

the next generation of environmental stewards, which is one of the best ways to truly "Save the Bay." It is therefore critical that we act now to reauthorize the Gateways program so that the Network and its partners can continue to educate residents of the Chesapeake Bay watershed about how their communities relate directly to the health of our largest estuary and a national treasure—the Chesapeake Bay.

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2008

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, Sunday, March 2, 2008, marked Texas Independence Day. 172 years ago that day, the Texas Declaration of Independence was ratified by the Convention of 1836 at Washington-on-the-Brazos.

Driven by the same spirit of freedom that drove the patriots of the American Revolution to throw off the shackles of tyranny and oppression, the Texas Declaration of Independence was produced, literally, overnight. Its urgency was crucial, because while it was being prepared, the Alamo in San Antonio was under siege by Santa Anna's army of Mexico.

Immediately upon the assemblage of the Convention of 1836 on March 1, a committee of five of its delegates was appointed to draft the document. The committee worked long into the night to prepare the declaration. It was briefly reviewed, then adopted by the delegates of the convention the following day.

The declaration was an announcement to the world that all Texans would fight to protect their rights. The declaration stated that they would no longer live under the dictatorship of Santa Anna or a government that had been "forcibly changed, without their consent, from a restricted federative republic, composed of sovereign states, to a consolidated central military despotism."

It spoke of the numerous injustices inflicted upon the settlers of the state then known as Coahuila y Tejas: the elimination of the state's legislative body; the denial of religious freedom; the elimination of the civil justice system; and the confiscation of firearms, this last one being the most intolerable, particularly among Texans.

The declaration stated that Texas was 'a free, sovereign, and independent republic . . . fully invested with all the rights and attributes' that belong to independent nations; and a declaration that they 'fearlessly and confidently' committed their decision to 'the Supreme Arbiter of the destinies of nations.'

The Texan Army was ready to defend itself from the oppression of Santa Anna and his army. Outnumbered by the vastly larger Mexican army, approximately 200 Texans and Tejanos under the leadership of Lt. Colonel William Barrett Travis and Tennessee Congressman David Crockett made their stand in the defense of Texas at an old Spanish mission known as the Alamo.

They bravely held their position for 13 days, enduring wave after wave of attack, and on the morning of March 6, 1836, they made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom as they were killed in action defending Texas at the Alamo.

Two weeks later on March 27, 1836 Colonel James W. Fannin and 300 men under his command were massacred by Santa Anna's army at Goliad.

The sacrifices made at the Alamo and Goliad would not be forgotten as they became the battle cry of the Texan Army: "Remember the Alamo. Remember Goliad!"

On April 21, 1836 a much smaller Texan Army led by General Sam Houston launched a surprise attack on the much larger Mexican force at San Jacinto. After only 18 minutes the Battle of San Jacinto was over, and Texas had won its independence.

That battle is memorialized along the San Jacinto River with the San Jacinto Monument in Baytown, Texas in the 29th district, the district I represent.

Texas Independence Day is important to all Americans because the events show that the brotherhood of freedom can be stronger than the brotherhood of ethnicity or nationality, as Tejanos proved at Gonzalez, Bexar, Goliad, the Alamo, along the banks of the San Jacinto River, and in the government of the Republic of Texas.

People sometimes wonder what makes Texas and Texans so different, and I believe part of that answer is that the desire for freedom that gave us the first Texas Independence Day is still alive today.

Madam Speaker, I hope that Congress and this whole country join all Texans in honoring these brave men who stood up for liberty and freedom 172 years ago. God Bless Texas and God Bless America.

TO COMMEND RIPON COLLEGE FOR ITS INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO PROMOTING THE USE OF BICYCLING ON CAMPUS

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2008

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend Ripon College for the exciting, innovative approach it is implementing to tackle transportation needs on their campus. Ripon College, a liberal arts college in Wisconsin, last year faced for the first time a greater number of applications for parking permits than they had available spaces. In today's car-centric society, most people would have addressed this problem by laying more asphalt.

But the Ripon College president, David Joyce, refused to consider the idea of paving over any more of Ripon's beautiful and historic campus. Instead, he championed the school's new "Velorution" program, which provides free bicycles for incoming freshman who pledge not to bring a car to campus.

With contributions from trustees and alumni, the university teamed up with several bike retailers to provide each car-free freshman with a Wisconsin-built Trek 820 mountain bike, a helmet, and a bicycle lock.

For too long, our transportation planning and decision-making have focused solely on the automobile. It's time we support non-motorized transportation for the many benefits it can bring. This program provides a fun and easy way for students to incorporate exercise into their daily routines, and can encourage a

lifetime of healthy, active transportation choices. The program will also take cars off the road, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the negative impact our transportation system has on the environment.

Ripon College is following in the footsteps of their representative, the gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. PETRI, who is a leading cycling advocate in Congress. Mr. PETRI co-chairs the Congressional Bicycle Caucus, previously served as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and has been a leader in the development of the Non-motorized Pilot Program, which has shown early success in promoting walking and cycling as important modes of transportation in his district. Ripon College is fortunate to be led by the gentleman's vision and understanding of the necessity of making sustainable transportation choices.

I commend President Joyce and Ripon College for their fresh vision for meeting the transportation needs of students, and hope that their program will be an inspiration for colleges and universities across the country to develop sustainable communities.

HONORING KNOXVILLE COLLEGE

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2008

Mr. DUNCAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Knoxville College, a predominantly African-American institution in my hometown.

On March the 6th, Knoxville College will hold its 110th Founder's Day Celebration.

The school was founded by Reverend Joseph Gillespie McKee, a Presbyterian minister who came to the United States from Ireland in 1852.

It was during the American Civil War that Mr. McKee settled in Nashville, Tennessee and organized the school for black people.

East Tennessee was settled primarily by very poor Irish and Scots-Irish immigrants and in 1875 the school was moved from Nashville to Knoxville, Tennessee, where it stands today.

Thousands of graduates have gone on to serve our country and communities well in their chosen fields.

Today, many young people come from all over the United States and several other countries to receive the special attention that Knoxville College can give.

I am very proud to have this College in my hometown, and I am sure they will continue to serve its students well for many years to come.

TRIBUTE TO MRS. BETTY SEMBLER

HON. ADAM H. PUTNAM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2008

Mr. PUTNAM. Madam Speaker, I am honored to congratulate Mrs. Betty Sembler as she receives the Drug Enforcement Agency Museum Foundation "2008 Lifetime Achievement Award." It is certainly well-deserved as