for her invaluable contributions to the New Lots Community Church, her service to the community and her open-heartedness. Even today, she volunteers especially for causes that involve children, at the Johnny Ray Youngblood Academy.

CARRIE HOTTEL

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 13, 2008*

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Carrie Hottel of Liberty, Missouri. Carrie is a very special young woman who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Girl Scouts of America, and earning the most prestigious award of Girl Scout Gold Award.

Carrie has been very active with her troop, participating in many scout activities. In order to receive the prestigious Gold Award, Carrie has completed all seven requirements that promote community service, personal and spiritual growth, positive values and leadership skills.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Carrie Hottel for her accomplishments with the Girl Scouts of America and for her efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Girl Scout Gold Award.