

horror that the Virginia Tech community has experienced is something that every parent, every American, hopes they never have to learn has affected their families and friends.

Although this horrendous and unspeakable violence showed the worst of mankind, it also showed what those of us who have been a part of the Virginia Tech community for years have always known . . . the students, the instructors, the administrators, and the citizens of Blacksburg care deeply for one another and take great pride in their community. Even in the worst circumstances, the Virginia Tech community showed great compassion for their fellow man and did what they could to help each other. Liviu Librescu, a survivor of the Holocaust, blocked the doorway of his classroom so that his students could climb out the windows to safety. Ryan Clark, a Resident Advisor in the West Ambler Johnston Hall, rushed into the hallway to help his fellow students when the first attack came, and became the second victim. And I was deeply saddened to learn that one of my constituents, Henry Lee—a graduate of William Fleming High School in Roanoke—was among those who died in the attack on Norris Hall.

In the days and months following this tragedy, the Virginia Tech Community and Hokie Nation saw an outpouring of love and support from people around the country. The university saw donations come in excess of \$7 million as people sought to give aid to those affected. As time went on, the university had to decide how to use the money donated as a result of this horrific act, and the university made a wise and selfless choice. They decided that the best way to disburse this money was to put it in the hands of those who experienced and lost the most as a result of this unspeakable violence. So, last month Virginia Tech distributed the money to 79 families or individuals. These are the families that have lost the most, and have experienced emotional trauma that no one should ever have to experience. This money, given by people across the Nation, is a small way to help those directly affected by this horrendous act. The families can determine the best uses for these contributions. Some already have decided to endow memorial scholarships at Virginia Tech or elsewhere. Some simply have bills to pay.

While the university has acted graciously to help the families, we have discovered that there is a new problem the families are facing, this time by the Federal Government. It has become apparent that the funds these families received will become significantly reduced because of taxes. Funds some families desperately need to pay medical bills, funeral costs, and to simply rebuild their lives. The last thing these families need to worry about is an additional tax burden. And I guarantee that those who gave so generously want their money going to help those directly affected, not paying taxes. I do not believe that these funds should be taxed or that it is Congress's intent that they should be taxed.

In 2001, Congress passed P.L. 107-143. In this bill there is a provision that makes qualified disaster payments exempt from taxes. There is no doubt that this was in fact a disaster—ask any member of the Virginia Tech Community, Hokie Nation, or a citizen of the Commonwealth of Virginia and to them it unequivocally was. In fact, the Governor of Virginia declared so that day. Despite this well intentioned law, that Congress passed to make

tax-exempt payments from qualified disasters, the families and the university have all been told it is likely these funds will be taxed. It was not the intention of the Congress that disaster payments should be taxed, and I am proud to join Mr. Boucher in introducing legislation that will seek to have these funds, like those resulting from any other disaster, tax-exempt.

The tragedy at Virginia Tech will never leave our minds, but we in Congress have an opportunity to help rebuild this community. I ask all Members of Congress to join us in supporting this legislation. Let us help the families and those so personally affected as they seek to rebuild their lives.

HONORING THE SOVIET JEWISH FREEDOM MOVEMENT H. RES. 759

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ
OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 8, 2007

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, December 7th marks the 40th anniversary of the mass movement for Soviet Jewish freedom, and the 20th anniversary of the Freedom Sunday Rally for Soviet Jews on the National Mall in Washington, DC. To honor the movement, I am proud to co-sponsor H. Res. 759, a resolution celebrating both of these milestones. We remember these moments to commemorate all of those who struggled and died for their freedom and to celebrate the efforts of advocacy groups that tirelessly campaigned for Soviet Jewry.

Twenty years ago, on December 7, 1987, more than 250,000 people rallied in Washington, DC to support freedom and amnesty for Jews living in the Soviet Union. The human rights campaign resulted from more than two decades of human rights violations and utter lack of freedom for Jews in the Soviet Union. The governmental policy on Soviet Jews violated even the most basic of human rights, including freedom of religion, freedom of movement, and the freedom to study ones culture, language and heritage. Soviet Jews were at risk of arrest, exile to Siberia and harassment for exercising their right to practice their religion or celebrate the Zionist movement. However despite the odds and risks there were many brave Soviet Jews, who worked clandestinely and tirelessly to spread Zionism, and raise Jewish consciousness among Soviet Jewry.

The movement to raise awareness of the Soviet Jewish plight became a global effort in the 1980s due to the work of many American advocacy groups. My heart is warmed by the work of groups that organized protests, petitions, demonstrations, and rallies in United States and all over the world. Through these united efforts, we have witnessed historic progress over the past 20 years, successfully opening the doors for millions of Soviet Jews who had been held as virtual prisoners within their own country. The movement also helped to cement Jewish solidarity, raise charity and unite Jews from all over the world.

However, the struggle for religious freedom continues today in many other countries. Activists labor tirelessly in the United States and abroad to fight anti-Semitism and religious discrimination wherever it exists. It is incumbent upon us to remember the lessons from the

movement for tolerance and religious freedom in the Soviet Union as we continue the fight for religious rights around the world. I commend Congressman WAXMAN for this timely and important resolution recognizing this milestone, and I support the ongoing efforts of those promoting religious freedom worldwide.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 8, 2007

Mrs. MYRICK. Madam Speaker, I was unable to participate in the following vote. If I had been present, I would have voted as follows:

On November 7, 2007, rollcall vote 1059, On Agreeing to the Resolution—H. Res. 801, Providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3688) to implement the United States-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement—I would have voted “aye.”

INTRODUCTION OF THE MAKE NO CENTS UNTIL IT MAKES SENSE ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 8, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I am introducing this bill in response to H.R. 3956, which would unconstitutionally delegate the authority to determine the metal content of coins to the Secretary of the Treasury. While I am concerned at the high cost of minting pennies, I am not entirely convinced that the Mint needs to mint as many pennies as it does. Over the past 30 years, over 300 billion pennies have been minted, more than twice as many coins as all other denominations combined. This is over 1,000 pennies for each man, woman, and child in this country.

I find it hard to believe that with this many pennies having been minted, we still have a shortage of pennies. My bill would prohibit the minting of pennies until the Treasury and Federal Reserve certify that there is no surplus of pennies. If there is a surplus of pennies, it makes no sense for the Mint to continue to coin them if each penny costs more than one cent to produce. If there really were a shortage, the onus would be on the Treasury and Federal Reserve to conduct their survey in a timely fashion in order to facilitate further penny production.

In the event of a shortage I would urge my colleagues to consider Mr. ROSKAM's H.R. 4036, which addresses the cost issue by changing the composition of pennies while maintaining the Congressional control and oversight mandated by the Constitution.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM “BERT” LUCAS

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 8, 2007

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize William “Bert” Lucas for his