

HONORING KAREN FONTENOT

HON. CHARLES W. BOUSTANY, JR.

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 20, 2009

Mr. BOUSTANY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Karen Fontenot, of Duson, Louisiana, who has dedicated her life to helping veterans throughout Southwest Louisiana.

She answered her country's call during the Vietnam Conflict, serving as a nurse in the Philippines.

It was while trying to help move and carry male patients twice her size that Karen first injured her back. It was an injury which left her permanently disabled, unable to walk without the assistance of a cane, and in constant pain. Karen's caring and tender nature was injured, perhaps more severely than her physical being. She suffered with every young man she saw torn apart by the horrors of war.

Upon returning to her family and domestic life in Southwest Louisiana, Karen remained true to her fellow veterans. In an area which lacked Memorial Day and Veterans' Day ceremonies, Karen led a movement to establish those events. She was aided by some fellow veterans, but the brunt of the effort fell on her. For more than a decade, Karen has organized ceremonies to honor those she served alongside as well as those who came before and after her.

When the Iraq War led to the deaths of several local, young men, Karen added a special tribute to the Gold Star Mothers. These families led by the mothers who have lost their child gather with dozens of other veterans and their families to pay tribute to those who have died and those who live.

In addition to the beautiful ceremony, Karen invites all of those attending to a catered lunch at the local Armory. Each of the Gold Star Mothers receives special gifts, and those who have made special contributions are recognized and receive a tribute.

Karen Fontenot broke her back to care for young men injured and killed in the Vietnam conflict and returned home with the intent that all men and women who have sacrificed for their country will be remembered. If it is up to her, none of their sacrifices will be forgotten or overlooked. Karen Fontenot is a patron saint of veterans.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in honoring Karen for her achievements and dedication to our nation's veterans.

**INTRODUCTION OF THE ABSENTEE
BALLOT TRACK, RECEIVE, AND
CONFIRM (TRAC) ACT**

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 20, 2009

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce The Absentee Ballot Track, Receive and Confirm (TRAC) Act—a bill to assist states in establishing absentee ballot tracking systems.

Many voters worry that they cannot determine whether their absentee ballots were actually sent out, received and counted.

In most cases, the fears of one's mail-in ballot somehow being lost in the system are un-

founded—but we all know the concern is still there. Our nation's voters deserve electoral procedures that are transparent and which strengthen their faith in democracy.

Sometimes there is reason for concern. I have heard from people who simply did not receive a ballot they requested. There are various reasons for this from clerical errors to confusion over addresses.

Other times, a problem occurs when an absentee ballot is rejected because a voter's signature has changed over time and the voter never knows the difference.

The good news is that it is possible and practical to track mail ballots.

Many elections offices are already tracking ballots with great success. In fact, in California it is law that all counties establish absentee ballot tracking systems and the systems are quite popular with voters and elections officials.

In my home of San Diego County, CA, our registrar's online voter registration/absentee look-up feature received 98,000 hits before the 2008 November election.

Quite simply, the technology exists to allow voters to easily find out whether an elections office has sent out a ballot, whether a completed ballot has arrived back at the registrar's office, whether the registrar has counted the ballot, and if not, why not.

Implementing ballot tracking systems will bring voters peace of mind and reduce the burden on elections offices which are often barraged with phone calls from voters trying to determine the status of their ballots.

Moreover, the ability to check absentee status round the clock is a convenient service for voters, especially for military and overseas voters in various time zones.

Not only is mail ballot tracking feasible and helpful, but it is also affordable.

Setting up systems at an elections office can be as simple as redesigning a website and linking it to a back-up of a current database as San Mateo County, CA discovered when they created a tracking system for just \$2000.

Absentee tracking could even help elections offices save money in the long run as call volumes will likely go down and the strain on elections office staff declines.

Mail ballot tracking is a win-win for voters and elections officials.

We should follow the lead of the trailblazers who are already tracking mail ballots and encourage local jurisdictions to create tracking systems.

The TRAC Act would allow the federal government to reimburse states for establishing tracking systems. However, I want to be clear that it would not require any state to set up a tracking system.

I am proud to introduce this bill along with my fellow colleague from California, Mr. MCCARTHY and I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join us in supporting this effort to strengthen the democratic process and give American voters the electoral certainty they deserve.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF
JAMES EDWARD ARRINGTON**HON. JO BONNER**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 20, 2009

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, the city of Jackson, Alabama, and all of southwest Alabama recently lost a dear friend, and I rise today to honor James Edward Arrington and pay tribute to his memory.

A native of Greensboro, Mayor Arrington was a veteran of the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict. In 1962, he moved to Jackson to build and operate Arrington Nursing Home, which later became Jackson Health Care. He was former auxiliary police chief in Jackson, former owner of A & B Trucking Company, and co-owner of Anderson Brothers Chrysler-Plymouth dealership.

For all of his achievements, James Arrington will perhaps be most remembered for serving as the mayor of Jackson for over two decades. Among the many accomplishments during his five-term administration include: funding of the new city hall building, locating Allied Paper (now Boise) to Jackson, construction of the Vanity Fair building, and construction of the northern Industrial Road bypass.

Just this past February, the Jackson City Council voted to rename City Hall the James E. Arrington City Hall Complex. Mayor Arrington was also named Jackson's Man of the Year for 1973 by the Jackson Civitan Club.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering a beloved friend to many throughout southwest Alabama. James Edward Arrington will be dearly missed by his family—his wife, Betty; his two sons, Ed Arrington and Greg Cotton; his two daughters, Leah Trotter and Brenda Fondren; his brother, Johnnie Arrington; his sister, Maggie Nelson; his eight grandchildren; and great-grandchild—as well as the countless friends he leaves behind.

Our thoughts and prayers are with them all during this difficult time.

**TRIBUTE TO THE PASSAIC COUNTY COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND
DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION, INC.**

HON. BILL PASCARELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 20, 2009

Mr. PASCARELL. Madam Speaker, I would like to call to your attention the work of an outstanding organization, The Passaic County Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Prevention, Inc., which will celebrate its 25th Anniversary on May 25, 2009. This milestone marks a quarter century of supporting those most in need of assistance to get their lives on track, and thereby become a productive part of the greater community.

It is only fitting that The Passaic County Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Prevention, Inc. be honored in this, the permanent record of the greatest democracy ever known, for all the assistance it has provided to individuals and families in the Passaic County area.