

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE AND FAREWELL TO HIS EXCELLENCY ITAMAR RABINOVICH, AMBASSADOR OF ISRAEL

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 30, 1996

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, today with a number of our distinguished colleagues from both Chambers of the Congress, I am hosting a farewell reception to honor and bid goodbye to the distinguished Ambassador of the State of Israel, my dear friend Itamar Rabinovich. The Ambassador will return to Israel before the Congress returns from its August recess, and this is our last opportunity to bid him farewell while we are all still here in Washington.

Mr. Speaker, joining me in hosting this reception are our colleagues from the other body, Senators MITCH MCCONNELL of Kentucky and JOSEPH BIDEN of Delaware. From the House, the hosts are Congressmen HOWARD BERMAN of California, BENJAMIN A. GILMAN of New York, and BILL PAXON of New York.

Ambassador Rabinovich was named Ambassador of Israel to the United States in November 1992, and he has served with great distinction during this past 4 years—a particularly significant time in United States-Israel relations. He was on hand for the transition in U.S. administrations when President Clinton replaced President Bush in January 1993. Later in September of that year on the South Lawn of the White House, President Clinton hosted the signing ceremony of the agreement between the State of Israel and the PLO which led to the major breakthrough in the peace process. He continued to play an important role coordinating efforts between the United States and Israel as the peace process moved forward with the signature of the treaty of peace with Jordan and a number of other important steps toward regional accommodation.

Mr. Speaker, we in the Congress have had ample opportunity to judge the quality of his representational skills. He has been a frequent visitor to my office and to the offices of a great many of us here on Capitol Hill. He has been a forceful advocate and a skilled representative. He has played a critical role in further strengthening the already strong ties between our two countries, and all of us owe him a debt of gratitude for his dedicated conscientious and intelligent service.

In addition to his critical role as the principal point of contact with our own Government, however, Itamar served simultaneously as chief negotiator with Syria, a position to which he was appointed in August 1992, just a few months before his appointment as Ambassador to the United States. As a highly regarded academic specialist on Syria, Ambassador Rabinovich played a key role in the extended series of negotiations with the Damas-

cus government. Either position—as Ambassador to the United States or as chief negotiator with Syria—is a full time position. Not only did Itamar handle then both, he handled them with great skill and he did an excellent job in giving justice to both positions.

Itamar Rabinovich is a distinguished scholar with an international reputation. Before his appointment as Ambassador to the United States, he was rector of Tel Aviv University. He was also a professor of Middle Eastern studies and the former head of the Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at the university. As an academic specialist on Syria, he is the author of *Syria Under the Baath, 1963–66*, *The War for Lebanon, 1970–82*, and *The Road Not Taken: Early Arab-Israeli Negotiation*.

Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues in the Congress to join me in paying tribute and expressing our gratitude for the distinguished diplomatic service of our friend, Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich, and in wishing a successful and happy future to Itamar and his lovely wife, Efrat, and their family.

IN SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT CLINTON'S VETO OF H.R. 1833

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 30, 1996

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer you to this moving letter from Diane Reiner in support of President Clinton's veto of H.R. 1833. Mrs. Reiner, like so many of the women we have heard from, discovered late in her wanted pregnancy that the fetus she was carrying was terribly deformed and would not survive. After carefully weighing all of the options, Mrs. Reiner and her husband decided to have an abortion. As I, and others, have stated throughout the debate on this bill—this tragic decision must belong to the woman, her husband, her doctor, her clergy and the friends and family that she chooses to consult. The one group of people it clearly does not belong to is the Congress.

JULY 25, 1990.

Hon. NITA LOWEY,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE LOWEY: I am writing to let you know that I have tremendous respect for your efforts in standing up for women and our right to choose. I thought you would be interested in seeing this letter that I sent to President Clinton to thank him for his brave and compassionate veto of H.R. 1833.

Thank you for your courage and hard work.

Sincerely,

DIANE REINER.

DEAR PRESIDENT CLINTON: Thank you for vetoing H.R. 1833, the Canady/Smith bill.

I am a 43-year-old woman who had a late abortion in 1988. I was married and pregnant with a wanted child, but my husband and I discovered at a routine sonogram that our child was fatally deformed—that it had no proper brain, no proper lungs, that its organs were not properly inside its body cavity, that its spine was bent at a 45-degree angle, and that its extremities were also deformed. The only reason it was alive inside of me was because it was dependent upon my body as its life support system—through the umbilical cord. It would not have been able to live on its own for more than a few seconds, if that, after birth since its own lungs and brain could never function. (I use the pronoun "it" because we never were able to discover the gender of our unborn child.)

This was a total tragedy, of course. We are very loving people who wanted children very much. We had been trying for several years to have a child. We were devastated. We took a week to decide whether or not we could stand to have an abortion, or whether we should carry the doomed child to full term (it would very possibly have made it to full term and then died at birth, we were told). I decided that to save my sanity I would take the very grave step of aborting. I didn't think I could stand to carry my baby 3 more months, waiting for it to die. This decision filled me with a certain type of grief, and it felt like it was almost too much to have to make this choice, but my husband and I actually prayed about this (we are not members of any one particular religion, but we are spiritual people) and were led to our ultimate decision.

The abortion method used in my case was a bit different than the one at issue in H.R. 1833, but it was similar. The whole thing was infinitely sad and torturous to go through, but I thanked the doctor who was willing and able to perform such a difficult (emotionally difficult) procedure. He was my angel of mercy, Mr. Clinton!

It is people in situations such as the one I and my husband went through who need these rare late-term abortion procedures. We are not murderers. We are grief-stricken, would-be parents who are in a horrible crisis and are trying to take the best course possible. If we did not have the technology which allows us to see inside a pregnant woman in her 6th month then perhaps we wouldn't be discussing late-term abortion procedures. But we do have this technology, for better or worse, and if we can discover at 6 months that our baby will die at birth, how can it be a sin to terminate the life at that point rather than waiting a few more agonizing months for the same outcome?

I particularly commend you on vetoing H.R. 1833 since I realize that it is a risky business for you politically at this point, it being an election year during which certain conservative forces are making their presence clearly known. So thank you again. . . . on behalf of me, my husband, and the other women and couples who have had and will have need for this merciful procedure.

Sincerely,

DIANE REINER.

P.S. I now have a wonderful 6-year-old daughter.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.