

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING MARK WASSERMAN AND THE HOUSES FOR CHANGE PROGRAM

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 31, 2012

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Houses for Change is an innovative new campaign garnering support for the fight against homelessness. This new program is quickly becoming a popular way to help communities across the country support the less fortunate. The program's founder, Mark Wasserman, recently visited Capitol Hill to share his ideas with Members of Congress and their staff. I would like to recognize Mr. Wasserman's dedication and thank him for working to improve his community.

Looking for a way to help the homeless, Mark came up with the Houses for Change program. This innovative program allows children to use their imagination and creativity to support homeless people. The children decorate pre-ordered boxes so that they look like small homes, and then they take their homes around the community to collect loose change. On a selected date, the children and parents bring the boxes back to Houses for Change, and all of the proceeds go directly to a charity selected by the participants. Similar to the Jewish tradition of the tzedakah box, this unique method allows all of the money raised to go directly towards helping the homeless.

Mark's original idea was extremely successful in Palm Beach County, Florida. As a result, the program is now being launched nationwide. With the help of Family Promise, Houses for Change is quickly being adopted by schools, church congregations, and homeless organizations across the country. Additionally, organizations such as the YMCA and United Way are going to begin using this program to help youth get involved in this meaningful community service project. Due to his hard work and dedication, Mark's original idea is now a national effort to help the less fortunate members of our society.

Mr. Speaker, people like Mark Wasserman are a shining example of those selfless individuals who have committed their life to helping their communities become a better place. I am so proud that the Houses for Change program started in South Florida, and I hope that the program continues to thrive across the nation.

BUFFALO SOLDIERS IN THE NATIONAL PARKS STUDY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 24, 2012

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1022, "Buffalo

Soldiers in the National Parks Study Act." This bill directs the Secretary of the Interior to study alternatives for the commemoration and interpretation of the role of the Buffalo Soldiers in the early years of the national parks.

America's national parks are a treasure of nature's magnificent wonders—84 million acres of the most stunning landscapes anyone has ever seen. The story of the national parks is the story of people from every conceivable background who were willing to devote themselves to saving a portion of the land they loved. Among them were Buffalo Soldiers.

Our country began the arduous task of rebuilding itself after a brutal civil war. In this war former slaves fought in Union regiments to pursue the ultimate goal to end slavery. These Black soldiers were later used in 1866, when Congress created six segregated regiments that ultimately became four black regiments that later became known as the original Buffalo Soldiers. Because of prevailing attitudes following the Civil War, these soldiers could only serve west of the Mississippi River. Their main charge was to protect settlers as they moved west and to support building the infrastructure needed for new settlements to flourish.

Buffalo Soldiers conducted campaigns against American Indian tribes on a western frontier that extended from Montana in the northwest to Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona in the southwest. They engaged in several clashes against such great Indian Chiefs as Victorio, Geronimo, and Nana.

"Buffalo Soldiers" was the name given the black cavalrymen by the Plains Indians. Reason for the name is uncertain. One view is that the Indians saw a resemblance between the black man's hair and the mane of a buffalo. Another view is that when a buffalo was wounded or cornered, it fought ferociously, displaying unusual stamina and courage. This was the same fighting spirit Indians saw in combat with black cavalrymen. Since Indians held the buffalo in such high regard, it was felt that the name was not given in contempt.

Those Buffalo Soldiers not only fought in conflicts along the western frontier, but they were indispensable in the treacherous and desolate trails of the Wild West. They helped protect and build up our new country as it expanded west. They built roads. They protected new territories where they escorted settlers, cattle herds, and railroad crews, while battling Mexican revolutionaries, outlaws, rustlers and hostile Native American tribes. The Buffalo Soldiers were the protectors of the western frontier.

Buffalo Soldiers played a central role in protecting national parks—Yosemite, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. They were, in fact, our national parks' first "guardians." These Soldiers kept the park free from poachers and from the ranchers whose grazing sheep destroyed the parks' natural habitats. They built roads, including the first wagon road into the Giant Forest of Sequoia.

At a time when most of the country would not recognize their humanity, these brave pa-

triot's stood up to fight and protect a country that was just as much theirs as any other American. And I think it is fitting and symbolic that at a time when our Nation was rebuilding itself after being torn apart, it was former slaves and children of former slaves—Buffalo Soldiers—that rebuilt and protected our new and expanding country.

As our country progresses, there will continue to be sites of historic and cultural significance that need to be added to the national park system. Commemorating and interpreting the role of the Buffalo Soldiers in the early years of the national parks will ensure the historical contributions of the Buffalo Soldiers will always be remembered. Celebrating the role of Buffalo Soldiers serves to interpret, articulate, collect, display and preserve historical artifacts, documents, and other historical memorabilia relating to these brave men.

It is America's mandate to acknowledge and reflect America's diverse stories. The story of Buffalo Soldiers is an underrepresented cultural theme in our national parks. Commemorating Buffalo Soldiers in the history of the nation's national parks is a step in the right direction. It reflects our cultural heritage and ensures their stories are told for our children and grandchildren to enjoy throughout posterity.

At this time I would also like to take a moment to thank a special Legislative Fellow in my office, Byron McKie. He has been working diligently to enhance the opportunities of children through STEM education.

IN MEMORY OF JAMES I. THACKER

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 31, 2012

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to James I. Thacker, a dedicated public servant and brave member of the Pike County Sheriff's Department in Pikeville, Kentucky. His passing is a great loss and he will be deeply missed in Pike County.

For law enforcement officers and other first responders, a routine assignment can become dangerous at any moment. On Monday, January 23rd, James was serving papers at the end of his shift, when a vehicle crossed the center line on U.S. 460 and hit him head on. His comrades rushed to his aid, just the same as he had done so many times before for them.

James will always be remembered for his service to Pike County, both for his time as a Deputy Sheriff and his faithful years as a Constable. He served with compassion, loyalty and the utmost integrity. James' comrades highly respected him, and described him as someone who treated others as he wanted to be treated. He was an excellent officer and was always prepared to answer the call of duty.

James was a loving husband, a father of four, a grandfather and a former road foreman. His loss will be felt across the county

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