

In addition to his position with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Russell is Festival Director and Principal Conductor at the Sunflower Music Festival. He founded both the Sunflower Music Festival and the Missouri River Festival of the Arts, and serves as Artistic Director of the Buzzards Bay Musicfest. He has appeared as guest conductor in opera and concert engagements in Mexico City, London, New York, Seattle, Cincinnati, and Sacramento.

Mr. Patterson has spent his career enriching Kansas City with his talent and vision. He is a graduate of the Conservatory of Music at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He helped establish the Middle-America Opera Apprenticeship Program in conjunction with the Conservatory. The Apprenticeship Program is designed to prepare exceptional young singers for a professional operatic career. The Program continues to gain national recognition for its commitment to aspiring artists.

As a trailblazer in the arts community, Mr. Patterson has served on the Advisory panels for the National Endowment for the Arts and the Missouri Arts Council, as a consultant to the Ford Foundation, and on the Board of Directors of OPERA America. He has received numerous awards and honors including the Alumni Achievement Award, the Dean's Award, the nationally prestigious Conductor's Award from the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, and the W.F. Yates Medalion from William Jewell College. In 1996, Mr. Patterson was honored at the OPERA America 25th Anniversary Conference for his years of service.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Russell Patterson for his commitment to our community's future artists and his service to music in Kansas City. I wish he and his lovely wife Terri well in all of their future endeavors, and hope we can enjoy some tennis at the Cape.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO AMEND THE D.C. CONVENTION CENTER AND SPORTS ARENA AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1995

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 16, 1998

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce a bill to amend the D.C. Convention Center and Sports Arena Authorization Act of 1995 in order to enable the Washington Convention Center Authority (Authority) to finance revenue bonds for the cost of constructing a new convention center in downtown D.C. This legislation moves forward the hope and promise of the 1995 legislation for a sports arena and a convention center, twin centerpieces of economic development and jobs in the city and revitalization of downtown in the District. The quick and efficient construction of the MCI Center and the new jobs and revenue the arena has brought to D.C. residents have encouraged the city to complete its work on a convention center, where the need has long been conceded.

In every other city in the United States, this matter would not come before any but the local city council. Unfortunately, unlike every other city, the District does not have legislative

and budget autonomy and therefore cannot spend its own funds unless authorized by Congress.

Extensive hearings in the City Council have been held on the underlying issues, with an informed and vigorous debate by members of the City Council. On June 16, the City Council approved legislation to finance the new convention center, and on July 7, the City Council passed a bond inducement resolution to approve the Authority's proposal for the issuance of dedicated tax revenue bonds to finance construction of the convention center. On July 13, the D.C. Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority (Control Board) gave its final approval to the financing plan for the project, leaving only congressional authorization, which is necessary for the District to proceed to the bond market.

On July 15, the Subcommittee on the District of Columbia heard testimony from Mayor Marion Barry, City Council Chair Linda Cropp, City Council Member Charlene Drew Jarvis, Control Board Chair Andrew Brimmer, Authority President Terry Golden, and representatives of the General Accounting Office (GAO) and the General Services Administration (GSA) on the financial aspects of the project. After hearing this testimony, I am satisfied that the Authority is ready to proceed with the issuance of bonds to secure financing, allowing the Authority to begin to break ground possibly as early as September. Considering the many years delay and the millions in lost revenue to the District, ground breaking cannot come too soon.

Although the GAO testified that the cost of constructing the new convention center would be \$708 million, \$58 million more than the \$650 million estimate, the \$58 million is not attributable to the cost of the center but to certain costs that should be borne by entities other than the Authority. For example, vendors who will operate in the facility are anticipated to contribute \$17.7 million in equipment costs; the District government will provide \$10 million for utility relocation from expected Department of Housing and Urban Development grants; and the President has requested \$25 million in his budget to expand the Mount Vernon Square Metro station.

The GSA testified that the agency had worked closely with the Authority to keep the costs of the project down. With the GSA's assistance, the Authority secured a contract with a construction manager for a "Guaranteed Maximum Price," whereby the private contractor is given incentives to keep costs down and assumes the risk for any cost overruns.

Mayor Marion Barry testified, among other things, regarding the promise of additional jobs for District residents. He said that the new convention center would create nearly 1,000 new construction jobs, and that once the facility is completed, it would generate nearly 10,000 jobs in the hospitality and tourism industries. He testified that, using some of the approaches that were successful with the MCI Center, special training, and goals for jobs for D.C. residents would be met.

The District of Columbia Subcommittee hearing was not a reprise of the lengthy D.C. City Council hearings, and, on home rule grounds, did not attempt to repeat issues of local concern. However, since the issues of financing and bonding before the Congress implicate other areas, the Subcommittee asked extensive questions and received testimony

concerning many issues, including location, size, and job creation, in addition to the strictly financial issues.

This convention center has an unusual financial base, which I believe other cities might do well to emulate. The financing arises from a proposal by the hotel and restaurant industry for taxes on their own industry that would not have been available to the city for any other purposes. The proposal was made at a time when the city's need for revenue and jobs has been especially pressing. For many years, the District had been unable to attract large conventions. Not only has the District lost billions as a result; the local hotel and restaurant industry has suffered from the absence of a large convention center. It is estimated that the inadequacy of the current facility led to the loss of \$300 million in revenue from lost conventions in 1997 alone. My legislation will enable the District to compete for its market share in the convention industry for the first time in many years.

The delay in building an adequate convention center has been very costly to the District. In a town dominated by tax exempt property, especially government buildings, a convention center is one of the few projects that can bring significant revenues. To that end, the District intends to break ground this September. I ask for expeditious passage of this bill.

HONORING THE TOWN OF HOLLAND, MA, ON THE DEDICATION OF ITS NEW TOWNHALL AND THE CELEBRATION OF ITS 215TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 16, 1998

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and honor the town of Holland, Massachusetts on the dedication of its new Town Hall and the celebration of its 215th anniversary.

In 1730, the Town of Holland was settled by Joseph Blodgett, whose descendants still live in the town today. The Town was named after Lord Holland, an English statesman who lobbied for independence for the American colonies. The town was incorporated on July 5, 1783, and is rich with history.

Holland is located in the southeast corner of Hampden County in Western Massachusetts. The town is four square miles in area. It contains the Quinnebaug River and the Hamilton Reservoir, one of the largest reservoirs in southern New England. It is nestled amongst two hill ranges, where elevations reach up to 1,100 feet.

Throughout the years, Holland has remained an example of the charm and beauty of the traditional New England village. At different times, it has sustained industries such as farming, the manufacturing of cloth, and brick making. To this day, Holland is known most for its recreational opportunities. There are extensive recreational facilities at the Hamilton Reservoir, which is stocked with trout each year by the state of Massachusetts. There is also a park and a swimming area at the very picturesque Lake Siog. This small town remains as alive and healthy today as it was 215 years ago.

Unfortunately, the 200-year old town hall was destroyed in a horrendous fire in December of 1995. The new Town Hall, which was dedicated on July 11, 1998, stands as a testament to the courage and character of the 2,300 residents of this wonderful town. I want to acknowledge this town and its residents as they celebrate their new Town Hall as well as their 215th anniversary.

TRIBUTE TO MR. PAT PATTON

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 16, 1998

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a gentleman who has endeared himself to the cause of equality and justice in Northern Ireland and distinguished himself as a community leader in Texas. Pat Patton has served in many capacities, both professionally and as a volunteer, for his community. As the Executive Director of the Ancient Order of the Hibernians, he worked diligently and effectively at seeking recognition of inequalities in Northern Ireland.

Before assuming that position, Mr. Patton played an instrumental role in the Irish community throughout Texas. He produced and hosted a weekly radio show in Houston called "Irish Aires." In 1991, I had the privilege of working with Mr. Patton as he spearheaded the lobbying effort to pass the MacBride Principles in the Texas Legislature. His tireless efforts over a period of two legislative sessions ultimately succeeded. To this day, this law dictates principles of fairness and equality within companies in Northern Ireland in which the State of Texas owns shares. For these and other efforts, Mr. Patton, on July 21, will be honored at the National Convention of the Ancient Order of the Hibernians in Pittsburgh, PA.

By profession, Mr. Patton is a social worker, having completed his undergraduate degree from St. Mary's University in San Antonio, which is my alma mater. As a social worker myself, I am aware of the sacrifices and patience required in this profession. After receiving his Masters of Social Work (MSW) from Tulane University in New Orleans, he provided counseling for the US Air Force. He continued his services at Catholic Charities in Los Angeles where he served as a therapist and family marriage counselor. Later, he moved back to Texas where he continued serving those less fortunate as Vice President of Houston Light-house for the Blind.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the selfless devotion of Mr. Patton to his community and his country. We owe him, his wife Mary, and their family, our debt of gratitude.

THE SMALL BUSINESS EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT PROTECTION ACT OF 1998

HON. SAM GEJDENSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 16, 1998

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Small Business Employee Re-

tirement Protection Act of 1998. This legislation will bring security to millions of small business employees in Connecticut and throughout the nation.

Mr. Speaker, I wrote this legislation in part because of a problem in my district. Late last year, we in eastern Connecticut learned just how vulnerable pension plans are. The employees of Emergi-Lite, a small manufacturing business in Westbrook, Connecticut, were informed that their plan was basically bankrupt. An unscrupulous, unqualified manager embezzled about \$2 million—nearly all the assets in the plan. The employees had no idea their life savings were being squandered. They had no information about the total value of the plan or how the total value of the plan or how the assets were being invested. They were left in the dark and almost robbed blind.

The bill I introduce today will reduce the chances that what happened at Emergi-Lite will happen again. This legislation requires pensions to be managed by qualified professionals, such as a bank or mutual fund company. Moreover, it requires plan managers to provide beneficiaries with information about total asset value and how funds are invested. Passage of this bill will ensure that people working for small businesses will know where their hand-earned dollars are going. They deserve nothing less.

If enacted into law, the Small Business Employee Retirement Protection Act will ensure that this sort of tragic loss of retirement savings does not happen again by requiring that pension assets be held in a bank or other qualified financial institution. In addition, the bill would give employees the right to find out the status of their plan's assets and would require that plans inform participants of that right.

I am happy to introduce this legislation with my five colleagues from Connecticut: Ms. DELAUNO, who also represents many of the affected employees, Mrs. KENNELLY, Mrs. JOHNSON, Mr. SHAYS, and Mr. MALONEY. All of us were disturbed about what happened in Westbrook. This is an example of how our delegation works together to support common-sense legislation that will really make a difference for people across our region.

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES EDWIN SKIDMORE—"CHAMPION FOR WEST VIRGINIA'S VETERANS"

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 16, 1998

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deepest condolences to the family of Charles Edwin Skidmore of Hinton, West Virginia, who died on May 31, 1998 after a long battle with cancer.

I also rise in tribute to Charles Skidmore and his lifelong commitment to disabled Veterans.

Charles was the Commander of the Disabled Veterans in Hinton, West Virginia at his death, but had previously served two terms as State Commander of the West Virginia Disabled American Veterans, and was still active as a volunteer at the Beckley, West Virginia Veterans Hospital up until his death.

Even though Charles was very ill during the last year of his life, he still fulfilled all his commitments.

Charles Skidmore was vice president of the Southern West Virginia Veterans Museum, and served on the committee for the Restwood Veterans Memorial where he was instrumental in its design and completion.

A lifelong member of the American Legion Post #29 in Elkins, and a life member and local commander of the DAV in Hinton, Charles was also deeply involved in "Respect the Flag" program with local area schools.

A retired Postal worker for the Beckley Post Office, Mr. Skidmore was also a former railway clerk in Hinton, West Virginia where he was born and where he lived all of his life.

Charles Skidmore is survived by his wife Rosalyn, three sons and three daughters, 16 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. I am confident that his wife, and his sons and daughters will carry on his commitments to local Veterans programs and to his community in the years to come.

Charles Skidmore will be sorely missed by Veterans at the Beckley VA Hospital, where they could count on his presence, where they could tell him of their problems and get his advice on how to solve them. Veterans in the Beckley-Hilton area knew they could always count on him to actively fight for their right to adequate and appropriate health care services at the local, State and National levels.

I last saw Charles at a dinner in May, shortly before he died, where we spoke briefly concerning veterans affairs, and where he introduced me to his wife, his daughter Sharon and his grandchildren. He was a proud husband, father and grandfather, who set a shining example of compassion and caring, trustworthiness, honesty and good citizenship for them and for his community.

Mr. Skidmore was buried with full military honors in the Restwood Memorial Gardens in Hinton, a place he helped design, build and dedicate as a fitting burial site for other Veterans.

CUTS IN SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT FUNDING

HON. HAROLD E. FORD, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 16, 1998

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, Each of the last two years, Mr. Speaker, I have witnessed over 5,000 young people in my district stand in line for the chance to apply for a summer job. And unfortunately, each year, at least 3,000 of these young people have been turned away because of a lack of resources—despite \$2.8 million of federal funding per/year and local government and private sector support.

So instead of waking-up each morning for eight weeks out of the summer and being exposed to the rigors, habits, and rewards of work, thousands of young people in my district—mostly 15, 16, and 17 years olds—have had little more to do than hang-out on the streets looking for ways to keep themselves entertained and occupied.

So I rise today, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the thousands of young people in my district and countless others across America, to express my deep concern and frustration over the decision last week by the Labor/HHS Appropriations Subcommittee to report-out a bill that will, among other things, eliminate \$871