

sunsets. The residents there take tremendous pride in their city, which has just the right combination of parks, shops and cultural offerings.

St. Pete Beach is a barrier island with a permanent population of just over 10,000. It was incorporated in 1957 with the consolidation of the towns of Pass-a-Grille, Don Cesar, Belle Vista and St. Petersburg Beach.

Today it is a popular tourist destination when its population doubles during the winter months. Visitors flock to St. Pete Beach to enjoy its 38 acres of public parks and 39 acres of public beaches.

This is also a fiercely patriotic city as flags fly on homes throughout the community. The people there have also led a seven-city effort to collect items to send our troops serving overseas. They want our soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, and coastguardsmen to know they are loved and appreciated.

Madam Speaker, as the city prepares for its festivities this weekend, let me commend Mayor Ward Friszolowski, Vice Mayor Michael Finnerty, Commissioners Linda Cheney, Ed Rutten cutter and Harry Metz, and all the city's employees for their dedication to governing and managing one of our Nation's finest hometowns and vacation destinations. St. Pete Beach reminds us of all that is right in Florida and why it is such a great place to live, to work and to play.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CLIFF STEARNS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 8, 2007

Mr. STEARNS. Madam Speaker, unfortunately, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall vote No. 1059 on Wednesday, November 7, 2007.

However, had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on H. Res. 801, providing for consideration of the bill, H.R. 3688, to implement the United States-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement.

CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF OREGON, OHIO

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 8, 2007

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a community in my District, that of Oregon, Ohio. Formally incorporated following elections in November of 1957, Oregon celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2007.

Oregon, located on the Western Bay of Lake Erie, was once part of Northwest Ohio's Great Black Swamp. Cultivated for its trees and rich earth, its first government—Oregon Township—was formed in 1838. It is bounded by the City of Toledo to the West, Lake Erie to the North, Wood County to the South, and Jerusalem Township to the East.

Through the 1800s and 1900s, water and rail systems developed in the region. Northwest Ohio is a cornerstone of water, rail, and surface transportation, and Oregon is at its hub. As a result of its location, its two largest employers built and remain in Oregon: Sun Oil

and BP refineries. Oregon continued to grow as an industrial center of the region, with several chemical plants and energy generating facilities. Industrialization brought residential and commercial growth, and Oregon thrives.

Throughout its earlier years of growth, its Western neighbor Toledo tried to annex Oregon Township. Annexation attempts failed, but so, too, did early attempts to incorporate Oregon on its own. In 1957 after another annexation attempt, the residents of Oregon voted overwhelmingly to incorporate as the City of Oregon.

Oregon's own residents coined the slogan "City of Opportunity" in 1958 shortly after adopting the City Charter. Indeed Oregon lives up to its slogan. The City is home to Maumee Bay State Park—a jewel on our Western Lake Erie shoreline—as well as Pearson Metropark, South Shore Park, and Coontz Recreational Complex. Oregon is home to one of Ohio's largest festivals, the German American Festival, as well as its own Oregon Fest. The community is an urban mix of business, industrial, residential, recreational, educational and municipal ventures.

The City of Oregon is a vibrant community full of pride. Oregonians celebrate their past while moving toward the future. It is a City on the move. While recognizing the achievements of its first 50 years, Oregon is poised for the next 50. Onward!

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PHIL HARE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 8, 2007

Mr. HARE. Madam Speaker, on November 5, 2007, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted as follows: on rollcall No. 1034, On Closing Portions of the Conference for Department of Defense Appropriations, I would have voted "aye"; on rollcall No. 1035, H.R. 513—National Heroes Credit Protection Act, I would have voted "aye"; and on rollcall No. 1036, H. Res. 744—Recognizing the contributions of Native American veterans and calling upon the President to issue a proclamation urging the people of the United States to observe a day in honor of Native American veterans, I would have voted "aye."

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3685, EMPLOYMENT NON- DISCRIMINATION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3685, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2007, introduced by my distinguished friend and colleague Representative FRANK. This important legislation extends the basic civil rights that we, as Americans, enjoy and cherish, to millions of gay, lesbian, and bisexual citizens.

This legislation also fulfills the vision and promise of our Founding Fathers who in the

"Declaration of Independence" proclaimed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." This legislation ensures that all of America's citizens inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are protected.

The Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2007 will make it illegal to fire, refuse to hire, or otherwise discriminate against employees simply based on their perceived or actual sexual orientation.

I would like to thank my colleague, Mr. FRANK, for introducing this important legislation, as well as for his ongoing leadership on this issue. I would also like to thank Chairman MILLER, of the Education and Labor Committee, for bringing this legislation to the floor. Madam Speaker, today marks a historic occasion. This bill has been introduced in every Congress since 1975, and the October 18th vote in the Education and Labor Committee to report this legislation to the floor was the first vote ever taken on this legislation in the House of Representatives.

Madam Chairman, we live in a Nation that has long prided itself on predicated success on merit and hard work. In recent decades, we have fought to create a level playing field, to allow women, African Americans, and other minorities to compete in the workplace. In addition to employment legislation, we have worked to eliminate discrimination against members of minority groups. Earlier this Congress, we passed a landmark piece of hate crimes legislation, which crucially included crimes motivated by prejudice of sexual orientation.

H.R. 3685 speaks to our Nation's core values of equality and justice. There are currently no Federal laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. This means that in the 30 States that have not enacted State legislation to this effect, employers may make critical personnel decisions, including firing, refusing to hire, demoting, or refusing to promote employees solely based on the sexual orientation of the individual.

Madam Chairman, I strongly believe that employees should be hired or fired on the basis of their merits. Their jobs should not be threatened because of sexual orientation. Many U.S. companies have recognized that it is in the interest of U.S. companies, as well as U.S. citizens, to make employment decisions based on qualifications and job performance. Ninety percent of Fortune 500 companies now include sexual orientation in their non-discrimination policies. Many major American companies, including General Mills, Microsoft, Citibank, and Morgan Stanley, have expressed their strong support for legislation outlawing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. In addition, a May 2007 Gallup poll clearly indicated that non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is broadly supported by the American people, with 89 percent of participants stating that they support equal treatment for gays and lesbians in determining employment opportunities.

However, anti-gay discrimination persists in the workplace. According to a 2005 survey, a quarter of gay, lesbian, or bisexual individuals disagreed with a statement that most employers in their area would hire openly gay, lesbian, or bisexual people. A 2007 study found