

On behalf of the Congress of the United States of America, I am proud to extend our highest praise to John W. Moody. We thank him for his continuing dedication to teaching and his willingness and ability to challenge and inspire students to strive for success.

STATEMENT ON VETERANS

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, 60 years ago Democrats fought to pass the GI bill. The GI bill provided assistance for veterans to pay for a college education, purchase a home, and find a job.

Today, Democrats are still fighting hard to make sure our veterans have the benefits they need. We are fighting to improve the health benefits for veterans, to end the Widow's Tax and the Disabled Veterans Tax.

Last year, I introduced the Department of Veterans Affairs Claims Backlog Reduction Act of 2003 to help the 450,000 veterans who have claims pending for federal benefits.

But as Democrats continue to fight for our veterans, Republicans continue to underfund the programs that are so important to our veterans. House Republicans have passed a budget that underfunds veterans health care by \$1 billion, meanwhile they have managed to find room for more tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans.

Our brave men and women in uniform are serving our country. They are sacrificing for our freedom. It is our duty to make sure that they are taken care of when they return home.

Republicans have broken the promise the GI bill made 60 years ago.

Not one Republican has taken a stand against the Bush budget proposal.

Our soldiers are fighting our enemies abroad. They should not have to fight our government at home too.

TRIBUTE TO BISHOP HAMEL
HARTFORD BROOKINS

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Bishop Hamel Hartford Brookins one of eight legendary leaders of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church who will be retiring at this year's Quadrennial Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Bishop Brookins was born in Yazoo City, Mississippi. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Wilberforce University in Ohio and a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Payne Seminary.

Prior to his election to the bishopric, Bishop Brookins pastored First AME Church in Los Angeles, California leading them through the building of a multi-million dollar cathedral. He also served as the first black president of the Wichita Ministerial Alliance. Bishop Brookins worked in the world of politics as manager and advisor helping to elect Thomas Bradley as Mayor of Los Angeles. He also served as

president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) Western Region, and as vice president of Operation PUSH. Further, Bishop Brookins founded the Martin Luther King Student Fund, organized the first Interfaith Service at the Hollywood Bowl, and also lead the Primary Convention to elect the first black city councilman and Second Convention to elect the first black school board member.

Elected at the 1972 General Conference held in Dallas, Texas, Bishop Brookins was assigned to the 17th Episcopal District. He was inspired by the people's struggle for freedom, and became an active participant in their cause. As a consequence, Bishop Brookins was barred from Rhodesia in 1975. He participated in the 6th Pan African World Congress in 1974. Bishop Brookins also served and revitalized the 5th Episcopal District by purchasing and building new churches, sending ministers to organize new churches in Southern California, and establishing an Economic Development Fund for the District. Bishop Brookins also served in the 2nd, 12th, and 13th Episcopal Districts, and is a past Ecumenical Officer.

Bishop Brookins is married to Rosalyn Kyle Brookins and they have three children.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my colleagues join me in paying tribute to Bishop Hamel Hartford Brookins upon his retirement from the Bishopric. He has provided tremendous leadership for the AME Church and his long history of religious and political service and leadership will influence generations for many years to come.

THE MIDDLE EAST

HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my views on the conflict in the Middle East.

I am deeply saddened by the seemingly endless bloodshed in the Middle East. The conflict has claimed the lives of too many innocent victims, Israeli and Palestinian alike. I have always believed and continue to believe that the United States has a role to play in assisting and supporting a negotiated peace in the region. I do not seek to assign blame but instead to ensure that we do all we can to achieve that end. I have no illusions that this conflict will be easily resolved, or that the United States can impose a solution—all we can do is urge the parties to make peace and support a process that offers some chance of success.

I support a two state solution to the conflict in the Middle East with Israel and Palestine coexisting as democratic states with secure, internationally recognized borders. Prime Minister Sharon's disengagement plan for an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza strip and certain areas of the West Bank presents an opportunity to get the peace process moving again and to lay the foundation for an eventual Palestinian state. However, I do not believe that withdrawing from these areas, in and of itself, will bring peace. We, and others in the international community, need to work with Palestine to end terrorism and foster and build a strong, stable democracy. Until this goal is

accomplished, I strongly support Israel's right to defend herself against attacks. Israel is currently building a security fence to block out suicide bombers and others wishing to harm Israelis. I have concerns over the placement of the fence in certain areas and it is my hope that this fence will be a temporary structure that can be dismantled when peace is achieved. Lastly, I believe that all final status issues, including final borders and refugee issues, must be negotiated by the parties and supported by all nations committed to peace, so that Israel and Palestine can feel confident that their agreement will endure.

I fear that the issue of peace in the Middle East will be brushed aside during campaign season. We must not merely call for peace, we must make it a priority. To this end, I have sent a letter, which I have attached and will submit for the record, to President Bush asking that he appoint two individuals, a Democrat and a Republican, to help the parties seek peace and set forth a practical agenda for doing so. This dramatic gesture would remove peace-seeking from partisan politics and make plain to the world that Americans are united in their commitment to finding a peaceful solution. I personally am determined to do all that I can to ensure that this issue remains at the forefront of U.S. foreign policy and that progress is made toward finding a peaceful resolution.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

June 7, 2004.

President GEORGE W. BUSH,
*The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue,
Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I am writing to you because I believe that the United States must, as it has in the past, take action to advance the cause of peace between Israelis and Palestinians. I do not seek to assign blame, but to end the bloodshed.

Prime Minister Sharon's disengagement plan presents an opportunity that ought not to be lost by inaction. I share your conviction, expressed last month, that "all final status issues must still emerge from negotiations between the parties. . . ." I share, too, your belief that the United States has a role to play in fostering such negotiations. The suffering is acute, for both Israelis and Palestinians. Insofar as we can help bring the parties together, we ought to take action now. Our good offices should not be suspended because of the election campaign.

Therefore I respectfully urge that you appoint two Americans, a Republican and a Democrat, to help the parties seek peace. I would not presume to dictate your choice: there are wise and just men and women in both parties. I ask that you select a bipartisan pair and offer their services to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia, to meet with them, together or separately, to set forth a practical agenda for seeking peace.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL E. CAPUANO,
Member of Congress.

IN MEMORY OF MERLE F.
PETERSON

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, Congressman MARION BERRY and I rise today to honor the