

Since the poverty threshold for a family of four is about \$20,000, and the income of the Jones family is above that level, the Jones family is officially "not poor."

Now let's say their neighbors the Smith family also is a family of four. The Smith family also has a total of \$30,000 in annual income. But the Smith's income comes from multiple sources—\$18,000 from wages, plus a total of \$12,000 in housing, health care, food stamp, and earned income tax credit benefits provided by taxpayers. Under current rules, none of the \$12,000 in taxpayer benefits provided the Smith family is counted as income. So since their \$18,000 in wages falls short of the \$20,000 poverty threshold for a family of four, the Smith family is "officially" poor.

This makes little sense.

The "Poverty Measurement Improvement Act" would direct the Census Bureau to report on poverty as measured three ways. First, Census would retitle the current official poverty rate as the "partial benefits poverty rate," which is what it is. The second measure, called the "full benefits poverty rate" would include means-tested food, housing and health care benefits as income. The final measure, called the "full benefits and taxes poverty rate," would also add in the value tax credits like the EITC, and subtract taxes paid.

This legislation would help us better understand both who is poor and the effectiveness of current antipoverty benefits. And it would put income from earnings and income from government benefits on the same level, so that the Jones and Smith families would be recognized as having the same disposable incomes, regardless of its source.

More needs to be done to help families lift themselves out of poverty. That means pressing on with more of what works to reduce poverty. As we saw in the progress against poverty following the 1996 welfare reform law, that starts with promoting more full-time work instead of welfare dependence. And it includes promoting more healthy marriage, which also reduces poverty and welfare dependence for the long run.

But we also should do a better job understanding how current antipoverty efforts are working, and the effect of means-tested benefits in improving the incomes and wellbeing of families. The "Poverty Measurement Improvement Act" I am introducing today does just that, and I urge all Members to support it.

IRAN SANCTIONS ACT OF 1996 AMENDMENTS

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2007

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I opposed this bill, much as I opposed the "Iran Freedom Support Act" last year, because it threatens the united international diplomatic front that's needed to block Iran's nuclear weapons program. Instead of sanctioning Iran, this bill will sanction allies in Europe and Asia.

I do not object to efforts to punish "sham" subsidiaries that are set up specifically to evade U.S. sanctions on Iran. However, the U.S. government already has this authority under the International Emergency Economic

Powers Act and the language in H.R. 957 is clearly meant to extend sanctions to overseas subsidiaries that are legally and legitimately incorporated outside of the United States. Passage of this bill will set back our diplomatic efforts with regards to Iran and only serve to diminish our global influence on this very important issue.

RECOGNIZING THE STONE GARDENS HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 31, 2007

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I rise today to applaud the efforts of Mr. Albert Blitstein and the Mitzvah Corps of Stone Gardens in Menorah Park who decided to commemorate the Holocaust with a living memorial. With donations from Mr. Blitstein's children and the residents of Stone Gardens, a memorial consisting of six weeping cherry trees representing the six million men, women, and children of the Jewish faith who perished during the Holocaust, was planted in a peaceful and reflecting setting.

A published author, Mr. Blitstein provided the quote that was placed on the commemorative plaque:

This living memorial is dedicated to the six million Jews who died in the Holocaust. It is to verify that we will never forget them. The six living trees planted in their memory are called weeping cherry trees. Although six decades have passed since the Holocaust, we still weep for them.

I join with the residents of the Stone Gardens, family, friends and the Stone Garden Mitzvah Corps in dedicating the Stone Gardens Holocaust Memorial. As a world community may we never forget the lives of those who died and may their memories never stray far from our minds as we affirm that we will never forget.

On behalf of the United States Congress and the residents of the Eleventh Congressional District, Ohio, I salute the Stone Gardens Mitzvah Corps for their dedication and generosity in the construction of this great memorial. May the Stone Gardens Holocaust Memorial be a lasting reminder and a living tribute to those who perished in one of the world's greatest tragedies.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF SCLC

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 31, 2007

Mr. RUSH. Madam Speaker, we are here tonight to pay tribute to an historic American institution. This August the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the SCLC, will celebrate its 50th anniversary.

The SCLC is one of the oldest and most influential civil rights organizations in American history. From its storied beginning, under the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the SCLC has practiced the cornerstone of its founding principles: nonviolence in the fight for civil and human rights.

Originating from the Montgomery Bus Boycott that began after Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat, the SCLC has been a stalwart in the struggle for equal rights and human dignity for all.

The bus boycott organized under the leadership of Dr. King and Ralph David Abernathy signaled to Black America the beginning of a new phase in the long struggle in what has come to be known as the modern civil rights movement.

Bombings, threats, and arrests could not dissuade church leaders from all over the Deep South from coming together and organizing under a simple mission and platform.

At its first convention in Montgomery, Alabama in August 1957, the Southern Leadership Conference adopted the current name, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the newly-formed group issued a document declaring that civil rights were essential to democracy, that segregation must end, and that all Black people should reject segregation absolutely and nonviolently.

Founders at these early meetings adopted nonviolent mass action as the centerpiece of their strategy against segregation and inequality. Additionally, the organization made the determination to open up the SCLC movement to people of all races, religions, and backgrounds.

At that time in American history there were many of us who questioned solely using nonviolent protest as a tactic in the fight for civil rights. However, today there can be no question that the strategy was effective.

One of the most dramatic moments in America history occurred during a SCLC campaign in Birmingham, Alabama. On May 2, 1957 more than 1,000 Black school children joined in the peaceful demonstrations where hundreds were arrested. The following day, 2,500 more students showed up, and Public Safety Commissioner Bull Connor met them with police dogs and high-pressure fire hoses.

That evening, television news programs showed the nation, and the world, scenes of fire hoses knocking down school children and dogs attacking individual demonstrators, who had no means of protecting themselves.

Public outrage led the Kennedy administration to intervene more forcefully. A settlement was announced on May 10, under which the downtown Birmingham businesses would desegregate and eliminate discriminatory hiring practices, and the city would release the jailed protesters.

During this turbulent episode, the brutal response of local police and "Bull" Connor stood in stark contrast to the nonviolent civil disobedience of the activists, and public sentiment came down on the side of justice.

Madam Speaker, I take pride in doing my part to continue the work of Dr. King and other prominent SCLC members and moving the civil rights agenda forward.

Tonight my colleagues and I would like to salute the efforts and hard work of the SCLC. The world is a better place today because of their actions throughout these past fifty years. I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations and gratitude for the legacy the SCLC has established, here in America and around the globe.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ALBIO SIRES

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 31, 2007

Mr. SIRES. Madam Speaker, on July 30, 2007, I missed rollcall vote Nos. 758, 759, 760, 761, and 762. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall 758, "yes" on rollcall 759, "yes" on rollcall 760, "yes" on rollcall 761, and "yes" on rollcall 762.

REAUTHORIZING THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL PROGRAM

SPEECH OF

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2007

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2707 which acknowledges the necessity to continue funding the Underground Railroad Educational and Cultural Program. Reflecting upon the nearly four hundred years of slavery, another century and a half of severe violations of American civil rights and continued hardship experienced by minorities everywhere, I feel that this measure warrants our support. The time has come for tolerance and understanding to triumph over racism and bigotry.

Our society is one that was formed by those who sought and dared to believe in freedom. Though these individuals committed transgressions of their own, they set the cornerstone for a union of states based on eminent documents and progressive ideals. Just to whom the notions of liberty, prosperity and happiness applied, would have to be settled in an undiplomatic nature, yet thankfully and virtuously the rights of all men prevailed. Before the Compromise of 1820 was agreed upon, a network now known as the Underground Railroad began to take form between those that wanted to gain and to give the ability to live freely.

Now legally armed with the rights and privileges endowed to all men and women, we find our society struggling to remain committed to not only remembering the plight of those who struggled to gain their freedom but what freedom explicitly implies. The struggle of protecting one's civil rights and the capability to act in one's best interests now faces our nation. We have developed as a people but must not stop or even slow our progression forward. The themes of our Founding Fathers must ring in our ears and our souls as loudly today as they did through the fights for our national and personal independence.

This legislation provides continued support for organizations such as the National Underground Freedom Center and the magnificent professionals who are dedicated to improving our community through education. I would like to thank my colleagues for their time and continued support for this institution of which I am proud to have been an original co-sponsor of its founding legislation back in 1999. This leg insures that The Underground Freedom Center and other institutions of the like will con-

tinue to educate and inspire generations to come.

RESOLUTION FROM THE CITIZENS OF WASHINGTON, CONNECTICUT

HON. CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 31, 2007

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, when we invaded Iraq in March of 2003, we were told that we did so only to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction and to enforce compliance with a United Nations resolution. Now, four years and over 3,600 American lives later, we are mired in a bloody civil war that only grows more intractable every day. Despite overwhelming evidence and an increasingly broad public consensus, the Bush Administration refuses to yield to the reality that our presence in Iraq is not only failing to accomplish our goals, it is hindering them.

So many of the reasons and explanations given to justify this war have proven woefully misleading, were prefaced on faulty intelligence and inaccurate information and—in some cases—wishful thinking. The grave threat posed by Saddam Hussein's burgeoning chemical, nuclear and biological weapons arsenal is now believed never to have existed. Iraq's oil infrastructure, which was supposed to fully fund the country's post-war reconstruction efforts, remains severely damaged and in some cases, actively supporting the Iraqi insurgency. We have been saddled with a war that now actively fuels the forces of terror it was waged to prevent.

While the war's greatest cost lies in human lives, it continues to drain our Nation's treasury at an alarming rate. Nearly \$600 billion has been spent toward the Iraq war thus far, and we continue to expend tens of billions of dollars in funding it every month. Equally disheartening is the estimated \$10 billion in missing Iraq reconstruction funds that simply cannot be accounted for.

Meanwhile, the Bush administration refuses to abandon its hopelessly naive belief that major progress is just around the corner in Iraq, despite the conclusions of its own interim report released days ago on the troop "surge" strategy, which found only 8 of 18 major benchmarks had been met by the Iraqi government to date.

As the secret NSA wiretapping program and his use of so-called "signing statements" have demonstrated, the President's irresponsibility in office extends beyond calamitous military decisions to Iraq to an outright disregard for the rule of law. Tragically, this has led an unprecedented number of Americans to lose their trust and belief in government. Where Americans once believed that government had the potential to affect meaningful change, they now see it largely as a tool for cronyism, corruption and deception at the hands of their leaders.

I have seen and heard that disillusion firsthand from my constituents, neighbors and friends. The outcry against our wrongheaded strategy in Iraq and the President's disregard for the rule of law comes not merely from opinion makers, retired generals and former cabinet members, but from the very people

who elected us to represent them in our Nation's capitol. My office receives dozens of phone calls every week from people so distraught by this President that they can see no other choice but to call for his impeachment.

On April 2, 2007, a coalition of concerned citizens from Washington, Connecticut banded together to pass a resolution calling for the President's impeachment. These citizens include Janet Buonaiuto, John Buonaiuto, Sandra Canning, Ken Cornet, Bill C. Davis, Diane Dupuis, Rita Frenkel, Paul Frenkel, Helen Gray, Diana Hardee, Joe Mustich, Mildred Pond, Davyne Verstandig. These conscientious residents of Connecticut's Fifth District presented me with their resolution and asked me to raise their concerns to the full House. I commend them for their activism and concern, and wish to register their views before Congress here today.

Thankfully, with the new Democratic majorities here in both houses of the 110th Congress, we now have the ability and the will to take a stand against this administration and its reckless conduct at home and abroad. We will continue to confront this President at every turn on his mismanagement of this war, and we will not cease to challenge the corrosive secrecy and corruption that his lack of leadership has spawned. While the battle is proving to be a hard-fought one, I am confident that we can bring the will of the people to the people's house of Congress.

IN HONOR OF DR. JOHN GARANG DE MABIOR

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 31, 2007

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I rise in honor of the late Dr. John Garang de Mabor, known to those close to him as "Dr. John." Dr. John was president of the Government of Southern Sudan and chairman of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army, SPLM/A. Yesterday was the second anniversary of Dr. John's sudden death in a helicopter crash.

Dr. John led a heroic life, leading the South of Sudan through the decades-long war with the tyrannical northern government eventually to peace, culminating in the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement on January 9, 2005. The southerners saw him as their founding father, their leader, their inspiration. Dr. John transformed his guerilla movement into an organized rebel force, and then into a political party, and eventually into a partner in the coalition government with the North. His influence over the South's destiny was clear; his leadership set the country on a track toward an agreement to share Sudan's vast wealth and power.

While Dr. John's passing deeply saddened us all, those who desire a bright future for Sudan hold in their memories the strength of Dr. John's character, and his strong and abiding belief that Sudan will indeed one day find peace.