

IN RECOGNITION OF THE DISTINGUISHED CAREER OF POLICE LT. BARRY ZALESNY

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 26, 1999

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the distinguished career of Lt. Barry Zalesny. Lt. Zalesny has served the people of Bellaire for over four decades as a member of the city's police force. He will be retiring from the police department on May first of this year. During his career, Lt. Zalesny has played a crucial role in the department as well as the community.

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to declare my appreciation for Lt. Zalesny's commitment to his community. It is a privilege to call him a constituent.

13TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR DISASTER

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 26, 1999

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, thirteen years ago today, an innocuous experiment designed to test the energy output of the No. 4 unit at the Chernobyl nuclear facility in Northern Ukraine precipitated the worst nuclear accident in history. The resulting explosions blew off a 2,000-ton metal plate that sealed the top of the reactor. The graphite core of the reactor burned out of control for days, releasing more than 100 tons of lethally radioactive material into the environment.

The human cost of this disaster is mind numbing. It is unlikely we will ever know how many deaths can be directly attributed to Chernobyl, but the figure is measured in the tens of thousands. Hundreds of thousands more were subjected to radiation poisoning.

The resulting damage from the Chernobyl disaster was greatly multiplied by the efforts of the Soviet Union to cover up the incident. It was nearly a week before the Soviet Union provided the world with anything more than a few sketchy details concerning the accident. Rescue workers and firefighters were initially sent to the scene without protective gear. For nearly all of these individuals, this was a death sentence. The 40,000 inhabitants of the nearby city of Pripjat, located just two miles from Chernobyl, were largely kept in the dark about the accident. They were not evacuated for days. Today Pripjat is a ghost town.

More than a decade later, the consequences of the Chernobyl accident continue to plague Eastern Europe. Ukraine has been especially impacted. According to the World Health Organization, thyroid cancer among children living near Chernobyl has risen to levels 80 times higher than normal. Vast tracts of what was once prime farm land remains dangerously contaminated and will remain so for decades to come. The ten-story protective sarcophagus that was later built around the ruins of the reactor is in need of repair and replacement. The legacy of Chernobyl is a heavy burden for the people of Ukraine, and our country must do more to help.

As we observe the thirteenth anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster, let us resolve to learn from this tragedy and prevent it from happening again.

HONORING WILLIAM "BILL" G. MALCOMSON

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 26, 1999

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor William (Bill) G. Malcomson for his 38 years of service in the Department of State. Bill will retire as Regional Director of the Houston Passport Agency.

A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Bill Malcomson grew up in Morgantown, West Virginia and attended the University of West Virginia. He began his career in the Department of State as a clerk-typist in the Processing Section of the Washington Passport Agency when passport books were printed on Addressograph machines. He then briefly worked in the Department's Operation Center decoding and transcribing incoming telegraphic messages from overseas posts.

In 1962, Bill Malcomson was drafted into the U.S. Army and spent two years at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico. Upon completion of his military service and another semester of college, Bill Malcomson returned to the Department of State.

His subsequent assignments, included Chief of the Special Issuance Section, Chief of the Official Travel Section, Operations Officer on the Field Coordination Staff, and Assistant Regional Director of the Washington Passport Agency.

Not only has Bill Malcomson ably served his country, but he is also involved in the community. He is a member of the Greater Houston Partnership and last year, he was Chairman of the Combined Federal Campaign.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate William (Bill) G. Malcomson for his thirty-eight years of service to our great nation. His contributions to the State Department and to all American citizens who traveled abroad in one capacity or another will not be forgotten.

HELP FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 26, 1999

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, following is the testimony I gave on April 22, 1999 to the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education of the Committee on Appropriations:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning on behalf of the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program.

There is virtually no disagreement that one-third of the homeless men in this country are veterans—and that approximately 58 percent of those individuals are veterans of the Vietnam era. In my home town of San Diego, it is estimated that 40-50% of the homeless served in our Armed Forces. This means, Mr. Chairman, that tonight in this great country of ours, more than 275,000 vet-

erans who served their country with honor will sleep in doorways—in boxes—in alleys—and on grates in our cities—and in barns—and lean-tos—and on the ground in rural America. This is a troubling and shameful image and a troubling and shameful reality.

Since 1987, the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP), a modest, cost-effective program designed to help homeless veterans reenter and succeed in the job market, has proven its worth. More than 46,000 homeless veterans have received help and support from the community-based organizations funded under HVRP, and many were placed in jobs at a cost of less than \$1,500 per veteran. Few government programs can claim to have achieved so much with so little.

At its fully authorized level of \$10 million, HVRP is profoundly underfunded—and the \$5 million funding level included in the Administration budget, although a welcome increase over past years, is woefully inadequate. The Department of Labor estimates that \$5 million will enable HVRP grantees to assist more than 6,000 veterans and actually place 3,500 homeless veterans in jobs. I ask that you provide the maximum authorization of \$10 million for this program so that more than 7,000 veterans may return to economic self-sufficiency and independence.

Mr. Chairman, the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans estimates that 550,000 veterans are homeless over the course of a year. This, to me, is an absolutely staggering and tragic statistic—and to limit funding to \$10 million for the only program that focuses on employment of veterans who are homeless makes no sense. Consequently, I introduced legislation on Tuesday that would authorize \$50 million for HVRP for each fiscal year through 2004. The need is enormous—and the need is real.

I know there are those who ask why we can't simply serve veterans along with other homeless populations. They want to know why we need veteran-specific programs. The answer is rooted in the uniqueness of the shared active-duty military experience—in the discipline, sacrifice, and camaraderie associated with military service. When they go through basic training, young recruits quickly learn that their lives could some day depend on the guy in the next bunk—and that they themselves may be responsible for the lives of their comrades. They learn that they must work together if they are to succeed in their mission—and they will succeed as a group only if each servicemember exercises the self-discipline required to perform responsibly. As a result of this training, homeless veterans respond to, and trust other veterans, and they succeed in programs that replicate the military structure. I expect that the non-veteran homeless population might not benefit from the organization and discipline of veteran-specific homeless programs, but veterans do thrive in this environment.

One of the key factors in the success of HVRP is the outreach to homeless veterans that is most often done by formerly homeless veterans. They are best able to reach out to and convince homeless vets to seek services and assistance. They are best able to recognize the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and arrange for the necessary treatment. They are best able to determine when their fellow veterans are ready to get a job—and to keep a job. And, perhaps most importantly, they are the best possible role models for success. In a recent conversation about the importance of veteran-specific homeless programs, someone said to me—"If one-third of the homeless men in this country spoke only Latin, would it make any sense for homeless providers to speak to them only in English?" And the answer is—of course not! Veterans speak the