

membership to genuinely question the motives of their colleagues in the Chair. At a time when rancor and tension exist in the House chamber and when the parties increasingly view each other with suspicion, the rule acts to compound the negativity. I know that the rule was a good faith effort to infuse integrity and transparency into the voting process—laudable goals that are not lost on anyone here; however, I guess what I'm saying is, its time to go back to the drawing board. I think all of us on this panel would be happy to share our thoughts—in detail—should the leadership choose to take our recommendation.

I would just like to take a moment to speak about MIKE McNULTY, the man who was in the Chair during Roll Call 814. For quite some time but I would say now, more than ever, what is lacking in Washington is the willingness to admit mistake, acknowledge error, to be candid and forthright about a misstep. The irony, I think, is it's a rare person who doesn't find such an admission refreshing. However, our custom and practice tends to be: "blame the other guy." Not MIKE McNULTY. He is special, truly exceptional, not just as a member and presiding officer, but as a human being. And while his character and integrity has long been recognized on both sides of the aisle, I think this incident has both magnified and confirmed this perception. We all know it was a most difficult moment for him. But he earned our respect not only for his apology to the membership, but for his conduct and candor with the committee as well. The Nation needs more MIKE McNULTYS in Congress, and we're all grateful, and have been better served, by his willingness to resume his duties in the Chair. I just want to reiterate here today, the respect and admiration the members have for him.

It should be noted that during his interview with the committee, Republican whip, ROY BLUNT told us that after August 2, he personally reached out to Mr. McNULTY and told him that he "should feel confident in his respect that the Members have for him personally."

Similarly, the Republican Leader BOEHNER went to the floor on August 3—the next day—and said: "I accept the regrets offered by my friend from New York. Having been in the Chair myself, I can understand how it can happen. He and I are friends. He is, in fact, one of the fairest Members who could ever be in the chair."

And certainly, this view is echoed on the Democratic side of the aisle, as stated by our own Majority Leader, STENY HOYER, who said: "I believe Mr. McNULTY is an extraordinarily honest person of high integrity . . . He's a wonderful human being."

And while I commend Mr. McNULTY for his honesty and his courage, I also want to suggest that even in error, he has made a contribution to this institution. As I've said in at least one of our prior meetings, none of us here sought this assignment, but I believe strongly that this committee's report is a benefit to the institution.

I am also hopeful that an even greater benefit has accrued. Many outside this committee viewed it with skepticism and cynicism. One the one hand, we would be the product of a political stunt, a microcosm of the partisanship and rancor in the House; on other hand, certainty that we would never meet, would never investigate or deliberate, and certainly never report.

To revisit Ornstein's article, he further stated,

[If we have] a House as deeply divided along partisan lines as it was in the previous Congress—and a House with no common denominator of trying to do something to solve the problems we have at home and abroad . . . if we can't [reduce this divide and distrust], the clear and urgent needs of the country will be left to fester.

The issues we've examined in this committee—most notoriously, a botched motion to recommit on a bill that never became law—do not compare to the issues we're currently facing as a Congress, and as a Nation. However, in light of Mr. Ornstein's ominous warning, I am hopeful that what we've done here is to demonstrate that we've succeeded at what the people want and deserve—which is accountability, responsibility, and transparency; and the commitment, the wherewithal and the humility to put our heads together to solve the problems that confront us.

RECOGNIZING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 25, 2008

Mrs. CAPPS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments on 40 years of success.

The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments, SLOCOG, is an association of local governments in the San Luis Obispo County region. Its members include all 7 cities Arroyo Grande, Atascadero, Grover Beach, Mono Bay, Paso Robles, Pismo Beach and San Luis Obispo, as well as unincorporated areas of the County. SLOCOG provides transportation, public works, and environment planning and funding for the region, and serves as a forum for the resolution of regional issues.

Over the course of four decades, San Luis Obispo County residents have looked to SLOCOG to lead our community forward. They have adopted a regional infrastructure plan, and helped certify several important projects, including the Cuesta College siting plan, the Lopez Lake water project and numerous community sewer and water plans. In addition to preparing the region's infrastructure plan, SLOCOG works in coordination with local transportation agencies in the region, including the San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority, the Air Pollution Control District, and the California Department of Transportation.

Since 1998, I have had the pleasure of working closely with SLOCOG to successfully address important regional priorities, such as the designation of Highway 1 north of the city of San Luis Obispo as a National Scenic Byway and All American Road, and securing Federal funding for such high priority regional transportation system improvements as the widening of Highway 46 East and the Santa Maria River Bridge, and bikeways, boardwalks and streetscapes throughout the region.

During its 40 years of existence, SLOCOG's activities have touched every aspect of the lives of the citizens of the Central Coast. I rise to express my appreciation and gratitude to its board members and staff, and applaud them

for the work they continue to do to improve the economic well-being and quality of life of the residents of San Luis Obispo County.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I call upon my colleagues to join me in congratulating SLOCOG's past accomplishments and in wishing them the best of luck in the many years to come.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SIMON LAKRITZ

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 25, 2008

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to the life of Simon Lakritz. Mr. Lakritz was devoted to his family and to his hometown of Hanford where he was an educator, city councilman, and mayor. He passed away on September 17th, 2008.

Simon Lakritz was born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1930. He moved with his mother, brother and sisters to Arizona in the 1940s. He attended Tucson High School from 1945 to 1949 and the University of Arizona from 1949 to 1953.

Upon graduation from college, Mr. Lakritz entered the U.S. Army, stationed in California at Fort Ord. He served during the Korean war at the European Army central command, in Heidelberg, Germany. Before leaving Germany, Lakritz married Mary "Mimi" Elizabeth Lyon at Fort Ord, and both traveled to Europe to begin married life overseas.

After returning to the states, Simon obtained his master's degree in Latin American history and pedagogy from the University of Arizona.

Soon after receiving his degree, Simon and his family moved to California and began his first job at Hanford Joint Union High School as a history teacher. He proved himself to be a popular educator.

Simon went on to a career of 37 years teaching and serving as coordinator of Federal programs for disabled and economically disadvantaged students at Hanford High School until his retirement in 1994.

While he led a successful career in education, Simon had a passion for public service and believed strongly in representative democracy.

During his 25 years on the city council, he served five times as mayor. In 2002, he was elected to the Hanford Joint Union High School District board of trustees, and also served as a mentor to teachers at Chapman University.

Simon volunteered his time to community organizations, including the NAACP, the Kings County Commission on Aging, of which he was a co-founder, and the Hanford Taoist Temple Preservation Society.

Simon Lakritz was preceded in death by his wife Mary "Mimi" Elizabeth in 1991. Surviving are his four children, Andrew Morris Lakritz, Jeffrey Lakritz, Bradley William Lakritz and Thomas Spencer Lakritz, and his four grandchildren: Ania, 11, of Arlington, Va.; Emily, 18, Noah, 12, and Mia, 10, of San Rafael.