

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

INTRODUCTION OF HOUSE RESOLUTION TO ISSUE PAUL ROBESON COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a resolution, with Mr. Pallone, expressing the Sense of Congress that the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee should recommend to the Postmaster General that a commemorative stamp be issued in honor of Paul Leroy Robeson's centennial birthday, April 9, 1998.

Few Americans can surpass the contributions of such an extraordinary man. Robeson was a fearless advocate for the cause of human dignity and justice, both in the United States and throughout the world. As an actor, singer, athlete, lawyer, and activist, Paul Robeson inspired the spirit and lives of millions of people.

The United States Government desperately tried to silence Paul Robeson during the repressive McCarthy era. The State Department revoked his passport for some pro-Soviet statements, and the House Committee on Un-American Activities attacked him. But Paul Robeson continued to speak out on behalf of freedom and civil rights.

To commemorate the centennial of his birthday, April 9, 1998, the Paul Robeson 100th Birthday Committee launched a national grassroots petition drive to ask the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee to issue a Paul Robeson postage stamp. The Campaign collected nearly 90,000 letters and signatures in behalf of this request. Numerous Members of the 105th Congress also signed letters to the Citizens Advisory Committee in support of the stamp.

Despite this outpouring of enthusiasm, the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee turned down the request. Our Resolution expresses the Sense of Congress that our country should honor Paul Robeson with the issuance of a commemorative stamp.

Thousands of people will mark Robeson's 100th birthday with celebrations across the country. But this accomplished American may not be well-known to younger generations. The issuance of such a stamp would not only be a fitting tribute to Paul Robeson, but also an excellent opportunity to educate new generations about his contributions to the arts, politics, sports, and the movement for social justice.

I urge Members of Congress to join me and Congressman PALLONE in honoring Paul Robeson and his legacy in American history by cosponsoring this Resolution.

HONORING THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. COMMUNITY CENTER

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center in Houston as it celebrates its 30th anniversary on April 4, 1998.

Begun by dedicated Vista volunteers and community leaders in the 1960s, the King Center has grown into a multi-purpose facility that meets a wide range of needs, including day care, delinquency prevention, education, food and clothing emergency assistance, housing for the homeless, assistance for abused or neglected babies and children, and senior citizen support groups.

I salute all who have contributed to the success of the center, especially Executive Director Madgelean Bush and the center's founders who had the vision, courage, and commitment to turn their dream into reality: Elizabeth Hardesty, the late Eugene Hardesty, the late Moses Leroy, Dr. Hardy Loe, Bob Newman, the late Barbara Russell, Ben Russell, Millie Simon, and the late Will Simon.

The history of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center dates to a definitive study on low-income housing in Houston conducted in the early 1960s by the Houston Council on Human Relations. This study found pockets of intense poverty in Houston. As a result, the Council sponsored Vista volunteers to work in these areas. One of these volunteers was Bob Newman, who was assigned to the third ward area. To help him, he was assigned a volunteer support team from the First Unitarian Church.

After several months in the neighborhood, Bob Newman arranged for a group of individuals to discuss the development of a community center. After a series of Tuesday night meetings, the founding group of seven rented a store front building at the corner of Sampson and Drew, and what was then known as the Sampson Street Center began its work. On the night that Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, the group met and voted to change the center's name to honor the fallen civil rights leader.

While the outside volunteers provided invaluable assistance, they quickly realized that the Center would only succeed with the support of neighborhood residents. Only residents truly understood the problems and could bring about the changes needed to solve them. So they began an active and successful outreach to build support in the neighborhood. An election was held to establish a neighborhood board of directors. And residents began organizing and staffing programs that addressed their immediate needs.

The priorities of the center echoed the many concerns of the neighborhood—the needs of children who needed a place to go while their parents worked, or teenagers with seemingly

no direction and nothing to do, of adults who needed the chance at further education and job training.

Grandmothers, aunts, and sisters, staffed a day care center. Neighborhood cleanup and rat eradication programs were started. Volunteers began an adult education program aimed at an eventual GED. Upholstery and ceramic classes were offered.

It quickly became obvious that volunteers could only do so much and that staffing would be required. A grant, arranged by Bob Woodson of the Unitarian Service Committee, made it possible to hire Ms. Ollie Hollies to work the Day Care Center, and shortly after, Madge Bush was hired to become the director of the King Center.

Space, always a problem, became critical as the programs grew. Houston had become eligible for Model Cities monies, and in 1974 a classroom building was built on King Center land with a Model Cities grant. This added space increased the day care program's capacity. Over the years, other programs were established: a halfway house for youngsters in trouble; food baskets and food collections for the needy; toy collections for children; and a senior citizen support program in a separate building with kitchen facilities that the seniors support themselves through quilting and Friday night fish dinner sales.

In 1990, the Mickey Eland Crisis Nursery was added to provide 24-hour-care for abused or neglected children and babies. Other vital services include programs such as sports, tutorial and counseling to combat delinquency and drugs and an alternative school, supported by the Houston Independent School District, for elementary age students who are having difficulties in a regular school environment. In addition, construction is under way on 16 family housing units in a project that will also include counseling, job training, and other services to help families.

Today, through the dedication and hard work of Madgelean Bush, the staff, and volunteers, the King Center is alive and well. In every challenge, Madge sees hopes for a solution, and she inspires others to join her in the effort. I salute everyone involved with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center throughout its 30 years of service and thank them for all that they have done to make Houston a better and more caring place.

U.S. OIL RESERVES—BUY HIGH,
SELL LOW?

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Energy is about to sell off more than \$207 million worth of oil owned by U.S. taxpayers from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. At today's low prices, that means the United States would dump about 20 million

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