

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. BOB CLEMENT**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 24, 1998*

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, on Roll Call Vote no. 14, I was unavoidably detained on official business. Had I been present, I would have voted aye, and I ask unanimous consent that this statement be placed in the appropriate portion of the RECORD.

Mr. Speaker, on Roll Call Vote no. 15, I was unavoidably detained on official business. Had I been present, I would have voted aye, and I ask unanimous consent that this statement be placed in the appropriate portion of the RECORD.

Mr. Speaker, on Roll Call Vote no. 16, I was unavoidably detained on official business. Had I been present, I would have voted aye, and I ask unanimous consent that this statement be placed in the appropriate portion of the RECORD.

Mr. Speaker, on Roll Call Vote no. 17, I was unavoidably detained on official business. Had I been present, I would have voted nay, and I ask unanimous consent that this statement be placed in the appropriate portion of the RECORD.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE BARS  
REMEDY FOR BLACK FARMERS**HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 24, 1998*

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, it is with outrage that I rise today to strongly admonish the Attorney General Janet Reno, and the Department of Justice in its handling of discrimination complaints of Black Farmers. It has come to the attention of the members of the Congressional Black Caucus that Attorney General Janet Reno will be releasing an opinion shortly which would block many Black Farmers from receiving adequate relief in the form of compensatory damages for federal claims made prior to 1994. The fate of many, many black farmers will rest on this opinion.

The situation is that the United States Department of Agriculture encouraged all farmer program participants to participate in the administrative complaint/investigation process. Subsequently, after the farmers placed their claims in good faith, the USDA in effect "closed down" the administrative process. This process was closed down for approximately 12 years with no notice of this "closing down" being given to the farmers. Finally, when the black farmers filed lawsuits because that were getting no satisfaction from the administrative process, they were told they were barred by the Statute Of Limitations.

The government is complicit and has unclean hands in this matter. It is shameful that the Department of Justice has decided to raise technical defenses, primarily the Statute Of Limitations to bar claims made by the these farmers. The black farmers are granted only one avenue for monetary remedy from which the Department of Justice is allowing payment. This avenue is The Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1972. This Act has a two year statute of limitations. Hence, all black farmers who made their claims prior to 1994 will be barred from monetary relief, even in cases where discrimination can be established. This is a crime and an atrocity. If the Attorney General goes forward with this tact, then only program type relief will be available. Program relief includes debt and loan forgiveness. Such relief would not be sufficient to right the wrongs done to America's Black Farmers.

I strongly urge Attorney General Janet Reno and the Department of Justice not to issue this opinion, not add to injustices that black farmers have suffered, not to be final death knell to hope for justice and fairness to these black farmers.

RONALD REAGAN WASHINGTON  
NATIONAL AIRPORT

SPEECH OF

**HON. CHARLES W. STENHOLM**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 4, 1998*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2625) to redesignate Washington National Airport as "Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport"

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Chairman, I regretfully rise in opposition to this legislation which will rename Washington National Airport for former President Reagan. I rise regretfully because I do believe that President Reagan certainly should be honored, but I do not believe that this is the proper way to honor our former president.

Washington National Airport is named after one of our founding fathers and first president, George Washington. It is not appropriate to change a name which honors our first president in order to honor another. President Washington lived just down the road from the airport at Mount Vernon, and it has been said here today that the tract of land on which Washington National Airport currently sits was actually owned by his family.

Additionally, this proposed name change is not consistent with President Reagan's philosophies on local control and federal intrusion. President Reagan was a champion of shifting control from the federal government to state and local authorities where decisions are best made. The local governments of Arlington County and the City of Alexandria oppose this

change; certainly the federal government should not usurp the wishes of the local governments to honor a man who worked to ensure local representation and control of many entities, including Washington National Airport.

I hope that we in Congress will find a more appropriate way to honor President Reagan. I personally have a great deal of admiration for President Reagan and respect his public service to our nation. In fact, I doubt there is a single Democrat in Congress who supported Ronald Reagan as much as I did during his presidency. I intend to visit with my constituents to come up with ways to honor President Reagan, and I hope that we come up with a better way to honor President Reagan and his legacy.

HONORING MR. ROBERT L. COUCH JR. FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE COFFEE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND CONGRATULATING HIM FOR BEING AWARDED THE TITLE OF "MR. DEMOCRAT"

**HON. BOB CLEMENT**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 24, 1998*

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Robert Couch Jr. for his service to the Coffee County democratic party and congratulating him for being awarded the title of "Mr. Democrat."

The honor of being chosen Mr. Democrat stems from life-time support of the party, dedication to the democratic process and an unceasing energy to for volunteerism.

Mr. Democrat, Bob Couch, is a dependable, life-time supporter of the Democratic party. Mr. Couch played an important role in a campaign that is very dear to my heart—he co-chaired Coffee County's campaign to elect my father, Frank Clement, to governor in 1953. I remember meeting Mr. Couch when he came to the Governor's residence to have a picture made with me and my brothers. My father always appreciated the work Mr. Couch did for him and for the Democratic party.

Mr. Couch is a Tullahoma merchant, a photographer and a historian. He teaches Sunday School and holds several offices at his church. He has been active in the American Legion for 52 years and a member of the Shriners Masonic Lodge for 48 years. Mr. Couch was also the recipient of the first Tullahoma "Lifetime Achievement" award.

This devoted citizen embodies the kind of energy, enthusiasm and dedication that we should all strive for. Mr. Couch is a grassroots campaigner and because of his work, and the work of people like him, Coffee County has not gone Republican for many years.

I congratulate Bob Couch on his lifetime achievement award and I comment him for his years of commitment