

TRIBUTE TO RODGER REEVES
MEIER

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 2007

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an admirable leader and beloved friend, Rodger Reeves Meier. As a dedicated hard worker, Mr. Meier was committed to his family, career, and community. His life exemplifies an attainable American dream. Mr. Meier was dedicated to balancing a life of family and career as he grew within the Dallas community and for this I commend his legacy.

As a young perseverant man, Mr. Meier completed high school in 1941. He then attended Texas Christian University where he met his partner for life. In 1946, Mr. Meier married Ms. Joyce Fowler. Shortly thereafter they both moved to Dallas, TX, to start the well-respected Meier family.

In 1952, Mr. Meier was appointed the first Dallas representative of the Cuban Tourist Institute. This accomplishment is one of many, as this allowed for him to continue to grow within the community. He was later named district agency and interline sales manager for the Cuban Tourist Institute. Continuing a path to a great career, Mr. Meier became a senior executive at the E.F. McDonald Company.

In 1969, a diligent Rodger Meier opened his Cadillac franchise on LBJ Freeway. Both he and his son worked together to expand the family owned business. In 1990, they added an Infiniti franchise and in 1994 an Oldsmobile brand. After years of dedication to his business, Mr. Meier sold his business and retired so that he could dedicate his time to charity work.

During his retirement, Mr. Meier became an outstanding community leader. He was chairman of the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport board, the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and the American Cancer Society. His work with the American Red Cross, Greenhill School, and Dallas Community College made an immeasurable impact to the Dallas community.

On behalf of the Dallas, TX, community, I am honored to commend the life of an astounding man and my dear friend, Rodger Meier.

CANINE DETECTION TEAM
IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2007

HON. CHRISTOPHER P. CARNEY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 2007

Mr. CARNEY. Madam Speaker, some of the nation's most dedicated citizens stand at the ready each and every day, working to detect and prevent the next terrorist attack on our soil. They are vital to our security and are to be commended. Often, they fulfill this critical homeland security work with significant help from what we have come to call "man's best friend." Canines trained to detect explosives and other dangerous materials regularly roam our nation's airports, subways, and ports, any-

where else that they are needed to deter, prevent, detect and respond to terrorist threats. U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the United States Secret Service, the Coast Guard, and the Federal Protective Service regularly use canine detection teams to secure National Special Security Events and to protect Federal buildings and their occupants.

As a consequence of September 11, demand for trained explosive detection dogs has increased dramatically. Today, there simply are not enough trained dogs to meet the demand. There also are no national standards to certify a dog as a capable bomb-sniffing dog or drug-sniffing dog. In the absence of national training and certification standards, there have been a number of cases of fraudulent operations and the use of inadequately trained canines and canine handlers. In one documented case, a Virginia man, Russell Lee Ebersole, was hired to protect several government buildings, including the Federal Reserve Board. In multiple tests his dogs failed to detect 50 pounds of dynamite, 50 pounds of TNT, or 15 pounds of C-4 in the agency's parking facilities.

The "Canine Detection Team Improvement Act of 2007," which Rep. MIKE ROGERS of Alabama is introducing today and on which I am the Democratic original cosponsor, will make the United States more secure by addressing the shortage of trained canine detection teams and establishing standards for canine detection teams and an accreditation process to assure Federal, State, local and tribal authorities that the dog they look rely on to help defend the homeland can get the job done.

Specifically, the bill directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to coordinate all training programs within the Department, including research and development of new canine training methods. The bill also directs the Secretary to consult on the use of canines with other Federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, universities, and private training facilities in order to increase the number of trained canines available to Federal, State, and local law enforcement. By coordinating all programs within the Department and working with outside resources, section 2001 empowers the Secretary to build upon the synergy of multiple resources to enhance dog training programs.

Section 2002 of the bill addresses canine procurement. It directs the Secretary to make it a priority to increase domestically bred canines used by the Department, and includes a provision encouraging the use of universities and private and non-profit organizations to accomplish this effort. This bill's section also directs the Secretary to consult with other public and private entities to not only encourage the use of domestic bred canines, but also to work with them to consolidate canine procurement wherever possible in the hopes to reduce the cost of purchasing canines across the Federal Government. Section 2003 of the bill is a "Domestic Canine Breeding Grant Program" for further encouragement of the development and growth of canine breeds best suited for detection training purposes.

However, perhaps the most significant accomplishment of this law is the establishment of an accreditation board, which will ensure proper certification standards. The board will consist of experts in the field of canine training and explosives detection from Federal and State agencies, universities, other research institutions, and the private sector. It is modeled

after the executive board of the Scientific Working Group on Dog and Orthogonal Detectors, or SWGDOG as it is popularly known. This group has already done a tremendous job in bringing together the major stakeholders in canine detection and I applaud them for their work on this issue. This law will build upon the success of SWGDOG in order to ensure the proper standards for voluntary certification are applied and maintained. The board will maintain a public list of accredited entities upon which other agencies, Federal, State, and local can rely for qualified canines. The aim of this board is to reduce misrepresentation, fraudulent or otherwise improper certification of dogs and their training organizations, but ultimately the board will ensure public safety and the safety of law enforcement.

Before closing, I want to personally thank MIKE ROGERS from Alabama. Under his leadership in the previous Congressional session, the Committee on Homeland Security began to address this issue. He held a hearing in the previous Congress entitled "Sniffing Out Terrorism: The Use of Dogs in Homeland Security." Many of the findings from that hearing were a source of guidance in writing this legislation and I thank him for his stewardship on this issue. I urge my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in passing this very critical legislation.

INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMISSION ON WARTIME RELOCATION AND INTERNMENT OF LATIN AMERICANS OF JAPANESE DESCENT ACT

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 2007

Mr. BECERRA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Latin Americans of Japanese Descent Act. This bill would create a commission to review and determine facts and circumstances surrounding the relocation, internment, and deportation of Japanese Latin Americans, and subsequently recommend appropriate remedies.

This year marks the 65th anniversary of the day that then President D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 that led to the internment of 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry. With the stroke of a pen, innocent men, women, and children became prisoners and were branded disloyal to the nation they called home. Lives were disrupted and homes were broken as these Americans were uprooted from their communities and locked behind barbed wire fences. Over the past years, the anniversary of this date has been nationally observed with educational events to increase public awareness about the World War II experience, recognize the unjust action, and to provide an opportunity for all people to reflect on the importance of justice and civil liberties during times of crisis and war.

The 1981 Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians concluded that the internment was the result of racism and wartime hysteria. Five years after publishing its findings, then President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 that provided an official apology and financial redress

to most of the Japanese Americans who were subjected to wrongdoing and confined in U.S. internment camps during World War II. Those loyal Americans were vindicated by the fact that not a single documented case of sabotage or espionage was committed by a Japanese American during that time. The Civil Liberties Act was the culmination of a half century of struggle to bring justice to those for whom it was denied. I am proud that our nation did the right thing. But 19 years after the passage of this act, there still remains unfinished work to completely rectify and close this regrettable chapter in our nation's history.

Between December 1941 and February 1945, approximately 2,300 men, women, and children of Japanese ancestry became the victims of mass abduction and forcible deportation from 13 Latin American countries to the United States. The U.S. government orchestrated and financed the deportation of Japanese Latin Americans to be used as hostages in exchange for Americans held by Japan. Over 800 individuals were included in two prisoner of war exchanges between the U.S. and Japan, where many were deported to a foreign country that they had never set foot on since their ancestors' immigration to Latin America. The remaining Japanese Latin Americans were imprisoned in internment camps without the benefit of due process rights until after the end of the war.

Further study of the events surrounding the deportation and incarceration of Japanese Latin Americans is both merited and necessary. The 1981 Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians acknowledged the federal actions in detaining and interning civilians of enemy or foreign nationality, particularly of Japanese ancestry, but the commission had not thoroughly researched the historical documents that exist in distant archives pertaining to Japanese Latin Americans.

It is for all these reasons, Madam Speaker, that I rise today to introduce the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Latin Americans of Japanese Descent Act. We must review directives of the United States military forces and the State Department requiring the relocation, detention in internment camps, and deportation of Japanese Latin Americans to Axis countries and recommend appropriate remedies based upon preliminary findings by the original commission and new discoveries. It is the right thing to do to affirm our commitment to democracy and the rule of law.

I am proud that there are many Members of Congress and community activists who have come together in this continuous fight for justice. I especially thank Representatives DAN LUNGREN, MIKE HONDA, and CHRIS CANNON for their commitment to this issue and joining me in this effort. The Campaign for Justice and the Japanese American Citizens League have been the vanguard organizations driving this effort.

Madam Speaker, let us renew our resolve to build a better future for our community by dedicating ourselves to remembering how we compromised liberty in the past by passing the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Latin Americans of Japanese Descent Act. Doing so will help us guard it more closely in the future and help us commit ourselves to justice.

INTRODUCTION OF THE KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER ACT

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 2007

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam Speaker, imagine having a child with a potentially fatal disease. Imagine the pain of watching your child suffer, even while effective treatments are out there, only not available to your family. Now imagine that you had to choose between watching your child in agony, maybe even slowly dying, or getting her the care she needs but only by relinquishing your parental rights.

This kind of choice is barbaric, senseless, and common.

I rise in support of the Keeping Families Together Act, a collective effort initiated by myself, Representative RAMSTAD, Representative STARK, and Senator COLLINS dedicated to improving the lives of children and adolescents living with mental disorders. The time is now to close systemic shortfalls in our social service and health care systems that revictimize children who suffer from chronic mental health disorders.

Every year in this country, thousands of families are forced to relinquish custody of their children to the state in order to secure vitally necessary—even life or death—health care for their seriously ill children. These needed services are extremely expensive and private insurance often runs out prior to children being adequately treated. The financial burden of caring for a child with a chronic mental illness often exceeds what a family can bear. Many of these children remain Medicaid-ineligible because their parents' income and assets prevent them from qualifying for this assistance. These are not families who want to turn their children over to state authorities. These are reluctant families. Families who have suffered, and have arrived at the all too painful reality that they have exhausted all resources available short of turning their child over to the State.

The choice between custody and care is one that no parent should be forced to make. Clinical child experts tell us that the best place for a child to receive care is in the context of a supportive family relationship. Intuitively, we know this to be true. The family is the primary institution of care and nurturing for children, and families should be empowered to provide the needed care for their children through access and support.

The cornerstone of the Keeping Families Together Act is the provision of competitive grants to states, conditioned on the existence of state laws and policies to ensure that children receive appropriate mental health services and that their parents do not have to relinquish custody of their children. These Family Support Grants will in part: (1) establish interagency systems of care as an alternative to custody relinquishment, (2) facilitate the design of a statewide system of care which would involve collaboration between state child-serving agencies, parents, providers, and other stakeholders, (3) only fund activities which demonstrate benefit to children who are already in or are at risk for entering state custody solely for the purpose of receiving mental health services.

This bill would establish a federal inter-agency task force to examine mental health

issues in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, make recommendations to Congress, and guide the implementation of the grant program. States will be required to report annually on the success of the programs and activities implemented by the State under the grant.

The Keeping Families Together Act seeks to redress the inexcusable emotional disruption that is inflicted upon thousands of children and their parents by maintaining a system of care that forces good families to relinquish custody of their children to the bureaucrats and institutions of the state. Nobody can think that kind of system is good for anyone, and it's no wonder this bill has broad bipartisan support. It is counterproductive, and clinically counter-indicated, to separate emotionally vulnerable children from their core system of nurturing and support. The Keeping Families Together Act provides the safety net that families need and deserve, because parental rights should never be a trade off for children's health care.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass this law this year and keep these families together.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE IMPROVED BURN INJURY TREATMENT ACCESS ACT OF 2007

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 2007

Mr. NEAL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Social Security and Medicare Improved Burn Injury Treatment Access Act of 2007. This legislation provides a waiver of the 24-month waiting period now required before an uninsured individual becomes eligible for Medicare coverage for disabling burn injuries, as well as the five-month waiting period for Social Security disability benefits.

Each year an estimated 500,000 people are treated for burn injuries. Of these 500,000 injuries, about 40,000 require hospitalization. Fire and burn deaths average about 4,000 per year.

Burn care is highly specialized. While there are thousands of trauma centers in the United States, there are only 125 burn centers with a total burn-bed capacity of just over 1,800. These specialized burn centers treat about 25,000 or 200 admissions per year, out of the total 40,000 admissions, while the other 5,000 U.S. hospitals without burn centers average less than three burn admissions per year.

Medical care for serious burn injuries is very expensive, which places a great financial strain on burn centers, about 40 percent of whose patients are uninsured. Because of these financial challenges, burn centers in Pennsylvania, Mississippi, Iowa and South Carolina have closed in just the past two years.

This is occurring at a time when the federal government is asking burn centers to expand their capacity to deal with mass casualty scenarios. The Departments of Health and Human Services and Homeland Security have included burn centers in the Critical Benchmark Surge Capacity Criteria in the funding continuation requirements for state plans administered through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). HSS, in conjunction with the American Burn Association,