

EXPRESSING SUPPORT AND APPRECIATION FOR THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES PARTICIPATING IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

SPEECH OF

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 20, 2003

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, based on the misleading and erroneous statement made by the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. HOYER, I feel compelled to correct the record. In an effort to suggest inconsistencies in my historical support and commendation of the troops, Mr. HOYER stated that on December 13, 1995, I voted against a resolution regarding Armed Forces deployment to Bosnia that resolved, "That the House of Representatives unequivocally supports the men and women of the United States Armed Forces who are carrying out their mission in support of peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina with professional excellence, dedicated patriotism, and exemplary bravery." However, a simple examination of the record tells a different story.

What the gentleman from Maryland failed to note, is that on December 13, 1995, the House considered two competing resolutions on the deployment of the United States Armed Forces to Bosnia—House Resolution 302 sponsored by Mr. BUYER and House Resolution 306 sponsored by Mr. Hamilton. If the Hamilton resolution had consisted of only the resolved clause, which my colleague quoted, I would have supported it. However, H. Res. 306 was compiled mostly of whereas clauses that justified the deployment of our Armed Forces to the former Yugoslavia. Had my colleague thoroughly researched this, he might have noticed that, also on December 13, 1995, I opposed this deployment by voting for Mr. Dornan's bill, H.R. 2770, which would have prohibited federal funds from being used for peacekeeping operations or any implementation force in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I, instead, voted for the Buyer resolution, which expressed dissatisfaction with the President's policy of deployment and his disregard of the action taken by the House on two separate occasions to disallow the use of United States Armed Forces for these purposes. Nonetheless, this resolution also declared that the House of Representatives, "... is confident that the members of the United States Armed Forces, in whom it has the greatest pride and admiration, will perform their responsibilities with professional excellence, dedicated patriotism, and exemplary courage. . . ."

Incidentally, the Buyer resolution passed the House by a vote of 287 to 141, with one voting present. The resolution Mr. HOYER criticized me for voting against, the Hamilton resolution, failed by a vote of 190 to 237, also with one voting present.

It is truly unfortunate that Mr. HOYER made such a misleading statement and questioned my unfailing dedication to the young men and women of our Armed Forces.

HONORING SENATOR CHARLES POOCHIGIAN

HON. DEVIN NUNES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 31, 2003

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of an extraordinary Californian, whom I have the privilege of representing in Congress, California State Senator Charles S. Poochigian. I am proud to have the opportunity to spend a few minutes of my time in the House to share with the people of the United States how wonderful Chuck is and what a great asset he is to the people he serves.

Chuck Poochigian is an outstanding public servant but more importantly, he is a wonderful husband, father and member of his community. Anywhere you go in Chuck's hometown, you will find adoring friends, supporters and, of course, the many members of his extended family. He and his wife, Debbie, have worked to achieve a balanced life of faith, family and community service and are blessed with three outstanding children, Mark, Kirk and Laura.

Chuck has been a member of the California State Senate for four years and had previously served in the California State Assembly. In addition, he spent time in the Administration's of two California Governors. However, the more important measure of his outstanding service can be found in his commitment to the people he represents and to his proud heritage as an Armenian American.

Chuck has managed to achieve the meritorious recognition of many prominent organizations, ranging from the California State Sheriff's Association to the California State Student's Association. Throughout his career in public service, Chuck Poochigian has tempered his political ambition with a strong belief in family, faith and an understanding of the founding principals of our democracy. Demonstrating the high esteem to which he is held, The California Journal commended Chuck for his integrity, intelligence and problem solving abilities rating him as "Rookie of the Year" during his freshman term in office. Mr. Speaker, these accolades could not have been bestowed on a more worthy public servant.

It is also fitting at this time to express how important Chuck has been to the cause of advocating the special concerns of the Armenian Community in the California Legislature and I wish to publicly commend him on his pending receipt of the Armenian National Committee of Central California's Man of the Year Award, which is to be presented on April 12th in Fresno, California.

INTRODUCING THE VOTER OUTREACH AND TURNOUT EXPANSION ACT OF 2003

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 31, 2003

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Voter Outreach and Turnout Expansion Act of 2003. The VOTE Act encompasses the best state voting practices in the country and is a progressive ap-

proach toward further reforming the way we run our elections.

Last year, in passing the Help America Vote Act, Congress made the historic statement that the federal government does in fact play a role in establishing minimum standards in federal elections. Today, as the fight to fund the Help America Vote Act continues in the 108th Congress, it is also appropriate for Congress to consider legislation that expands voting opportunities for all Americans far beyond those of current law.

Many states across the country have already taken steps to expand accessibility to the polls and encourage its citizens to vote. Now, riding the coattails of the Help America Vote Act, Congress must do the same.

To accomplish this important task, Mr. Speaker, the VOTE Act takes aim at combating voter apathy through same day voter registration, early voting, no excuse absentee voting, improved registration by mail procedures, the establishment of an Election Day holiday, and guaranteed leave on election day to allow employees to vote. Specifically, the legislation does the following:

The VOTE Act requires states to establish same-day voter registration procedures. Under the legislation, voters who have not previously registered to vote will be permitted to register on election day at the appropriate polling location and vote in that election. To address concerns over voter fraud that in the past so many of my colleagues have suggested occurs, voters are required to present proof of residence and written confirmation pursuant to the Help America Vote Act. Title I of the bill is linked to the enforcement provisions of the Help America Vote Act to ensure states' compliance.

Further, the VOTE Act requires local elections supervisors to establish early voting polling locations within the jurisdiction where registered voters will be able to vote prior to election day. Early voting must commence no less than 22 days, or three weeks, prior to election day and shall be made available to voters during normal business hours each weekday. Additionally, elections supervisors must make early voting available to voters on no less than two weekend days during the three weeks.

The bill also prohibits states and local supervisors from requiring voters to provide a reason for voting absentee. All too often, voters become discouraged from voting absentee, or just voting at all, because they are required to provide a reason. This is just plain wrong. Voting should not be a test where excuses are not permitted. On the contrary, absentee voting should be an option—and an easy one to take advantage of at that.

The VOTE Act also amends the Help America Vote Act to require that election supervisors provide voters with adequate time and opportunity to complete their mail-in voter registration form. In instances where the state registration deadline has already passed, supervisors are required to inform the voter of same-day voter registration opportunities that exist.

Further, my legislation requires that federal employees be given the day off on Election Day and encourages states to make Election Day a legal holiday and provide paid leave for state government employees.

Finally, the VOTE Act requires private companies with 25 or more employees to allow their staff to take up to 2 hours of paid or unpaid leave time to vote. Employees who live