

called Lawsuit Abuse Reduction Act. The legislation will have a significant, adverse impact on the ability of civil rights plaintiffs to seek recourse in our courts.

This bill would remove a court's discretion to impose sanctions on attorneys for frivolous lawsuits under Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. By removing a court's discretion to impose sanctions, this bill would make Rule 11 sanctions mandatory.

Mandatory Rule 11 sanctions are a failed experiment. When they were mandatory—between 1983 until they were repealed in 1993—they were disproportionately used to harass civil rights plaintiffs bringing claims to enforce civil rights laws. It would be a mistake to turn back the clock on civil rights.

If such mandatory sanctions are reinstated, what can we expect? The movie, based on the first sexual harassment class action, *North Country*, perfectly illustrates the problem. *North Country* is based on the real life case of Lois Jensen, who in 1975 was a single mother on welfare and took a job working in the taconite mines of northern Minnesota. In that male-dominated work force, she endured extreme sexual harassment and her employer refused to do something about it. After 25 years and three trials, Jensen finally prevailed in 1998. Landmark litigation takes time. And landmark causes of action, often referred to as novel, should not be confused with frivolous claims.

If H.R. 420 passes, motions for Rule 11 sanctions will be disproportionately brought by big corporations against individual plaintiffs to harass, drag-out, and make the costs of their litigation more expensive.

It's important not to make landmark civil rights cases more difficult. Mandatory Rule 11 sanctions would make such compelling cases more difficult by allowing big companies even more opportunities to out-litigate the individual. H.R. 420 will require a mandatory sanctions regime that would apply to civil rights cases and massively skew the playing field against injured victims. I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on H.R. 420, and support the Democratic alternative.

TRIBUTE TO ROSA PARKS

SPEECH OF

HON. JOSEPH K. KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 26, 2005

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the passing of Rosa Parks.

Rosa Parks took a stand by refusing to leave her seat for a white man on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. She forever changed the course of our nation with one simple act of courage and stubbornness. By keeping her seat in the front of the bus she started a movement which would ensure that African-Americans and other minorities would never again be required to take a back seat to bigotry, prejudice, and racism.

The significance of Rosa Parks' life was not limited to the civil rights movement, as can be evidenced by her reputation with people of all ages. She is just as important to children today as she was to the millions she inspired with her singular act of defiance in 1955. She led the life of a true heroine, refusing to bow

down to intolerance, inequality, and narrowmindedness.

She was the voice of courage, the personification of bravery, and the catalyst of change. She sat down when the world told her to get up, inspiring millions to demand equality. She leaves a legacy built upon strength, pride, and hope. She was the beginning of a movement that sought tolerance and equality not only between blacks and whites, but also between people of all backgrounds.

Rosa Parks remains a role model for us all, having demonstrated the importance of perseverance and principle. I was and always will be proud to say that she was, for at least a portion of her life, a Michigander. She will be missed, but her memory will never fade.

TRIBUTE TO ROSA PARKS

SPEECH OF

HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 26, 2005

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Rosa Louise Parks, a woman whose life was exemplified by quiet courage, strength and conviction.

During her 92 years, Ms. Parks impressed all that all of us with a sense of the possible. It was possible to change Alabama segregation law by refusing to give up a bus seat, it was possible to change Jim Crow across America, and it was possible to do all this in a non-violent fashion.

Her refusal to rise from her seat and subsequent arrest led to the 381-day Montgomery Bus Boycott and to the eventual repeal of the segregation laws of the South. Her individual act of defiance is considered by many to be the beginning of the civil rights movement.

It would be easy to remember Rosa Parks solely for this event. However, her legacy is so much more. I will remember her as someone who was deeply committed to equality. I will remember her as someone who never sought out personal attention, yet whose great actions attracted admiration from all quarters. I will remember her as a role model and as a great American.

However, without a doubt the best way that we can honor the life of Rosa Parks is not by erecting monuments or parading up and down the main streets of American towns and cities. This is not to say that we shouldn't honor her in this manner, but rather, we should continue her life's work and try to live by the ideals that she shared with all of us.

We should encourage grassroots democracy for positive change in our districts. We should encourage non-violent action, to resist intolerance and discrimination much as Ms. Parks did. Above all, we should encourage Americans to continue the fight for civil rights and equality.

The freedoms we enjoy today are because of the sacrifice of exceptional individuals like Rosa Parks who stood up to oppression and changed history. But Rosa Parks's greatest legacy is that she taught generations that acts of courage can precipitate great change.

Let us celebrate the lifetime achievements of a truly remarkable woman.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SCHOOL ENERGY CRISIS RELIEF ACT

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 28, 2005

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the School Energy Crisis Relief Act to provide relief to school districts that have been hit hard by rising fuel costs. This bill is widely supported and has received endorsements from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, American Federation of Teachers, National School Boards Association and Council of Great City Schools. I would especially like to thank all 26 of my colleagues who have signed on as original cosponsors.

We all know that gas prices were skyrocketing for months before the major hurricanes disrupted fuel production on the Gulf Coast. While some school districts anticipated rising energy costs and budgeted accordingly this year, many others will fall short of the funding needed to meet these costs. As a result, precious education dollars are being spent to fill the tanks of school buses and to heat classrooms. States with areas with wide-open spaces, including much of the West and Midwest, will be especially hard-hit. Schools in urban areas will bear the brunt of additional fuel costs in order to heat the Nation's oldest, and often least energy-efficient, school buildings.

It's not hard to understand why school buses are gas-guzzlers. According to an article in the *USA Today*, a Fairfax County school district in Virginia which transports 110,000 students daily pays \$2.19 a gallon for diesel fuel. A typical school bus takes 65 gallons. That makes the price of a full tank \$142, and it doesn't go far in a vehicle that gets 7 miles per gallon.

The dramatic increase in gas prices therefore imposes a significant burden. For example, in my district, the Colton Joint Unified School District's buses rack up over a million miles a year. In September, the district paid \$2.72 for a gallon of diesel fuel, which 2 years ago cost under a dollar. As a result, the district is spending at least \$300,000 more to fuel its buses than a couple years ago.

Many school districts across the country are already operating on shoe-string budgets this year. These price hikes threaten to exhaust the budgets of those caught unprepared for higher fuel costs. Recent news reports indicate that some schools are implementing drastic measures to keep their fuel costs under control. In Kentucky, for instance, record gas prices have caused a number of schools to cut back to 4 days of classes a week. Last month, most of Georgia's schools cancelled classes for two days in an effort to conserve fuel.

The School Energy Crisis Relief Act authorizes the Secretary of Energy to issue energy assistance grants to help the poorest school districts across the Nation offset these unexpected and challenging costs. If we don't help school districts cover these energy costs, children won't just get left behind—they will be left at home! At a time when fuel price hikes are creating budget shortfalls for many school districts, America cannot afford to compromise our children's education.

I urge my colleagues to support the School Energy Crisis Relief Act. This legislation will