EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TIME TO REEXAMINE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

HON. MIKE HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, January 6, 2001

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, today I express my concerns over the difficulties that arose during our voting and ballot counting process in this most recent presidential election. It is undisputed that the presidential candidate who received more popular votes on Election Day, November 7, 2000, was not elected to the nation's highest office. However, our Constitution allows for this anomalous result. While the Electoral College system may need to be reviewed, I believe the most troubling aspect of this result was that the voting process and procedure failed a great number of American voters. From allegations of voter intimidation, voter confusion, to the now infamous Votomatic punch systems, process and procedural problems abounded. We are now in the 21st Century, and as a Representative from the Silicon Valley, I know that the technological creativity and innovation exist to solve these problems. We must be willing to research, test and implement reliable technologies to the way in which we conduct elections.

The right to vote is one of the most cherished and fundamental rights we have in our great nation. There are a myriad of ways in which a voter may become disenfranchised and the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was a milestone in the protection of this right. Now, 35 years later we have learned that even more is needed to protect our right to vote and have our vote counted. Mr. Speaker, as has been stated by many of my colleagues who are concerned about this issue it is nothing less than the integrity of the vote in America that we in Congress must now work together to protect.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. DAVID M. LANEY

HON. TOM DeLAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, January 6, 2001

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize Mr. David M. Laney, who will soon complete his term as a member of the Texas Transportation Commission. Governor George W. Bush appointed Mr. Laney to the commission in April 1995, designating him its chairman and Commissioner of Transportation. In April 2000, he stepped down as Commissioner of Transportation, serving the remainder of his term as a member of the commission.

During his term on the commission, Mr. Laney has been the champion of the State's efforts to increase the state's share of federal transportation dollars returning to Texas. He was instrumental in promoting the STEP 21 Coalition's successful efforts to guarantee that every state receive a fairer return on its contributions to the Highway Trust Fund. As a result, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21) provides a guarantee of at least a 90.5 percent return. When this guarantee was combined with a significant increase in national highway program funding and the use of more real world funding formula factors, Texas received an increase of more than $700 million annually in federal highway funds. In addition, he promoted increased federal funding for the nation's general aviation and reliever airports, which Congress provided in the historic Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment Reform Act for the 21st Century (AIR 21). Finally, Mr. Laney has been a strong advocate for the state's small urban and rural transit systems, working with Congress to provide much needed discretionary funding to address the vehicle replacement needs of these vital transportation systems, the most extensive in the nation. With these additional funds for Texas transportation programs, the commission will be better able to meet the tremendous transportation demands of the growing regional and international trade traffic in Texas.

With a look to the future, as Commissioner of Transportation Mr. Laney led the Texas Department of Transportation in its efforts to obtain the flexible financing tools it needs to help address the multitude of transportation needs in Texas. He was successful in working with the Texas Legislature to create the Texas Turnpike Authority Division of the department, which provides toll-funding options for the state's major transportation projects. With this strong support and encouragement, the division has applied for and expects to receive an $800 million loan under the federal Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act for a major Central Texas turnpike project. Under Mr. Laney's leadership, the commission has used the Texas State Infrastructure Bank, authorized under the National Highway System Designation Act of 1995, to provide needed assistance to localities to help move forward important transportation projects. Mr. Laney also initiated a major Texas border strategy, which provides more than $1.8 billion in priority highway funding to the state's border region to address the demands of international trade traffic.

Throughout his tenure on the commission, Mr. Laney has provided strong, confident, and visionary leadership to the Texas Department of Transportation, promoting the development of a first-class Texas transportation system. His legacy is a transportation agency with a menu of solid financial and operational tools to provide a safe, effective, and environmentally sensitive transportation system for the people of Texas and the nation. His dedication to transportation and his strong leadership on the commission will be missed.

Mr. Speaker, I know my fellow Texans join me in this expression of appreciation to David Laney for his exemplary leadership. I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating him and wishing him the best in his future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. WILLIAM M. THOMAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, January 6, 2001

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I was absent for rollcall vote Nos. 3 and 4 on January 3, 2000. Had I been present, I would have voted ''no'' on rollcall No. 3 and ''yes'' on rollcall No. 4.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BINATIONAL GREAT LAKES–SEAWAY ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2001

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, January 6, 2001

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, on January 3, I introduced legislation, the Binational Great Lakes-Seaway Enhancement Act of 2001, to improve the competitiveness of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway system and restore its vitality.

Since the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway more than 40 years ago, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway system has become a vital transportation corridor for the United States. The Seaway connects the Great Lakes with the Atlantic Ocean and makes it possible to ship manufactured products from our industrial Midwest and grains from the Upper Plains directly to overseas markets. Benefits of efficient operations of this transportation route are not limited to the Great Lakes region but extend throughout the United States. Congress recognized the broader impacts and, accordingly, designated the Great Lakes as America's fourth seacoast in 1970.

The Great Lakes region and the international markets recognized the system's potential, as evidenced by the sharp rise in vessel and cargo traffic through the Seaway after its opening in 1959. Unfortunately, that potential was never fulfilled. The upward trend in cargo traffic peaked around 1977–79. It then went into a long decline, precipitated in part by a nationwide economic recession that hit the manufacturing sector particularly hard, and prolonged in part because of capacity constraints imposed by the Seaway.

Locks on the Seaway and the Great Lakes were built as long ago as 1895. New locks constructed for the Seaway between the mid- and late-1950s, as authorized by Congress in 1954, were built to the same size as those completed in 1932. Locks and connecting channels were limited to 27 feet of draft. Because vessel size had grown over time, Seaway facilities were too small on opening day to

serve the commercial fleet then in existence. Today, they are capable of accommodating no more than 30% of the world's commercial fleet. An undersized Seaway that denies large, specialized, and efficient vessels access to the system will prevent U.S. products, especially those from the Great Lakes region, from competing effectively in the global economy.

In addition to declining traffic, inadequate investment in Seaway infrastructure caused the mix of cargoes shipped through the system to be transformed from one that was diverse to one composed largely of low-value commodities. Although the trend of cargo tonnage through the system turned up once again in 1993, current cargo mix consists of essentially steel coming to the Great Lakes region from abroad, grains going overseas, and iron ore and coal moving from one port to another within the region. Since the late 1980s, industrial manufacturing in the United States has recovered through investment in technology and corporate restructuring. Industrial production is flourishing once more in the Great Lakes region; Midwest economies are booming. Yet, only a small volume of high-value finished goods is shipped through the system. The Great Lakes region, therefore, has not been able to participate fully in this resurgence of economic strength due to limitations in the Seaway's capacity.

As we enter a new millennium, it is fitting that the Great Lakes-Seaway system is given an opportunity to modernize its structure and facilities so that it can compete on an equal footing with other transportation routes such as coastal ports and the Mississippi River. The United States has great seaports on its Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf Coasts. The Mississippi River, likewise, is an extremely vital inland maritime transportation artery in the mid-section of the country. A competitive and successful Great Lakes-Seaway system would complement these other major transportation routes. The United States would greatly benefit in global competition by such a balanced national maritime transportation system.

The Seaway differs from the other transportation routes in one crucial aspect, however. Whereas the coastal seaports and the Mississippi River navigation channel were developed with substantial assistance from the federal government, the Seaway was required initially to repay the costs of its construction with interest. The Seaway, therefore, was hampered in its ability to compete successfully from the start. Not only was it built undersized, it was also saddled with great debts. Years later when Congress forgave the debts, the damage has already been done.

Throughout my service in the Congress, I have tried to help the Great Lakes-Seaway system better position itself in competition for commercial transportation. For more than 4 years, I have been working closely with interested parties in the Great Lakes maritime transportation community and the infrastructure investment finance sector in the United States and Canada to develop a proposal to allow the Seaway to reach its full potential, to guarantee the future viability of the Seaway, and to continue economic development of the Great Lakes region.

The bill I introduced on the first day of this Congress, the Binational Great Lakes-Seaway Enhancement Act of 2001, was developed in concert with the Honorable Joe Comuzzi, a close friend of mine and a member of the Canadian Parliament whose Thunder Bay, Ontario Riding (district) is adjacent to mine. It would establish the foundation, create the conditions, and provide the resources to permit the system to achieve its full potential. The bill would authorize the creation of a binational authority to operate and maintain the Seaway. It would also provide for the establishment of a non-federal credit facility to offer financial and other assistance to the Seaway and Great Lakes maritime communities for transportation-related capital investments.

Specifically, the legislation would establish a binational governmental St. Lawrence Seaway Corporation by combining the existing, separate U.S. and Canadian agencies that operate each country's Seaway facilities. It would require the Corporation's top management to run the Seaway in a business-like manner. It would transfer Seaway employees and the operating authority of Seaway assets to the Corporation. It would provide significant labor protection for current U.S. Seaway employees, whether or not they transfer to the Corporation. It would offer incentives for employment and pay based on job performance. It would set forth a process for the Corporation to become financially sustainable. At the same time, it would provide the United States with ample oversight authority over the Corporation.

Through merger of the two national Seaway agencies into a single binational authority, we could eliminate duplication and streamline operations. Improved efficiency would reduce government's cost of operating the Seaway. Moreover, a unified Seaway agency would reduce regulatory burden and help cut the sailing time of ships through the system. This latter efficiency improvement would positively affect the bottom line of Seaway users. All of these efficiencies would make the system a more competitive and viable transportation route for international commerce.

The Great Lakes and the Seaway should be considered as an integrated system in maritime transportation. Improvements to the Seaway infrastructure alone would not be sufficient to deal with the efficiency and competitiveness problems facing the Great Lakes-Seaway system. Quite the opposite, improvements to the Seaway could stress the capacity of ports on the Great Lakes. A comprehensive approach is necessary to address the system's investment needs.

My legislation would provide for the establishment of a Great Lakes Development Bank. It would outline in broad terms the structure of Bank membership. To ensure no taxpayer liability, this legislation would prohibit the United States and the St. Lawrence Seaway Corporation from becoming members of the Bank. It would specify eligible projects for financial and other assistance from the Bank. It would define the forms of such assistance. It would require recipients of Bank assistance, states or provinces in which such recipients are located, contractors for projects financed with Bank assistance, and localities in which such contractors are located to become Bank members to broaden the Bank's membership base. It would establish an initial capitalization level for the Bank, and would provide as U.S. contributions $100 million in direct loan and up to $500 million in loan commitments that could be drawn upon to meet the Bank's credit obligations. It would set interest on U.S. loans to the Bank at rates equal to the current average yield on outstanding Treasury debts of similar maturity plus administrative costs to preclude taxpayer subsidy to the Bank. It would allow the United States to call loans to the Bank if the Bank is not complying with the objectives of this legislation, and would provide specific limitations on United States' liability to protect our interests.

Mr. Speaker, my legislation is intended to make the Great Lakes-Seaway system a more efficient, competitive, and viable transportation route. Such a system will enable our manufacturers to bring their goods to the world market at reduced cost, making U.S. products more competitive in the global economy. This is a sensible bill; it is a good-government bill. A similar bill was introduced in the last Congress. The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has held one hearing on that bill. Changes have been made to the proposal to reflect suggestions made by witnesses at the hearing. As a result, this is an improved bill. We should all support it. I hope Members will join me in co-sponsoring this legislation and moving it forward. This bill should be enacted this year to help prepare the Great Lakes-Seaway system for competition and trade in the 21st century.

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, January 6, 2001

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, in just a few days we Americans will be commemorating the birthday of one of the outstanding citizens of the 20th century. I was pleased many years ago to be one of the original sponsors of the legislation making his birthday a national holiday, and I urge all Americans to commemorate January 15th with appropriate ceremonies.

We should all avail ourselves of this opportunity to once again honor the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. With it now being nearly 33 years since his life was senselessly snuffed out by an assassin in Memphis, Tennessee, it is more important than ever that all Americans, especially our young people who have no personal recollection of Dr. King's moral leadership, are reminded of his significant contributions and his message.

Regrettably, many Americans view Martin Luther King Day as a holiday just for African-Americans. Reverend King would have been the first person to repudiate that attitude, for his message was for all people, of all races, creeds, colors and backgrounds. His message is universal and should be heeded by all citizens of America and, in fact, all citizens of the world.

Dr. King contributed more to the causes of national freedom and equality than any other individual of the 20th century. His achievements as an author and as a minister were surpassed only by his leadership, which transformed a torn people into a beacon of strength and solidarity, and united a divided nation under a common creed of brotherhood and mutual prosperity.

It was Dr. King's policy of nonviolent protest which served to open the eyes of our Nation