

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PAYING TRIBUTE TO RICHARD
GONZALEZ

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 24, 2002

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Richard Gonzalez, who has served as the Denver Regional Commissioner of the Social Security Administration since June 1998. Richard Gonzalez's innovative thinking and leadership was pivotal in guiding the Denver Region in improving Social Security services for the American Indians and Alaskan Natives. His retirement marks over thirty-seven years of Federal service and it is my honor to bring forth his accomplishments before this body of Congress and this nation.

Richard Gonzalez began his career with the Social Security Administration as a Computer Programmer in the Bureau of Data Processing in headquarters after serving in the United States Air Force. Prior to coming to Denver, he served as Associate Commissioner for Systems Requirements at SSA headquarters in Baltimore, MD. Richard also held a number of senior level information systems positions with the Social Security Administration and was appointed to the Senior Executive Service in 1994. Under Richard's leadership, Denver led national efforts to improve service delivery to rural communities by piloting outreach efforts in Northern New Mexico and Browning, Montana and partnering with the Chicago Region on a major outreach effort for three reservations in Minnesota.

Richard Gonzalez was recognized for his outstanding service to the public and the Denver Region when he was awarded a prestigious Presidential Rank of Distinguished Executive Award. He serves as the Vice Chairperson on the Denver Federal Executive Board Committee. Richard received his Bachelor of Science Degree from Towson State University and Master of Science Degree from John Hopkins University. He has received numerous citations and awards for his outstanding efforts as Commissioner. His many contributions are appreciated, and his countless hours of devotion have greatly improved the community of Denver and its surrounding areas. Richard is a devoted father and husband, and he cherishes the support and encouragement his family has provided throughout his career. He is married to Dr. Sylvia Simpson, and has two sons, Dan and Mathew.

Mr. Speaker, it is a great privilege that I recognize Richard Gonzalez and his contributions to the City of Denver and this nation. His efforts have greatly helped many people throughout our country and I am proud to recognize him before this body of Congress today. Congratulations on your retirement Richard, and good luck in your future endeavors.

HONORING RETIRING MADERA
POLICE OFFICERS

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 24, 2002

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Madera Police Chief Jerry Noblett, Commander Michael L. Jeffries, Sergeant Leon C. George, Detective Walter Dale Padgett, and Crime Prevention Officer Joe R. Garza on the occasion of their retirement from the Madera Police Department. A retirement celebration will be held for these dedicated individuals on July 20, 2002.

Chief Jerry Noblett's efforts have made a tremendous impact on the Madera Police Department. He began his law enforcement career as a reserve deputy in 1972, and in 1973 he was appointed as a police officer. Jerry obtained a bachelors degree in Criminology from California State University, Fresno. He swiftly moved up the ranks and, in 1977, was promoted to the rank of sergeant in the patrol division. When Chief Colston retired, in July 1997, Jerry was promoted to Chief of Police. Chief Noblett's contributions have been expansive through his career in law enforcement, but Jerry has also served the community by participating on many boards, including the Madera Chamber of Commerce and the Madera Kiwanis.

Commander Michael L. Jeffries began his law enforcement career with Madera in August of 1972. He earned the department's Medal of Valor in 1996 for his bravery in the handling of a barricaded suspect. Sergeant Leon C. George also joined law enforcement in 1972, but began his career in Los Angeles. He joined the Madera Police Department in December of 1984 and has received many commendations for his performance. Police Officer Walter Dale Padgett began his career in October of 1970 with the Madera Police Department. He was chosen as the Police Officer of the Year for the department in 1997. Crime Prevention Officer Joe R. Garza's law enforcement career originated in Fresno in June of 1977. Two years later he joined the Madera team, and has worked on a range of cases, including being the first Crime Prevention Officer in Madera.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate these men on the occasion of their retirement. I invite my colleagues to join me in thanking them for their service to the community and for their valor.

SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES IMPLEMENT WESTERN GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION "COLLABORATIVE 10-YEAR STRATEGY FOR REDUCING WILDLAND FIRE RISKS TO COMMUNITIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT"

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN R. THUNE

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 22, 2002

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res 352, a resolution expressing the Sense of Congress to fully implement the Western Governors Association "Collaborative 10-year Strategy for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment" and to prepare a National Prescribed Fire Strategy that minimizes risks of escape.

More than 7.4 million acres burned during the 2000 wildfire season—equivalent to a three-mile-wide swath from Washington, D.C. to Los Angeles, California and back—destroying 861 structures, killing 16 firefighters and costing the federal government \$1.3 billion in suppression costs. Upon completion of the 2001 wildfire season, 81,681 fires burned 3,555,138 acres, which threatened rural communities nationwide and killed 15 firefighters. To date, the 2002 fire season has consisted of 50,168 fires burning 3,632,508 acres.

In South Dakota the Black Hills National Forest has had several small fires this fire season. We have been fortunate that firefighters have been able to contain the fires quickly and that very few structures have been burned. However, I am concerned about the future of the Black Hills and the other public lands in the West.

According to the General Accounting Office, "the most extensive and serious problem related to the health of national forests in the interior West is the over-accumulation of vegetation, which has caused an increasing number of large, intense, uncontrollable and catastrophically destructive wildfires. According to the U.S. Forest Service, 39 million acres on national forests in the interior West are at high risk of catastrophic wildfire."

It is clear that this is a result of poor forest management decisions. Because of years of litigation in the Black Hills, the Beaver Park Area of the forest is under high risk of wildfire. The mountain pine beetle epidemic has killed thousands of trees in this area which is fuel for a large crown fire waiting to happen. The Forest Service has had their hands tied by litigation and have not been able to control this problem.

Also, in the Black Hills, the Norbeck Wildlife Preserve is also at risk because of considerable over-growth of ponderosa pine. The dry weather conditions in conjunction with the over-growth is a concern to all that live and work in the Black Hills. This area is only a few

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miles from Mt. Rushmore, where summer attendance averages 25,000 daily.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this issue. The time is now for Congress to express its concern for the future of our public lands and the risk of wildfire in the West.

DISAPPROVAL OF NORMAL TRADE
RELATIONS TREATMENT TO
PRODUCTS OF VIETNAM

SPEECH OF

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 23, 2002

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member would like to express his opposition to H.J. Res. 101, which would provide for the disapproval of the Bush Administration's extension of the waiver of Jackson-Vanik trade restrictions on Vietnam. In considering the disapproval resolution, it is important, of course, for us to recognize what the Jackson-Vanik waiver actually does and does not do.

By law, the underlying issue here is about emigration—the freedom for their citizens to leave Vietnam in order to live in another country. Based on Vietnam's record of progress on emigration and its continued cooperation on U.S. refugee programs over the past year, renewal of the Jackson-Vanik waiver will continue to promote greater freedom of emigration. Disapproval would, undoubtedly, result in the opposite.

Actually continuing the Jackson-Vanik waiver for Vietnam is really also reflective of an American interest in further developing a positive relationship with that country and its people. Having lifted the trade embargo and established diplomatic relations five years ago, the United States has tried to work with Vietnam to normalize, incrementally, our bilateral political, economic and consular relationships. Such an effort, if it brings positive results, is in America's own short-term and long-term national interest. It complements and tests Vietnam's own policy for political and economic re-integration into the world. No doubt such a re-integration will be a difficult and perhaps lengthy process. However, there is certainly no compelling rationale for reversing course on gradually normalizing our relations with Vietnam.

Now, for example, Vietnam reportedly continues to cooperate fully with our priority efforts to achieve the fullest possible accounting of American POW-MIAs. The granting of a Jackson-Vanik waiver has contributed to this cooperative process.

Mr. Speaker, the Jackson-Vanik waiver certainly does not constitute an endorsement of the Communist regime in Hanoi. Of course, we have made it abundantly clear that we do not approve of a regime that places severe restrictions on basic freedoms, including the right to organize political parties, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion. We condemn such restrictions. On many occasions, with this Member's support, this body passed resolutions condemning just such violations of civil and human rights.

The Jackson-Vanik waiver does not provide Vietnam with any new trade benefits, including Normal Trade Relations (NTR) status. However, with the Jackson-Vanik waiver, the

United States has been able to successfully negotiate and sign a new bilateral commercial trade agreement with Vietnam. Congress will have an opportunity to decide in the future whether to again grant a waiver and decide, eventually, whether Vietnam deserved to be considered for NTR. But, that is a separate process—for the future. The renewal of the Jackson-Vanik waiver only keeps this process of improved cooperation and progress going forward.

Finally, it also is important to note that the renewal of the Jackson-Vanik waiver does not automatically make American exports to Vietnam eligible for possible coverage by U.S. trade financing programs. The waiver only allows American exports to Vietnam to be eligible for such coverage.

Mr. Speaker, the Vietnam War is over and we have embarked cautiously on a new and expanding set of relationships with Vietnam. Now is not the time to reverse course. Accordingly, this Member supports the Administration's request by voting "no" on the resolution of disapproval.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO STEPHANIE
HERRERA

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 24, 2002

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate an outstanding individual from Colorado whose hard work and commendable deeds have recently earned her the Minority Small Business Advocate of the Year award. Stephanie Herrera of Denver, Colorado is described as a small business owner, insurance professional, professor, dancer, mentor, community activist, and caring friend. Stephanie believes that "when you want to get something done, find a busy person" which is precisely how she has been described, and I am honored to bring forth her accomplishments before this body of Congress and nation.

Stephanie's efforts are currently focused on children, helping other small businesses, continued active involvement in the Denver Community, her own business, and her husband of eight years, Dan Herrera. She is also currently pursuing a Doctorate degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in International Marketing, while finding time to teach management and marketing classes at the Community College of Denver. A long believer in community service, she is the founder of and director of Dancers of Americas, a multi-cultural dance program that focuses on providing young girls, predominantly from low-income families, the opportunity to dance.

The Colorado Enterprise Fund has recently recognized Stephanie for her work at North High School in northwest Denver called Bizworks. Bizworks is a youth entrepreneurial program designed to build the skills and capacity of next generation entrepreneurs promoting self-employment and business ownership as a career choice among high school aged youth.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that Stephanie Herrera is a woman of great dedication and commitment to her professions and to the children of Denver. Her success is well earned and I

am honored to bring forth her accomplishments before this body of Congress and this nation. Stephanie is a remarkable woman and it is my privilege to extend to her my congratulations on her selection for the Minority Small Business Advocate of the Year award. Stephanie, congratulations, and all the best to you in your future endeavors.

ARIZONA'S VOICE OF DEMOCRACY
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

HON. BOB STUMP

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 24, 2002

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary have a long history of promoting patriotism and values through its Voice of Democracy audio and essay competition. The program, now in its 55th year, requires high school student entrants to write and record a three to five minute essay on a theme. This year, the theme, "Reaching Out to America's Future," attracted more than 85,000 student entrants nationwide.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to announce that Alison Boess, who resides in the Third Congressional District of Arizona, is a national winner of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Voice of Democracy Scholarship. Alison, a senior at Ironwood High School, was among 58 national scholarship recipients in the 2002 Voice of Democracy Program and the recipient of the Department of Pennsylvania Joseph L. Vicit Memorial Award. VFW Post 1433 and its Ladies Auxiliary in Glendale, Arizona sponsored Alison. I am pleased that Alison was among the 58 national scholarship recipients. I commend Alison's efforts and call to the attention of my colleagues Alison's award winning script on "Reaching Out to America's Future."

2001-2002 VFW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST—REACHING OUT TO AMERICA'S FUTURE

(By Alison Boess)

Imagine yourself in a life where freedom, dignity and the acquisition of knowledge have been stripped from you. The walls surrounding you are dark with grim mortality and incarceration, imposed by a government that views you as a threat to its authority. Your beaten body rests heavily in the prison cell, immersed with thoughts of your family's safety and the terror they are to suffer through. Perpetual gunshots keep your heart darting wildly in your chest. Outside the walls that have become your asylum, your wife and children attempt to flee from their fate, but are shot dead by their assailants. Your people have been overcome by a government that withholds basic God-given rights and affords you no control over your conditions.

This is not a dramatization of what could be. It is an image of what already is, right now, in countries currently run by powers over which citizens have no influence—an image far outside the experience, understanding, and appreciation of most American youth.

The idea that the future of America depends upon its youth is a widely received and valid notion. French statesman Alexis de Tocqueville observed that "Among democratic nations, each new generation is a new people." Bearing that in mind, the responsibility that our new generation understands