

respectfully submit this extension of remarks on behalf of Sgt. Henry Johnson's candidacy for the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Sgt. Henry Johnson, an African-American soldier from Albany, NY, performed extraordinary acts of bravery during World War I. However, he has yet to receive the honor and recognition he deserves from the Nation he so heroically served.

According to the Department of the Army, on the night of May 15, 1918, near Verdun, France, then Private Johnson, a member of the all-Black 369th Infantry Regiment, gallantly fought off an attack from an enemy patrol of at least 12 German soldiers. On that night, Johnson killed four German soldiers, wounded numerous others, rescued a wounded comrade, and captured a stockpile of weapons. He accomplished this feat by using grenades, rifle fire, and engaging in hand-to-hand combat with both the butt of his rifle and his French bolo knife. In the midst of the fighting, Johnson was severely wounded.

To acknowledge and reward this act of valor, the French Government honored Johnson on May 24, 1918—just 9 days after the engagement. Citing "his magnificent example of courage and energy," it awarded Johnson with the Croix de Guerre, for all intents and purposes the highest strictly military honor a foreign soldier can receive. Last year, 78 years after the fact, the Department of Defense finally awarded Henry Johnson the Purple Heart. Mr. Speaker, he deserves the Congressional Medal of Honor.

During this celebration of African-American History, I need not remind you of the great injustices that took place in our Nation during the years of legalized racial segregation. No one disputes that the values for which American stands were undermined during that period. I simply urge that those who bravely fought for those values, in spite of the then-existing practices of American society, receive their just reward.

The fact is that Sergeant Johnson and many other African-American soldiers performed heroic service during World War I. To date, only one of these men has received the Medal of Honor—and that was awarded 73 years after his death on the battlefield. This is wrong. We must correct this blemish on our history.

If we as a Nation are going to realize, as President Clinton noted in his State of the Union, that our "diversity is our greatest strength," we must settle the errors of our past. If we are going to "give all of our citizens, whatever their background, an opportunity to achieve their greatness," we must honor those who have already earned great distinction.

To be sure, as our colleague, the gentleman from Oklahoma, reminded us just a week ago, "Government can't ease all the pain" of racial division. But when Government can effectively act, it should; when Government has been part of the problem, it must be part of the solution. I therefore urge all the Members of this House to do justice to the memory of St. Henry Johnson and support the effort to award him the Congressional Medal of Honor.

## DISASTER ASSISTANCE LOANS

HON. PATSY T. MINK

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 1997

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation that will help our Nation's farmers survive disastrous outbreaks of plant viruses and diseases which virtually wipe out entire crops. This bill would ensure that crop losses resulting from plant viruses and other devastating plant diseases are included under the crop insurance program as well as the noninsured crop assistance programs and that agriculture producers who suffer these losses are eligible for emergency loans.

The current U.S. Department of Agriculture crop insurance and noninsured assistance programs do not specify which crops are eligible for insurance. This makes our farmers very vulnerable to administrative reviews on whether a particular crop is eligible for assistance usually with negative results.

Under current law, crop diseases are not eligible for low-interest emergency loans. Agriculture producers can only qualify for emergency loans when crop damages are caused by adverse weather conditions and other natural phenomena which have caused severe physical property damage or production losses. Since the USDA does not consider plant disease-virus a natural disaster, farmers are limited to USDA funds-resources which are due to weather as causing production or physical losses.

In Hawaii, nearly 300 farmers are suffering from the disastrous effects of the Papaya Ringspot Virus [PRV]. The disease produces lumpy, tasteless fruit and severely reduces production and eventually kills the plants. Papaya farmers estimate that they will incur \$27 million of losses due to the loss of these PRV-infested trees.

A similar situation is taking place in the Southwest and Southeast United States where wheat producers are battling the Karnal bunt fungus. This disease gives a fishy odor and taste to flour made from affected wheat. In one State alone, producers have already lost an estimated \$25 million.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation's farmers are the envy of the world. They provide us with the highest quality food and ensure that we will always have a stable food supply. We need to provide financial assistance when they are hit by disaster, natural or disease. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this legislation and help our farmers survive these natural borne disasters.

## COMMEMORATION OF MALIBU CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS DAY

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 1997

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate February 14 as Childhood Cancer Awareness Day in the city of Malibu, CA. I would also ask that you join me in honoring the American Cancer Fund for Children and its

founder Steve Firestein for their diligent work helping children. The tireless work of this organization has not only highlighted the issue of childhood cancer in the United States, but has provided a positive influence on hundreds of young lives effected with cancer. I am pleased to offer my highest congratulations for the deep sense of community the American Cancer Fund for Children has given to the city of Malibu. I would also like to commend the city of Malibu as it adds itself to the growing number of communities who have adopted a Childhood Cancer Awareness Day in the Los Angeles area. I am very proud to have community-based efforts of this caliber in my district, and am thrilled to have the opportunity to bring such accomplishments to the attention of this body.

Each year approximately 10,000 more American children will be diagnosed with cancer, making cancer the leading cause of death by disease among children in the United States. Motivated by these losses the American Cancer Fund for Children has worked tirelessly to heighten community awareness of childhood cancer. All too often the costs incurred in the treatment of cancer far exceeds the average family's financial resources. The American Cancer Fund for Children has established itself to provide financial assistance to such families who find themselves experiencing financial hardship with a child undergoing a bone marrow transplant. The organization understands the importance of communities coming together to provide social services to those families in need, not wanting one child in need of treatment to be turned away because their families could not afford them. As the demands for cancer treatment grow each year, the organization has also taken on greater challenges to meet the demand for patient and family services to help ensure the quality of care to better promote the chances of survival. These services have provided an assortment of patient psychosocial services designed to nurture self-esteem, encourage peer interaction and better generate special patient communication. The Main Street Children's Services Program has received praise from across the United States for their efforts in providing gifts via visits for the emotional support of the children. These efforts have lifted the spirits of children nationwide through the simple gift of giving with a human touch.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me and our colleagues in recognizing the accomplishments of the American Cancer Fund for Children in cooperation with the city of Malibu, in highlighting childhood cancer with the establishment of a Childhood Cancer Awareness Day.

## "TOWNSHIP OF THE YEAR" BESTOWED ON MAINE TOWNSHIP

HON. HENRY J. HYDE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 1997

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, please permit me to share with my colleagues the recent news that Maine Township, IL was named our State's "Township of the Year."

Bestowed annually by the Illinois Township Association, the award was presented to Maine Township for its very innovative programs for senior citizens. The award follows a