Mr. JEFFERSON. Mr. Speaker, I was detained because my flight to Washington. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on all these votes.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on roll-call No. 222, 223, and 224 I was unavoidably delayed by weather problems that affected airline flights from Dallas to Washington. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on all three votes.

Mr. JEFFERSON. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained when rollcall votes 222, 223, and 224 were taken. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea." I was detained because my plane was an hour late in taking off.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in this brief minute to allow all of us collectively to share the joy and pride of all the LSU alumni across America with the extraordinary success of the LSU baseball program and the great success of Coach Skip Bertman, who has now brought the LSU Tigers the third championship of the College World Series this week.

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to share with me the pride of this wonderful LSU team and this great coach who will now be the Olympic coach for the United States team in Atlanta. LSU. Go, Tigers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would ask Members not to doff hats in the Chamber.

TRIBUTE TO LSU TIGERS AND WOMEN'S TRACK TEAM

(Mr. MCCREERY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCCREERY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to add my congratulations to the LSU Tigers baseball team and say ditto to the words of my colleague, the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN].

I would also like to remind everyone that just a few weeks before LSU's baseball triumph the women's track team from LSU also won the national championship for the umpteenth time in my lifetime. They have a great program there, so congratulations to the women's track team at LSU and Skip Bertman's baseball team.

Go, Tigers.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CALIFORNIA HOMEOWNER EARTHQUAKE PROTECTION ACT

(Mr. LEWIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I am today introducing the California Homeowner Earthquake Protection Act, legislation granting tax-exempt status on State authorities established for the purpose of providing earthquake insurance. As a 30-year insurance professional the chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee overseeing FEMA and Federal disaster assistance, I am concerned about an emerging insurance crisis in my State. California Governor Pete Wilson is poised to sign a measure establishing the California Earthquake Authority (CEA), a unique publicly run and privately financed State program to supply earthquake insurance for millions of homeowners in our State. The California Homeowner Earthquake Protection Act will add viability to the CEA and will address a looming and potentially devastating crisis affecting every homeowner—the ability to purchase affordable earthquake insurance.

Under California State law, insurance companies that sell homeowners coverage are required to offer earthquake protection as well. However, as a result of the 1994 Northridge earthquake which resulted in over $1.2 billion in insured losses, many insurance companies are now moving out of the marketplace. In fact, of those companies that offered earthquake coverage before the Northridge earthquake, 95 percent no longer offer policies to homeowners. In the near term, over 1 million families may not have their homeowner coverage renewed.

The CEA is designed to provide $10.5 billion in earthquake coverage funded by insurance carriers, reinsurers, investors, and policy holder assessments. The success of this innovative public-private partnership, which will provide immediate insurance relief for hundreds of thousands of California homeowners, condominium owners, mobile home owners, and renters, depends largely upon the IRS granting the CEA tax-exempt status. Tax-exempt status would allow the Authority's reserves to accumulate free of Federal income taxes. The IRS, which had promised a decision to the CEA in February, withdrew its decision without warning or explanation in April. Legislation at the Federal level is now necessary to require the IRS to stand by its initial decision.

Continued uncertainty over the tax status of the CEA threatens to kill this innovative public-private partnership. I urge my colleagues to join me, Gov. Pete Wilson, California Insurance Commissioner Chuck Quackenbush, and other in this bipartisan effort to protect California homeowners. We must act now to avert a financial crisis every bit as devastating as the Northridge earthquake itself.
It may only be an idea that remains, a determined spirit, but from that idea, that spirit, will come another church.

As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. often stated eloquently and profoundly, “You can kill the dreamer, but you cannot kill the dream.”

Mr. Speaker, I must admit that I was stunned when the church arsons hit home.

Last Thursday, when the Matthews-Murkland Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, NC became another one of the more than thirty African-American churches to be burned over the past 18 months, the shock and amazement of this deed left me dazed and numb.

I thought, How could anyone violate what is most cherished, most precious to a civilized society?

But then, there was Oklahoma City and the World Trade Center in New York.

We grieve in very puzzling and troubling times.

Yet, from the ashes of Oklahoma and the ruins of New York, something remains, and something emerges.

Good ultimately prevails over evil. And, it is in that spirit, Mr. Speaker, that I rise to urge all of my colleagues to use this week to also rise in swift responding voices to condemn this evil and to demonstrate that it will not be tolerated.

President Clinton on Saturday outlined a four-step plan that he has put in place in response to these acts.

Among those steps is the creation of a task force involving the Justice and Treasury Departments and more than 200 law enforcement officers.

It is now time for the Congress to step forward.

First, we should all support the bipartisan legislation introduced by our colleagues, Mr. CONYERS and Mr. HYDE. That legislation would make it easier to bring prosecutions and stiffen the penalties against those who target houses of worship.

Second, the world urges support for a resolution I am introducing, calling on the collective outrage of congress and denouncing these arsons.

It is my hope that such a resolution can be considered this week and that as many Members who wish will have the opportunity to speak in favor of the resolution.

And, finally, we should all, work within our respective communities to help prevent future arsons.

The President told the story of Reverend Mackey, who woke one morning to a spot in a field where his church had stood the day before.

Reverend Mackey was concerned about what he could say to his daughter about what had happened.

Eventually, he said to his daughter, “They didn’t burn down the church. They burned down the building in which we hold church. The church is still inside all of us.”

The deeds of hate have inspired acts of love.

Oftentimes when evil people have burned a church building, good people of every race and color and religion have worked together to rebuild the church.

When three African-American churches were burned in Alabama, a group of unpaid volunteers from the Washington area stepped forward to help.

When the St. John Baptist Church in Dixiana, SC was the target of repeated vandalism, a group of African-Americans and whites, Democrats, and Republicans, those with money and those without, organized the Save St. John Baptist Church Committee, and they rebuilt the church.

But this church, just a couple of miles from where the Ku Klux Klan meets, was also burned to the ground.

Yet, with the help of many, diverse volunteers, it too will be rebuilt.

And, when the church in Charlotte was burned down, the pastor preached forgiveness, and the congregation knew in their hearts that help would come to rebuild.

At the end of the day, evil loses and good wins.

On June 15, Reverend Mackey, his daughter, the congregation, and friends will undertake a symbolic march from the site of the old church in Greeleyville, SC, to the site of their new church.

My resolution urges all Members on June 15 to join with Reverend Mackey, his daughter, his congregation and others, in whatever gesture is deemed appropriate, to say to those who would promote evil—that you have burned our churches, but cannot burn our spirit.

Mr. Speaker, after a fire, something always remains, a blade of grass, a spirit.

Mr. Speaker, if I may borrow from the Bible on this occasion, I am reminded of Ecclesiastes, chapter 3, verses 1 through 8.

It states, in part, “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. A time to keep silence and a time to speak.”

Mr. Speaker, this is a time to speak, and I urge my colleagues to join me in speaking against these dreadful deeds.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to recognize a truly outstanding Marine Corps officer and to ask all of my colleagues to join me in giving our congratulations and best wishes to Maj. Gen. Fred McCorkle.

General McCorkle leaves North Carolina this month to take command of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing at Miramar, CA.

It was recently, in his present assignment as the commanding general at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, NC, that I had the honor of getting to know Fred McCorkle. I quickly found a deep respect for his ability to challenge the men and women under his command, not only to excel within specialist military profession, but in relating with the surrounding community of Havelock, NC. Beyond his all of duty, he has brought the people of Craven County and the base community together. He has become a role model to thousands of young men and women serving in the armed forces.

First, we should all support bipartisan legislation introduced by our colleagues, Mr. CONYERS and Mr. HYDE. That legislation would make it easier to bring prosecutions and stiffen the penalties against those who target churches, but cannot burn our spirit.

And, finally, we should all, work within our respective communities to help prevent future arsons.

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