

CONGRATULATING LOVIE SMITH AND TONY DUNGY ON BECOMING THE FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN HEAD COACHES OF NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE TEAMS TO QUALIFY FOR THE SUPER BOWL

SPEECH OF

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2007

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the historic meeting of two wonderfully talented African-American coaches, Lovie Smith of the Chicago Bears and Tony Dungy of the Indianapolis Colts. These two men have made history by leading their teams to Super Bowl XLI. February 4, 2007 will remain a significant day in the pantheon of sports history, as well as American history. Prior to this date, there was never an African-American coach at the helm of a team that qualified for the big game. It is important for us to recognize the historic nature of this meeting—the meeting of two extremely successful coaches and two very talented teams—because the victories celebrated on this date extend far beyond the length of the football field and speaks to significant changes from a time when Black players and coaches were not allowed to join White sports leagues. The leadership of African-American coaches who pride themselves on their Christian ideals and coach using positive reinforcement demonstrate the resilience, perseverance and desire to partake in all aspects of the American dream of people of African descent. I urge my colleagues to support the resolution to H. Res. 90, congratulating Lovie Smith of the Chicago Bears and Tony Dungy of the Indianapolis Colts on becoming the first African-American head coaches of National Football League teams to qualify for the Super Bowl.

We should pause to commemorate this historic event, but it is important that we remain critical while celebrating. Though there have been significant improvements in racial inequities in the NFL, there is still much work to be done. Frederick Douglass “Fritz” Pollard became the first African-American head coach of an NFL team in 1921 with the Akron Pros. It would be another 70 years before another head coach joined the ranks. Throughout the 1980s, there was not a single African-American head coach in the NFL, in fact all head coaches were Caucasian. In 1989, Art Shell joined the Oakland Raiders as head coach. He would be joined by two more Black coaches in the years that followed while the number of African-American assistant coaches continued to grow. The stark contrast between the number of Black coaches, always very few in numbers, and the number of Black players has sometimes drawn critical attention from those outside of the Black community; however, it was extremely difficult to avoid discussing these discrepancies in the coming weeks. I hope that as we move forward and continue to remember the first meeting of two great African-American men and continue to push for true equality, throughout the ranks, in the NFL and in other professional leagues.

Football, in America, has always been more than just a game. It is the American game, deeply entrenched in the fabric of our society and a symbol of our culture as Americans.

Travel to any city or town throughout the Nation and you will see people of all races, ethnicities, religions, socio-economic classes and social backgrounds discussing, celebrating and playing football, sharing in the losses and successes of their favorite teams. While tremendous progress has been made, especially in the area of racial equity, there is still work to be done in extending equality to all Americans.

RECOGNIZING TYLER COVERDELL FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 8, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Tyler Coverdell, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 75, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Tyler has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the years Tyler has been involved with Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Tyler Coverdell for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

CONCERNING VENEZUELA'S PASSAGE OF THE ENABLING LAW

HON. CONNIE MACK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 8, 2007

Mr. MACK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to call attention to a gathering storm in our own backyard.

Last week, Venezuela's self-proclaimed Communist President Hugo Chavez was granted free rein to accelerate changes in all areas of society by presidential decree.

This action, granted to him by the National Assembly, which is completely under his control, is putting Venezuela on a rapid path toward dictatorship.

Venezuelan lawmakers unanimously gave President Chavez sweeping powers to legislate by decree and impose his radical vision of a socialist state in the mold of Castro's Cuba.

The new law gives Chavez more power than he has ever had in 8 years as president.

And, based upon his own words and statements, he plans to use this power to nationalize many privately held companies, snuff out political dissent, and remove term limits, thereby allowing him to serve indefinitely as president.

Madam Speaker, some of my colleagues on both the left and the right argue that Chavez was democratically elected and that he and his quest for his Bolivarian Revolution are no threat to the Western Hemisphere.

For example, last week in response to the new law, Assistant Secretary of State for the

Western Hemisphere Tom Shannon said, and I quote from an interview with the Associated Press, “the enabling law isn't anything new in Venezuela. It's something valid under the constitution. As with any tool of democracy, it depends how it is used. At the end of the day, it's not a question for the United States or for other countries, but for Venezuela.”

But I vehemently disagree with this statement and the hands-off-approach-to-Chavez sentiment. The mere holding of elections is not enough.

Venezuela with Chavez at the helm is on a glidepath towards a dictatorship disguised as a democracy.

Madam Speaker, we should all be concerned about the direction President Chavez is taking his country. Any leader who tries to tighten his grip on power by destroying the institutions of democracy, curtailing press freedom, and using his office to intimidate pro-democracy opponents is setting in motion a dangerous process with potentially ominous consequences.

During almost every speech Chavez gives, he says it is “socialism or death.” Madam Speaker, it is time to realize Chavez must be taken seriously. We must refocus our efforts in Latin America and defeat this gathering storm.

INTRODUCTION OF FOUR NATIVE AMERICAN BILLS

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 8, 2007

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, I am today reintroducing four bills that would make various changes in current laws regarding Native Americans. Each of these bills is identical to one that I introduced last year, and each is identical to a bill passed by the Senate in 2005 or 2006 on which action was not completed before the end of the 109th Congress. I am reintroducing them today so that their consideration can resume without further unnecessary delay.

One bill corresponds to S. 1231 as passed by the Senate on December 14, 2005. Entitled the “National Fund for Excellence in American Indian Education Amendments Act,” it would amend the Act to provide four key improvements intended to assist the Fund in achieving self-sufficiency. First, it would provide initial seed money to the Fund for three fiscal years to facilitate operations. In addition, it would authorize the Secretary to provide funding for operational costs of the Fund on a reimbursement basis. It also would authorize the Board to appoint the Chief Operating Officer rather than mandating the Secretary of the Board serve as the Chief Operating Officer. And it would increase the administrative cost cap of ten percent currently in place to 20 percent for one year, 15 percent the following year and then decreasing back to 10 percent.

Another bill corresponds to S. 1758, as passed by the Senate on September 26, 2005. It would amend the Indian Financing Act of 1974 with respect to loan guaranty and insurance to: (1) authorize the Secretary of the Interior to guarantee or insure loans to both for-profit and nonprofit borrowers; and (2) allow all or any portion of a guaranteed or insured loan, including its security, to be transferred by the lender by sale or assignment to