

COMMON SENSE NEEDED ON  
ARSENIC ISSUE**HON. DOUG BEREUTER**

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2001*

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member commends to his colleagues the following editorial from the August 2, 2001, Lincoln Journal Star. The editorial highlights the need to move beyond the rhetoric and examine the arsenic issue in a rational manner.

Clearly, it is important to get the full story and listen to those who would be most affected by the proposed changes. Many State and local officials as well as water system administrators have expressed concern about the problems which could be caused by the proposed changes. Everyone recognizes the importance of providing safe drinking water for all of our Nation's citizens. Also, some changes in the arsenic standard may well be justified. However, it makes sense to base these changes on sound science rather than emotion.

[From the Lincoln Journal Star, Aug. 2, 2001]

## OF ARSENIC, AND ART OF GOVERNING

President George Bush is getting a bum rap on the arsenic issue.

New EPA chief Christine Whitman was neither wacko nor callous when she withdrew new standards for arsenic in drinking water proposed by the Clinton administration that slashed the previous limit by 80 percent.

Neither was Nebraska's entire House delegation oblivious to health concerns when it voted shoulder-to-shoulder—unsuccessfully—against a proposal to force the administration to restore the new standards.

The real reason Bush is undergoing such a bludgeoning on arsenic is because it's so easy for his political enemies to portray him as a heartless boob. Arsenic is nasty. Who could possibly be against removing this poison from our drinking water?

Real life, however, is often complicated, involving tradeoffs in which the costs and payoffs are matters of speculation. As a New York Times story put it, “. . . the setting of environmental risks is as much art as science, one that entails innumerable assumptions about risks, costs and benefits.”

The Clinton administration proposed to cut the allowed level for arsenic from 50 parts per billion to 10 parts per billion.

Earlier the administration had toyed with the idea of setting the limit at 5 parts per billion, but decided that would be too expensive. So it upped the new limit to 10 parts per billion. That's still too low for many of Nebraska's communities. The city of York will have to ante up \$12 million to meet the new regulation. The city of Alliance will have to spend \$6.5 million, or \$650 per person. In all, the new water regulations would cost 51 Nebraska communities \$97 million.

One may notice that folks in those communities have not been perishing in huge numbers of arsenic-related diseases during the past 50 years. The health benefits of change in arsenic standards involve relatively small numbers in comparison with the nation's 281 million residents.

The reduction in the arsenic level is estimated to prevent 37 to 56 cases of bladder and lung cancer and 21 to 30 deaths annually throughout the nation, according to The New York Times. If the standard were set at 20 parts per billion, the benefit would diminish to preventing an estimated 19 to 20 cases of bladder and lung cancer, and 10 to 11 deaths per year nationally.

Most European countries have set arsenic levels at 20 parts per billions. The World Health Organization recommends 10 parts per billion.

Often unnoticed in the rhetoric over arsenic is that fact that the new regulation was not scheduled to take effect until 2006. Whitman's withdrawal of the new regulation allowed for nine months more study on the “art” of setting environmental standards. Her action hardly deserves the contempt it unleashed.

ON THE 53RD ANNIVERSARY OF  
INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE**HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2001*

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate India on its 53rd anniversary as an independent democratic republic.

Fifty-three years ago India under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi forged a path towards freedom and democracy by declaring its independence from Britain. With independence India undertook anew a responsibility as a voice of other newly independent nations in the post-colonial world.

India is the world's largest democracy, and in the next fifty years it will become the world's most populous nation. As we celebrate India's independence it is important for us to reflect on the achievements of the previous 53 years while at the time looking forward to the future.

India and the United States share much in common. Both countries sought independence to create great nations based on freedom and liberty. Both nations also sought to establish a more prosperous future for its people.

As we enter a new century it is important for the United States to recognize India's importance as a great democracy and as a force for stability in South Asia. While India faces many challenges it has nonetheless undertaken an important role of working towards greater prosperity and stability in the region.

India is of immense strategic importance to the United States. Being the only democracy and one of three nuclear powers in the region India has the potential to be a force for economic development and political stability.

South Asia is a vast region that faces many challenges, from the civil war in Afghanistan to great poverty that still haunts much of the region. It is therefore vital for the United States to maintain a dialogue with as many nations in the region as possible. India's cooperation in bringing about stability to the region will be essential.

Over the past ten years the United States and India have taken concrete steps to improve their bilateral relations. Trade, investment, and military cooperation have played a major role in bringing the two nations closer.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the India Caucus I have come to recognize the importance of India in South Asia. I am also proud to have worked on making additional funds available to India and other nations of South Asia for the creation of regional emergency institution similar to our own FEMA, so that we can save more lives in a future natural disaster.

As you know Mr. Speaker, President Clinton worked very hard to foster U.S.—Indian relations and to bring greater regional stability. I

encourage President Bush, to continue America's leadership in South Asia. I particularly encourage President Bush to call upon Pakistan to return to a democratic government and to work with India for peace in Kashmir.

As the United States Representative of the second largest South Asian community in the United States I would like to congratulate India on this achievement, and seek greater understanding and relations between our two great democracies.

## TRIBUTE TO ANDY COMBS

**HON. GREG WALDEN**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2001*

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, colleagues, I rise today to publicly thank a member of my Washington, D.C. staff for his tireless efforts on behalf of the good people of Oregon's Second Congressional District. Andy Combs recently departed my staff to pursue a law degree at the University of Oregon. I wish him well in this new endeavor and know that he will excel both in law school and as a lawyer.

Andy comes from Dora, a small town on the southern Oregon coast. He graduated from my alma mater, the University of Oregon, and after serving admirably as a staff member in the Oregon Legislature he embarked to Washington, D.C. to join my staff. He brought those desirable “small town values” to the nation's capital and to how he treated the people who sought assistance from my office.

Andy was more than just “the guy at the front desk.” He helped families get the inside track to the sights and sounds of Washington, D.C. Time and again, he brought history alive as he led tours of the Capitol for people who had come nearly 3,000 miles so that their children could better understand the federal government and our bold history. Andy arranged their tours, took their calls, answered their questions. In short, Mr. Speaker, Andy made their day and their trip.

I can't think of a time during his service in my office that a visitor went away disappointed. He attended faithfully to every detail and literally went the extra mile to make sure families could see the White House, the Capitol and other sights in the area.

Moreover, Andy made Oregonians feel at ease and at home when they walked in the door. He possesses that warm and helpful attitude that is too often lacking in a big city. I have a significant stack of letters from Oregonians that took the time to write after their trip to Washington, D.C. to thank me for Andy's treatment of them and his dogged determination to make sure their experience was memorable, Andy was also instrumental in recognizing when something needed to be done, taking the initiative to complete myriad projects and lend others a helping hand.

His ability and intellect will serve him well as a member of the bar. And his likeable attitude will serve him well in the courtroom. In short, Mr. Speaker, Andy's a difficult person to replace. Andy, thanks for a job well done and good luck in the future.

TRIBUTE TO DR. VERMELLE J. JOHNSON

**HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2001*

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Dr. Vermelle J. Johnson of South Carolina, who was recently appointed to the Commission on Higher Education. Dr. Johnson's long and illustrious career spans thirty eight years and includes many incredible accomplishments. I am sure her vast experience will serve her well at the Commission on Higher Education.

Dr. Vennelle J. Johnson is leaving her post as Senior Vice President and Vice President of Academic Affairs at Claflin University in Orangeburg, South Carolina to accept her new appointment. Her stellar career was recognized at an evening of reflection and celebration on July 31, 2001 on the campus of Claflin College.

Dr. Johnson began her career as an educator in the public school system in 1963. In 1969, she became an associate professor of business at South Carolina State University. Dr. Johnson moved to Claflin University in 1979, where she established and implemented a Department of Business Administration.

She went back to the South Carolina State University as Professor and Dean of the School of Education in 1982, and in 1985 she became the Executive Vice President and Provost of the University, which at the time was the highest rank held by a female in the South Carolina public college/university system. In this position, Dr. Johnson established several significant new programs, such as a Master of Arts in Teaching and a Department of Nursing.

In 1995 Dr. Johnson returned to Claflin to serve as Senior Vice President and Vice President for Academic Affairs. During this six-year tenure, Dr. Johnson conducted a complete overhaul of the academic curriculum, brought onboard five new academic Honor Societies and Fraternities, and increased faculty professional development and scholarly activity by more than 100%.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me today in honoring Dr. Vermelle J. Johnson for the incredible service she has provided to the students and citizens of South Carolina. I sincerely thank Dr. Johnson for her outstanding contributions and congratulate her on her recent appointment and wish her the best in all of her future endeavors.

THE 'WILLIE VELASQUEZ' COMMEMORATIVE STAMP ACT

**HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2001*

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, throughout the 2000 Presidential election, talk from both sides of the isle focused on the growing prominence of Latino voters in the American political system. Of the total number of registered voters in the United States, Latinos currently comprise almost 6 percent. And according to the United States Census Bureau, 12.5 percent of the total U.S. population or 35.3 million Americans are Hispanic.

Legislation I introduced today would recognize William C. "Willie" Velasquez for his pioneering work to empower Latinos and other minority groups through voter registration. Coining the famous phrase, "Su voto es su voz," "Your vote is your voice," Willie not only translated words describing the influence of the vote, he raised a battle cry for political activism that can still be heard today.

Throughout the American Southwest, Willie was recognized as a selfless advocate of the politically under represented. An outstanding leader who inspired others to play an active role in American democracy, Willie dedicated his life to empowering the Hispanic community through voter registration, hard work, and education. His efforts are largely responsible for the unprecedented growth in the number of registered Hispanic, Native American and low-income voters across the country.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Willie helped to lay the foundation of political activism which brought the importance of the Hispanic vote to prominence in the 2000 Presidential election. In large part due to the civil rights organizations Willie founded, voter registration grew from 2.4 million registered Latinos in 1974 to nearly 8 million in 2000.

In 1974, he founded the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project and the Southwest Voter Research Institute (now known as the William C. Velasquez Institute). Under Willie's leadership, Southwest Voter registered Hispanics, Native Americans and low-income citizens across the country in unprecedented numbers. The research institute enjoyed similar success, emerging as a preeminent institution in the analysis of Hispanic voting trends and demographics.

Sadly, Willie passed away in June 1988 without the opportunity to see the full benefits of much of his groundbreaking advocacy work. Congress adjourned for the day upon learning of his passing, and people across the country lamented the untimely loss of the prominent community organizer and leader. President Clinton later presented the Presidential Medal of Freedom to his widow Janie Velasquez and their children.

A request I submitted to the U.S. Postal Service's Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee was unfortunately denied, but Willie's legacy remains an example for all those who believe in civil rights, democracy, and equality. I hope you will agree that his memory is worthy of national recognition and join my efforts to encourage the U.S. Postal Service to issue a commemorative stamp in Willie's honor.

Now, more than ever before, the Hispanic voice has been heard and courted by both Democrats and Republicans. Today I urge all my colleagues in the House of Representatives to recognize Willie's life-long work and the importance of the Hispanic vote with a commemorative postage stamp.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4, SECURING AMERICA'S FUTURE ENERGY ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

**HON. THOMAS E. PETRI**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, August 1, 2001*

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that this rule does not allow the Rahall-Petri-

Kind amendment to be considered by the members of the House. Yesterday we went before the Committee on Rules to ask that our amendment striking Title II of Division F of H.R. 4 be made in order during floor debate.

This title addresses various aspects of oil and gas production from federal lease lands, both onshore and offshore. The title reportedly seeks to provide greater incentives and royalty relief to oil and gas producers to encourage exploration and development in these areas. These incentives raise several serious policy questions. Unfortunately, this amendment was not made in order, and the full House was denied the opportunity to address this important issue.

The incentives contained in this section are far too generous. They are not in the public interest. They will not provide for our energy security. Further, none of these provisions was contained in President Bush's report on Energy Policy. Indeed, this title is an oil and gas producer's dream, but it is a taxpayer's nightmare.

First, this section provides a full royalty holiday for certain offshore leases granted over the next 2 years. Royalty payment suspension will be allowed for drilling operations in water as shallow as 400 meters. Just a few weeks ago, Interior Secretary Norton testified before the Resources Committee that the Administration does not support granting relief for production in water under 800 meters in depth. And, importantly, the Secretary currently has the authority to waive royalties. We don't need to mandate it—especially at a time of high prices. The CBO cost estimates for this relief are only the tip of the iceberg—taxpayers will continue to lose hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars of revenue during the full lifetimes of these leases.

Second, this title proposes to allow the Secretary of the Interior to replace the current royalty system with a "Royalty-in-Kind" program which allows royalties for oil and gas taken from public lands to be paid in actual deliveries of crude oil or natural gas. This would require enlarging the size of the federal presence in these western states so that federal employees can assume private sector responsibilities. This cannot be done efficiently; an audit of a recent royalty-in-kind pilot program in Wyoming found that it had lost \$3 million.

Third, this legislation would mandate a royalty holiday for, and expand the definition of, marginally producing oil and gas wells. Onshore wells producing less than 30 barrels of oil per day would be considered marginal. It is my understanding that approximately 85 percent of all the oil wells on public lands produce less than 30 barrels of oil per day. Clearly, this stretches anyone's definition of marginal. Moreover, relief for truly marginal wells is already provided in this bill through the expansion of the marginal well tax credit.

Fourth, the legislation contains several provisions which transfer the costs of regulatory compliance to taxpayers. Such fees are normally paid by permit applicants. There is no good reason to grant this type of financial relief, and I can think of no other federal program in which taxpayers bear these costs.

I agree that we need to address our energy future to assure all Americans access to reliable and affordable energy. But I fail to see how granting a royalty holiday for oil and gas production on federal leases will accomplish