

AMERICAN HOMEOWNERSHIP AND
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT OF
2000

SPEECH OF

HON. PATSY T. MINK

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 5, 2000

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5640, especially subtitle B of title V. The title expands housing assistance for native Hawaiians by extending to them the same types of Federal housing programs available to American Indians and Alaska Natives. The provision authorizes appropriations for block grants for affordable housing activities and for loan guarantees for mortgages for owner- and renter-occupied housing. It authorizes technical assistance in cases where administrative capacity is lacking. The block grants would be provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands of the government of the State of Hawaii.

This is the fourth time this year that the House will consider a bill containing these important provisions for Native Hawaiian housing.

I thank the chairman of the Banking Committee [Mr. LEACH], ranking member [Mr. LAFALCE], the chairman of the Housing Subcommittee [Mr. LAZIO], and the ranking member of subcommittee [Mr. FRANK] and the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BEREUTER] for their assistance in incorporating the provisions for native Hawaiian housing in the bill. They have worked tirelessly to craft a bill that both Houses can support so that Congress will be able to enact a housing bill this year.

Passage of this bill is critical because within the last several years, three studies have documented the housing conditions that confront native Hawaiians who reside on the Hawaiian home lands or who are eligible to reside on the home lands.

In 1992, the National Commission on American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Housing issued its final report to Congress, "Building the Future: A Blueprint for Change." In its study, the Commission found that Native Hawaiians had the worst housing conditions in the State of Hawaii and the highest percentage of hopelessness, representing over 30 percent of the State's homeless population.

In 1995, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development issued a report entitled, "Housing Problems and Needs of Native Hawaiians." This report contained the alarming conclusion that Native Hawaiians experience the highest percentage of housing problems in the Nation—49 percent—higher than that of American Indians and Alaska Natives residing on reservations (44 percent) and substantially higher than that of all U.S. households (27 percent). The report also concluded that the percentage of overcrowding within the Native Hawaiian population is 36 percent compared to 3 percent for all other U.S. households.

Also, in 1995, the Hawaii State Department of Hawaiian Home Lands published a Beneficiary Needs Study as a result of research conducted by an independent research group. This study found that among the Native Hawaiian population the needs of Native Hawai-

ians eligible to reside on the Hawaiian home lands are the most severe. 95 percent of home lands applicants (16,000) were in need of housing, with one-half of those applicant households facing overcrowding, and one-third paying more than 30 percent of their income for shelter.

H.R. 5640 will provide eligible low-income Native Hawaiians access to Federal housing programs that provide assistance to low-income families. Currently, those Native Hawaiians who are eligible to reside on Hawaiian home lands but who do not qualify for private mortgage loans, are unable to access such Federal assistance.

I look forward to enactment of the bill because it is so important to the native people of Hawaii.

BUSH VERSUS GORE IN THE U.S.
SUPREME COURT**HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 11, 2000

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following articles, which appeared in the New York Times on December 11, 2000 and the Washington Post on December 9, 2000, into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

[From the New York Times, Dec. 11, 2000]
TO ANY LENGTHS
(By Bob Herbert)

And so the Supreme Court intervened, not with wisdom and grace but with a clumsily wielded hammer, to protect the interests of George W. Bush and the Republicans by thwarting any further movement in the Florida vote toward Al Gore.

Mr. Bush and his party have made it clear to the country and the world that their greatest fear—the scenario they dread above all others—is that somehow, somehow, all of the votes legally cast in Florida would actually be counted.

They have demonstrated their willingness to go to almost any lengths to prevent that from happening. And that resolve was given the unfortunate imprimatur of the nation's highest court on Saturday when, in a 5- to-4 decision, the court ordered the hand recounts in Florida to stop.

But the Bush team's appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, which will hear oral arguments this morning, is just one prong of the G.O.P.'s dangerous assault on the spirit of democracy that has served this nation so well for so long. The truth is that while Mr. Bush and the Republicans will be more than happy to accept a final Supreme Court ruling in their favor, they are already prepared to take extraordinary steps to circumvent a ruling that goes against them.

In short, they are not willing to accept any set of circumstances that would result in Al Gore winning the White House.

Former Secretary of State James Baker was asked on "Meet the Press" yesterday if the Bush campaign would accept the results of a recount in Florida if, after hearing the arguments today, the Supreme Court ordered the recount to resume.

Mr. Baker told the moderator, Tim Russert, "Of course we'll begin the recount again if that's the ruling of the United States Supreme Court."

Mr. Russert said, "And will you abide by the result?"

Mr. Baker, clearly uncomfortable with the question, said "Well, I'm not sure I under-

stand what you mean, 'Will we abide by the result?' The result will be there."

Mr. Baker knows as well as anyone that the Republican-controlled Florida Legislature is poised to trash any semblance of justice and fair play by designating its own slate of 25 presidential electors committed to Mr. Bush if, under any scenario, Al Gore wins the popular vote in Florida.

Mr. Baker said of the Legislature, "They have an interest here that is a constitutional interest granted to them under Article 2 of the Constitution, and it is not up to me or anybody else to rule that out or rule it in."

Mr. Russert said: "But your campaign has been working in concert with them, giving them legal advice. Both sides admit it."

"Uh, Tim, we may have indeed," said Mr. Baker. "Some of our people have been talking to them, there's no doubt about that, because it is a constitutional remedy set forth in Article 2 of the Constitution."

In the eyes of the Republicans, the Supreme Court ruling is the final word only if it goes against Mr. Gore.

The game is rigged. And the Democrats, who all along have been more willing than the Republicans to adhere to standards of fair play, are openly talking about folding their tents and conceding the White House to Mr. Bush.

American democracy suffered a grievous wound this year in Florida. The conservative majority on the U.S. Supreme Court that has ranted ad nauseam about activist courts and the infringement of states' rights turned its own philosophy on its head by rushing in on Saturday and gratuitously stopping a recount of votes legally cast by American citizens.

It is not unreasonable to believe that had those votes been counted, Al Gore, who won the popular vote nationwide, would also have won Florida and a majority in the electoral college.

A former colleague of mine called yesterday and said: "All the Supreme Court of Florida wanted to do was have the vote counted. What was so wrong with that?"

The good news, of course, is that American-style democracy is resilient enough to rebound from the Florida fiasco. Eventually the full truth will emerge about the extent to which the voices of voters in Florida went unheard. And the role of the U.S. Supreme Court and the Republican Party in silencing those voters will be a matter of public and historical record.

[From the New York Times, Dec. 11, 2000]

RAISING THE STAKES

(By Anthony Lewis)

WASHINGTON.—Whether Al Gore or George W. Bush becomes president will make a difference, but it has never been a cosmic question. Whoever wins, the country will survive.

But now a truly profound interest is at stake in the election controversy. That is the public's acceptance of the great power exercised by the Supreme Court of the United States.

Justice Robert H. Jackson, in lectures published in 1955 after his death, pointed out the curiosity of the role played by the justices in our democracy. The court has often been in controversy, he said, and "the public has more than once repudiated particular decisions."

"Public opinion, however," Justice Jackson said, "seems always to sustain the power of the court. . . . The people have seemed to feel that the Supreme Court, whatever its defects, is still the most detached, dispassionate and trustworthy custodian that our system affords for the translation of abstract into concrete constitutional commands."