
National News

Amelia Boynton Robinson Statement on MLK Day

In a statement issued Jan. 18, to commemorate Martin Luther King Day, revered civil rights leader Amelia Boynton Robinson called King “this country’s philosophical spiritual leader, a role model. . . .”

“Almost 40 years ago, since the death of Dr. Martin Luther King,” she said, “the world has gone through many phases of changes: physically, degradation of our world; educationally, corruption in the public schools; socially, a little more race tolerance; and morally, many young people have lost faith in the future. Often in speaking of the 1950s and ’60s, the name Martin Luther King permeates most conversations especially on his birthday, and Black History Month, which is February. Dr. Martin Luther King’s messages were inspired by One Who was greater than he, that is, by God. My experience riding with him, made me realize this. . . . Thus, as this kind of leader, he inspired millions worldwide to love, rather than hate, do unto others as they would have done unto them. . . .”

“When Dr. King was killed, we were all saddened. Many of us, angry. But like all of us, we are here for a purpose. . . . God did not want Dr. King’s enemies to destroy him. But before leaving us, Dr. King to a degree changed the course of the entire world.”

Wexler Urges Cheney Impeachment Hearings

In direct opposition to Speaker Pelosi, Rep. Robert Wexler (D-Fla.) gave a short, impassioned speech on the floor of the House on Jan. 15: “In this time, at this moment, Congress must stand for the truth. If we fail to act, history may well judge us complicit in the alleged crimes of Vice President Cheney. . . . In the history of our nation, we have never encountered a moment where the actions of a President or a Vice President have more strongly demanded the use of the power of impeachment.”

Wexler held up a thick packet containing the names of almost 189,000 Americans who had responded quickly to his call for support of hearings on Rep. Dennis Kucinich’s (D-Ohio) impeachment resolution. Wexler has sent a letter to Judiciary Committee Chairman John Conyers (D-Mich.), praising his work on oversight of balance of powers, and asking Conyers to “hold a sober investigation and let the facts determine the outcome.”

Waxman To Hold Hearing On Iraq Reconstruction

The chief Oversight Committee of Congress will hold a hearing on Iraq Reconstruction on Feb. 6, announced its chair, Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.). Waxman released three letters on Jan. 17, requesting the testimony of former Coalition Provisional Authority Head Paul Bremer; Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction Stuart W. Bowen, Jr.; and Coordinator for Iraq Transitional Assistance Timothy Carney.

Waxman requests Bremer to “be prepared to discuss an audit report issued on Jan. 30, 2005, by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, which concluded that more than \$8.8 billion in cash under the CPA’s control was disbursed without adequate financial controls or accountability (Report No. 05-004). In addition, you should be prepared to answer questions about how key positions with the CPA were filled.”

Pennsylvania, New Jersey To Levy Huge Road Tolls

Pennsylvania has come up with a scheme to raise funds for repairing failing highways and bridges: Impose huge tolls on highways that are now free. Ironically, this is the state where Lyndon LaRouche’s Homeowners and Bank Protection Act has been endorsed by more than 30 municipalities, as the first step in rebuilding the state’s, and the nation’s collapsed industrial economy, and where a bill supporting the HBPA is be-

fore the state legislature.

The *New York Times* reported Jan. 19 that Pennsylvania’s legislature approved a plan last July to put ten toll booths on Interstate 80, which runs 311 miles across the northern half of the state. The revenue tolls, which would be \$25 for cars travelling across the entire state, and \$93 for commercial trucks, would be used to repair and maintain the aging highway. The state did this as an alternative to privatization. The legislature had rejected a plan, proposed by Gov. Ed Rendell (D), to lease the Pennsylvania Turnpike to private investors. Apparently Rendell has not noticed, unlike many of his colleagues in city councils across the state, that the reason for the collapse in transportation funding is that the state’s economy has crashed.

New Jersey Gov. Jon Corzine (D), meanwhile, is going ahead with even more onerous tolls. Corzine’s plan calls for jacking up tolls on the New Jersey Turnpike from the current \$5.85 to drive the entire length of the road, to \$48 by 2022. The additional money would go towards debt reduction and public transportation.

Is House Speaker Pelosi Paranoid?

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) acknowledged, in response to a question at her press conference on Jan. 17, that she is under enormous pressure for protecting Dick Cheney from impeachment proceedings.

“Members of your caucus have accused you of silence and denial . . . in [not] having impeachment hearings concerning Vice President Dick Cheney. [Why not] have hearings and see whether or not there were impeachable crimes?” a reporter asked.

After a monologue about the legislative “successes” (which have brought the Democratic Congress down to a 10% approval rating), Pelosi spilled the beans: “And you’re right. I am criticized for it [blocking impeachment hearings on Cheney—ed.], not only in my caucus, but across the country—because I go through airports, and people have buttons as if they knew I was coming.”