

EXPRESSING THE GRATITUDE OF
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTA-
TIVES TO ITS PARLIAMEN-
TARIAN, THE HONORABLE
CHARLES W. JOHNSON

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY J. HYDE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to propose the acceptance of the ill-advised attempt by the finest Parliamentarian I have ever known to tender his resignation. While I do not disagree with any of the language contained in H. Res. 651 expressing the House's gratitude to Charlie Johnson, I will vote to table the consideration of the resolution since I strongly oppose the House accepting Charlie's resignation.

Charlie Johnson has served two separate roles during his distinguished 40-year career in the Office of the Parliamentarian. First, he has steadfastly guided the proceedings of the House on a day-to-day basis by assisting the presiding officer in a fair and evenhanded manner. His objectivity, dedication to fairness, and respect for precedent have made him an invaluable asset to the people's House.

Just as importantly for the long-term continuation of the fair and consistent workings of the House, Charlie has been an educator. He has assembled what I consider to be the very best office on Capitol Hill, and clearly the most professional. Charlie and his staff work in a collegial and dedicated manner, frequently in the eye of the hurricane, and sometimes even in front of it. The Office of the Parliamentarian has historically been nonpartisan.

One of the very best things Newt Gingrich did when he was elected Speaker in 1995 was to ensure that the Rules and Precedents of the House would continue to guide the proceedings of the House. He recognized that Charlie and his staff are the institutional memory of the House. Speaker Gingrich knew it was important to have nonpartisan professionals guiding the proceedings of the House.

While Members come and go, the Office of the Parliamentarian, led by Charlie for the last decade, has continued its proud history. Charlie has continued the legacy of his mentor and friend, the late Bill Brown.

My own experience with Charlie has been gratifying and truly educational. When I was in the minority, I learned to understand and appreciate the nonpartisan nature of the Office of Parliamentarian, and of each and every member of that staff. While I'm sure Charlie has his own strong personal opinions on the great issues of the day which we debate, I do not know what those opinions are, nor, I venture, does any other Member. Those personal feelings have never been a part of the way in which Charlie carries out his professional duties.

When I became the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee in 1995, and as part of the new majority, the Committee took on the responsibility for consideration of many of the items outlined in the Contract with America. At that time, I became even more aware of the importance of the Parliamentarian and the necessity of that office being nonpartisan. A great majority of the matters in the Contract, including amendments to our founding document, the

Constitution, were considered and processed by the Judiciary Committee. Having the advice and counsel of Charlie was crucial to that endeavor. It was a difficult and heated period of leadership transition, and, through it all, Charlie maintained his impartiality, professionalism, and desire to preserve the integrity of the proceedings of the House.

Little did I know at that time that I was to find myself in a position several years later when I would need Charlie's help in an even more difficult and heated endeavor—the consideration of the impeachment of the President of the United States. Throughout those long and agonizing proceedings, Charlie was always in the background with answers to questions, and a nonpartisan professional attitude. He was a crucial part of the proceedings in the Committee and on the House floor.

During the entirety of my working relationship with Charlie, he has taken his job seriously, but not himself. He is a man with a wonderful sense of humor. That quality helped both him and the Members get through some difficult times. I know Charlie is a great fan of the one-liner. One of his favorite comedians was the late Henny Youngman of "Take my wife—Please" fame. I have it on good authority that when Henny Youngman visited the House, Charlie was given a gift of two of his joke books which Henny autographed, and which Charlie keeps right next to his House Manual. It has been said that, occasionally, Charlie has grabbed the wrong volume and based some of his rulings on the Henny Youngman book, but I doubt that.

We frequently throw around clichés in this body, but, in this case, I say without a doubt that Charlie Johnson has served his country well. He has also served well the Members of this House, the House as an institution, and the American people with distinction and dignity, and I honor him here today.

I wish Charlie and his family a long and happy retirement.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO MARIANNA
RAFTOPOULOS

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 3, 2004

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Marianna Raftopoulos and thank her for her dedication to Colorado as a Moffat County Commissioner. Her dedication and tireless efforts have done much to ensure a promising future for her constituents. As Marianna moves on in her career, let it be known that she leaves behind a terrific legacy of commitment to the people of Moffat County and the State of Colorado.

Marianna attended Grand Junction High School and graduated from University of Colorado at Boulder. Before being elected county commissioner in 1996, she was the public relations director for Memorial Hospital in Craig, Colorado. Marianna's commitment to her community includes serving as chair of Colorado Works Allocation Committee, Yampa Valley Economic Development Commission, Yampa Valley Partners, a member of NACO Telecommunication & Technology Committee, and extensive involvement with United Way. She is also a past president of Colorado Counties In-

corporated, serving on the General Government, Tax & Finance, Transportation & Telecommunication, and Health & Human Services Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to Commissioner Marianna Raftopoulos before this body of Congress and this nation, and to congratulate her on an outstanding career of public service. Her selfless dedication to her community and the people of Colorado as a Moffat County Commissioner is truly remarkable. I wish her and her husband John all the best in their future endeavors.

FALLEN HEROES

SPEECH OF

HON. CHARLES F. BASS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2004

Mr. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor LCpl Peter J. "P.J." Sora, Jr. of Londonderry, New Hampshire. He bravely served the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division as an assistant machine gunner and was awarded the National Defense Service Medal. Lance Corporal Sora made the ultimate sacrifice in service to his country when the military vehicle he was riding in tragically rolled over during a training accident at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, in Twentynine Palms, California on May 4, 2004.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring LCpl Peter J. "P.J." Sora, Jr. and our other service men and women who have courageously given their own lives in order to protect and defend the democracy we enjoy in America and to extend the freedoms that come with democracy to those who live in fear and oppression worldwide.

HONORING THE TUSKEGEE AIR-
MEN AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION
IN CREATING AN INTEGRATED
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

SPEECH OF

HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 1, 2004

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 417 honoring the Tuskegee Airmen and their amazing contributions during World War II and the impact they had in creating an integrated United States Air Force.

As the first African-American combat unit in the Army Air Corps, the Tuskegee Airmen helped shatter stereotypes by fighting for freedom both abroad and here at home. Through their heroism in the skies above North Africa and Europe, the Airmen demonstrated that African-Americans could be effective members of the military. Completing over 500 missions during the war, the Tuskegee Airmen destroyed over 250 enemy aircraft without losing a single American bomber. Their individual and collective acts of courage helped pave the way for the desegregation of the Army in 1948.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize four members of the Tuskegee Airmen with ties to my hometown of Baltimore,