

on the Chief of Staff position at Fort Leonard Wood, U.S. Army Engineer School in Southern Missouri.

Colonel Davis has held various positions in the Army Corps of Engineers, including serving as an exchange officer to the Australian School of Military Engineering and participating in Operation Desert Storm in Saudi Arabia. Colonel Davis also participated in Operation Desert Shield in Kuwait and Operations Restore Hope and Continue Hope in Somalia. In the United States, Colonel Davis took part in the Hurricane Andrew Relief Operations in the Miami area.

Colonel Davis has had an extraordinary career. His long list of awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with three campaign stars. He has also earned the Parachutist and the Air Assault Badges. Last, but certainly not least in Larry Davis' long list of accomplishments, is his dedication as a husband and father of two children, Kimberly Anne and John.

I have enjoyed working with Colonel Davis over the years in addressing various Army Corps issues in my district. I will surely miss his attention, and that of his staff, to matters of importance to me.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Larry for his hard work and dedication. I would also like to wish him and his wife Barbara continued success and happiness in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHARLES W. PICKERING

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 15, 1998

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to return to the House floor because I was unavoidably detained and missed the following rollcall votes:

- (1) Rollcall vote No. 426, S. 2206. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."
- (2) Rollcall vote No. 427, H. Con. Res. 304. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."
- (3) Rollcall vote No. 428, H. Con. Res. 254. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."
- (4) Rollcall vote No. 429, H. Con. Res. 185. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

THE OMNIBUS NATIONAL PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS BILL OF 1998

HON. JAMES V. HANSEN

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 15, 1998

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I introduce today the National Parks and Public Lands Omnibus Bill of 1998. This is a very good and necessary bill that addresses a variety of important concerns and issues dealing with National Parks, wild and scenic rivers, heritage areas, National Forests, and many other public lands. This bill is a compilation of a number of resource related bills, most of which have gone through individual hearings and followed the legislative process. Numerous Members of Congress are to be commended and congratulated for their

hard work on the single parts of this bill which, together, make this a landmark piece of legislation. The far-reaching Omnibus National Parks and Public Lands Bill accomplishes many goals and addresses a multitude of public lands concerns to assure that our cherished parks and public lands, many of them national treasures, are protected, expanded, and improved. It also creates new and important historic sites, heritage areas, and wilderness areas so that the American public can enjoy, benefit, and use these extraordinary natural and historic resources.

Furthermore, the wonderful natural and significant historic areas that the Omnibus National Parks and Public Lands Bill protects and creates, span the breadth of this great country of ours. In fact, it deals with resource issues and areas in over 305 States—from wild and scenic rivers in Massachusetts, to creating wilderness areas in California, to studying Midway Island, far out in the Pacific Ocean, from the Everglades of Florida to Mount St. Helens in the State of Washington.

Of equal breadth and scope is the variety of issues and areas that this bill addresses. For example, the Omnibus Bill will assure a fair and equitable land exchange dealing with hundreds of thousands of acres of school trust lands in Utah while also authorizing an innovative approach to land management in Utah's spectacular San Rafael Swell area. It will create new trails across the United States and authorize the construction of a trails interpretive center. These trails will bring years of enjoyment to those who wish to hike across the entire United States or for those who just want to take a few steps on trails that the American pioneers made on their courageous treks to settle this country.

In addition, this bill establishes new affiliated units of the National Park System, like a historic site which will honor America's most prominent landscape artist, Thomas Cole. Other affiliated areas include the unique and innovative Eastside Tenement Museum in the heart of New York City and the important Casa Malpais Indian ruins in the middle of picturesque rural Arizona.

This bill also re-authorizes and extends a number of Commissions which were established to better manage many of our park units or affiliated areas, like the Delaware Water Gap and the Illinois-Michigan Heritage Corridor. Moreover, it expands many of the existing National Park units, like the unique and beautiful Arches National Park in Utah, the Cape Cod National Seashore, the Fort Davis Historic Site in Texas, the Morristown Historic Site in New Jersey, the George Washington Boyhood Farm in Virginia, and Abraham Lincoln's Birthplace in Kentucky.

The Omnibus National Parks and Public Lands Bill of 1998 provides for many land exchanges which help Federal agencies better manage their resources, it authorizes a memorial to a great world leader, Mahatma Gandhi, it establishes a cave and karst research center. In addition, this bill makes needed technical corrections to previous laws, it establishes new heritage areas and new historic sites and even authorizes construction of a new visitor's center for the Independence Mall so that the public can better interpret and marvel at the history and people behind founding of this great country.

The paragraphs above outline just some of the many things that this bill accomplishes. In

fact, the Omnibus National Parks and Public Lands Bill of 1998 does more than any other single piece of legislation could, in order to ensure that the management and creation of America's parks and public lands remains a top priority of this Congress. It creates new National Park units, new wilderness areas, new historic sites, and new heritage areas. It expands existing National Parks, authorizes land exchanges and conveyances, and makes numerous and necessary technical changes to existing laws so that parks can operate more efficiently. In short, this bill assures that our country's magnificent historical, cultural, and natural resources and areas will be protected and managed effectively now and in the future.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 15, 1998

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was not present due to important business in my home district and missed four rollcall votes (426, 427, 428 and 429). If I had been present, I would have voted "aye" on all four votes.

SALUTE TO VIOLET THOMPSON

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 15, 1998

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Ms. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding citizen of my district and the state of New York, as well as an outstanding American: Ms. Violet Thompson. Ms. Thompson will be honored on October 20, 1998, in St. Louis, Missouri by the National Industries for the Blind as the 1998 Peter J. Salmon National Manufacturing Employee of the Year. Ms. Thompson overcame a difficult childhood punctuated by repeated stints in foster care to raise a family and pursue a career.

Ms. Thompson's birth-related blindness was not detected until she was in the sixth grade. By then, Violet had fallen far behind the other students both in her academic work and her sense of self-esteem. Through her own perseverance and hard work, the help of an attentive teacher, the encouragement of her stepfather, and large print books, Violet learned to read and write and graduated from high school at the age of 20.

Ms. Thompson married soon after and settled down to raise a family of four daughters and seven grandchildren. Seven years ago, Ms. Thompson decided to take on a new challenge and return to work. She learned about the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired-Goodwill Industries in Rochester, New York and joined the workforce on the production line. Ms. Thompson's dedication and skill allowed her to move rapidly through the various manufacturing stations and in time she reached her present position of Production Supervisor. In her position, Ms. Thompson benefits from a number of assistive technologies, including a Visual-Tek closed circuit television as well as hand held magnifiers.