

Furthermore, the guilty party will be prohibited from owning a firearm for 5 years. Exceptions to this rule can be made, however, depending upon the circumstances surrounding each individual's case. Present law states that a person convicted of a drug crime can petition to the Secretary of the Treasury for an exemption to the firearms prohibition if they can prove "that the circumstances regarding the conviction, and the applicant's record and reputation, are such that the applicant will not be likely to act in a manner dangerous to public safety and that the granting of the relief would not be contrary to the public interest."

Certainly the time has come for serious efforts to convince people who use drugs that the cost of engaging in this activity is prohibitive. If my bill becomes law, individuals owning firearms for legitimate purposes (hunting, target-shooting, collecting, or personal protection) and who also engage in the use of illicit drugs, will think twice before participating in their drug-related endeavors, facing the prospect of enhanced penalties and the loss of their firearms.

This legislation will not affect a law-abiding citizen's right to own a firearm. By imposing stiff penalties on people convicted of lesser drug offenses where a firearm is present, we will send a serious message that the cost of engaging in this activity far outweighs the benefit. Drugs and guns are a lethal combination, exacting a terrible toll on this Nation.

#### TEEN COURT

HON. JIM KOLBE

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 13, 1996*

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to make my colleagues aware of a phenomenal program for youth that has had a huge impact in Casa Grande, AZ—Teen Court. This is a program that can and should be replicated across the country.

The American Legion Auxiliary's National President's Special Project, Teen Court, was the community service project that Fred A. Humphreys Unit 8 member LaVerne Rowe adopted. She called and received information from the Odessa, TX, Teen Court coordinator. Then she contacted Pinal County Juvenile Court Judge William O'Neil—a former first grade student of hers—and arranged for him to meet with members of Casa Grande 2000, a group organized to address community concerns about education and youth issues, to discuss the merits of bringing a Teen Court to Casa Grande. The response was overwhelming and Teen Court was on the road to becoming a reality.

Mrs. Rowe took the next step by conducting initial interviews of Teen Court coordinator candidates. Judge O'Neil and Frank Sanders, director of Juvenile Court Services in Pinal County, ultimately chose Michelle Kmetz out of five finalists. Since October 5, 1994, Ms. Kmetz has done an outstanding job of making Teen Court a success in Casa Grande.

Let me take a moment to say that it is very encouraging to see the American Legion take such an interest in our youth and work to make an investment in the future of our country.

I would ask that the following newspaper articles be included in the RECORD. I urge my

colleagues to read them and take this message back home. Our youth are worth it.

[From the Casa Grande (AZ) Dispatch, Oct. 13, 1994]

PINAL TEEN COURT SUBJECTS OFFENDERS TO JURY OF THEIR CASA GRANDE PEERS

(By Shannon L. Pantelis)

The promise of trial by a jury of peers will now extend to some juvenile offenders in Casa Grande.

Teen Court made its Pinal County debut Wednesday night. The new program is available to first- and second-time offenders, ages 9 to 17. Eligible offenses include shoplifting, criminal damage, theft, assault, disorderly conduct, alcohol and traffic violations.

Michelle Kmetz, a probation officer with Pinal County Juvenile Court Services who was hired to coordinate the program, said it uses what is sometimes a negative influence to make a positive difference.

"The premise that I believe in is that peer pressure works both ways," she said. "It can be both negative and positive."

"We know peer pressure works negatively, we see that every day. Now it's time to turn it around to work for us."

Patterned after a typical adult trial, Teen Court is an official legal proceeding and the sentences are enforceable. Presiding Pinal County Juvenile Court Judge William O'Neil and Casa Grande City Judge Judy Ferguson will take turns trying the cases.

The defendant must admit guilt and agree to accept whatever "constructive" sentence is determined by a group of six jurors. The defendant's attorney pleads the case, while the prosecutor argues the crime. Meanwhile the clerk and bailiffs are busy doing their jobs of keeping order.

The difference in Teen Court is that all involved—except the judge—are teens themselves.

The attorneys aren't high-paid counselors with law degrees hanging on posh office walls. The bailiffs might be worrying about homework or a math quiz the next day.

The juries eventually will have past-offenders serving part of their sentence on the panel, trying other kids.

The current jury, attorneys, bailiffs and clerks are all Casa Grande Union High School juniors and seniors who volunteered to take part in the program.

The program is meant to take some of the intimidation and alienation out of the courtroom, while giving teens a chance to take responsibility for their actions and those of their peers.

"It is time that another generation started making decisions for themselves," O'Neil said about the concept of his Pinal County Juvenile Court Services program.

Last week the crew went through a mock trial in front of family, friends and people involved in bringing Teen Court to Casa Grande. It will be the last time anyone outside of the participants will be allowed to see Teen Court in action, except the parents of those on trial.

Confidentiality is stressed to participants. Before each case, the clerk swears in everyone in the courtroom, committing them to silence about everything and everyone involved in the trial.

Defendants and Teen Court participants are forbidden to discuss the proceedings, testimony or sentences outside the courtroom. Parents and friends are included in the gag order.

At the mock trial, teens trained as Teen Court attorneys acted as defendants, acting out real cases.

Sentences are meant to be constructive, not just punitive. Community service hours, tutoring, Teen Court jury duty, letters of

apology, attending workshops or paying a fine or damages are among the jury's options.

Many of the Teen Court participants are interested in law careers themselves. Kmetz said that when she chose the kids to participate in the first semester of Teen Court, she did not exclude teens who had been in trouble themselves.

She said she was most impressed with one applicant's answer when she asked why he wanted to be a part of Teen Court.

"It's about time we (teens) got a chance to bring honor back to our name," she said he responded.

"That's what it's all about, giving them the chance to prove themselves and make it," she said.

[From the Casa Grande (AZ) Dispatch, Oct. 13, 1994]

#### JUDGE COULDN'T REFUSE

William O'Neil did not really have much choice about Teen Court.

Even now as the presiding Pinal County juvenile court judge, he still listens to his teacher.

"When my first-grade teacher called me to tell me about this, she said this was something we needed and have to have," he said starting Teen Court.

Retired teacher LaVerne Rowe had heard about the program, which was started in Texas several years ago. She told her now-influential pupil and told him to get going with it.

At the same time, the education-support group Casa Grande 2000 was learning about Teen Court and trying to get the program started in Casa Grande.

Once the two groups got together, it was only months before Teen Court was a reality in Casa Grande.

O'Neil said the program was on his five-year plan of programs to implement. He said his schedule was pushed up about 4 years at the urging of Rowe and the interest of Casa Grande 2000.

With at least 3,000 juveniles being referred to Pinal County Juvenile Court Services each year, alternatives were needed.

Juvenile Court Services Director Frank Sanders said the area is in a "state of crisis."

"Business is booming" he said about the juvenile justice system.

He said the Teen Court program in Casa Grande, which is expected to eventually expand to other areas in the county, was funded through the Arizona Supreme Court.

The \$40,000 went toward hiring director Michelle Kmetz, training and contracting with Project Hope's Project YES, which will be used to run the community service hours ordered.

The Casa Grande Teen Court has been patterned closely on a similar program that has been working in Globe for about six years.

#### FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION REVITALIZATION ACT OF 1995

##### SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 12, 1996*

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2276, the FAA Revitalization Act. This bill illustrates that viable, productive solutions can be achieved when both parties examine an issue thoughtfully and approach reform reasonably. In my view, H.R. 2276

serves both to increase the safety of air travel while protecting the rights and needs of air traffic personnel. Recent events at the Pittsburgh International Airport near my district in western Pennsylvania showcase the difficulties which can inhibit maintaining a high degree of air traffic safety in our country.

The development of a new procurement system will help to ensure that air traffic personnel obtain proper safety equipment in a more timely manner. The reduction of the often overwhelmingly burdensome Federal procurement rules will increase safety effectiveness as well as guard against increased costs, waste, and abuse. As I am always concerned how legislation will affect the working men and women in Pennsylvania's 18th Congressional District, I am pleased that H.R. 2276 explicitly states that new FAA personnel systems would not be exempt from whistleblowers protection laws, laws prohibiting discrimination or strikes, workers and unemployment compensation, retirement, labor-management relations, and life and health insurance laws. The air traffic workers in my district support this legislation, and eagerly anticipate its enactment so that they will be able to maximize their ability to maintain the high level of air traffic safety that is absolutely necessary.

I would like to conclude my remarks with words of encouragement for removing the Federal Airport and Airway Trust Fund from the unified Federal budget. As a cosponsor of H.R. 842, the Truth in Budgeting Act, I was disappointed to find that off-budget provisions were deleted from the final language of the bill. As a cosponsor, I encourage my colleagues to support final passage of H.R. 2276 today, and I look forward to debating the merits of H.R. 842 in the near future. Revitalizing the FAA will benefit travelers, air traffic personnel, and the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall safety of air travel.

#### HONORING ELLA MILLER

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 13, 1996

Mr. DAVIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mrs. Ella Miller for her tireless efforts in working with the children of Fairfax County in the 11th Congressional District of Virginia. She will be honored on March 16, 1996, at the Hunter Mill District Republican Committee's recognition dinner for African-American community-based organizations.

Mrs. Miller was born in 1880, a mere 15 years after the end of the Civil War to parents who were former slaves in rural southern Tennessee. She was unable to attend school, but recognized the value of education and gained what knowledge she could at night from her siblings who did attend school.

After leaving Tennessee, Mrs. Miller relocated to Cincinnati, OH, where she worked as a domestic for two families until she reached the age of 107, after which time she decided to retire and moved to Vienna, VA, where she lives with her niece. She is now 115 years of age and continues to be active.

Mrs. Miller, expressing a desire to share her life's experiences, visits with students at elementary schools in Fairfax County, VA, where she has become a symbol of "Living History"

to all of the fortunate children she has touched through her reflections on history, famous people she has met, and her messages about faith, obedience, caring for others, and belief in oneself. She is a living example that you are never too old to learn.

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues join me in honoring Mrs. Ella Miller for all she has done for our children and wish her the best of luck for her future endeavors.

#### CONCERT FOR DEMOCRACY: TRIBUTE TO PRESIDENT LEE TENG-HUI, REPUBLIC OF CHINA

HON. MAURICE D. HINCHEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 13, 1996

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, on March 17, 1996, Representative and Mrs. Benjamin Lu of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in Washington, DC, will host the Music for Democracy Concert at the Kennedy Center. This concert is a celebration of the Republic of China's long journey toward complete democratization.

The Republic of China's democratization has been rapid and total. Over the last 8 years, President Lee Teng-hui has presided over economic and political liberalization, the free election of the National Assembly, three elections of the Legislative Yuan, the Republic of China's Parliament, and the election of the Governor of Taiwan Province and mayors of Taipei and Kaohsiung, culminating in the Republic of China's free and direct election of the President of the Republic of China on March 23, 1996.

President Lee Teng-hui is one of four Presidential candidates on the March 23 ballot. Regardless of the outcome of this election, President Lee Teng-hui must be complimented and respected for his unwavering determination to bring total democracy to his country. He alone has brought to fulfillment the dreams and aspirations of the Chinese people for a free and open society.

I wish to extend our best wishes to Representative and Mrs. Lu and to all the Chinese people living in the Republic of China. These are indeed trying times for them, but democracy, as always, will most certainly prevail over any adversity.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF BIODIVERSITY

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 13, 1996

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, important new research by University of Minnesota ecologist David Tilman has confirmed what many know instinctively—biodiversity is a critical element of environmental and ecological health. Dr. Tilman worked in conjunction with botanist David Wedin and Johannes Knops, and recently published the results of an important plant study in the scientific journal *Nature*.

In Dr. Tilman's recent study, researchers in Bethel, MN planted 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 12, or 24 species of prairie plants in plots measuring 3

meters square. The plots received equal watering and weeding. The results showed that the more diverse a given plot was in terms of species the more productive the plants were. The plants in diverse plots were also better able to withstand stresses such as extreme weather or drought. The bottom line, according to Dr. Tilman, is that regional and global ecosystems must be diverse in order to thrive and produce benefits such as filtering water, enriching the soil, and purifying our air.

We in Congress must recognize the important policy implications of this significant plant study. If Congress superimposes clearcutting and similar harvest practices in our forests and public lands and permits replanting of limited species, the forests will lose their biodiversity and our forest ecosystems will become less and less productive. The current moratorium on the listing of new species under the Endangered Species Act could have a further devastating effect on available biodiversity, and ecosystems will become less durable and productive. Those policy actions, which disregard science, could have severe consequences for us and future generations. We need to follow good science and stewardship today for tomorrow.

I am including with this statement a copy of a recent article printed in the Minneapolis Star Tribune describing Dr. Tilman's research and its implications. I urge all my colleagues to read this informative article.

[From the Minneapolis Star Tribune]

#### BIODIVERSITY IS ROOT OF ENVIRONMENTAL GROWTH

(By Tom Meersman)

University of Minnesota ecologist David Tilman just keeps growing things. And he just keeps learning more about the inner workings of nature in the process.

His latest findings, published today in the international scientific journal *Nature*, indicate that growing a variety of plants and grasses in a given area is much better for the environment than having only a few species.

While prevailing wisdom might dictate that one or two types of plants in an area would thrive because of minimal competition, Tilman's research shows the opposite: Different plants don't compete so much as they complement each other and function as a community.

Tilman has been studying native Minnesota grasslands for the past 13 years on university land at the Cedar Creek Natural History Area near Bethel, about 35 miles north of the Twin Cities. It's one of 18 sites in the nation where scientists conduct long-term ecological research.

In his latest study, Tilman worked with botanist David Wedin, of the University of Toronto, and Johannes Knops, an adjunct faculty member in ecology at the University of Minnesota.

In 1994 the researchers and their summer interns planted 147 plots, each 3 meters square, with one, two, four, six, eight, 12 or 24 different prairie plants, chosen randomly from a pool of 24 species. The plots had homogeneous soils, were watered equally and were weeded from elevated boardwalks at regular intervals. Last summer the team measured how productive the plants were in various plots and what had happened to the soil chemistry.

The results, Tilman said, show that "plots that are more diverse can hold more of the nutrients and sustain the fertility of the soils." Plots that had few species were not as productive, he said, and their soil lost important nutrients.

What this means, he said, is that diversity—having a large number of different