

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT MANIECE

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, in commemoration of Black History Month, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the many accomplishments of distinguished African-Americans in Mississippi's Second Congressional District.

Dr. Robert Maniece is presently serving as interim Superintendent for the Quitman County School District. In 1967, Robert Maniece led a number of black students over to then Marks Junior High, a predominately white school. That action led to the integration of the public school in 1971.

In the same year the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King visited Marks, he also visited Mississippi's Cotton Street, the street on which Robert and his family lived. This is the place where Dr. King witnessed families so victimized by poverty that he created the Poor People Campaign. Thereafter, Robert and his family members became heavily involved in this fight to rid the Nation of poverty and want. He has traveled to Washington, D.C. many times to participate in the protests and has continued to fight the fight for those in the greatest need.

In 1993, he became Director of Instruction and Professional Development Coordinator for Quitman Mississippi County Schools. In that position, he has led the District from academic probation to one of the best performing schools in all the Mississippi Delta and the State.

CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN
EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

HON. DIANE E. WATSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to echo my colleagues' concerns with the prevailing digital divide in African American communities.

As our society continues to make leaps and bounds in the digital information age, too many people are still left behind. It is especially evident in the African American communities, where currently only four out of ten African-Americans have access to internet access—30 points behind the national average. This sharp contrast continues to represent a very substantial and real divide in our society.

But the picture is not all gloomy. In 2001, for instance, internet usage among African Americans increased by 31 percent, as compared to 19 percent among whites. High-tech companies have also begun to focus on technological literacy among our nation's students, such as Microsoft's recent initiative to donate a \$15 million software grant to Historically Black College and University campuses.

Now it's up to this Congress to do more. The Omnibus Appropriations bill we just passed has under-funded many of the pro-

grams aimed to stimulate technological usage and access for more Americans, among them the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the Community Technology Centers (CTC), and the Technology Opportunities Program (TOP).

We must recommit ourselves to those resources. We must also maintain an open market for competition in the telecommunications industry so that better services can be brought to more communities at lower prices.

I urge my colleagues today to work towards those goals.

NATIONAL PEACE CORPS DAY,
FEBRUARY 28, 2003

HON. CHRISTOPHER COX

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is National Peace Corps Day. It is with great pleasure that I send my congratulations to Peace Corps volunteers serving throughout the world as we celebrate the Peace Corps' 42 years of service.

Forty-two years ago, President John F. Kennedy mobilized a generation to work in developing nations around the world in education, community development, agriculture, health care, and public works. Although each volunteer is given a particular role in a community, the most important job is the simple day-to-day interaction each volunteer has with the people of the villages in which they serve.

Since 1961, over 168,000 Americans have volunteered their expertise, time, and energy to foster development and progress in 136 countries. There is no greater symbol of America's generosity than American volunteers living and working in partnership with the people of developing nations to encourage education and opportunity.

As grass-roots ambassadors, Peace Corps volunteers have conveyed the message of freedom and hope to communities in need of help. In doing so, they have strengthened the ties of international friendship and understanding, and have spread the spirit of sharing that is so fundamental to American society.

It is my deepest hope that we continue to recognize and support the Peace Corps' work. By honoring the Peace Corps, we reaffirm our nation's commitment to strengthen freedom and create opportunities around the world.

I am very happy to join with Peace Corps volunteers, past and present, to celebrate National Peace Corps Day 2003.

WHITE MARLINS AND THE
LONGLINE INDUSTRY

HON. JIM SAXTON

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce this important piece of conservation legislation. In the last session of Congress the Resources Committee worked hard to report

out, my good friend from Maryland and Subcommittee Chairman, Mr. GILCREST's bill, H.R. 4749, the Magnuson-Stevens Act Amendments of 2002. While I was pleased with many of the provisions, I felt the bycatch section could be strengthened and was successful in getting a provision added to H.R. 4749 addressing the concerns I still have today, with regard to the amount of bycatch of white marlin by the domestic longline industry, which is why I am introducing this bill today.

This bill creates a closed area in the mid-Atlantic that protects marlin from being caught by longlines, when marlin are the most prevalent in those waters. This area consists of the entire Mid-Atlantic Conservation Zone for Highly Migratory Species and closes the upper zone July 15 through September 1, and closes the lower zone from August 15 through October 1. The bill allows for the maximum fishing effort by the longline industry consistent with the conservation.

I continue to be concerned about this species because stocks domestically and internationally have continued to rapidly decline. On September 4, 2001, an environmental group petitioned the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to list Atlantic white marlin under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. On December 19, 2001, NMFS found that the Atlantic white marlin petition presents substantial scientific and commercial information indicating that a listing of Atlantic white marlin may be warranted.

On September 4, 2002, NMFS determined that the species does not warrant being listed at this time. However, the most recent stock assessment indicates the total Atlantic stock population had declined to less than 12 percent of its maximum sustainable yield level; current fishing mortality was estimated to be at least seven times higher than the maximum sustainable level; over fishing had taken place for over three decades and the stock is less productive than previously estimated, with a maximum sustainable yield of less than 1300 metric tons. The bottom line—this species needs an immediate strong conservation measure or it may disappear forever.

I have for many years been very concerned about the dramatic drop in population of this species, and the fact that NMFS even considered listing it confirms my concerns have not been unfounded. I am therefore introducing this piece of legislation as it is critical we continue to make every possible effort to save this species from extinction, which is a distinct possibility should nothing be done to stop the tremendous amount of bycatch.

It is so important we work together to conserve all species, and the dramatic drop in population of white marlin sends a strong message that if we do nothing the potential for other species to be in equal jeopardy is almost guaranteed. Our oceans could well be void of many species we now enjoy and take for granted if we do not take aggressive steps to halt their disappearance now, before it's too late.

It is of the utmost importance that today, more than ever, we work diligently to ensure our world's fisheries populations are maintained at sustainable levels. If we fail to protect them, there are some species that may disappear forever, which would be tragic.