

request but simply the authority to access the funds already granted to the agency. There was bipartisan and widespread support for H.R. 1240 to be included in the FY'99 Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government Appropriations bill at the urging of the American Bar Association, Federal Bar Association, Association of Administrative Law Judges and the Federal Association of Administrative Law Judges. The House Judiciary Committee included H.R. 1240 as an amendment to H.R. 1252, the Judicial Reform Bill of 1998. Despite all of this support, ALJs will be the only federal employees in their hearing offices to not receive a 3.6 percent COLA, as hearing office clerks, secretaries and staff attorneys all benefit from the annual COLA and increase in their retirement as well.

This disparity between ALJs and other federal employees has not gone unnoticed by the Administration and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). OPM commented on H.R. 1240, when it was included in the Civil Service Subcommittee draft, stating that OPM supports a COLA for ALJs but at the discretion of the President, who would determine the amount, giving ALJs equal treatment with federal employees in the Senior Executive Service (SES). I support this result in the assurance that ALJs receive their well-deserved COLAs. Unlike ALJs, the SES this year will most likely receive a COLA at the President's discretion. Unfortunately, OPM's proposed statutory change for ALJ fair treatment was not received until the eve of the FY'99 Treasury, Postal Service & General Government Appropriations markup.

Mr. Speaker, I am including for the RECORD the proposed text of OPM's draft legislation to ensure fair treatment for ALJs. My colleague on the bill, Mr. GILMAN, and I pledge to work with the Administration and OPM to enact this suggested change for ALJs in the 106th Congress. We regret that it was unable to be resolved this year but the attached proposal is a good start to correcting this inequity. Text of OPM proposal follows:

PAY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

Sec. . Section 5372(b) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1) by striking the second sentence and inserting the following:

"Within level AL-3, there shall be 6 rates of basic pay, designated as AL-3, rates A through F, respectively. The rate of basic pay for AL-3, rate A, may not be less than 65 percent of the rate of basic pay for level IV of the Executive Schedule, and the rate of basic pay for AL-1 may not exceed the rate of basic pay for level IV of the Executive Schedule."

(2) in paragraph (3)(A) by striking "upon" each place it appears and inserting in each such place "at the beginning of the next pay period following"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"Subject to paragraph (1), effective at the beginning of the first applicable pay period commencing on or after the first day of the month in which an adjustment takes effect under section 5303 in the rates of basic pay under the General Schedule, each rate of basic pay for administrative law judges shall be adjusted by an amount determined by the President to be appropriate."

TRIBUTE TO PETE TIRRI

HON. BILL PASCHELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 1998

Mr. PASCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to your attention Pete Tirri, President of the Paterson Education Association (PEA). Pete is being recognized this evening for his 25 years of service to the PEA.

Pete was born and raised in Paterson, New Jersey. He attended the local public school system, graduating from School #12 in 1960 and from Central High School in 1964.

Upon graduating from Central, Pete attended Paterson State College, now known as William Paterson University, and graduated in 1968 with a degree in Social Studies. In 1974, he graduated from William Paterson College with a Master's degree in Teaching and 1980, he received a Master's degree in Education with certification in Administration and Supervision.

Pete's service to the Paterson Education Association began in October 1973, as a member of the negotiating team. He has also been involved in the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), having served on the Delegate Assembly (DA) or an alternate DA member throughout his career and as Chair of the Urban education Committee.

Pete served also as the NJEA legislative contact for the late State Senator, and Mayor of Paterson, Frank X. Graves. Currently he is chairing the Working Conditions of the NJEA and is a member of the Executive Board of the Passaic County Education Association (PCEA).

From 1980 to 1986, Pete served on the Pequannock Board of Education and is currently serving on the New Jersey State Board of Examiners, a position to which he has been reappointed to several times.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me, our colleagues, Pete's family and friends, and the State of New Jersey in paying tribute to Pete Tirri's 25 years of outstanding and invaluable service to the Paterson Education Association.

RECOGNITION AND CITIZENSHIP FOR HMONG-AMERICAN VETERANS

HON. DANA ROHRBACHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 12, 1998

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that the years of the 105th Congress have been historic for the Hmong and Lao people. For the first time in their long history, the Hmong and Lao people have received long overdue national recognition from the United States Congress and American officials for their pivotal efforts in fighting for freedom and helping to defend U.S. national security interests during the Southeast Asian conflict. I was honored to play a role, along with many bipartisan Congressional colleagues, to honor these courageous veterans and speak at both of the two Lao Veterans of American National Recognition Day ceremonies held in

1997 and 1998 at the Vietnam War Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend my utmost appreciation to General Vang Pao, Colonel Wangyee Vang, Chertzong Vang, Ching Bee Vang, Ying Vang, Song Ge Kue, Philip Smith, Grant McClure and Dr. Jane Hamilton-Merritt of the Lao Veterans of America and the Lao Family Community organization for helping to organize these historic ceremonies which received national media attention. I would also like to include in the RECORD the following important article from the Washington Times about these events, as well as the ongoing patriotic efforts of elderly Hmong combat veterans to become American citizens.

[From the Washington Times, May 15, 1998]

HMONG ARMY VETERANS ASK FOR U.S. CITIZENSHIP—WANT TO TAKE EXAM WITH INTERPRETERS' HELP

(By Ben Barber)

Thousands of Hmong veterans of the CIA's secret army in Laos from 1960 to 1975 assembled in camouflage uniforms at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial yesterday to mark their flight from communism and to ask for U.S. citizenship.

"We fought in Laos so that young American soldiers would not have to fight in the mountains," said Gen. Vang Pao, leader of the one-time secret Hmong army.

"Members of Congress: These former soldiers who escaped death at the hands of the Lao communists and stand here in from of us today appeal for your assistance" in becoming U.S. citizens.

Thousands of aging soldiers dressed in camouflage and hundreds of Hmong women wearing traditional colored dresses, jewelry and headcoverings, spread out in a neat formation on the grass of the Mall.

"America has been good to us—four of my children have good jobs, another is in college, and one is in high school," said former Capt. Lapien Sphabmixay, 64, from Charlotte, N.C.

Philip Smith, executive director of the Lao Veterans of America, said 4,000 Hmong-Americans arrived in Washington yesterday for the second annual celebration of the start of the Hmong exodus across the Mekong River into Thailand.

From 1975 until about 1988, some 300,000 Hmong fled Laos after its takeover by Laotian communists, with the help of then-North Vietnamese troops.

About 25,000 of the refugees came to the United States and largely collected in Fresno, Calif., and St. Paul, Minn.

Last year was the first time since the war that the Hmong veterans had assembled. Then, as yesterday, members of Congress and former CIA officers honored the sacrifices the Laotian hill tribe made during the war.

The Hmong continued yesterday to call for passage of a bill to allow the refugees to take U.S. citizenship exams with the help of interpreters, since many of the aging fighters and their spouses still have not mastered English.

In Laos, most Hmong did not attend school and could not read Hmong or Lao. Fifty-seven members of Congress have co-sponsored a bill to grant the Hmong exemptions from the English language exam.

The Hmong also observed a memorial to victims of a Laotian offensive against Hmong fighters and villages around Phu Bia mountain, where many had retreated after the 1975 communist takeover of the country.