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House of Representatives

A TRIBUTE TO ROGER F. HONBERGER!

HON. BOB FILNER
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MR. FILNER: Mr. Speaker, December 31, 2001 will mark the passing of an era, an era of accomplishment in the field of intergovernmental relations. On that day, a pioneer in Washington representation for California public policy and project development will retire from service.

Roger F. Honberger comes from a humble upbringing of enterprising parents from the 1930s. His mother is a Native American, born into the Pechanga Band of California Mission Indians at the turn of the century, and is presently the oldest living Tribal member. Roger was the first member of his family to graduate from college, the result of extensive sacrifice by his parents. After beginning his career in the field of Urban Planning, he returned to graduate school, where he distinguished himself and received degrees from both the University of London, England and Harvard University.

In his early career, he served as a professional planner with the County of Riverside, City of San Diego, National Capital Planning Commission, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. His federal experience in writing legislation, budget preparation, and program management led him to the establishment of his own government relations consulting firm in 1970, Roger Honberger Associates, Inc. He pioneered a new industry of dedicated people working with the Congress and Federal Administrations on behalf of the intergovernmental needs of state and local governments. Today, this industry serves countless public agencies from all corners of the nation.

Thirty years ago, Roger was selected from a field of 200 applicants by the County of San Diego to be their first Washington representative. At that time, the San Diego County Congressional Delegation consisted of Lionel Van Deertin, Bob Wilson, and Jimmy Utt. The only other state or local governments that had full time Washington offices when Roger began his work for San Diego County were the State of California, the County of Los Angeles, and the Cities of Los Angeles and San Diego. These were the only general-purpose governments from any other part of our great nation in those days that maintained a full time presence in Washington, D.C.

In his thirty years of representing San Diego County, Roger directly served 27 different elected members of the County's five person Board of Supervisors, and 8 different Chief Administrative Officers. The number of Congressional Districts in the County grew from 3 to 5 during the same period, and he worked closely with all 16 different Members of Congress elected from these districts since 1970. Five different Presidents recognized Roger for his work on public issues. He has also been recognized as Alumnus of the Year by the California State

Polytechnic University, as well as by his High School Alumni Association from Perris, California. He is the only career County representative that the National Association of Counties has officially honored for professional accomplishments. He has had a truly remarkable career of public service.

A broad array of regional accomplishments in the County have benefited from Roger's efforts in Washington, D.C. These include: the establishment of the region's first alcohol detoxification center; development of the first solid waste recycling program; a countywide gasoline vapor recovery program; harbor cleanup; welfare reform; a multitude of flood control and highway projects; San Diego Trolley project construction; Sheriff's Department funding; lagoon preservation; drug addiction treatment; children's disease inoculation services; foster care program support; air quality program certification; and the prevention of off-shore oil drilling, just to name a few. The list is long and impressive.

Five years ago, Roger invited his long-standing associate, Thomas Walters, to become his partner, and the firm's name was changed to Honberger and Walters, Inc. For the past three years, Tom has been the firm's chief executive officer and owner. The firm continues to manage San Diego County's Washington office. Their other clients include the San Diego Metropolitan Transit Development Board, North County Transit, San Diego Unified Port District, the Sweetwater Authority, the Counties of Riverside and Ventura, the Monterey-Salinas Transit District, the Calleguas Municipal Water District, and the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians.

Roger has long been recognized as one of the leaders in his field and has lectured on intergovernmental relations and lobbying practice at San Diego State University, U.S. International University, University of Maryland, and the University of Arizona. He continues to be involved in a variety of American Indian issues and was one of the founders of the Harvard University Native American Alumni Association.

Many of us in the Congress have worked with Roger Honberger during his distinguished career. We will miss his friendly disposition and his dedicated hard work on behalf of his public clients. Above all, we will miss his candor and honesty. His word has always been his bond, something we have all appreciated and have grown to expect, regardless of the circumstances. We are happy to see that his high professional standards and style are being continued by Tom Walters without missing a beat. For this we are grateful, and we are grateful for Roger's sustained friendship and support over the years. We wish him the very best as he moves on to other endeavors.