

CAPE VERDE NATIONAL
INDEPENDENCE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleagues, my fellow Rhode Islanders, and our Cape Verdean community in celebration of Cape Verde Independence Day.

Every country is rich with its own history and unique story of how it achieved democracy, and Cape Verde is no exception. In 1462, Portuguese settlers arrived at Santiago Guinea and founded the first permanent European settlement city in the tropics. In 1951, Portugal changed Cape Verde's status from a colony to an overseas province in an attempt to blunt growing nationalism. Five years later, a group of Cape Verdeans, led by Amilcar Cabral, and a group from neighboring Guinea-Bissau organized the clandestine African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, PAIGC, demanding improvements in economic, social, and political conditions in Cape Verde and Portuguese Guinea. This important action formed the basis of the 2 nations' independence movements.

By 1972, the PAIGC controlled much of Portuguese Guinea despite the presence of the Portuguese troops, but did not disrupt Portuguese control in Cape Verde. It was not until the April 1974 revolution in Portugal that the PAIGC and Portugal signed an agreement providing for a transitional government composed of Portuguese and Cape Verdeans. On June 30, 1975, Cape Verdeans elected a national assembly, which received the instruments of independence from Portugal on July 5, 1975, making it the official national day of independence.

For its first 15 years of independence, Cape Verde was ruled by one party. Then in 1990, opposition groups came together to form the Movement for Democracy. Working together they ended the 1-party state and the first multi-party elections were held in January 1991.

Cape Verde enjoys a stable democratic system where 4 parties share seats in the National Assembly. It is an example to other nations as to what can be accomplished. These democratic changes meant better global integration as the government has pursued market-oriented economic policies and welcomed foreign investors.

Today there are close to 350,000 Cape Verdean-Americans living in the United States, almost equal to the population of Cape Verde itself. These Americans hold a special right since the Cape Verdean Constitution formally considers all Cape Verdeans at home and abroad as citizens and voters. Thus, July 5th is a day of independence for all Cape Verdean-Americans as well as those in Cape Verde.

Recently we celebrated the independence of our own country, reflecting on the personal sacrifices many have made to ensure our own freedom and democracy. It is fitting we do the same with Cape Verde and I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing all those

with direct and ancestral ties to Cape Verde a happy Independence Day.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO THAYAS RAY BRAY

• Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, on July 20, 2004, the city of Moss Point, MS will take time out to honor and pay tribute to one of its own, Mr. Thayas Ray Bray. In fact, his accomplishments are so numerous and his dedication to his community so strong, Moss Point officials have designated this Saturday as "Thayas Ray Bray Day." Along with his wife, Joyce Bray, and two sons, Jerry and Keith, and their families, I want to take this opportunity to join the City of Moss Point in congratulating Mr. Bray on all of his hard work.

Mr. Bray's service to his local community and fellow citizens has taken on many different forms over the years. He has served as president of YMBC, MPAC, Exchange Club, and JC. He has owned Moss Point Sonic since 1976, as well as Lucedale Sonic, and has co-owned Jackson County Funeral Home. I understand he was the original organizer of Moss Point Impact, and a member of the Mississippi Restaurant Association. All the while, he has remained an active member of First Baptist Church of Moss Point.

By giving back so generously to the community through volunteer time, he has truly made a difference in the lives of others. Leading youth in Boy Scouts and Little League baseball are prime examples of his dedication. He has supported local activities such as the high school band and football, Gulfport Special Olympics, and YMBC Golf Tournaments. He also has been an active supporter of the fight against Muscular Dystrophy, and has supported both the American Cancer Society and American Heart Association.

As you can see, his contributions to the City of Moss Point are far-reaching and have benefited the community in many different ways. So again I want to thank Mr. Bray for his contributions to his community, and I want to join my friends and neighbors in applauding and commemorating his service.●

OPPORTUNITY VILLAGE'S 50TH
BIRTHDAY

• Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, I wish to honor and celebrate an organization that has made an unbelievable impact on my home State of Nevada.

Today marks 50 years since Opportunity Village became part of the Las Vegas landscape. In 1954, a group of families joined together to support the needs of children with mental retardation. In the 50 years that followed, Opportunity Village grew to become the largest private provider of vocational training, employment, advocacy, and recreation for people with disabilities in Nevada.

Words cannot adequately describe the difference that Opportunity Village

makes in the life of a person with severe disabilities. The organization gives individuals long-term work experience, marketable job skills, independence, and increased self-esteem. Those benefits are the very least that they provide.

However, Opportunity Village's accomplishments have not been made single-handedly. In Las Vegas, there are many wonderful partnerships between Opportunity Village and community businesses and agencies. Among them are America Nevada Corporation, ATC-Vancom, the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the U.S. General Services Administration, the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, the Las Vegas Valley Water District, Bellagio, Harrah's, Station Casinos, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bank of Nevada, Bechtel, Boyd Gaming, the City of Henderson, the Clark County Health Department, Desert Automotive Group, GES, the Internal Revenue Service, KNPR, Krispy Kreme Doughnuts, McCarran International Airport, New York-New York Hotel and Casino, Southwest Gas Corp., Wells Fargo, and Wynn Resorts. I applaud all of Opportunity Village's partners for their vision and their commitment to providing opportunity for so many individuals.

I had the chance to see one of the Opportunity Village partnerships in action and it was then that I truly understood the tremendous impact they make each and every day. Opportunity Village clients serve more than 60,000 meals per month at the Nellis Air Force Base (AFB) dining facility and also operate the postal service center at the base. On one of my visits to the base, Senator REID and I joined Opportunity Village workers in serving lunch in the mess hall.

It was incredible to see individuals with disabilities working and interacting with our military. Not only were they serving food and smiles, but they were contributing to our Nation and the Air Force with their work.

Their accomplishments and contributions are quite remarkable given the hurdles they have faced all their lives.

Eddie was diagnosed a mentally retarded child in the first grade. Those who know him say he has a genuine and caring personality, a child-like shyness, and the focus of a genius. Eddie began working with Opportunity Village in 1986 where his specialty was packaging and product assembly. Following his mastery of that program, Eddie moved on to janitorial services in the work center. Later, he moved to another promotion as a room attendant in a hotel. Finally, he was promoted to mess attendant at Nellis AFB where the results of his hard work are easily seen in the respect he has earned from his coworkers and supervisors.

Jamie was diagnosed with mild mental retardation when he was a child. He refused to let the diagnosis slow him