



<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL0705/S00368.htm>

Modern Day Paul Reveres Ride to Washington

Tuesday, 22 May 2007, 11:20 am

Opinion: James J Murtagh

Modern Day Paul Reveres Ride to Washington

By [James J. Murtagh, M.D.](#)

*So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm
A cry of defiance, and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door*

Paul Revere is America's most well known whistleblower. Present day patriots who sound the alarm when danger threatens our society rightly believe Paul Revere to be the founding father of whistleblowing. Like modern day patriots, he called on the Sons of Liberty to oppose the grave, immediate dangers posed by redcoat troops sent to impose the will of an unresponsive king and parliament.

Last week, a conference as unique as Paul Revere's ride took place in our nation's capital. Whistleblower's Week in Washington (WWW) alerted the countryside of the grave dangers threatening our nation's security and well being. Modern patriots from a broad spectrum of government and private employers - health, environment, national security, civil rights, veterans, and more - have all banded together in a single meeting. The program was initiated and organized by the whistleblowers themselves. They were joined by more than 50 eminent public interest organizations in Washington to sound the alarm on dangers proven too real to be ignored. Hundreds of citizens took part.

Whistleblower's Week in Washington provided the time, place and voice for whistleblower patriots to band together for the first time to speak out against fraud, waste and corruption. These heroes and heroines represent a broad spectrum of government and private employees - national security, veterans, healthcare, environment, civil rights and justice.

Activities included congressional forums and hearings, an award ceremony for Senator Charles Grassley, rallies, and a film screening and book signings by eminent whistleblowers. Participants visited legislative offices to alert individual members of Congress of grave concerns.

Speakers and participants included both well-known figures and unfamiliar but important whistleblowers such as:

- Republican Senator Charles Grassley who was the keynote speaker. He was given a lifetime achievement award for his fight against waste, fraud and corruption in government. The award, like the conference, is completely bipartisan and has been endorsed by both blue-chip conservatives and liberals.
- Mahatma Gandhi's grandson Dr. Kanubhai R. Gandhi and EPA whistleblower and civil rights activist Dr. Marsha Coleman-Adebayo asked to keep America beautiful and safe from "Sea to Shining Sea."
- Religious leaders, including Rev. Walter E. Fauntroy, stressed the role of speaking the truth and the role of faith based initiatives in America's civil rights heritage.
- Climate Change Whistleblower Rick Piltz who suffered numerous retaliations after reporting that White House officials with no scientific training tampered with critical reports.
- Susan Wood who resigned in protest against the FDA's delaying of a ruling on whether the Plan B pill would be made more accessible to patients. She charged that then-acting FDA Commissioner Lester Crawford was interfered in FDA decisions.
- Physicians Dr. Helen Salisbury and Dr. Larry Poliner who put their careers on the line to protect quality patient care. Dr. Janet Chandler battled to protect the humane treatment of her patients, and after more than a decade of legal appeals won a Supreme Court verdict upholding her stand for integrity in medical decisions for patient care.

- Coleen Rowley who blew the whistle on the FBI's negligence preceding the September 11 terrorist attack. Ms. Rowley was named as one of *Time Magazine's* Person's of the Year, along with conference supporter and Enron whistleblower Sherron Watkins.

Patriotic commitment united this band of whistleblowers who oppose hazardous, illegal and unsafe conditions, waste, fraud and abuse. They unite in order to maintain an open society, and to protect the rights of U.S. citizens to speak without reprisal on matters threatening the general welfare and defense of our nation.

In true Jeffersonian tradition, America's truth-tellers invited the press, Congress, and the American people to take part, to hear their stories, and to judge for themselves. Like Paul Revere, they rode to Washington to be heard throughout the land. New Sons and Daughters of Liberty must rise to defend our safety, our national defense and our honor.

The joint task force of WWW urges you to write your congressman, your senator, the media, and your friends to support the goal of a safer, freer America.

(James Murtagh spent 20 years as an Intensive Care Unit physician. Dr. Murtagh is the founder of Doctors for Open Government and is a co-chair of Washington Whistleblower Week.)