

TRIBUTE TO BERT BOECKMANN

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, Mr. MCKEON, Mr. SHERMAN, and I rise today to pay tribute to our good friend, Bert Boeckmann, who will be leaving the Los Angeles Police Commission because of term limits. The Police Commission is one of Los Angeles' most important panels, and Bert's strong leadership and vision have played a vital role in setting police policy for the City of Los Angeles during the past seventeen years.

Bert began his remarkable career selling automobiles at Galpin Ford in 1953. Four years later at the age of twenty-six, he became the General Manager of the company. Shortly afterwards, Bert began a buyout of the corporation. By 1968, the buyout was complete. Bert's innovation and management skills, along with a very strong sense of integrity and customer concern, have helped make him one of America's most successful entrepreneurs. By surrounding himself with a management team that shares his enthusiasm, honesty and dedication, Galpin Ford has become the world's most successful Ford dealership. Bert is widely recognized as the most honored and successful automobile dealer in America.

In 1984, Bert was appointed to the Police Commission by Mayor Tom Bradley. In his many years as a member of the Commission, Bert served as a stabilizing force, often counseling younger committee members. As a Commissioner, Bert worked to revise the system-wide deployment of police units to ensure that all areas of Los Angeles received equal police response. Bert has also worked to enforce and create policy regarding Official Police Garages. In the wake of September 11, Bert monitored the police's Anti-Terrorist Division. The mark Bert leaves on the Police Commission is indelible, positive and a testament to his commitment to public service.

Bert's many philanthropic achievements have touched the lives of millions, even beyond his well-known projects in Los Angeles. For example, in 1992, Bert and his wife, Jane, personally responded to a desperate plea from the city government of Moscow and Russian farmers who were in dire need of seed for the approaching winter harvest. Through his involvement with various organizations, Bert helped arrange the donation of over 57,000 pounds of seeds. Recently, he established the Boeckmann Charitable Foundation, which gives millions annually to charities around the world. Locally, Bert has donated more than \$1.5 million to the Boeckmann Center for Iberian and Latin American Studies at the University of Southern California.

Bert is a devoted and loving husband and cares deeply for his five children, their families and his five grandchildren. We are extremely pleased to know Bert and feel fortunate to have a person like him in our community.

Mr. Speaker, we invite our colleagues to join us in thanking Bert Boeckmann for his outstanding contributions to the Police Commission and wish him continued success.

THE "LIBRARIAN EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2003" (LEND Act) TO PROVIDE LOAN FORGIVENESS TO LIBRARIANS IN CRITICAL NEED AREAS

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, public libraries and schools across this nation are experiencing a dire shortage of librarians. To help fill the void, I have introduced legislation that will encourage individuals to pursue careers as librarians in public schools and libraries in low-income areas by providing student loan forgiveness.

The shortage of librarians is attributed to a combination of two factors. First, it is difficult to recruit and retain qualified librarians in the face of low salaries. Libraries are now in direct competition with industries needing workers with librarian skills such as those in multi-media technology, database administration, and systems analysis.

Second, an alarming number of librarians are reaching the age of retirement. One in four librarians will retire in the next five years. Nearly 60 percent of professional librarians will reach the age of 65 between 2005 and 2019.

State and local government budgets are tighter than ever and public libraries are being closed to save money. For example, Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens libraries closed their doors two days a week, reduced staff and eliminated programs. 67 of New York's 85 libraries have reduced services, affecting primarily children. Proposed cuts in Ohio nearly led to the closing of two-thirds of the state's 250 public libraries; in the end, the legislature chose to provide no state funding for the month of July. In Washington State, Seattle's 24 libraries will close for two weeks as they did last year, in an effort to save \$1 million in costs. In 2002, branches were closed, hours were reduced, a hiring freeze was implemented, programs were eliminated and the book budget was cut. 2003 is looking worse. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, school libraries have become even more important as the place where our children learn outside of the classroom.

Not just any college graduate can be a school librarian. Specialized training is necessary if we are to expect our libraries to be staffed by the right people with the right skills. My home state of California requires that a school librarian have a media teacher credential in addition to the usual teaching credential. The shortage of qualified librarians is so serious that many schools are asking teachers to leave the classroom to obtain the required training to become school librarians. Our schools cannot afford to lose teachers any more than they can afford to be without librarians.

There have been bipartisan efforts to address the critical shortage of librarians. The President's FY 2004 budget requested \$20 million to fund an initiative to recruit and educate librarians for the 21st century. This is a good idea, but I also think we can do something simple that will also encourage more students to enter and stay in the field and serve children and youth in our highest risk schools.

Current law allows for the cancellation of educational loans for several categories of

professionals that serve in low-income areas, such as teachers for Title I schools, special education, and Head Start, as well as members of the armed services, law enforcement officers, Peace Corps volunteers, medical technicians and nurses. The Librarian Education and Development Act adopts the same incentive for our college students to make the choice to train and serve as librarians in areas where there are concentrations of children with the greatest need for improved educational opportunities.

Specifically, under my bill, a librarian working full-time in a public library that serves a geographic area with combined average of 40 percent of enrolled students at the poverty level, or in an elementary or secondary school library that is eligible for Title I assistance would qualify for the following levels of loan cancellation based on number of years of service: 15 percent of Perkins in the first or second years, 20 percent of Perkins in the third or fourth years, 30 percent of Perkins in the fifth year, and \$5,000 (total) of direct and indirect Stafford after five years of service.

I am honored that the American Library Association supports my bill. I've included their letter in the RECORD.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. I think it is just as vital to the improvement of our public schools and education of our children as legislation the House considered today to encourage qualified graduates with increasing debts to enter educational fields that are suffering from critical shortages.

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION,
Washington, DC, July 7, 2003.

Hon. XAVIER BECERRA,
*Longworth House Office Building,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE BECERRA: Thank you very much for offering an amendment to H.R. 438 for Loan Forgiveness for Librarians. This issue is of great concern to school and public libraries as they face devastating shortages of librarians, especially minority librarians.

As you are aware, over the next five years, 25 percent of currently working librarians will retire and there are too few people going into the profession. This is not for lack of desire, but because professional librarians must have at least one Masters degree and salaries in this field are not commensurate with other professional fields.

There are a great number of college graduates who desire to be librarians and serve their communities, but the resources aren't available to them. This is especially true in low income communities.

Your amendment will do a great deal to open up the opportunity for dedicated community members to go to library school. The American Library Association appreciates your continued support for libraries in this country.

Sincerely,

EMILY SHEKETOFF,
Executive Director.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 9, 2003

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, because of an emergency in my district, I missed rollcall vote