

Missionary Baptist Church, where she was a member. As chairperson of Liberty Hill's scholarship committee, she raised thousands of dollars every year to ensure that every church member attending college received at least \$1000 in financial assistance.

Margaret also made sure that members of her church remained informed through her work and that of others who served on the congregation's Christian Social Concern Committee. One of the ways in which Margaret first became known to the public in Berkeley was through spearheading the ultimately successful campaign to install a traffic light at Ninth Street and University Avenue, an effort aimed at protecting children crossing the street on their way to and from the church. Margaret continued to advocate for the safety of children and others in her neighborhood not only through her work at Liberty Hill, but also as the chair of both the Human Welfare Action Committee and the West Berkeley Neighborhood Development Corporation and through here involvement with the West Berkeley Area Plan Committee, the West Berkeley Community Cares Services Bank and the Community Advisory Board.

After several years of advocating on behalf of the residents of West Berkeley, in the mid-1990s Margaret decided to seek public office, and was elected as the District 2 representative to the Berkeley City Council in 1996. In her first term, she secured over one and a half million dollars in funding for projects and facilities located in her district, working to make up for funding gaps that she felt had long been ignored. Regardless of the challenges she faced, Margaret worked tirelessly to provide affordable housing, access to healthcare, police and fire protection resources and support for youth in her district. Though she struggled with her illness for much of the second half of her time in office, she remained steadfastly committed to serving her constituents, demanding daily briefings and making efforts to go to City Hall even as her condition and treatments diminished her physical strength. Margaret's devotion to serving her constituents earned her a reputation as a candid and straightforward representative of the people, someone who was truly dedicated to serving as a voice for those without the means to advocate for themselves.

On April 15, 2005, Margaret Breland's life and legacy will be honored at her own Liberty Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Berkeley, California. It is with great sorrow but also with great pride that I add my voice to all those that have joined together today to pay tribute to Margaret and the spirit of selflessness that she embodied. Margaret's commitment to and concern for others set her apart as an elected official and as a human being. The generosity that led her to serve others throughout her life is an inspiration to all of us to follow her example in giving back to our communities, our country and our world.

ELECTION WEEKEND ACT OF 2005

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 14, 2005

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the election Weekend Act of 2005. My

dear friend and distinguished colleague, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, and I are introducing this bill to expand accessibility to the electoral process for millions of hard working Americans, who at present are faced with the untenable task of balancing their familial and work responsibilities with their desire to participate in our democratic process, namely to vote.

For more than 200 years, our Nation has prided itself on being the preeminent democracy in the world. We have been the nation to which others look as an example of a healthy democracy. Yet, our rate of voter turnout reveals that our democracy is suffering from serious illness. According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, between 1945 and 1998, the United States ranked a dismal 139th out of 172 democracies in voter turnout.

True to our ideals of freedom and individuality, voting has always been voluntary. But the voluntary nature of voting is only true if all Americans have equal access to participate in this process. Many hardworking Americans simply do not have ample time and opportunity to vote. And, as we saw in the 2004 election, many civic-minded Americans must wait in line for hours upon hours for the opportunity to cast their ballot.

Our predecessors in Congress arranged for elections to be held during a time of the year and day of the week that would allow enable the largest number of citizens to vote. In 1845 Congress selected November as the month to hold elections (Election Day) because the harvest was in, and farmers were able to take the time needed to vote. Congress selected Tuesday because it gave a full day's travel between Sunday, which was widely observed as a strict day of rest, and Election Day. Travel was also easier throughout the north during November, before winter had set in.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for this Congress to recognize today what our predecessors so astutely recognized 160 years ago: The timing of our elections must accommodate the schedules of our hard working citizens. In recognition of changed times, our bill proposes to do just this. The Weekend Election Act changes our Nation's Election Day from the first Tuesday in November to the first consecutive Saturday and Sunday in November, and in so doing, enables many more Americans to participate in the most fundamental aspect of our democratic process.

Our bill acknowledges the fact that many Americans are unable to leave their jobs in the middle of the day to vote because our elections occur on a Tuesday, a day when almost all Americans are working. By holding elections over a weekend, a time when fewer Americans work, voters will have more time to go to the polls, reducing many of the long lines that form during peak voting hours.

In a time when we are ardently promoting democracy abroad, we must not forget the ongoing need to strengthen democracy at home. Only as long as the democratic process is accessible to all hardworking citizens at home will we serve as a shining example of democracy to the rest of the world.

I urge my colleagues to support the Election Weekend Act to enable greater access to the most fundamental aspect of our democratic process.

HONORING LIEUTENANT COLONEL
RICHARD "SLUG" MCGIVEN

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 14, 2005

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to bring to the attention of all the members of this Congress some good news and some bad news. First, the bad news; Lieutenant Colonel McGiven will no longer be serving the U.S. Congress as the Deputy Director of the Air Force's Congressional Liaison Office on Capitol Hill. He's retiring after 23 years of exceptionally patriotic and honorable service in the United States Air Force. The good news is that he's going to enjoy a well-earned retirement from military duty while pursuing a new civilian career. We are certain his infectious, "we're the Air Force, we can do anything" attitude, will uplift any organization he comes in contact with. Unfortunately for us, as nearly every member of this body knows who has traveled with "Slug," we are losing one of the best liaison officers we've ever had. He is one of those unique military members who knows and understands the intricacies of Congress and the complexities of overseas travel to often-hostile environments.

During the past 23 years, Lieutenant Colonel McGiven has served in the Air Force with honor and distinction. He's a master navigator/weapons officer with over 2,300 hours. He flew over 100 combat hours in Southwest Asia and was the operations officer of an F-15E squadron at Seymour Johnson AFB, NC. As a result of his operational expertise and consummate professional he was twice selected to work in the congressional arena for the USAF.

As we all know, we are engaged in a war different than those we have fought in the past. The war on terrorism is often a war of individuals and not a war of massed forces on a battle line. Lieutenant Colonel McGiven has contributed greatly to our success in this global war on terrorism by his individual attention and counsel to members of the U.S. Congress during trips to Iraq and Afghanistan. His insightful comments and professional skill has, on numerous occasions, been the difference between a safe and productive trip to visit our troops in the field. He's treated everyone of us like we were family and we couldn't appreciate it more. Despite the conflict and the natural frictions that develop in such an atmosphere, the relationship between the Congress and our military services has never been better. I attribute much of this to the unquestioned judgment and integrity of individual officers up and down the line—officers like LTC Rick McGiven. Whether it was responding to a constituent inquiry, providing information about force modernization or escorting our delegations to all corners of the world, we could count on the Air Force and it's congressional affairs officers to respond quickly, accurately and courteously.

As LTC Rick "Slug" McGiven departs from his active duty service to the United States Air Force and the Nation, we the members of the U.S. House of Representatives on behalf of all of our constituents, the citizens of this great nation, wish him the fondest farewell and deepest thanks for a job well done and mission complete.