

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. TODD RUSSELL PLATTS**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 3, 2009*

Mr. PLATTS. Madam Speaker, due to my attendance at a U.S. Navy change of command ceremony, I regret that I could not cast recorded votes for roll Nos. 80–85. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on roll Nos. 80, 81, 82, 84, and 85, and “no” on roll No. 83.

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE H.  
WILLIAMSON, CHIEF DEPUTY  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**HON. DANIEL E. LUNGREN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 3, 2009*

Mr. DAVID E. LUNGREN of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to George H. Williamson who is retiring after 31 years of service as a criminal prosecutor. George was my Chief Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division during the eight years that I was privileged to serve the citizens of California.

When you think of George Williamson, the first thing which comes to mind is that he is a “lawyer’s lawyer.” Were Black’s Law Dictionary to put pictures next to their definitions, you would find a picture of George next to the definition of “criminal prosecutor.” What else could you say about a man who has tried over 70 homicide cases? It is not surprising that he was named “Prosecutor of the Year” by the California District Attorneys Association and received the “Outstanding Advocacy Award” from the Association of Government Attorneys in Capital Litigation. The National District Attorneys Association inducted George into the “Home Run Hitter’s Club” in recognition of his stature as one of the finest litigators in the United States. He was meticulous in his legal preparation, persuasive in his courtroom presentation and unequivocally ethical in his dealings with all parties.

In his work supervising our Criminal Division in the California Department of Justice, George was not only responsible for managing 450 attorneys and staff, but he personally handled major case litigation as well. In this regard, he was responsible for one of the most significant public corruption cases in California history, where he obtained a conviction against the former California Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Let me also say that one of the most admirable leadership qualities displayed by George was his role in mentoring young lawyers in the California Department of Justice. Although George may be retiring, he leaves behind him a legacy of fine lawyers who include District Attorneys within their ranks.

It was an honor to work with George H. Williamson during my tenure as Attorney General. He will always have my friendship and respect, and I wish him the best with his endeavors.

## TRIBUTE TO MR. BENNIE GOODEN

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 3, 2009*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize the life and legacy of Mr. Bennie Gooden, a dedicated civil servant who contributed so much to the lives of others in Mississippi. His dedication to public service began with his tenure as a teacher in Coahoma Agricultural High School and later Dean of Men at Coahoma Community College. Afterward, he transitioned to being the first Project Director for the HeadStart Program in Coahoma and Tunica Counties.

Madam Speaker, not only did Bennie serve in the arena of education, but he was an advocate of affordable housing for all. In 1969, he led the Chapel Hill Baptist Church in the ownership and development of a 100-unit housing development, Chapel Hill Heights. He was a Certified Real Estate Manager, CREM, and managed multi-family housing units throughout the Southeast in a career which spanned 35 years. One can understand why his name, particularly in the Mississippi Delta, is synonymous with “housing.”

Madam Speaker, Bennie amassed many honors and was involved with an impressive list of religious, civic and community endeavors in his life, which include: being a member of the Coahoma County Branch NAACP for more than 50 years, past President of the Aaron E. Henry Community Health Services Center, Inc., he served on the Advisory Board of the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission, he was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to serve on the Board of Directors of the National Institute for the Building Sciences, and he received the Medgar Evers Award for Outstanding Civic Community Leadership, and the Coahoma County Branch NAACP Spirit and Freedom Award.

Without Bennie Gooden’s support, I would not be in the position I am today. Madam Speaker, I’m grateful for his presence in my life and the lives of Mississippians all around our great state.

RECOGNIZING THE PROFESSIONAL  
EXCELLENCE OF THE UNITED  
STATES TRANSPORTATION COM-  
MAND AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS  
OF THE MILITARY AND CIVIL-  
IANS WHO SERVE ON TRAVIS  
AIR FORCE BASE

**HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 3, 2009*

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the hard work, and professionalism of General McNabb and the fine men and women of the United States Transportation Command. Their accomplishments are unmatched as they delivered 2 million passengers, 3 million short tons of cargo, and nearly one and a half billion gallons of fuel worldwide in order to meet Department of Defense needs.

I am also proud to include the patriotism and total dedication to excellence exhibited by

the military and civilian members of my district who played a vital role in these accomplishments as they performed their duties on Travis Air Force Base.

As you know, Travis Air Force Base is the largest Air Mobility base in the country and serves as the principal staging area for the Pacific Theater. As such, Travis plays an invaluable strategic role in our airlift programs.

With President Obama’s decision to increase military operations in Afghanistan, Travis’ role will increase in prominence. Travis is host to the 615th Contingency Response Wing and is also home to the David Grant Medical Center which is the primary lead for the Craig Joint Theater Hospital at Bagram Air Force Base.

Since the 2005 Mobility Capability Study, Department of Defense Officials have not been able to agree on the baseline inventory requirements for the C-17. I have long been an advocate of keeping the production line open to address future requirements and have supported supplemental appropriations to reach the baseline levels for this multi-role platform required by the Air Force and Transportation Command for mission accomplishment.

I look forward to working hard in this Congress to provide our brave men and women with the tools they need to continue to keep our nation secure while also being able to respond to national emergencies.

FREEDOM FOR OMAURIS RONDON  
RIVERO

**HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 3, 2009*

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about Omauris Rondon Rivero, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

The Cuban people continue to suffer a repression unprecedented in the history of our hemisphere. For 50 years Fidel and Raul Castro have imposed a brutal, murderous and unscrupulous totalitarian tyranny on the Cuban people.

Last May, Mr. Rondon was thrown into a dungeon after being accused of “defamation of government institutions, heroes and martyrs” by the dictatorship. It is unclear what Mr. Rondon had said, but the dictatorship sends people to the gulag even for the slightest of “verbal transgressions.”

Mr. Rondon is not known to be a member of any human rights group, opposition political party or independent civil society organization. But he said something that bothered the criminal thugs who oppress the Cuban people. He was “sentenced” to a year in the gulag. Reports from within the political prisons have pointed out that Mr. Rondon has suffered continuous and serious beatings inside the degrading gulag where he is locked up. In totalitarian Cuba the cries of the tortured are never heard; we can only imagine the horrors Omauris Rondon is being subjected to.

Thousands, like Mr. Rondon, languish in Cuban dungeons simply for their support of freedom, democracy and the Rule of Law, or for other acts that are considered criminal only