

ADMINISTRATION'S BUDGET CUTS
TO AMTRAK

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2005

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I wish to discuss the Administration's proposed budget cuts to Amtrak.

I want to be clear from the very beginning: if the Administration's proposed cuts go into effect, Amtrak will not survive. And, in many cases, the millions of people who depend on Amtrak's services will be left with no reliable means of rail transportation. This would result in a serious problem for rail passengers, and represents a tremendous misjudgment by this Administration.

The Administration has made clear its position on Amtrak. The result of their cuts to Amtrak would "lead to the elimination of operations." I am concerned that the "elimination of operations" would result in a significant hardship for the people of southern West Virginia, and Amtrak riders everywhere.

Practically speaking, the millions of passengers who depend on Amtrak's services would be stranded. Those who can afford a car or plane ticket would descend on our already heavily congested roads and airports. Those without the means to purchase an airline ticket or pay for the ever-increasing price of gasoline—and those in rural communities without direct access to airline or highway travel—would be left twisting in the wind.

In West Virginia alone, Amtrak served nearly 51,000 passengers in 2004. Two of the largest cities in the 3rd Congressional District, Huntington and Hinton, represent nearly half that total with nearly 24,000 riders. In addition, Amtrak pumped \$3.7 million into the state's economy—which helped foster job creation and economic development opportunities for West Virginians. The economic impact of Amtrak on my state, and states throughout the country, cannot be overlooked.

Importantly, Amtrak is making great strides to improve itself from within. Capital investment is up substantially; a new and detailed five-year plan has been developed; unprofitable services have been eliminated; and significant overhauls and needed maintenance operations have been undertaken. And Amtrak's ridership has, and continues to, increase.

I urge this House, this Congress and this Administration to recognize the improvements Amtrak is making, the need Amtrak fills for millions of Americans and the importance of Amtrak on America's transportation infrastructure.

IN MEMORY OF MAGDALENO
DUENAS

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2005

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the life of Magdaleno Duenas, a World War II military hero who passed away on February 27 at the age of 90.

We honor and thank him for his courageous military service and the sacrifices he made for

our nation, as well as his lifelong struggle on behalf of Filipino veterans of World War II. His life is a symbol of the struggle for total recognition of Filipino veterans and a sad reminder of a shameful page in the history of our nation.

Born and raised in the Philippines, Mr. Duenas joined the 101st Infantry in 1941. In 1943, he joined the guerilla forces in the mountains and was captured by the Japanese while procuring food for American soldiers. Under questioning, Mr. Duenas denied any knowledge of the whereabouts of the American soldiers. He escaped, and helped 10 U.S. soldiers escape the Japanese POW camp.

Mr. Duenas came to the United States to claim his U.S. citizenship and military benefits, and fell into the hands of an abusive landlord in Richmond, Calif. He and 16 other veterans were held in captivity, beaten, chained and fed dog food, while their landlord kept their monthly government checks.

After being rescued, his experience received news coverage. It brought public attention to the plight of elderly Filipino veterans who came to America expecting to receive previously promised veterans' pensions for their honorable U.S. military service, but instead learned that Congress had stripped them of those benefits and recognition.

Thousands of Filipino veterans came to the U.S. seeking equity and have waited 60 years for the promise to be honored. After fighting for more than half a century for their right to U.S. citizenship, other issues related to their health and recognition remain to be addressed. Many live alone in poverty. It is a national tragedy to see our veterans suffer from neglect, despair and hopelessness.

Mr. Duenas moved to San Francisco's Tenderloin district in 1993, where he was vibrant member of our community. This diminutive, gentle man worked tirelessly to improve the experience of Filipino Veterans in the Bay Area.

All these years, he waited for the recognition of the U.S. Government for the services he rendered during WWII. He was featured in two documentaries: *Tears of Old and Second Class Citizens*. He died still waiting for the full equity bill to be passed by the U.S. Congress. We will not rest until the equity bill becomes law.

Mr. Speaker, we will never forget his struggle on the frontlines of the battlefield and on the frontlines of the fight for equity for Filipino veterans. Mr. Duenas' courage and resolve moves all of us to continue the fight for justice in our country for all people.

We will never forget the sacrifices Mr. Duenas and other Filipino veterans made for our freedom. We must dedicate ourselves as a nation to ensure that America fulfills its moral obligation to those who pay the high price for our freedom.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF MUNICIPAL COURT JUDGE
JESUS GARZA

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the important contributions of Judge

Jesus Garza in Laredo, TX in my Congressional District.

Judge Jesus Garza was born and raised in Laredo. He is a product of LISD and graduated from J.W. Nixon High School in 1977. Upon graduation he enrolled at the University of Texas and earned a Bachelor of Journalism in 1981. In 1984 he received his Doctorate of Jurisprudence from the Thurgood Marshall School of Law in Houston and was licensed to practice law in the State of Texas in 1985.

Judge Garza was appointed Associate Municipal Court Judge in 1984 and served until 1985 at which time he decided to run for Justice of the Peace. He ran a successful campaign and took office in 1986 and served for 6 years.

In 1993 Judge Garza, "Chuy" as he is known to his friends, was voted into the newly created Webb County County Court at Law #2 and is presently presiding over his second term.

In 1994 Mayor Saul Ramirez appointed Judge Garza to the Economic Advisory Council and selected Co-Chairman by its members.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to have this opportunity to recognize County Court of Law Judge Jesus Garza.

IN HONOR OF MARIA PLASENCIA

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2005

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Maria Plascencia, a beloved San Diego activist. Maria passed away on February 1, 2005. She is survived by her parents, Alma and Jesse Plascencia of Crown Point, Indiana, and brother, Jesse Jr. of Schererville, Indiana.

If an issue involved equality and social justice, Maria was among the first to rally her fellow feminists. Last April, as an official and activist in the San Diego Democratic Club, she organized a 500-member San Diego delegation that joined the March for Women's Lives in Washington, DC. After organizing San Diego's effort in the March of Women's Lives—which drew about a million people to Washington—Maria was elected to NOW's national board.

To those who knew her, bringing hundreds of San Diegians for the march in Washington, D.C. exemplified her uncompromising beliefs and her ability to galvanize grass-roots support. Her colleagues describe Maria as energetic and passionate about her beliefs. A diabetic, Maria did not let her condition stand in the way of pursuing her interests or from leading an active life.

In her role as an activist and in her job as an auditor for General Electric Commercial Finance, Maria traveled extensively. She enjoyed meeting new people and seeing the country. Cities and small towns alike fascinated Maria, delighting in each one's population and character.

Maria grew up in Crown Point, Indiana. Her father, a steel mill worker, had come to the United States from Mexico as a young man. Maria became the first member of her family to attend college and graduated with a degree in accounting from the University of Dayton.

Her career brought her to San Diego more than a decade ago. A longtime feminist and