

H.R. 134 WILL PROVIDE COMPENSA-
TION FOR VETERANS EXPOSED
TO RADIATION

HON. PATSY T. MINK

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2001

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, on January 3, 2001, I introduced H.R. 134 to enable veterans exposed to radiation to be considered for medical assistance without regard to their particular level of exposure. The bill also expands the definition of radiation-risk activity to include veterans exposed to residual contamination.

The destroyer U.S.S. *Brush* entered the waters of the Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands, an area contaminated with radiation from a large number of ships that had served as targets during two atmospheric nuclear tests. Crew members of the U.S.S. *Brush* ate fish and drank water distilled from the bay and crew members made trips to the target vessels to retrieve souvenirs. There was no dosimetry data collected on the U.S.S. *Brush* or at the Kwajalein Atoll to determine levels of exposure. No safety precautions were taken to prevent exposure and the crew was unaware of the dangers of ionizing radiation.

Veterans who served on the U.S.S. *Brush* now suffer from a number of diseases that can be linked to radiation exposure. However, their disability claims have repeatedly been denied because they were not onsite participants in an atmospheric nuclear test and they were exposed to low levels of ionizing radiation.

Congress has assisted veterans exposed to radiation in the past. In 1988 Congress passed the Radiation-Exposed Veterans Compensation Act (Pub. L. 100-321). This law covered veterans which participated in a radiation risk activity. The law has three definitions of radiation risk activity. They include: Onsite participation in a nuclear detonation, occupation of Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan, by United States forces during the period beginning on August 6, 1945 and ending on July 1, 1946, and internment as a prisoner of war in Japan during WWII which resulted in the opportunity for exposure to ionizing radiation comparable to that of veterans occupying Hiroshima or Nagasaki. Clearly, this language does not cover those veterans exposed to radiation while in the service of their country.

VA claims that lab tests on these veterans show that levels of residual radiation are not sufficient to sustain their claims for disability. However, these dose levels were based on lab tests, not data collected on sight at the Kwajalein Atoll. This is important because Congress has previously concluded that determining the level of exposure, unless collected onsite, is a futile exercise. Disability claims must be considered without regard to whether any particular level of radiation was measured for that individual especially when exposure is not denied.

Congress must ensure that veterans exposed to ionizing radiation either on site or residually be eligible for benefits. Without H.R. 134 radiation-exposed veterans do not have a realistic chance of proving their disability claim. I urge my colleagues to support our veterans by co-sponsoring H.R. 134.

HONORING MR. SCOTT FLORES

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2001

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Scott Flores, the outgoing chairman of the Denver Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, who has made significant contributions to the Hispanic community and to Colorado as a whole.

The Denver Hispanic Chamber flourished under his leadership. It has been recognized not only as the Regional Hispanic Chamber of the Year for a nine-state region, but also as the leading large Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in the country, highlighting its important leadership role in the local and national Hispanic community.

During the past year, Scott Flores has been the individual most responsible for uniting the seven Hispanic Chambers throughout Colorado into a single Colorado Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Alliance. Although this alliance is still in the development phase, it has the potential to unite Colorado Hispanics economically and socially. This new organization could help strengthen existing businesses and establish new ones. Additionally, this new organization will likely be partnered with the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, which could help to foster cultural unity and stimulate further achievements on the part of the Hispanic community in Colorado.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize Mr. Scott Flores for his efforts. I have no doubt that his work with the Denver Hispanic Chamber will continue to benefit our economy and improve American equality and social justice.

HONORING BILL NORTH, PRESI-
DENT, JURUPA VALLEY CHAM-
BER OF COMMERCE

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2001

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication to the community and to the overall well-being of California's Inland Empire and the nation is unparalleled. The Inland Empire has been fortunate to have dynamic and dedicated business and community leaders who willingly and unselfishly give time and talent to making their communities a better place to live and work. Mr. Bill North is one of these individuals.

On January 27, 2001, Bill North was honored by the Jurupa Valley Chamber of Commerce during his installation dinner, not only for being the singular individual in the Chamber's history to serve three consecutive terms but also for his life-long service to the community and our country. In 1989, Bill and his wife, Debbie, joined the Chamber of Commerce as the owners of Eagle One Security. In those 12 years they have given time and time again, and are still at it.

Bill North's life is a testament to the founding principles of our great nation. One of twelve children born in Cawood, Kentucky, Bill grew up working in tobacco fields and on his

family farm. At only seventeen he enlisted in the United States Army, training with the British Commandos to become an Airborne Ranger. As a soldier he fought in more than his share of battles, including: Normandy, the Battle of the Bulge, the Rhineland, Northern Europe and Central Europe Campaigns. His bravery and heroism earned him a Silver Star, five Bronze Stars, a Presidential Citation, two Purple Hearts and many other citations. The war not only introduced him to seemingly impossible challenges—such as when his outfit mistakenly parachuted behind enemy lines and landed in a concentration camp, engaging in heavy combat, and liberating the victims—but also afforded him the opportunity to share a meal with Winston Churchill and having General Patton remark to him, "You'll Make It Kid," while riding on the General's tank.

After the war, Bill's long and prosperous career included a stint in the steel mills of Detroit and government work in California, welding titanium heat shields for the first manned orbital space flight. However, it is his community involvement that has set Bill apart, including: fifty-seven years as a Shriner within the Masonic Order, the Elk & Moose, Junior Mechanics, Odd Fellows, Red Man and numerous others. These groups have allowed him to continue to express his care for humanity by delivering meals to those in need and visiting terminally ill children in the hospital. Bill is also a co-founder of the Concerned Citizens on Patrol and currently volunteers as a Social Investigator with the Riverside County Probation Department's Youth Accountability Board Program.

Bill North's incredible devotion to our nation and his outstanding work to promote the businesses, schools and community organizations of the Jurupa Valley Chamber of Commerce make me proud to call him a community member and fellow American. I know that all of the Inland Empire, including myself, are grateful for his contribution to the betterment of our community and salute Bill as he commences his fourth term (third consecutive term) as President of the Jurupa Valley Chamber of Commerce. I look forward to continuing to work with him for the good of the community well into the future.

A SALUTE TO JACK MCLAUGHLIN
HONORING HIS YEARS OF SERV-
ICE WITH THE BERKELEY UNI-
FIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2001

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor today to salute Berkeley Unified School District's Superintendent, Jack McLaughlin, for his years of service to the school district and city of Berkeley.

Superintendent McLaughlin has thirty-seven years of service in California's public school system to his credit, with twenty-six of those years as a district superintendent throughout the state. Additionally, he has also served as a teacher, Principal and Assistant Superintendent. Dr. McLaughlin is leaving Berkeley Unified to become Nevada State's Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Dr. McLaughlin has made a positive and profound impact on the students and faculty of