

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

INTRODUCTION OF HOUSE RESOLUTION TO ISSUE PAUL ROBESON COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a resolution, with Mr. Pallone, expressing the Sense of Congress that the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee should recommend to the Postmaster General that a commemorative stamp be issued in honor of Paul Leroy Robeson's centennial birthday, April 9, 1998.

Few Americans can surpass the contributions of such an extraordinary man. Robeson was a fearless advocate for the cause of human dignity and justice, both in the United States and throughout the world. As an actor, singer, athlete, lawyer, and activist, Paul Robeson inspired the spirit and lives of millions of people.

The United States Government desperately tried to silence Paul Robeson during the repressive McCarthy era. The State Department revoked his passport for some pro-Soviet statements, and the House Committee on Un-American Activities attacked him. But Paul Robeson continued to speak out on behalf of freedom and civil rights.

To commemorate the centennial of his birthday, April 9, 1998, the Paul Robeson 100th Birthday Committee launched a national grassroots petition drive to ask the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee to issue a Paul Robeson postage stamp. The Campaign collected nearly 90,000 letters and signatures in behalf of this request. Numerous Members of the 105th Congress also signed letters to the Citizens Advisory Committee in support of the stamp.

Despite this outpouring of enthusiasm, the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee turned down the request. Our Resolution expresses the Sense of Congress that our country should honor Paul Robeson with the issuance of a commemorative stamp.

Thousands of people will mark Robeson's 100th birthday with celebrations across the country. But this accomplished American may not be well-known to younger generations. The issuance of such a stamp would not only be a fitting tribute to Paul Robeson, but also an excellent opportunity to educate new generations about his contributions to the arts, politics, sports, and the movement for social justice.

I urge Members of Congress to join me and Congressman PALLONE in honoring Paul Robeson and his legacy in American history by cosponsoring this Resolution.

HONORING THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. COMMUNITY CENTER

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center in Houston as it celebrates its 30th anniversary on April 4, 1998.

Begun by dedicated Vista volunteers and community leaders in the 1960s, the King Center has grown into a multi-purpose facility that meets a wide range of needs, including day care, delinquency prevention, education, food and clothing emergency assistance, housing for the homeless, assistance for abused or neglected babies and children, and senior citizen support groups.

I salute all who have contributed to the success of the center, especially Executive Director Madgelean Bush and the center's founders who had the vision, courage, and commitment to turn their dream into reality: Elizabeth Hardesty, the late Eugene Hardesty, the late Moses Leroy, Dr. Hardy Loe, Bob Newman, the late Barbara Russell, Ben Russell, Millie Simon, and the late Will Simon.

The history of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center dates to a definitive study on low-income housing in Houston conducted in the early 1960s by the Houston Council on Human Relations. This study found pockets of intense poverty in Houston. As a result, the Council sponsored Vista volunteers to work in these areas. One of these volunteers was Bob Newman, who was assigned to the third ward area. To help him, he was assigned a volunteer support team from the First Unitarian Church.

After several months in the neighborhood, Bob Newman arranged for a group of individuals to discuss the development of a community center. After a series of Tuesday night meetings, the founding group of seven rented a store front building at the corner of Sampson and Drew, and what was then known as the Sampson Street Center began its work. On the night that Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, the group met and voted to change the center's name to honor the fallen civil rights leader.

While the outside volunteers provided invaluable assistance, they quickly realized that the Center would only succeed with the support of neighborhood residents. Only residents truly understood the problems and could bring about the changes needed to solve them. So they began an active and successful outreach to build support in the neighborhood. An election was held to establish a neighborhood board of directors. And residents began organizing and staffing programs that addressed their immediate needs.

The priorities of the center echoed the many concerns of the neighborhood—the needs of children who needed a place to go while their parents worked, or teenagers with seemingly

no direction and nothing to do, of adults who needed the chance at further education and job training.

Grandmothers, aunts, and sisters, staffed a day care center. Neighborhood cleanup and rat eradication programs were started. Volunteers began an adult education program aimed at an eventual GED. Upholstery and ceramic classes were offered.

It quickly became obvious that volunteers could only do so much and that staffing would be required. A grant, arranged by Bob Woodson of the Unitarian Service Committee, made it possible to hire Ms. Ollie Hollies to work the Day Care Center, and shortly after, Madge Bush was hired to become the director of the King Center.

Space, always a problem, became critical as the programs grew. Houston had become eligible for Model Cities monies, and in 1974 a classroom building was built on King Center land with a Model Cities grant. This added space increased the day care program's capacity. Over the years, other programs were established: a halfway house for youngsters in trouble; food baskets and food collections for the needy; toy collections for children; and a senior citizen support program in a separate building with kitchen facilities that the seniors support themselves through quilting and Friday night fish dinner sales.

In 1990, the Mickey Eland Crisis Nursery was added to provide 24-hour-care for abused or neglected children and babies. Other vital services include programs such as sports, tutorial and counseling to combat delinquency and drugs and an alternative school, supported by the Houston Independent School District, for elementary age students who are having difficulties in a regular school environment. In addition, construction is under way on 16 family housing units in a project that will also include counseling, job training, and other services to help families.

Today, through the dedication and hard work of Madgelean Bush, the staff, and volunteers, the King Center is alive and well. In every challenge, Madge sees hopes for a solution, and she inspires others to join her in the effort. I salute everyone involved with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center throughout its 30 years of service and thank them for all that they have done to make Houston a better and more caring place.

U.S. OIL RESERVES—BUY HIGH,
SELL LOW?

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Energy is about to sell off more than \$207 million worth of oil owned by U.S. taxpayers from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. At today's low prices, that means the United States would dump about 20 million

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barrels of oil on a market already awash with oversupply.

Congress created the Reserve in 1975 to avoid the devastating effects on our national security and our economy that could be caused by the kind of shortages that occurred when other oil-producing countries stopped producing in order to drive up the price of oil and gas.

Last year, Congress directed the DOE to sell over \$200 million worth of oil—essentially covering the cost of operating the Reserve. But shouldn't we think about the wisdom of proceeding with this plan at this time?

Isn't it foolish to liquidate federal oil reserves now, when oil and gas are selling at very low prices? Even if the price of oil rebounds this year, we would still be selling these federal assets for far less than the \$27 to \$30 per barrel it cost us to acquire them. Secretary of Energy Federico Pena agrees, noting, "This is the worst time to be selling oil out of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve." Good economics would suggest that we buy oil for the Reserve now—not sell it.

On March 26, the Senate accepted an amendment to its supplemental appropriations bill to rescind the sale. The House bill passed earlier this week does not rescind the sale. On behalf of taxpayers who stand to lose millions in this unwise liquidation proceeds, I would hope that the House conferees will accept the Senate position in Conference.

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE
FRED AND MRS. ANNE ANDERSON

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Honorable Fred and Mrs. Anne Anderson of Loveland, Colorado. Fred and Anne are being honored April 1 by the National Multiple Sclerosis with the 1998 Hope Award at the fourth annual Dinner of Champions. April 1 is a very special anniversary for the couple as this was the date Fred proposed to Anne 44 years ago, so it is especially poignant that the community chose this date to honor this dedicated couple for their volunteer service.

As residents of the community for four decades, and parents of four children, the Andersons have spent an enormous amount of time contributing to the political and local community. To name just some of the organizations they worked for include the Boy Scouts, their children's schools, youth football, church, library, McKee Medical Center, Rotary, Jaycees, PEO, and foundations.

Fred, who served in the Colorado State Senate for 16 years, including a time as Senate President, is well known for his expertise on Colorado water issues. His knowledge has been invaluable to the citizens of the region and state. Anne has served as co-chair of United Way with Fred, and board member of public television's Channel 6. Together, they signed up to work hard for the National MS Society when one of their children, Kate, was diagnosed with the disease, chairing the first Dinner of Champions.

The Andersons are a good example of Americans who are generous and caring.

"They would do anything for any person who needed a hand," said Cindy Bean, development manager for the National MS Society. As a personal friend of the Andersons, I know this statement to be true. Fred and Anne are two people who are working to make this a better world.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1757,
FOREIGN AFFAIRS REFORM AND
RESTRUCTURING ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. VINCE SNOWBARGER

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 26, 1998

Mr. SNOWBARGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this conference report. The United Nations Reform Act is an important first step in bringing this institution in line with what America expects of it, and achieving the goals of the Kassebaum-Solomon amendment which began our withholding of a portion of our U.N. dues. Last year, I introduced the United Nations Accountability Act to force reforms at the U.N. before any arrears could be paid to that body. This measure would go far in accomplishing that goal by providing the funds in three tranches, but payment of each tranche would be contingent on certain specified reforms accomplished at the United Nations.

The U.S.'s dues assessment must be lowered from the current 25 percent to 22 percent immediately, and to 20 percent by the year 2000. For too long, the U.S. has been paying a disproportionate share of the U.N.'s expenses, and other countries have been getting off without paying their fair share.

The bill also requires that our assessment for peacekeeping activities be reduced to 25 percent, and most importantly that our in-kind military contributions to U.N. peacekeeping missions be credited against our assessment. Last year I supported an amendment by the gentleman from Maryland—Mr. BARTLETT—to require money we spent in the past for this purpose be applied to our arrearage. Unfortunately, a majority of the House opposed that effort. I can understand why—the Administration promised and the Congress appropriated this money without first demanding reimbursement, and it would be difficult to retroactively correct that foolish mistake. But we must make sure that we get compensation in the future. Administration officials and Members of Congress must remember that it is not our money they are promising to Kofi Annan, it belongs to the people of this country, and they deserve full value for it.

There are other important institutional reforms in this bill that deserve our support. There are procurement reforms that ensure that contracts will be let fairly and openly and not to the friends of the U.N. officials awarding them. There will finally be a merit-based personnel system at the U.N. to end the rampant cronyism there. The United States—as the largest contributor to the U.N.—will be ensured of a seat on the U.N.'s budget committee. The bloated staffing levels will be cut. And a report will be required on efforts to ensure that our ally Israel has the same opportunity to serve on the Security Council as every other member state.

Now that the reforms have been required by Congress, the next step must be enforcing

them. I must say that I would have preferred the enforcement procedure of the United Nations Accountability Act—requiring a second vote by Congress to approve the reforms. Instead the Administration has to certify that the U.N. has indeed made the required reforms—not just making progress, but actually accomplishing them. Congress now has the duty to keep both U.N. and the Administration honest. I will do my best to do so, and if any certification is made that is in conflict with the facts, I will lead the effort to block further appropriations.

THE DISABLED VETERANS' SPECIAL HOUSING IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 1998—H.R. 3619

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the Disabled Veterans' Special Housing Improvements Act of 1998. This legislation will provide our most severely disabled veterans with a much needed increase in the amount of the one-time grant they may receive in order to obtain or adapt special housing to meet their unique needs. Only a small number of service-connected veterans are so disabled that they qualify to receive a grant to obtain suitable housing. Most are required to use a wheelchair for mobility. During the past ten years, the purchasing power of this grant has been allowed to erode by almost one-third.

The Disabled Veterans' Special Housing Improvements Act of 1998 was prompted by a call to my office from a severely disabled veteran. This veteran reported that while he had been approved for a one-time grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs to modify his home to meet the requirements of his service-connected disabilities, the cost of the needed adaptations far exceeded the amount of the grant. There was a simple reason for this fact. The grant amount for veterans which had been regularly increased between 1969 and 1988 has been frozen since 1988.

The grant available under this program amount is limited to 50% of the actual cost of the modifications or purchase. Nonetheless, almost 95% of the veterans who qualify for this benefit receive the maximum grant. The legislation I am introducing today makes up for years of neglect. It will restore the purchasing power of the grant to reflect the current cost of housing. In order to avoid repeating the neglect of the past ten years, the legislation will also index the grant to the cost of new construction in future years.

In addition, this legislation has been recommended by the Independent Budget and the many veterans service organizations who participate in preparing that document. Our most severely disabled veterans have earned the right to live in a safe, secure home, specially adapted to meet their needs. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.