



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 155

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2009

No. 77

House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. TONKO).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 19, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable PAUL TONKO to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

HONORING ARMY SPECIALIST JEREMIAH P. MCCLEERY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with the sad duty of recognizing the death in combat of Army Specialist Jeremiah P. McCleery, age 24, of Portola, California.

Mr. Speaker, if you read the observations of his friends, you very quickly realize this was not only an irreplaceable loss to his family and a monumental loss to his community, but it was also a terrible loss for our country.

Miah, as he was known, was simply a good kid. He made friends easily, he had a great sense of humor, and he had wanted to join the Army since he was 4 years old. He was an exemplary soldier who commanded the friendship and respect of his colleagues. He had fallen in love with a girl at Fort Hood before he shipped out, with their whole lives ahead of them.

A friend of his, Josh Rodgers, was asked when Miah McCleery was happiest, and the answer was, "doing anything with his dad." They had lost his mother, Collette, to cancer a few years ago. His father, Joe, worked at a refuse collection company and later at a sheet metal business, and Miah was often at his side.

That same friend was asked why Jeremiah had enlisted. The response, "he always wanted to when he was a kid. He probably just wanted to out of patriotic duty to go serve. And I think he wanted to go do his part."

The question first asked by Jim Michener thunders across the countryside with a loss like this: "Where do we get such men?" Mr. Speaker, I don't know how to offer condolences to Miah McCleery's family, to his father, Joe, to his sisters, Lynette and Chastity, and to his grandparents and many friends. The loss they bear is beyond my comprehension.

I can only offer my awe and gratitude that humanity has within itself a small band of brothers like Jeremiah McCleery who stepped forward not for treasure or profit nor even to defend their own freedom. But rather, to win the freedom of a people half a world away. And they do it because their country asks and because it is virtuous and noble.

A few feet from here in the Capitol Rotunda is a fresco called the "Apotheosis of Washington." It depicts General Washington, in uniform, ascending to the heavens, flanked by victory and freedom, and surrounded by the essence

and fruits of a free Nation. And in that depiction, Washington beckons.

From little towns like Portola, California, decent young men and women with promising futures, like Jeremiah McCleery, have answered. And I don't know where we get such men, and I don't know how their families can bear it. But I do know what we owe them. And I do know that we can never repay that debt, except to honor their memory and keep their sacrifice always in mind, those who gave up everything "to proclaim liberty throughout all the land, and unto all the inhabitants thereof."

HONORING AND REMEMBERING LES SARNOFF

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. This is an era where new media and communication devices are seemingly created overnight. Was it only 3 years ago that YouTube bounced on the scene? It seems like it was last week that we first heard about Twitter.

Well, the first and most influential of the "new media" still plays a large role in our lives. Radio captures that magic in part because of the radio personalities who captivated us with their distinctive voices and wit, made larger than life by how much was left to our imagination in terms of the production and even what they looked like. William Conrad was the radio voice of Gunsmoke's marshal, Matt Dillon, who was played on TV by actor James Arness, 6 foot 6, tall and rangy with craggy good looks. William Conrad, the radio voice, sounded that way, but he was short and rotund. And while he looked distinctive, few would confuse him with a matinee idol. From Fred Alan, Jack Benny and Edward R. Murrow to Scott Simon, Garrison Keillor

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H5715

today, these people play an important role not just in a communication and entertainment medium, but in the lives of Americans.

In much of the commercial radio wasteland today, where content is centralized and digitized, while costs are cut, local personalities, who played such a profound role in virtually every community, are more and more a distant memory.

In my hometown of Portland, Oregon, we are still blessed with a few distinctive local voices. But sadly last month, we lost one who can only be described as an icon. For decades Les Sarnoff was the most distinctive personality in what started as an idiosyncratic, offbeat and obscure FM station. He helped it grow into a major commercial success and a Portland fixture. The characteristics that made him such a well respected professional and beloved local figure helped him rise above and survive the turmoil in the industry, the often destructive changes, to brighten the mornings of tens of thousands of my neighbors every day for the better part of three decades.

Les was a dedicated and disciplined professional, arising shortly after midnight every weekday to spend hours in preparation before his morning shift. He was a step ahead of legitimate trends in music, but with a profound respect for both music and artists that was timeless. He had a rapport and a chemistry with not only his audience, but the outstanding people that were part of his morning team over the years. Despite a demanding schedule and brutal hours, Les always made time to be part of public events and public affairs.

Now, media and people in politics need for, professional and ethical reasons, to maintain a certain distance. That is far more important to a media personality like Les, than for a politician like me. And observe that distance he did, but always with a sense that I was a friend, with a sense of interest and awareness whenever I would visit him in the station or more often do a telephone interview from our Nation's Capitol or an occasional lunch or interaction at a civic event. But it was not Les Sarnoff letting his guard down. It was Les revealing that at core he liked, understood and respected everyone. He was curious, funny and caring. Even in his passing, Les brought our community together as thousands gathered last Sunday to honor his memory in Portland's Pioneer Square, our City's front yard. By reflecting on his life, we reflect on ours.

To his wife Rita, Les' many friends and colleagues, because of his love for and work with you, we have all been touched. We will never be the same without Les, but also, we will never be the same because of Les Sarnoff.

WORLD HEPATITIS DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, today, May 19, marks the second annual World Hepatitis Day, when the need for greater public awareness towards prevention and treatment of this silent killer is recognized internationally.

Hepatitis is a prime example of an issue that must be addressed now, as Congress and the administration work together to create a sustainable health care system for future generations.

Of those infected with viral hepatitis C, more than three-quarters are unaware of their infection, making the long-term consequences of HCV infection, including cirrhosis of the liver and liver cancer, a greater, greater danger.

A study about HCV released just yesterday by Milliman Incorporated, one of the Nation's most respected firms, tells a troubling story. They are saying that over the next 20 years, medical costs for patients with HCV infections are expected to increase from \$30 billion in 2009 to over \$85 billion in 2024.

Chronic viral hepatitis is a leading cause of primary liver cancer, one of the fastest growing cancers, which significantly impacts 6 million Americans and has a 5-year survival rate. The minority population will be disproportionately affected. Hepatitis C is twice as common among African Americans as among whites.

As a Member of the United States House of Representatives, I will continue to support increased funding towards public education, early detection, testing and counseling for patients. We cannot afford to be silent about this disease any longer. We must speak out and take action. That is what we need to do to curtail this very, very serious problem.

THE DROUGHT CRISIS IN SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to a drought crisis that is affecting California's San Joaquin Valley. Three years of below-average rainfall have created tremendous hardships in valley communities that are the backbone of California's agriculture economy. We have heard time and time again about the deep, deep financial impacts affecting all regions of our country. But in places like Detroit and in places like the San Joaquin Valley, where you have 30 and 40 percent unemployment, it is no longer a deep recession, but it is a depression.

Farmers and farm workers in the San Joaquin Valley grow over 350 different crops, employing tens of thousands of people and providing half the Nation's fruits and vegetables. It is number one in the dairy industry and a host of

other important agricultural commodities that are not subsidized, that don't use subsidized water, that, in fact, are critical to healthy diets for Americans and provide a tremendous balance of payments on our trade efforts abroad.

Sadly, though, three critical years of drought shortage have had a devastating effect on communities in the San Joaquin Valley and in my district. My district and Congressman CARDOZA's district are at ground zero where we have communities that have 30 and 40 percent unemployment, communities that have 10 and 12,000 people, 30,000 people, 50,000 people. When one-third of the people in your community don't have jobs, it is a depression.

Today, clearly, our environmental regulations are not working. We have an inability to move water around California.

□ 1045

We know that, if this drought lasts a fourth and fifth year, Katy, bar the door.

These are food lines in communities in my district. The irony is that these are some of the hardest working people you will ever meet. Normally, they would be working in fields, working in processing facilities, putting food on America's dinner plates. Sadly, they're in food lines. How horrific in America. Many of my colleagues for the last 4 months, 5 months have been working to try to bring attention to our State representatives, to our Governor and, here, to our President and to the new administration in town because we know, in California, like other parts of the country, droughts and floods are cyclical.

This photograph is an almond orchard that has been pulled out because of a lack of water. So, to that degree, Congressman CARDOZA and I, in January, began meeting with the new administration, laying out a host of administrative efforts that we thought, with flexibility, could allow us to move water around from parts of the State that have water. We have met with Secretary Salazar and his staff, with the Mid-Pacific Region and their staff time and time again and with the Governor and his director of water resources, and we have brought to the attention of the President and of his White House staff the fact that they should come to the valley and see firsthand the devastating impacts.

We need to have flexibility during times of drought. Clearly, people are as important as the other environmental balances and trade-offs that are there. If the Environmental Species Act were working, we would not have a decline in the fisheries that have taken place over the last two decades. So we are working on short-term efforts to try to deal with the current situation in the event that this drought lasts a fourth or a fifth or a sixth year.

The last drought we had in California lasted 6 years, from 1988 to 1993. I predict to my colleagues that if, in fact,