

also designed a number of bond initiatives and lead the start-up of the County's own bus system which now operates over 120 buses.

Through out his career Shiva K. Pant has been an innovator and leader in the field of transportation for the State of Virginia and the County of Fairfax. After 28 years of service to the State and County, we will truly miss Mr. Pant's council and leadership. As much as we hate to lose his years of experience and personal expertise, I know he will be enormous value to both Virginia and WMATA in his new capacity as Government Relations Officer for Virginia.

REPEAL THE NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION ACT

HON. BOB STUMP

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I am today reintroducing my legislation to repeal the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, the "motor-voter" bill.

The law, which took effect in most states on January 1, 1995, requires states to establish voter registration procedures for federal elections so that citizens may register to vote by mail, at state and local public assistance agencies and while applying for a driver's license. Motor voter provides no funding to the states to carry out any of these prescribed features.

The motor voter law was crafted to increase voter turnout by making the ballot more accessible. In one sense, it has achieved its goal. Motor voter has extended voting rights to non-citizens, dead people, children and even animals. On a more serious note, motor voter has fallen woefully short of its intended goal. While it is responsible for adding massive numbers of new voters to the rolls, voter turnout remains at dismally low levels. In 1996, voter participation dropped to 49.7%, one of the lowest rates in this century.

Motor voter has been a nightmare for many state election officials. Some have stated that motor voter has caused them to lose control over potential voter fraud. It ties their hands in removing "dead wood" from their rolls by requiring them to keep registrants who fail to vote or who are unresponsive to voter registration correspondence to be maintained on voter rolls for years. Moreover, it fails to provide for citizenship verification. As troubling, the law has actually hindered citizens' voting rights. In the last election, in my home State of Arizona, voters who registered to vote while applying for a driver's license were turned away at the polls. Apparently, their applications were not properly forwarded to the election recorder. Mr. Speaker, this presents an interesting and poignant question: Why would we entrust our privileged right to vote to the wrong people?

Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no need for this unyielding federal presence in voter registration. The states carry the responsibility for administering all elections and should be free to do so without unnecessary and heavy-handed federal intervention. Last Congress, we were unsuccessful in mitigating some of the more egregious provision of motor voter. Although I found this disappointing, I was en-

couraged by the heightened interest in reversing the law.

Mr. Speaker, the fraud perpetuated by motor voter will undoubtedly contribute to increasing voter apathy. I urge my colleagues to continue their fight to preserve the integrity of the vote by repealing motor voter. Voters must have assurances that a fraudulent ballot will not negate their precious vote. Please join me in repealing this ill-conceived federal mandate, which is a threat to our democracy.

THE NOTCH BABY HEALTH CARE RELIEF ACT INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, today I am again introducing legislation to assist the over 6 million senior citizens who have been negatively impacted by the Social Security Amendments of 1977. Seniors born between the years 1917 and 1921—the "Notch Babies"—have received lower Social Security monthly payments than those seniors born shortly before or after this five year period. My legislation, the Notch Baby Health Care Relief Act, will offset the reduction in Social Security benefits by providing a tax credit for Medicare Part B premiums.

The approach taken in this bill is different than that taken in my Notch Baby Act of 1999 or in any other Notch bill that has been introduced in the previous Congress. This legislation is particularly noteworthy because it was suggested to me least year by one of my own constituents—adjust Medicare insurance payments for Notch Babies. Specifically, my new bill provides a refundable tax credit for monthly Medicare Part B premiums for senior citizens born between the years 1917 and 1921, their spouses and their widows or widowers. The bill also eliminates the Medicare Part B premium late enrollment penalty for these individuals.

As health care expenses can take up a large proportion of a senior's retirement income, this tax credit can go a long way to both correct the inequity caused by the Notch and to help seniors meet their health care needs. I urge my colleagues to review the Notch Baby Health Care Relief Act, to discuss this legislation with the seniors in their districts, and to join me in cosponsoring this important legislation.

AMERICA'S BLESSINGS

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member would like to commend to his colleagues this November 26, 1998, Omaha World Herald editorial. This extension would have been submitted earlier but the House was not in session. Of course, the sentiments expressed in the editorial are certainly worth sharing at the beginning of the new year and the new Congress.

[From the Omaha World-Herald, November 11, 1998]

AMERICA'S BLESSINGS EXTEND BEYOND THE NATION'S SHORES

As Americans count their blessings on Thanksgiving Day, it would be appropriate if they looked at the freedoms and opportunities that have been handed down from the Founding Fathers. It would be fitting if they gave thanks for family, health and prosperity.

However, they might also look beyond the borders of the United States as they identify things for which to be thankful. In this ever-shrinking world, global developments have a sustained influence on life in America.

The world has enough food. Indeed, surpluses are a bigger problem than hunger in some places. Certainly international relief efforts still must compensate for an inadequate market system that fails to get food to some hungry people. But the hunger that exists is not because the world's farmers have failed to produce enough.

Man is using less water. For many years, the prospect of regional water shortages, harming agriculture and industry, led to concerns about possible water wars in the next century, as water-short nations attempted to take possession of a neighbor's water supply. Now, with improved irrigation techniques and widespread conservation methods, many countries are demonstrating that existing water supplies can be stretched much further.

Negotiated agreements have produced a shaky peace between the factions in Northern Ireland and between the Israelis and Palestinians on the West Bank, raising hopes for a permanent decline in hostilities. A ceasefire has held up in Bosnia. Diplomacy has kept tensions in check on the Korean Peninsula. India and Pakistan have backed away from a violent confrontation over nuclear weapons.

Researchers are learning more about AIDS, although the epidemic still rages out of control in much of the world. The fact that HIV-positive men and women are being kept alive longer raises hopes of additional progress toward a treatment or immunization that would be both effective and affordable.

Because of declining birth rates in a number of countries, demographers are backing away from some of their more depressing population projections, including the projection of a population doubled to 12 billion by the middle of the next century. Overpopulation is at the root of many other problems, including deprivation, environmental degradation, illegal immigration and disease.

Even with the more optimistic projections of recent years, the world could still have too many people, perhaps more than it could feed.

But a lowered birth rate is the best hope for dealing with overpopulation. A prolonged slowdown in the rate of growth, leading to a stabilized world population at a sustainable level. Would be some of the best news that Americans could hope for as they consider the prospects of their children and grandchildren in the decades ahead.

FREEDOM AND PRIVACY RESTORATION ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Freedom and Privacy Restoration Act of

1999. This act forbids the federal government from establishing any national ID cards or establishing any identifiers for the purpose of investigating, monitoring, overseeing, or regulating private transactions between American citizens. This legislation also explicitly repeals those sections of the 1996 Immigration Act that established federal standards for state drivers' licenses and those sections of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 that require the Department of Health and Human Services to establish a uniform standard health identifier.

The Freedom and Privacy Restoration Act halts the greatest threat to liberty today: the growth of the surveillance state. Unless Congress stops authorizing the federal bureaucracy to stamp and number the American people federal officials will soon have the power to arbitrarily prevent citizens from opening a bank account, getting a job, traveling, or even seeking medical treatment unless their "papers are in order!"

In addition to forbidding the federal government from creating national identifiers, this legislation forbids the federal government from blackmailing states into adopting uniform standard identifiers by withholding federal funds. One of the most onerous practices of Congress is the use of federal funds illegitimately taken from the American people to bribe states into obeying federal dictates.

Perhaps the most important part of the Freedom and Privacy Restoration Act is the section prohibiting the use of the Social Security number as an identifier. Although it has not received as much attention as some of the other abuses this legislation addresses, the abuse of the Social Security number may pose an even more immediate threat to American liberty. For all intents and purposes, the Social Security number is already a national identification number. Today, in the majority of states, no American can get a job, open a bank account, get a drivers' license, or even receive a birth certificate for one's child without presenting their Social Security number. So widespread has the use of the Social Security number become that a member of my staff had to produce a Social Security number in order to get a fishing license! Even members of Congress must produce a Social Security number in order to vote on legislation.

One of the most disturbing abuses of the Social Security number is the congressionally-authorized rule forcing parents to get a Social Security number for their newborn children in order to claim them as dependents. Forcing parents to register their children with the state is more like something out of the nightmares of George Orwell than the dreams of a free republic which inspired this nation's founders.

Since the creation of the Social Security number in 1935, there have been almost 40 congressionally-authorized uses of the Social Security number as an identification number for non-Social Security programs! Many of these uses, such as the requirement that employers report the Social Security number of new employees to the "new hires data base," have been enacted in the past few years. In fact, just last year, 210 members of Congress voted to allow states to force citizens to produce a Social Security number before they could exercise their right to vote.

Mr. Speaker, the section of this bill prohibiting the federal government from using identifiers to monitor private transactions is nec-

essary to stop schemes such as the attempt to assign every American a "unique health identifier" for every American—an identifier which could be used to create a national database containing the medical history of all Americans. As an OB/GYN with more than 30 years in private practice, I know well the importance of preserving the sanctity of the physician-patient relationship. Oftentimes, effective treatment depends on a patient's ability to place absolute trust in his or her doctor. What will happen to that trust when patients know that any and all information given to their doctor will be placed in a government accessible data base?

A more recent assault on privacy is a regulation proposed jointly by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, the Office of Thrift Supervision, and the Federal Reserve, known as "Know Your Customer." If this regulation takes effect in April 2000, financial institutions will be required not only to identify their customers but also their source of funds for all transactions, establish a "profile" and determine if the transaction is "normal and expected." If a transaction does not fit the profile, banks would have to report the transaction to government regulators as "suspicious." The unfunded mandate on financial institutions will be passed on to customers who would have to pay higher ATM and other fees and higher interest rates on loans for the privilege of being spied on by government-inspired tellers.

Many of my colleagues will claim that the federal government needs these powers to protect against fraud or some other criminal activities. However, monitoring the transactions of every American in order to catch those few who are involved in some sort of illegal activity turns one of the great bulwarks of our liberty, the presumption of innocence, on its head. The federal government has no right to treat all Americans as criminals by spying on their relationship with their doctors, employers, or bankers. In act, criminal law enforcement is reserved to the state and local governments by the Constitution's Tenth Amendment.

Other members of Congress will claim that the federal government needs the power to monitor Americans in order to allow the government to operate more efficiently. I would remind my colleagues that in a constitutional republic the people are never asked to sacrifice their liberties to make the job of government officials a little bit easier. We are here to protect the freedom of the American people, not to make privacy invasion more efficient.

Mr. Speaker, while I do not question the sincerity of those members who suggest that Congress can ensure citizens' rights are protected through legislation restricting access to personal information, the fact is the only solution is to forbid the federal government from using national identifiers. Legislative "privacy protections" are inadequate to protect the liberty of Americans for several reasons. First, federal laws have not stopped unscrupulous government officials from accessing personal information. Did laws stop the permanent violation of privacy by the IRS, or the FBI abuses by the Clinton and Nixon administrations?

Secondly, the federal government has been creating property interests in private information for certain state-favored third parties. For example, a little-noticed provision in the Pa-

tient Protection Act established a property right for insurance companies to access personal health care information. Congress also authorized private individuals to receive personal information from government data bases in last year's copyright bill. The Clinton Administration has even endorsed allowing law enforcement officials' access to health care information, in complete disregard of the fifth amendment. Obviously, "private protection" laws have proven greatly inadequate to protect personal information when the government is the one providing or seeking the information!

The primary reason why any action short of the repeal of laws authorizing privacy violation is insufficient is because the federal government lacks constitutional authority to force citizens to adopt a universal identifier for health care, employment, or any other reason. Any federal action that oversteps constitutional limitations violates liberty because it ratifies the principle that the federal government, not the Constitution, is the ultimate judge of its own jurisdiction over the people. The only effective protection of the rights of citizens is for Congress to follow Thomas Jefferson's advice and "bind (the federal government) down with the chains of the Constitution."

Mr. Speaker, those members who are unpersuaded by the moral and constitutional reasons for embracing the Freedom and Privacy Restoration Act should consider the overwhelming opposition of the American people toward national identifiers. My office has been inundated with calls from around the country protesting the movement toward a national ID card and encouraging my efforts to thwart this scheme. I have also received numerous complaints from Texans upset that they have to produce a Social Security number in order to receive a state drivers' license. Clearly, the American people want Congress to stop invading their privacy. Congress risks provoking a voter backlash if we fail to halt the growth of the surveillance state.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I once again call on my colleagues to join me in putting an end to the federal government's unconstitutional use of national identifiers to monitor the actions of private citizens. National identifiers are incompatible with a limited, constitutional government. I therefore, hope my colleagues will join my efforts to protect the freedom of their constituents by supporting the Freedom and Privacy Restoration Act of 1999.

STEP FORWARD AGAIN TO PROTECT OLD GLORY: COSPONSOR THE FLAG PROTECTION AMENDMENT

HON. JOHN E. SWEENEY
OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. SWEENEY. Mr. Speaker, on the opening day of the 106th Congress, I respectfully request that all of my colleagues contact Congressman DUKE CUNNINGHAM's office to co-sponsor the Flag Protection Amendment.

For more than 100 years, Americans have crafted laws to protect the American flag from physical desecration—until 1989, when on a 5–4 vote the Supreme Court denied them that right to protect the eternal symbol of freedom and democracy.