

As chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Sonny recognized these needs and proposed a cost-effective education incentive that would be popular with college-age youth. Sonny's vision won high praise, with one admiral saying it "reversed expectations of failure and planted the promise of success" in our post-Vietnam era military.

One official at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point wrote:

Transitioning to the all-volunteer force was the most important change the Army made since World War II. The Montgomery GI Bill was the policy vehicle that allowed this to happen.

I should also note that the law made National Guard and Reserve personnel eligible for educational benefits for the first time in history. It reflected Sonny's understanding of the importance of our reserve components and our national defense picture. The role of our Guard and Reserve today is even stronger, and I'm confident that the Montgomery GI Bill has been key to that success.

Over the past quarter century, more than 2.6 million veterans have used the Montgomery GI Bill. It has made a difference in the lives of the men and women who have pursued higher educational opportunities that otherwise might not have been available. It is also one of the foundations upon which our military continues to stand as the greatest military power in history.

POVERTY AND FARM WORKERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, as the cofounder of the Congressional Out of Poverty Caucus, I rise today to continue talking about the crisis of rising poverty devastating families in every single congressional district all across our country.

Mr. Speaker, I also rise today to recognize Linda Lee and Geraldine Matthew. These two extraordinary women are among a group of farmworkers who spent their lives working in the swampy fields bordering Lake Apopka in Florida. Their backbreaking work helped to provide the bulk of the winter season produce on the eastern seaboard.

In the early 1990s, a settlement was negotiated with the large farming corporations where 20,000 acres of land were sold for roughly \$100 million. A negligible amount of 200,000 was allocated for the 2,500 farmworkers, and most were simply given pink slips, despite decades of service on the farm.

For years, these workers were exposed to a chemical mixture of carcinogens and other contaminants as planes crop-dusted the fields. Now these workers are suffering from an array of diseases that have been linked to long-term pesticide exposure. Their children suffer from defects cause by prenatal exposure to harmful contaminants.

These women have worked for over a decade to bring attention to their

cause, while many of their former colleagues, unfortunately, have passed away. Although these women are desperately seeking some relief and good health, what they ask for more than anything else is their dignity. Dignity is the contribution of their community to feeding this Nation and the sacrifices they made in doing so.

I would, therefore, offer my profound and earnest gratitude to these incredible women, to their community, and to farmworkers across the country, for theirs truly are the hands that feed us. Mr. Speaker, now more than ever, we need to redouble our efforts to reward hard work. We must work to be sure that Americans who work all of their lives have something to show for it.

This does not just affect Linda Lee or Geraldine Matthew. We cannot ignore the fact that millions of Americans have seen their retirement savings decimated, their pensions short-changed, and their wages stagnant or falling.

Even in the face of a rising tide of poverty and an economy with high unemployment, the Tea Party-led Republicans continue their efforts to slash programs which protect the health and well-being of millions of low-income and working poor families.

In the coming weeks and months, we will begin to see the impact of the, quite frankly, immoral cuts to vital unemployment benefit extensions as thousands of people, thousands of people across our country who are struggling to find a job will be thrown off of unemployment benefits, thrown off, kicked off the rolls.

Some of them may be lucky enough to find work, but far too many will be suddenly cut off with nearly nothing, nothing to keep them from falling behind into poverty. They will have been left out and left behind.

We may disagree on how to help families in need and workers who are struggling find work access needed health services or feed their children, but we can all agree that leaving struggling families completely cut off of unemployment insurance with nowhere to turn for help is not the American way.

When Republican politicians protect tax cuts for millionaires, we must be very adamant about protecting the working poor. When Tea Party Republicans fight to protect tax writeoffs for corporations and Big Oil, we must fight to protect hardworking Americans.

When Republican Tea Party members continued to expend their energy protecting the dividend gains on investments, we must fight to protect Linda Lee and Geraldine Matthew, women who have worked their entire lives and are left with nothing to show for it.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately there are some who continue to support policies for the 1 percent where profits, rather than people, matter. We need a jobs bill for those who are desperately in need of a job, and we need to help with their support for themselves and their families. So we do need a strong safety net

to act as a bridge over these troubled economic times. It's critical to reaffirm that the needs and the aspirations of the poor and the working poor are really important and critical for us to address where they too are aspiring to be part of the middle class.

I want to thank Congresswoman JACKSON LEE for her support because I know she cares about Linda Lee and Geraldine Matthew and all of the issues that she continues to fight for.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I come back to the floor again—this is my 13th time, really—doing a tour of the United States highlighting the locations where we currently store high-level nuclear waste in this country.

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With the end of this location, I will have placed in the RECORD the position of our U.S. Senators in each one of these States on where they stand on either keeping high-level nuclear waste in their State at their location or helping us move to a centralized repository at Yucca Mountain in the desert in Nevada.

So let's go to the location. Here's Yucca Mountain, which is, by law, the site, based upon the 1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act and the amendments passed in 1987. So I'm comparing it to a place in Virginia very close by, the North Anna Nuclear Generating Station on North Anna Lake, which is a recreational lake that many people in Virginia know.

Yucca Mountain right now has currently no nuclear waste on site. What about North Anna? North Anna has 1,200 metric tons of uranium, spent nuclear fuel, on site.

If we had nuclear waste in Yucca Mountain, where would it be? It would be stored 1,000 feet underground. Where is the nuclear waste stored at North Anna? It's stored above the ground in pools and in casks.

If it was at Yucca Mountain, as designed by law, where would it be in comparison to the groundwater? Well, it would be a thousand feet above the water table because Yucca Mountain is in a desert. What about North Anna? Well, it is 53 feet above the groundwater. And as you can see from the photo, it's right next to a major lake in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

If the waste was at Yucca Mountain, how far would it be from the largest body of water in the area? It would be 100 miles from the Colorado River. Again, from the photo, you see that North Anna is right next to the lake.

So let's look at the Senators from the Commonwealth of Virginia, and in their time serving, what's their position on where the nuclear waste should be? Should it stay in the Commonwealth of Virginia or should it move to the desert underneath a mountain?