

TRIBUTE TO THE U.S. MERCHANT
MARINES

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 1999

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give tribute to U.S. Merchant Marines and extend my gratitude for their valiant service to our country during World War II. As my colleagues should be aware, May 22nd is National Maritime Day.

In years past, I have come before the House to explain in detail how the thousands of courageous men and women who served in the Merchant Marines transported supplies to our soldiers during war and in the face of grave danger. Undeniably, the actions taken and responsibilities fulfilled by these men and women who served in the Merchant Marines contributed to the outcome of World War II. As the Pittsburgh areas was one of the most heavily recruited regions of the country by the Merchant Marines, I have come to have an enormous appreciation for and ever growing amount of respect for the contributions that merchant mariners have made to our nation.

Indeed, their efforts should not be diminished in any way and should be equated with those of other armed service personnel. It is important to note that during World War II, Merchant Marines were subject to government control and their vessels were controlled by the government under the Authority of the War Shipping Administration. And just as with other branches of the military, Merchant Marines traveled under sealed orders and were subject to the Code of Military Justice. Like many Members of Congress, I felt it was completely unacceptable that Merchant Marines were discriminated against in terms of benefits and lent my strong support to H.R. 1126, the Merchant Marine Fairness Act. The bill, H.R. 1126, was ultimately enacted into law as part of H.R. 4110, the Veterans Programs Enhancement Act.

While I am pleased that the Merchant Marine Fairness Act has been signed into law, I was not pleased that the language of an important provision has been altered. Specifically, the Merchant Marine Fairness Act included directive language according to the recognition of Honorable Discharge to merchant mariners whose service included time between August 15, 1945 to the end of 1946. The language however, was changed to read "Certificate of Honorable Discharge" when the original bill was included in H.R. 4110, and was enacted as part of Public Law 105-368.

As it has been more than half a century since the end of World War II and almost 20 years since the struggle for equitable recognition of merchant mariners began, I am deeply concerned about the potential for the intent of the original language to be misconstrued and thus creating further delay in the delivery of earned benefits. I urge both Secretary of Defense Cohen and Secretary of Transportation Slater to expeditiously and consistently implement the new benefits provisions in accordance to the intent of the original bill's language. Approximately 2,500 mariners and their families are expecting and should receive no less.

I also want to recognize the efforts of one of my constituents, Mark Gleeson, for this per-

sonal involvement in, and steadfast commitment to obtaining appropriate recognition for the efforts of Merchant Marines during World War II. Mark cares very deeply about this matter and played a major role in creating greater awareness about the inequitable treatment of Merchant Marines within the halls of Congress.

In closing, I want to thank all of my colleagues who were supportive of the effort embodied in the Merchant Marines Fairness Act and encourage them to monitor its implementation. It is my hope that each and every Member of the House will take the time to recognize the efforts of our country's World War II Merchant Marines.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO PRESIDENT
LEE TENG-HUI OF TAIWAN

HON. EVA M. CLAYTON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 1999

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I wish to offer my congratulations to President Lee Teng-hui of the Republic of China on Taiwan, as Taiwan celebrates the third anniversary of his presence in office on May 20, 1999.

President Lee Teng-hui is the leader of the other China—The Republic of China on Taiwan, a country of 21 million hardworking Chinese citizens who subscribe to an American style of democracy—free elections, respect for human rights and a free enterprise system.

Mr. Speaker, under President Lee's leadership Taiwan is a world-class nation and its citizens enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world.

As Chinese mainland students continue to demonstrate against the United States, let's not forget our friends on Taiwan who have been our ally and partner throughout their history.

Mr. Speaker, once again I congratulate President Lee as he celebrates his third anniversary in office. He has done a wonderful job for his country and his people.

IN SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF
ZEBULON G. WEDGE ON HIS APPOINTMENT TO ATTEND THE
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
ACADEMY

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 1999

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to an outstanding young man from Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. I am happy to announce that Zebulon G. Wedge, of Fostoria, Ohio, has been offered an appointment to attend the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Mr. Speaker, Zeb has accepted his offer of appointment and will be attending the Air Force Academy this fall with the incoming cadet class of 2003. Attending one of our nation's military academies is an invaluable experience that offers a world-class education and demands the very best that these young

men and women have to offer. Truly, it is one of the most challenging and rewarding undertakings of their lives.

Without question, Zeb brings a great deal of leadership and dedication to the incoming Air Force class of 2003. During his time at Fostoria High School, Zeb has achieved a high level of academic excellence. Currently, he has attained a grade point average of 3.75, which places him thirteenth in his class of 158 students. Academically, he was an honor roll member in each year of high school.

In addition to his stellar performance in the classroom, Zeb has shown himself to be an excellent student-athlete. He has been a member of the Fostoria High School Varsity Wrestling Team and the Varsity Football Team. In addition, Zeb has been a member of the Spanish Club, Peer-Mediation, Youth-to-Youth, and served as the Vice President of the Freshman Student Council.

Mr. Speaker, at this point, I would ask my colleagues to stand and join me in paying special tribute to Zebulon G. Wedge. Our service academies offer the finest education and military training available anywhere in the world. I am sure that Zeb will do very well during his career at the Air Force Academy, and I wish him the very best in all of his future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO FLETCHER AND
SYBIL SULLARDS

HON. MARION BERRY

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 1999

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute and recognize Fletcher and Sybil Sullards on the occasion of the celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary. Fletcher and Sybil are mother and father to Karen who they love dearly. The Sullards have actually parented many many children in their years as educators in the public schools in Arkansas. They are "public servants" in the true spirit of the words. I think of the Biblical meaning of servanthood when I look at the work of Fletcher and Sybil with the young people they served and the communities across this great state that they became involved.

Fletcher and Sybil came to the community I live in, Gillett, in the late 1950's. They were there only a few short years before moving on to serve larger schools and eventually made their home in Searcy, Arkansas. Their time in my community has been an example of the lasting impact for good that teachers make on children and also in setting standards of excellence for the schools they serve.

Of the many strengths of this unique couple I think first of their gift of laughter. As teachers, they dealt with a serious subject—educating children—but it was fun for them. You knew they loved what they were doing because they were and always will be happy people. In my opinion their greatest strength is in their dedication to children as individuals. This makes them truly outstanding. As educators, they knew their students, they liked their students, thus they could challenge, encourage and even reprimand their students. If it takes a village to raise a child, the Sullards are the ingredient every village needs as does every child.

I wish continued happiness for this wonderful couple. My state, my community and my family are better for Fletcher and Sybil Sullards.

INTRODUCTION OF FEDERALLY IMPACTED SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ACT

HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 1999

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleague, Congressman J.D. HAYWORTH, in introducing the Federally Impacted School Improvement Act. This legislation is designed to provide matching grants to federally impacted schools to meet their urgent repair and construction needs.

The Impact Aid program was built on the premise of a shared responsibility between the federal, state and local governments. Since 1950, the federal government has recognized and accepted its responsibility to assist school districts and communities that are impacted by a federal presence such as a military base or Indian reservation. The federal government has made payments to school districts in the form of federal property, disability and basic support payments to help cover the cost of educating federally connected children. Across the country, 1,600 school districts and 1.5 million children depend on the Impact Aid program for a quality education.

Up until 1994, Congress has provided assistance to help these school districts build and repair their schools, particularly districts whose property tax circumstances make it almost impossible to pass school construction bonds. Since 1994, however, the Impact Aid school construction account has suffered. The funding provided in the section 8007 construction account has become woefully inadequate and is spread too thinly among the over two hundred qualifying schools. As a result, many of these school buildings are antiquated, overcrowded and most troubling, compromise the health and safety of their students.

I would like to draw my colleagues' attention to two particular instances in my state where Impact Aid section 8007 construction funding has fallen far short of meeting schools' most basic repair and construction needs. The Grand Forks school district in North Dakota has been plagued by severe ventilation and air quality problems for some time. The meager funds Grand Forks receives through section 8007 have not enabled the district to make even urgent repairs. One school has had to delay renovation projects because of insufficient funds, and ultimately, to borrow from their Basic Support Payments when renovation needs became too urgent to ignore. In order to improve the air quality so that children are not at risk, this one school would need \$800,000. However, the entire Grand Forks school district will receive only \$40,000 in section 8007 money this year.

Another Impact Aid school that has become a particular concern for me is Cannonball Elementary, located on the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota. As a result of inadequate Impact Aid construction funding over the years, Cannonball has long been neglected. Storage rooms have been converted

to makeshift classrooms and portions of the building that have been condemned continue to house students. Students and teachers are often forced to move from classroom to classroom to escape the stench of sewer back-up that permeates the building. I have walked the halls of this school and have found the conditions these students face on a day-to-day basis to be deplorable.

The legislation we are introducing today offers the best opportunity for Cannonball, and the Grand Forks School District to meet these urgent construction needs. Our legislation would create a separate Impact Aid construction account and authorize a federal appropriation of \$50 million for each of the next five fiscal years. The funding would be divided equally between Indian land/federal property and military schools and would create a reserve account for emergency repair needs. Under the legislation, an individual school district could receive a grant up to \$3 million any time during the five year authorization period. In order to make the limited federal funds go farther, the bill targets funding directly to those school districts located on Federal property or that serve a high concentration of federally-connected students. Additionally, the bill requires districts to provide matching funds on all but the small portion of funds reserved for emergencies.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government has a clear obligation to federally impacted schools, and only by stepping up its support can these schools continue to provide a quality education to thousands of children across the country. I am looking forward to working with my colleagues on a bipartisan basis to support Impact Aid schools. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation, which would enable federally impacted schools across the country to meet their urgent construction and repair needs.

HONORING KEITH LUND AS A "STAR OF LIFE"

HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 1999

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I commend Keith Lund for being designated as a "Star of Life" by the American Ambulance Association.

Keith's selection as the "Star of Life" Award winner for Dade, Broward, Monroe and Palm Beach Counties of Florida is an appropriate honor for such a dedicated paramedic. Keith has worked with American Medical Response for eight years, rising from an emergency medical technician to a paramedic and supervising officer.

Anyone who has been in an emergency situation can easily recognize the vital importance of a calm, direct manner and the ability to work as a team member. Keith Lund embodies these to near-perfection. He handles his daily work in the high-stress environment as a critical care paramedic with eagerness, diligence, and pride.

I believe it is exceedingly difficult to separate professional life and personal life. This is an especially complicated task for a single parent. As a single father, Keith's dedication to his job is balanced with his dedication to his son. Keith's commitment to both should be honored and admired.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join with me in honoring the 150 emergency medical professionals being honored as "Stars of Life" during National EMS Week of 1999. I commend Keith Lund for his dedication to emergency care for the people of South Florida as a true "Star of Life".

U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 1999

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of President Lee Teng-Hui and Vice-President Lien Chan of Taiwan as they prepare to celebrate their anniversary in office this May 20th. We are reminded once again that we have a strong partner and friend in the Far East—The Republic of China on Taiwan.

Throughout its history, the Republic of China on Taiwan has always continued to foster good relations with the United States. Many of Taiwan's leaders were either educated in the United States or the United Kingdom and they, just as much as we do, believe in democracy and a free enterprise system.

In the future, I hope we can continue to work together on issues that are mutual beneficial to both countries in the areas of democracy and governance, the rule of law, international trade and the environment. Taiwan has always supported the United States in many areas as it relates to security in and outside of the region. I hope we can continue to do this. It is time we show our appreciation of Taiwan by offering our help to them when they need us.

IN SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF GEOFFREY L. EARNHART ON HIS APPOINTMENT TO ATTEND THE U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 18, 1999

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to a truly outstanding young man from Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. Recently, I had the opportunity to nominate Geoffrey L. Earnhart for an appointment to attend the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York.

I am pleased to announce that Geoff has been offered an appointment and will be attending West Point with the incoming cadet class of 2003. Attending one of our nation's military academies is one of the most rewarding and demanding time periods these young men and women will ever undertake. Our military academics turn these young adults into the finest officers in the world.

Mr. Speaker, without question, Geoff belongs with the incoming West Point class of 2003. During his time at St. Francis DeSales High School, in Perryburg, Ohio, Geoff has achieved a remarkable grade point average of 4.427, which currently ranks him tenth in his class of 178 students. Geoff is a three-year member of the National Honor Society, and has received many awards for his academic excellence.