

Today I would like to take a moment to recognize two exceptional friends of mine on the other side of the aisle, Republicans who enriched my time in Congress and brought honor to this body. I rise today to speak of the service of RICHARD HANNA and REID RIBBLE. These two gentlemen represent small town America—rural Upstate New York, in the case of RICHARD; and Green Bay, Wisconsin, and surrounding environments in the case of REID.

They have a number of similarities. They are both hardworking, dedicated Members of this Chamber, who leave after only three terms. They are fiercely dedicated to their family, and family concerns figured heavily into their decision not to seek reelection.

They have both been very successful businesspeople, building their own enterprises; taking pride, in the case of REID, in the employment and terrific service from a roofing company; and RICHARD, founding and growing a construction enterprise.

Both are accomplished in a broad range of other areas. RICHARD is a pilot who travels across the country piloting his own plane. REID recently completed a motorcycle trip from Alaska, all the way across North America to the Florida Keys; most of it with his wife riding along with him.

They are both what normally would have been regarded as conservative Republicans. That description really belies their approach and their value to the institution. In some respects, they may actually entertain some libertarian leanings. But they believe in less interference, whether it is liberal overreach or zealotry of the other extreme. RICHARD is equally disdainful of government telling women what they and their doctors should do with women's bodies.

They are both deeply concerned about budgets and the economy—core Republican values in the past—with REID famously, in an exchange with some of his Tea Party constituents, indicating that they weren't fair to their grandchildren by refusing to even consider raising the gas tax to meet our transportation needs, and he made an eloquent case.

RICHARD has been a partner with me for the last two Congresses as we work with transportation stakeholders to try to inform one another and find common ground, working forward on solutions to common problems of rebuilding and renewing America.

I fully respect the decision of both gentlemen to follow their instincts and their families to the next phase of their careers, but their decision to end congressional service weakens this institution. The fact that we could not find enough incentive to keep them here, being productive and adding their wisdom and energy, says something about the challenges that this Congress faces in the years ahead.

Serving with them has been a remarkable pleasure. They have helped both Republicans and Democrats func-

tion a little better in a largely dysfunctional climate. They have both given good advice to their Republican colleagues, which I hope, as they leave, will find greater resonance with those who are left.

We are going through a great period of a national civics lesson, where Americans discover that elections have consequences, that facts really should matter, and voters need to be very discerning about the decisions they make.

RICHARD HANNA and REID RIBBLE have helped, through their service, to advance that civics lesson. I will be grateful to them for as long as I am a citizen, and I look forward to years of friendship in the future and maybe ways to advance that national civics lesson that they speak to so eloquently by their service.

□ 1030

WRDA CONFERENCE REPORT:  
WATER FOR CALIFORNIA; FIRE  
PROTECTION FOR TAHOE

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

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, the conference report on the Water Resources Development Act is the product of many hours of good faith negotiations between the House and the Senate and between Republicans and Democrats. Like any compromise, I don't like everything that is in it, but the net effect is an important step forward in protecting against the devastation of future droughts in California and catastrophic wildfire that threatens Lake Tahoe.

It provides \$335 million for desperately needed surface water storage. It opens a new era of hatcheries to provide for burgeoning populations of endangered fish species. It adds flexibility to the management of New Melones Reservoir and enables water transfers to assure that water can be more efficiently moved to where it is the most needed. It adds strong protection to northern California area of origin water rights. It expedites the review and approval of new projects. It updates flood control management criteria to make better use of our existing reservoirs.

I particularly want to highlight the provisions related to Lake Tahoe. For many years, we have spent enormous resources to adjust drainage in the basin to improve water clarity at the lake. The Senate version of the measure, which was introduced this session by Senators HELLER and FEINSTEIN, continued this effort; but the Heller-Feinstein bill neglected the most immediate environmental threat to Lake Tahoe, and that is catastrophic wildfire. The Senate bill had no provision for forest management, specifically for fire prevention.

The number of acres burned by wildfire in the Lake Tahoe Basin has in-

creased each decade since 1973, including a tenfold increase over the past decade. Eighty percent of the Tahoe Basin forests are now densely and dangerously overgrown. They are dying. At lower elevations, there are now four times as many trees as the land can support. Modeling by the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit warns that, in two-thirds of the forest, conditions now exist for flame size and intensity that are literally explosive. If a super fire of the size we have seen in other parts of the Sierra were to strike the Tahoe Basin, it could decimate this lake and its surroundings for a generation to come.

For this reason, Congressman AMODEI and I introduced a bill focused on fire prevention. This measure was specifically designed, after extensive input from fire districts throughout the Tahoe region, to reduce excess fuel before it burns. It provides for expediting collaborative fuel reduction projects consistent with the Lake Tahoe Land and Resource Management Plan, and it calls for funds generated by timber sales and other fee-based revenues to stay in the Tahoe Basin to provide for further fuels management and other improvements.

This was falsely portrayed by left-wing activists in the region as a substitute for the Senate bill. As Congressman AMODEI and I made clear repeatedly, it was designed to supplement that bill and fill a glaring deficiency that ignored the single greatest environmental hazard to the lake.

I am very pleased to note that the critical provisions of both bills—for lake clarity and fire prevention—are now in the conference report, thanks to bipartisan negotiations between House and Senate negotiators, most notably by Senator FEINSTEIN and House Majority Leader McCARTHY.

Unfortunately, in the last 48 hours, Senator BOXER has threatened to blindside this effort and destroy the fruit of these years of labor and endless hours of negotiation. She has threatened to assemble enough votes, not to put forward a positive and credible plan of her own to address these critical needs but, rather, to ruin the painstaking negotiations of many others just as they are coming to fruition.

In the last 4 years, the King Fire, the Butte Fire, the Rough Fire, and the Rim Fire have destroyed more than 1,000 square miles of forest in the Sierra Nevada. If we don't restore sound forest management for fire prevention in the Tahoe Basin now, the next fire could reduce its magnificent forests to cinders and clog the lake with ash and debris for decades to come. We can only pray that wiser heads prevail in the Senate and that this conference report is speedily adopted by both Houses and signed into law by the President.

MY TENURE AS RESIDENT  
COMMISSIONER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from