

forests healthy and as a result generate revenue for future projects, counties, and schools.

The achievements of this act over the last few years are positive and substantial. This law should be extended so it can continue to benefit the forest counties, their schools, and continue to contribute to improving the health of our public lands.

If we do not work to reauthorize this act, all of the progress of the last 6 years will be lost.

Schools in timber dependant communities will lose a substantial part of their funding. These school districts will have to start making tough budget decisions such as keeping or canceling after school programs, sports programs, music programs, and trying to determine what is the basic educational needs of our children.

Next, counties will have to reprioritize road maintenance so that only the essential services of the county are met because that is all they will be able to afford.

Congress needs to act now in order to ensure a future for rural schools and counties.

ZIMBABWE

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, the events of the last few days in Zimbabwe are outrageous and warrant universal condemnation. It is time for the government of Robert Mugabe to cease its repressive and divisive actions and to allow Zimbabweans to pursue their hopes for legitimate political change and opportunity.

Since Sunday, the world has watched with horror and outrage as the Mugabe government has cracked down on legitimate opposition, detained 50 Zimbabweans attending a peaceful prayer meeting outside of Harare, and brutalized opposition leaders and ordinary citizens alike.

A protestor was shot and killed. Morgan Tsvangirai, the leader of the Movement for Democratic Change, has been badly beaten and suffered severe head injuries. Lovemore Madhuku, the leader of the National Constitutional Assembly, reportedly has a broken arm and numerous other wounds. Many of their colleagues in opposition remain in Harare hospitals.

The Government has responded to the outrage prompted by these attacks on human rights and legitimate expression with characteristic bluster. Once again, we are told that the opposition is to blame. Once again, we hear ominous warnings that the opposition is "set to pay a very heavy price, regardless of who they are." Meanwhile, the true cause of the strife—President Mugabe's disastrous rule—remains unaddressed. To the dismay even of his own party, he has declared his intention to run for a new term in office in 2008.

These events are shocking, but sadly they do not come as a surprise. For years, it has been increasingly apparent that the Mugabe government is interested only in its own survival and enrichment, not the welfare of the peo-

ple of Zimbabwe. International observers—including the United States—concluded that the Presidential election of 2002 and the parliamentary elections of 2005 were not free and fair.

The State Department reported just last week in its country report on human rights in Zimbabwe that: "The government engaged in the pervasive and systematic abuse of human rights. The ruling party's dominant control and manipulation of the political process through intimidation and corruption effectively negated the right of citizens to change their government."

Meanwhile, the Government's corruption and mismanagement has brought the Zimbabwean economy to the brink of ruin. Estimates place inflation at a world high of 1,700 percent, and the IMF forecasts that this could pass 4,000 percent by the end of the year. Unemployment stands at 80 percent. Poverty rates are soaring. Zimbabwe's economy is shrinking faster than any other country in the world that is not at war.

I am heartened, though, that this political and economic deterioration has been met with growing calls for change.

Within Zimbabwe, the opposition to Mugabe is showing resilience and courage. Factions of Mugabe's own party have indicated that they want a transition in 2008, and ordinary citizens are increasingly voicing their hopes for a new chapter.

Beyond Zimbabwe, frustration with the Mugabe government is mounting. The head of the African Union has expressed his embarrassment at the situation in Zimbabwe. South Africa and the Southern African Development Community, which have been slow to criticize Zimbabwe in the past, seem to be losing patience. The United States, European Union, and the United Nations were swift in condemning this latest outrage and have been consistent in their calls for change.

The United States must continue to stand strongly against the Mugabe government's abuses of power in Zimbabwe. We must join with our European allies, the United Nations, and—most importantly—the countries and institutions of the region to press for positive change in Zimbabwe. That means a peaceful democratic transition in 2008 and support for economic growth and opportunity—including the lifting of sanctions—once the dark cloud of Mugabe's rule is lifted and Zimbabweans are able again to reach for the new horizon they deserve.

I call on President Mugabe to immediately release all political detainees and repeal the ban on political rallies, to end the use of violence and torture in the jails, permit a free media and abide by the rule of law. His government must also urgently address the humanitarian crisis that has put the mass of his population in dire need of assistance.

Zimbabwe is a nation rich in history and rich in resources. Its talented people have known great hardship just as they have achieved great heights. When Robert Mugabe became President

over a quarter century ago, there was great hope. Zimbabwe had emerged from British rule, claiming its freedom and its future for itself.

Sadly, the freedom and opportunity for which Zimbabweans fought have been eclipsed in the last decade by repression and uncertainty. Instead of peaceful self-determination, we see Zimbabweans intimidated and beaten in the streets. Instead of the responsible management of Zimbabwe's state institutions, we see state-sanctioned corruption, violence, and property seizures. Instead of economic self-sufficiency, we see what was once one of Africa's most promising economies in a free-fall.

Yet I am confident that the people of Zimbabwe will once again claim for themselves a better future. As they seek to hold their leaders accountable, as they try to rebuild their lives and their country, they must know that they have a strong and steady friend in the United States. The events of the last few days—and the Mugabe regime—must belong to the past, and the United States must work with the international community to help all Zimbabweans forge a better future.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING MAUI ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, INC.

• Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I offer my congratulations to Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc. for 42 years of outstanding community service. A private, non-profit organization dedicated to helping individuals and families in need, MEO was chartered as a community action agency on March 22, 1965, by Federal mandate under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.

For more than four decades, MEO has served the people of Maui, Molokai and Lanai through a number of poverty fighting initiatives. By providing employment training and placement, business education for low income entrepreneurs, and micro-enterprise loans, MEO has helped countless citizens get back on the path to financial independence.

Moreover, MEO has helped citizens lead fuller, richer lives by providing housekeeping for seniors, allowing them to remain in their homes, and providing specialized transportation for seniors, persons with disabilities and children to doctor's offices, grocery stores, and schools. In addition, they have helped former inmates reintegrate and become productive members of the community.

The hard work and dedication of Maui Economic Opportunity's staff and volunteers have earned national recognition by receiving the prestigious Excellence in Community Action award from the Community Action Partnership. To this I would like to