

lighthearted example to show that let us just count all Americans when we do the census in the year 2000.

Mr. Speaker, let me talk about a more serious subject, and that is the continued stonewalling by the Clinton Administration regarding the 2000 census. The latest example is the Census Monitoring Board. Last year Congress and the Administration agreed to appoint a new oversight board. The agreement was for four congressional appointments and four White House appointments.

Speaker GINGRICH and Majority Leader LOTT made their appointments in February. But the board members have not been able to hire staff and start oversight because the White House took its own sweet time in making appointments. In fact, I had to send a letter on Friday to get the White House to finally follow through with the appointments last night. I would like to submit my letter for the RECORD.

The text of the letter is as follows:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COM-
MITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
AND OVERSIGHT,

Washington, DC, April 24, 1998.

Hon. WILLIAM J. CLINTON,
*President of the United States, The White
House, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I am writing to express my extreme disappointment with the apparent lack of serious interest your Administration is displaying towards the oversight of the 2000 Census.

You are required pursuant to §210 of Public Law 105-119, the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State Appropriations Act of 1998, to appoint four members to the Census Monitoring Board to observe and monitor all aspects of the preparation and implementation of the 2000 decennial census. These appointments were due to be made within 60 days of the enactment of P.L. 105-119, which you signed into law on November 26, 1997.

On April 6, 1998, The White House Office of the Press Secretary released a two-page document which stated: "The President today appointed Tony Coehlo, Dr. Everett M. Ehrlich, Gilbert F. Casellas, and Lorraine Green as members of the U.S. Census Monitoring Board." I have attached a copy of this announcement for your reference. The news of the appointment of these individuals was subsequently widely reported by a substantial number of news organizations.

Several times after this April 6th announcement, including as recently as today, my staff and counsels have reported to me that in numerous telephone conversations, both the Office of the Executive Clerk and the Office of Presidential Personnel have denied to them that you have officially appointed either these or any other individuals to the Census Monitoring Board. Congressional Census Monitoring Board Co-Chairman J. Kenneth Blackwell has also been told that no appointments have been made, frustrating his efforts to convene a meeting of the Board to begin their work. These statements are in direct contradiction to your earlier announcement.

You can understand my frustration at this startling turn of events. It is completely irresponsible for the Administration to further delay the first meeting of the Board, since you are undoubtedly aware that the Board must first meet and approve its ground rules before oversight activities can begin and professional staff can be hired. Thus, every day

you delay in making your appointments, you effectively stonewall independent oversight and review of the 2000 census.

The mixed and conflicting messages from your Administration on the Board appointments create the appearance of an attempt to delay or prevent oversight of the controversial Census 2000 plan. The Commerce Department Inspector General and the General Accounting Office have repeatedly warned us that the decennial census is at high risk for failure. The critical Census Dress Rehearsal began on April 18th, yet the Board is unable to perform any oversight until your appointments have been made. I would hope you agree with me that without this intensive oversight by the Board, the American people cannot have confidence that the demonstrations of the Bureau's complicated and complex statistical methodologies have been done in an open and fair environment.

The American people deserve a census that is honest and reliable. This latest episode increases the risk of a failed census in 2000, one which will cost taxpayers billions and produce worthless results. I strongly urge you to immediately rectify this situation by confirming your appointments to the Census Monitoring Board and allowing them to get on with the very serious work that await them.

Sincerely,

DAN MILLER,

Chairman, Subcommittee on the Census.

P.S. I strongly urge you to also move quickly to nominate a new Director of the Census Bureau.

After receiving the letter we heard last night that the President finally made his appointments.

Mr. Speaker, I should not have to send letters to the White House to get the President to comply with the law. The mere fact that the letter had to be sent reflects poorly on the White House. The fact that the dress rehearsal has already started before the President made his appointments reflects poorly on the White House. Reports that the co-chairman, Tony Coehlo, is planning on leaving the country before the board has a chance to meet reflects poorly on the White House.

Fairly or unfairly, the cavalier attitude from the Clinton Administration creates the appearance of an attempt to delay or prevent oversight of the controversial 2000 census plan. The Commerce Department's Inspector General and the General Accounting Office have repeatedly warned us that the decennial census is at a high risk for failure.

The critical census dress rehearsals began on April 18, yet the board has been unable to perform any oversight. Without this intensive oversight by the board, the American people cannot be confident that the demonstrations of the Bureau's complicated and complex statistical methodologies have been done in an open and fair environment.

Now we have strong signals that the stonewalling will continue. My friend and respected colleague from New York, the ranking member of the subcommittee, is suggesting hiring practices for the oversight board. Despite the fact that the law says that, "the board may appoint and fix the pay of

such additional personnel as the executive director for each of the two parts of the group considers appropriate," there is now a suggestion that both sides have to approve the hiring of each other's persons. That is just outrageous. I do not tell the minority what staff to hire and they do not tell the majority what staff to hire. To propose that is just outrageous.

Unfortunately, the helpful suggestions of the minority do not stop there. They go on to demand that employees of the board be forbidden to do any work unless both sides approve, that the expenditure of any funds by the board be forbidden unless both sides approve, crippling their ability to do even simple things like traveling and cutting monthly paychecks. And, most shockingly of all, they demand that board members and employees forfeit their constitutional right to free speech while in the employment of the board.

Mr. Coehlo certainly does not need the advice of congressional Democrats on how to stonewall oversight, so my Democratic colleagues should not be concerned with trying to interfere with the oversight board's activities and dictate their rules.

Once again this strikes me more as an attempt to delay oversight. Rather than getting down to serious oversight, the Democrats now want to fight about hiring a staff and play games with the rules. That of course will take time, time that we do not have because the White House took so long to appoint its board members. I understand the game that is being played, and frankly it is sad.

The American people deserve a census that is honest and reliable. This ongoing saga of the delay at the oversight board increases the risk of a failed census in 2000, a census which will cost taxpayers billions and produce worthless results. I strongly urge the President to take the warnings of a failed census seriously and direct his administration to start cooperating and listening to Congress.

IN SUPPORT OF RESOLUTION ON
OCCASION OF 50TH ANNIVERSARY
OF FOUNDING OF MODERN
STATE OF ISRAEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Joint Resolution 102, expressing the sense of Congress on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the modern state of Israel and reaffirming the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the United States and Israel.

I would like to particularly acknowledge the Jewish community in Houston and thank them for giving to Houston and Houston school children the wonderful Holocaust Museum located in

Houston, TX which has provided so many with an opportunity to understand the life and legacy of so many of our Jewish community and as well the history of Israel.

I would also like to acknowledge special friends like the late Jerry Ribnik, someone who has lived his life in fostering good relations, human relations and communication between those of the Jewish community and the larger community, and particularly for his support of Israel.

Likewise, I would like to add my appreciation and support for Vic Samuels, the editor of the Jewish Herald Voice, a paper that for many years has given to Houston the value of its insight and understanding of the issues dealing with Israel and the issues in general of the Jewish community.

I would also like to thank the late Karen Susman, who worked so very hard with the Anti-Defamation League. Many were able to see the light through Karen's eyes; we thank her. With her recent passing, I wanted her family and friends to know how much her contributions impacted all of us and helped to foster relationships between the Jewish community and the larger community.

Then I would also like to commend Melvin and Freda Dow whose combined leadership of AIPAC did so much in adding to the national recognition of the friendship between Israel and the United States.

It is important as well to recognize the many community associations and organizations like Houston's local chapter of the American Jewish Federation, the local chapter of the Anti-Defamation League and, as I mentioned earlier, the Jewish Herald Voice newspaper. All have contributed to fostering greater understanding and friendship in Houston and added to our appreciation of the importance of Israel to our Nation and yes, to our city, the City of Houston.

A milestone in world history was reached on November 29, 1947, when the United Nations General Assembly voted to assist in the creation of the state of Israel. The people of the United States began a long history with the modern state of Israel on May 14, 1948 when the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent state of Israel and the United States Government established full diplomatic relations with Israel. This relationship has been fostered by a mutual appreciation for democratic values, common strategic interests and moral bonds of friendship and mutual respect.

The establishment of a modern state of Israel as a homeland for the Jews followed the murder of more than 6 million European Jews during the Holocaust. This tragic chapter in world history will never be forgotten, and the establishment of a modern state of Israel in no way relieves those responsible for that terrible crime.

This jubilee year for the state of Israel is one that the United States and

the world can join in to celebrate together. The people of Israel have established a vibrant and functioning pluralistic democratic political system including freedom of speech, a free press, free and open elections, the rule of law, and other important democratic principles and practices.

I would like to offer my thanks and appreciation to the people of Israel for their efforts in maintaining a democratic government and the strengthening of the relationship with the United States as each Nation moves toward the dawn of a new century. I wish all of Israel and its people a prosperous future, and I believe that the next 50 years will be as successful as the last. Best wishes to all of you on the 50th anniversary of the modern state of Israel.

IN HONOR OF TOM ARCHER AND
LARRY WALSH, VOLUNTEER
FIREFIGHTERS FELLED IN THE
LINE OF DUTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LATHAM) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor two fallen heroes from Albert City, Iowa. Tom Archer and Larry Walsh, both volunteer firefighters with the Albert City Fire Department, were taken from us in the line of duty on April 9. They were fighting a propane tank fire when an unexpected and horrific explosion claimed their lives. The explosion also injured six other firefighters and a deputy sheriff.

Both of these men were true heroes in every sense of the word. Between them they had served for nearly 30 years as volunteer firefighters to protect the lives and the property of their neighbors, their families and their communities.

Larry Walsh and Tom Archer volunteered because they cared. They volunteered because they cared enough to risk their lives whenever called upon. They volunteered because they cared enough to interrupt their jobs, their meals and their precious time with their families. They volunteered because they cared about protecting the property, the safety and the lives of their neighbors in times of need, a need that could have arisen at any time in the day or night or any day of the year.

Tom Archer and Larry Walsh were two of the Nation's finest volunteer firefighters, a group of men and women who inspire so many by the brave actions they take in and for their communities.

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Volunteer firefighters are uniquely small town and rural American. They provide a quality protection that their communities would never be able to afford without their dedication.

This evening, I am asking that all Americans take a moment to remem-

ber Tom Archer, his wife Kelly, and their 2 children, Cody and Tanner, and to remember Larry Walsh, his wife Valerie, their four children, Angela, Lindsey, Jason and Shannon, in our prayers. May we remember Tom Archer and Larry Walsh in our hearts as fathers, husbands and two of America's greatest heroes. May they rest in peace in God's hands.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the Chairman of the Congressional Fire and EMS Caucus, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON).

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding; and I just want to join him and thank him for his eloquent statement on behalf of these two brave Americans and to extend my deepest sympathies to their families along with the gentleman from Iowa.

Let me state, Mr. Speaker, each year, unfortunately, we have a hundred incidents of this type across this Nation, where there is no other volunteer occupation in America where, each year, 100 brave Americans lose their lives and they are torn from their families as we have with the American volunteer fire service. It is another example of where we have people selflessly providing support to protect our families and our neighborhoods, and it is all the more reason why in this terrible tragedy in Iowa we should recommit ourselves as an institution to try to lessen the amount of loss of life that we have not in just these brave Americans but from those people they are trying to save.

I join with my friend and colleague, and I would reiterate that on Thursday, Mr. Speaker, we will be joined by some 2,000 of these leaders from across the country to talk about the kind of needs that would better prepare men like Tom and Larry to deal with these terrible disasters that they face every day in their communities.

Right outside of the House Chambers will be a massive display of support for the men and women of the American Fire Service, both paid and volunteers, asking this Congress and this administration to finally listen, to provide not just training but resources, communications equipment, support for preplanning that does not exist now so that we do not keep having to come down to the well to pay tribute to brave Americans like Tom Archer and Larry Walsh.

Let me say in closing, Mr. Speaker, as we in this country look for heroes we do not have to look to Hollywood, and we do not have to look to our athletic figures. We do not have to look to our politicians. We can look to those men and women across this country, 1.2 million of them in 32,000 organizations and departments just like the one that Tom and Larry belonged to who, day in and day out, protect America. And they do not do it for the pay. They do not do it for the recognition. They do it because it is the right thing to do for their community and for their country.

I join with my friend, and I thank him for his tireless efforts on behalf of