

When the memory of the men who died
Both North and South is one.

This regiment will still shine forth
In annals of the free:
The Massachusetts Fifty-Fourth
Who fought for Liberty.

Abe Lincoln had refused to act,
Moreover, Stanton too.
The one to recognize the fact
Was the Governor John Andrew.

He fought to do what saved the war:
Bring Blacks into the fray.
For up 'til then there'd been a bar
By both the Blue and Grey.

When Lincoln signed the document
Which brought Emancipation,
The administration did relent,
Accompanying authorization.

From the Commonwealth the call rang out:
"Come Colored Men to Arms."
Amid the ridicule and doubt
They answered war's alarm.

They came from city and the farm;
Left sweethearts, wives and mothers
To wear that Union uniform,
And free their shackled brothers.

From every state they filled the roll,
From Maryland to Maine.
The Gov'nor more than reached his goal,
The mandate now was plain:

To show that these Black fighting men
Were equal to the task:
To never have to prove again;
To never have to ask.

They served for less than equal pay,
Accepting none, 'til righted.
Enlisted, they remained to stay,
Their honor yet unblighted.

Eli George Biddle, Edward Hines
And Sergeant William Carney:
The knowledge of whom redefines
The Northern Grand Old Army.

Andrew had turned to Robert Shaw
To lead this regiment.
For in this bold Brahmin he saw
The strength of firm commitment.

The men trained with exactitude,
To Milit'ry precision.
With courage, strength and fortitude
They faced their disposition.

Fort Wagner in South Caroline
Would prove their maiden test,
To see if courage would align
By bringing forth the best

From Blacks who fought to free the slave,
For Justice and the Right—
These soldiers who when called on gave
New meaning to the Fight.

With neither map nor smooth terrain
They charged the mouth of Hell.
Into the with'ring blast they came
Ignoring shot and shell.

Young Colonel Shaw, while rallying forth
With sword clutched in his hand.
Exhorted, "Onward Fifty Fourth"
His ultimate command.

He died upon the parapet.
He fell amidst his men.
All buried in a common pit,
Returned to earth as kin.

The standard bearer breathed his last;
The flag was going down.
Thrice wounded Carney grabbed it fast:
"It never hit the ground."

This soldier from New Bedford soil,
Who hailed from Company "C"
Half-dead amid the bloody toil,
Dismissed his own safety.

The men fought valiantly that day,
Though victory was denied.
Amid the wreaths and laurels lay
A source of new found pride.

For courage, neither black nor white;

Resides within us all,
When we surrender to our plight
And answer duty's call.

When the drumbeat and the fife subside
And the celebration's done,
And the memory of the men who died
Both North and South is one.

This regiment will still shine forth
In annals of the free:
The Massachusetts Fifty-Fourth.
They died for Liberty.

SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM: AMERICANS SKEPTICAL ABOUT PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTS

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 6, 1998

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, during the past year the President has engaged Americans in a dialogue about the reform of Social Security. This dialog is a precursor to the President and Congress addressing Social Security reform next year.

Last week, President Clinton participated in dialog in Albuquerque, NM, and he outlined five fundamental principles with are essential to Social Security reform. These principles are: universality and fairness, provide a benefit people can count on, continue to protect the disabled and low-income beneficiaries, fiscally disciplined approach, and strengthen and protect the guarantee.

Social Security was created as part of the New Deal and it benefits 44 million elderly and disabled Americans. The system needs to be reformed, but there should not be a shift away from its fundamental principles. Without making changes, the system will be insolvent by 2032.

Many of us in Congress differ on how to fix Social Security. Even a commission assigned with the task of reforming Social Security could not reach a unanimous consensus and instead, reported out three very different solutions. The concept of allowing individuals to place a portion of their payroll tax in a private account has been suggested and serious deliberation needs to occur to understand the consequences such a change would have on the guarantee of the benefit provided by the system.

On July 25, the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare released a study which was conducted by Peter Hart Research Associates which surveyed a sample of 1,094 adults and 326 of these individuals were aged 18–34. The survey focused on Social Security and proposals to reform the system which included private accounts. The crux of the survey was Generation Xer's want the Social Security system fixed but oppose tax increases, benefit cuts, and a higher retirement age.

Generation Xer's share the same sentiment as their parents and grandparents in agreeing that "Congress should fix Social Security by strengthening its financial condition, so that future retirees will be guaranteed a reasonable level of benefits." Many believe that younger Americans would like Social Security privatized and invested in individual accounts. This study showed that most Americans including younger Americans want the system fixed and do not think privatization is the answer.

Of all the adults surveyed, 73 percent believe the Social Security system can work for young people when they retire if Congress will strengthen the system's finance and 69 percent of the adults surveyed that were between 18 and 34 years old agree. The survey inquired about private accounts and only 39 percent of those surveyed between 18 and 34 years of age supported allowing individuals to invest their Social Security contributions in the stock market, so that people can manage their accounts. Only 32 percent of all individuals surveyed support private accounts.

This survey helps us realize that Americans are concerned about Social Security, but they do not want the guarantee that is the fundamental principle of Social Security changed. Social Security has become a safety net for retirement for all American workers and we should not take action to weaken this safety net. We should consider all aspects of the Social Security system as we moved forward with the debate on reform.

REGARDING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 6, 1998

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to, and recognize the anniversary of the historic Voting Right Act, August 6th. It was almost a frightening coincidence that on the anniversary, many of my colleagues were attempting to defeat efforts that would prevent the use of statistical sampling to accurately count America's minorities. The opponents of an accurate count wanted to prevent minorities from being counted because it could indirectly heighten their influence in elections and the drawing of congressional districts. Mr. Speaker, the floor debate did not mark the first time that efforts were used to prevent the political franchisement of African-Americans. Indeed, the very purpose of the creation of the voting rights act was done to address the countless obstacles African-Americans faced in electing their own to Congress.

Before the enactment of the Voting Rights Act, minorities were subjected to these efforts to dilute their voting power: Gerrymandering, removing minorities from voting rolls and even outright threats of bodily harm.

The Voting Rights Act was instrumental in protecting the voting opportunities of minorities. In addition, to the chagrin of those who would like to see the clock of progress turned back, the Voting Rights Act has directly resulted in the fair election of African-Americans to Congress.

However, Mr. Speaker, I stand not only to call attention to the benefits of the Voting Rights Act, but to ask that Americans be ever vigilant in protecting the Voting Rights Act from those who wish to forever confine it to the annals of history.

As the uses and benefits of the Voting Rights Act are forever enduring, so are the attacks and efforts to eliminate it. Unfortunately, there are those who seek to eliminate or weaken the protections provided by the Voting Rights Act. If they are successful, then the wonderful diversity of Congress that mirrors

the rich cultural tapestry of our Nation may be jeopardized. If they are successful, the Congress of tomorrow could look like the Congress of a hundred years past.

Mr. Speaker, I highly suspect that arguments of fairness, constitutionality and righteousness are thinly-veiled attacks on the Voting Rights Act and seek to imperil the ability of African-Americans to gain elective office.

Some of my African-American colleagues are now experiencing the attacks that I went through; nevertheless, I am confident that the can prevail as I have.

One way that I believe we can continue to prevail and protect the letter of the law that is inherent in the Voting Rights Act is to teach future generations to study what it means and what it has accomplished. If we allow future generations to forget the strides we made in voting that has enabled African-Americans to serve in Congress, then they will not be able to recognize threats to the voting franchise, or fully appreciate how fragile the right to vote truly is. I ask that in the days following this historic anniversary, we teach new generations to be forthright students of history, so that they may be informed protectors of our future.

Mr. Speaker, as it was once said, "That is the supreme value of history. The study of it is the best guaranty against repeating it."

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE,
JUSTICE, AND STATE, AND JUDI-
CIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. LOUIS STOKES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 4, 1998

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4276) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes:

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to the proposed \$141 million account cut in funding to the Legal Services Corporation contained in H.R. 4276, the FY 1999 Commerce, Justice, State, and Judiciary appropriations bill. I would like to fundamentally affirm—from the outset—the tremendous contribution which the Legal Services Corporation has made to this country's most vulnerable populations.

The Legal Services Corporation provides a wide host of benefits to those Americans who cannot otherwise afford legal support. A precipitous decrease in funding, as would occur if this proposed 50 percent decrease takes place, would resign America's poor and underserved to an unenviable situation where they would have little or no access to legal services. A measure of this sort would prove nothing less than unconscionable.

The Legal Services Corporation was created in 1974 by the Nixon administration with broad bipartisan congressional support. The program was created to provide civil legal support to those American citizens and legal aliens who could least afford it. Since its inception, the program has characteristically served those

generally underrepresented segments of our society, including African-Americans and Hispanics, as well as women who are victims of domestic violence. Statistically speaking, the Legal Services Corporation's client pool is as follows: 27 percent are African-American, 16.3 percent are Hispanic, 2.6 percent are native American, and an overwhelming amount, 68 percent, are female.

Last year alone, the Legal Services Corporation provided legal support to over 57,000 spouses who were victims of domestic abuse. The LSC provides legal support and counseling to close to 4 million Americans, and in 1997, the corporation was responsible for closing approximately 1.5 million legal cases.

Without the support of the LSC, many of these individuals would have absolutely no place to turn because the LSC is very often the place of last resort for those who can ill afford it. This was demonstrated in 1996 when Congress irresponsibly reduced funding for the LSC by 31 percent. According to estimates from the LSC itself, this reduced the amount of legal support offered by the organization by 14 percent.

This number does not represent a number in the abstract. Rather, it designates Americans and legal immigrants who—simply because they are poor—did not receive a day in court to address, and perhaps receive compensation for the wrongs that they have suffered.

Mr. Chairman, we must not close the only door that the most vulnerable of us have to address their legal wrongs. Thus, I urge my colleagues to vote no to the amendment to cut funding for the Legal Services Corporation by 50 percent.

A THREAT TO DEMOCRACY IN
PANAMA

HON. DANA ROHRBACHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 6, 1998

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, when John Adams was inaugurated as the second President of the United States in 1797, President Washington turned to him and said "I am fairly out and ye are fairly in." That inauguration was the most important in American history because it established the precedent of peaceful transitions of power, which are crucial to all democracies.

Unfortunately, a contagious trend is catching on in Latin America: Presidents are seeking to extend their reign by working to amend the constitutions that limit their terms. The result is that they are preventing democracy from developing deep roots.

What is happening today in Panama exemplifies the problem. Panama's president, Ernesto Perex Balladares, and his ruling PRD party, are attempting to amend the constitution to eliminate its one-term limit on the presidency. On Aug. 30, the people of Panama will vote on the adoption of this amendment.

This referendum is a power grab by the PRD, cleverly cloaked as constitutional reform. It should not be forgotten that the PRD is the party of Manuel Noriega. Twice in 30 years the PRD has stolen democracy from the people through military means. The last time this happened, 28 Americans lost their lives in

order to restore the democratically elected President, Guillermo Endara.

Perez Balladares has hired Democratic party operative James Carville in an effort to ease any pressure that might have come from the White House to put a stop to Balladares' power grab. He should have saved his money. If one looks at the way this Administration has coddled the world's dictators, from Hun Sen in Cambodia to the Politburo in Beijing, from the Taliban in Afghanistan to the North Korean regime, Perex Balladares has little to worry about from the people in the White House who are concerned about democracy.

For the sake of the Panamanian people and the tens of thousands of Americans who have served in Panama, especially those who have given their lives in Panama, I ask my colleagues to watch this referendum closely.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 6, 1998

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, on July 30, 1998, I was unavoidably detained during roll call vote number 355, the vote on passage of H.R. 4328, providing funds for transportation and other related agencies for fiscal year 1999.

Had I been present for the vote, I would have voted "yes."

ZEKE GRADER—ENVIRONMENTAL
HERO

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 6, 1998

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, Vice President GORE recently honored William F. Grader, Jr.—Zeke to his many friends—with the presentation of an Environmental Hero Award. This award, by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), is particularly meaningful as we celebrate the International Year of the Ocean.

Zeke Grader has been an environmental leader in the San Francisco Bay Area community for many years and has always stood firm in his conviction that sustainable fisheries could be an achievable goal on the Pacific Coast. His efforts on behalf of fishery restoration and sustainable fishing practices set an example for our government and for coastal communities throughout America.

Zeke was responsible for creating the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen in 1976 and he has served as its Executive Director since that time. His leadership at the Federation has resulted in the implementation of federal safeguards to bring greater protection to our marine resources and to restore weakened fisheries.

The human hand on the environment has been anything but gentle. By 1997, one third of U.S. marine fisheries were overfished, costing the U.S. economy \$25 billion and coastal communities thousands of jobs. In managing our U.S. fisheries, the effect has been evident in the loss of salmon in the Pacific Northwest,