

Freeholder Jim Mancini, as chairman of the Ocean County Office on Aging, serves the largest senior population in the State of New Jersey. Ocean County's nutrition sites, transportation programs for the elderly and senior outreach programs are considered among the finest in our State. Freeholder Mancini has worked closely with me through the years in our effort to preserve and protect such programs as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. His support has been invaluable.

As liaison to the Ocean County Library Commission, Freeholder Mancini has worked tirelessly to expand the system to 17 branches throughout the county.

A former member of New Jersey's General Assembly, he continues to serve as mayor of Long Beach Township, a position he has held for 28 years. This dedicated public servant also serves as chairman of the board of Southern Ocean County Hospital and as vice president of the Long Beach Island St. Francis Community Center. The civic associations to which he has devoted many hours are too numerous to mention.

All these associations and activities were carried out while always putting his wife, Madeline, and their nine children first.

The residents of Long Beach Township pay him a great tribute by dedicating their municipal facility in his honor and name.

Jim Mancini represents what is so very good about our country—he is an honorable man, a family man, a man who is willing to go the extra mile for what is right. He has proven the point of the old saying, "If you want something done, give the job to a busy person."

I offer him my personal thanks and the gratitude of all those he has so faithfully served throughout the years.

As he celebrates his 70th birthday among family and friends, I wish him all the best that life can offer.

GREECE AND THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

HON. HERBERT H. BATEMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 1996

Mr. BATEMAN. Mr. Speaker, on March 25, we will once again be celebrating the anniversary of the beginning of the effort by the Greek people to liberate themselves from oppression. Every year, I join with some of my colleagues here in the House of Representatives to make special note of this occasion. We do this because we recognize that it is absolutely vital that citizens of democratic nations the world over do not take the freedom we enjoy for granted.

On March 25, 1829, Greek patriots began their struggle for freedom and independence from the Ottoman Empire. Though the intervening years have been filled with trials and tribulations, the ultimate success of democracy in Greece is a testament to the courage and fortitude of her people.

Throughout world history, freedom of expression, of assembly, of government elected by the people, have been the exception rather than the rule. The concept of democratic government established by Greece laid the foundation for the most promising alternative to the autocratic forms of government that have pre-

dominated for much of history. From the Homeric tradition to Alexander, through the birth of the Socratic method, Aristotelian logic and countless artistic and architectural endeavors, the Greek people have left an indelible impression on civilization.

I am proud, once again, to congratulate the Greek people on their monumental achievement. Democracy has persevered against many threats to its continued existence. That is why it is important that we recognize this date every year. In national cemeteries across the Nation as well as those in foreign lands lie thousands of Americans who gave their lives so that the shining light of freedom would not be extinguished. That light was lit in Greece. It is proper that we recognize the occasion of Greek Independence Day. From it was the ideal of America borne.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FALLS CHURCH NEWS-PRESS ON ITS FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 1996

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, the local newspaper of any town is a very important link in the community, from praising the town athlete to reporting the events of the big city, it allows the neighborhood to keep an open communication. It is that communication that maintains the character of the community and loyalty of the residents.

Today I rise to applaud one such paper that provides the communication lines of a city in my district, the Falls Church News-Press. The News-Press is celebrating 5 years of service as a definitive link in the community.

This paper's commitment to the city of Falls Church is underscored by its many awards and accomplishments. In 1991, it was honored by the Falls Church City Council and named recipient of the Council's Business of the Year.

The News-Press helped initiate, and testified on behalf of, legislation passed in the Virginia General Assembly in 1992 that set out criteria for nonpaid distribution newspapers to carry official legal notices. Subsequently, the News-Press became the first newspaper in the history of the Commonwealth of Virginia to receive court authorization to publish official legal notices as a nonpaid distribution newspaper. As a result, the News-Press was the first nonpaid distribution newspaper in the history of the Commonwealth to be accepted as a full, voting member of the Virginia Press Association.

The News-Press' owner/editor-in-chief, Nicholas Benton, served 2 years as president of the Greater Falls Church Chamber of Commerce and was the recipient of the Chamber's Pillar of the Community Award in 1992.

Please join me in wishing the Falls Church News-Press best wishes on their future endeavors.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND INDIA

HON. PETER T. KING

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 1996

Mr. KING. Mr. Speaker, Amnesty International recently issued a report called *Amnesty International and India* detailing India's violations of fundamental human rights.

On the very first page of this report, Amnesty International states that "violations such as torture, including rape, and deaths in custody remain endemic, and * * * political prisoners continue to face unfair trials." The report goes on to tell us that "human rights violations affect most segments of Indian society, with people from some groups, particularly the socially or economically disadvantaged, being particularly disadvantaged." The record bears this out. More than 150,000 Sikhs have been killed since 1984, over 200,000 Christians in Nagaland since 1947 and in excess of 43,000 Moslems in Kashmir since 1988. Tens of thousands of Assamese, Manipuris, and others have been killed, as have thousands of Dalits or black untouchables.

The amnesty report cites the extensive use of disappearances as a way to circumvent the rights of detainees. Records of detentions are not maintained, allowing the regime to claim that the detainee died in an encounter, a form of extrajudicial execution. "Thousands of people remain detained under the provisions of the now lapsed Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act," the report says. Many of us have spoken about the brutality of TADA. Amnesty reports that "torture of detainees in police and military custody remains endemic." According to the report, "the most common method of torture is beating with lathis (canes). Other methods included suspension by the wrist and electric shocks. Reports of rapes indicate that it is used as a method of torture." According to the report, "in 1995 at least 100 people died in the custody of police or security forces throughout India, as a result of torture and medical neglect."

In the face of this kind of repression, no Sikh ever signed India's constitution. Instead, the Sikh Nation reasserted its claim to freedom on October 7, 1987 by declaring the independent, sovereign nation of Khalistan. Many Sikhs who are working peacefully to free Khalistan are denied their human rights by India. Human rights groups estimate that more than 100,000 Sikhs have been tortured, raped, killed, or made to disappear. Another 70,000 languish in India prisons without charge or trial, according to human rights groups. According to Amnesty International, "lawyers and relatives are routinely denied access by police to people held in custody." The report tells us that "most torture and ill-treatment in India occurs during the first stage of detention in police custody, when access to outsiders is routinely denied."

Amnesty International sharply criticizes India for these repressive practices. "Whatever imperatives the Indian state has to maintain internal peace and security, the violation of rights protected by the Constitution of India as well as by human rights standards is avoidable," the report says. Strong action by free countries of the world is called for. There are two bills in the House that address these concerns. H.R. 1425, the Human Rights in India

Act, would cut off United States development aid to India until basic human rights are respected, and House Concurrent Resolution 32 calls for a plebiscite in India under international supervision to let the Sikh nation have a free and fair vote on its political future. The sooner we pass these bills, the sooner the people of South Asia can live in freedom, security, and dignity. I call upon my colleagues to pass these bills as soon as possible.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND INDIA

This report is an introduction to Amnesty International and its concerns in India. It answers basic questions about Amnesty International: its role as a non-governmental international human rights organization; its worldwide membership, its mandate for action, its campaigning methods; and its work and membership in India.

The bulk of the report deals with human rights violations that Amnesty International has documented in India over several decades. It shows that violations such as torture, including rape, and deaths in custody remain endemic, and that political prisoners continue to face unfair trials. It highlights a legal and judicial system that facilitates these and many other abuses, often allowing the perpetrators to act with impunity. Even the safeguards that do exist are regularly disregarded. The report also summarizes human rights abuses committed by armed opposition groups.

Human rights violations affect most sections of Indian society, with people from some groups, particularly the socially or economically disadvantaged, being especially vulnerable. In a complex society of approximately 920 million people, speaking dozens of languages and dialects, living in 25 states and seven union territories, not everyone has equal access to justice or an equal chance to be allowed to live in safety and with dignity.

TRIBUTE TO KIM PUTENS

HON. JAMES A. HAYES

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 1996

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my appreciation publicly for the excellent job that Kim Putens has done the last 3 years as executive director of the National Wetlands Coalition. Kim departed her position on March 15 to move to the next exciting professional chapter in her life.

The National Wetlands Coalition was formed in September 1989 by a broad cross-section of trade associations, companies, public entities, and individuals that are directly affected by the Federal Wetlands Regulatory Program, either because they own or live on land that is considered Federal jurisdictional wetlands or because they undertake economic activities that encounter wetlands. The group was formed to participate in the anticipated debate over how to achieve President Bush's goal of no overall net loss of wetlands. Longstanding concerns about the program, coupled with issuance of the 1989 manual that greatly broadened the description of lands that are Federal jurisdictional wetlands, expanded the debate to one over the entire wetlands permitting program under section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

Mr. Speaker, this House, on May 16, 1995, by a vote of 240 to 185, adopted a number of

reforms that are very similar to those that have been advocated by the National Wetlands Coalition since 1990. In fact, this was the first time since 1977 that either the House of Congress has adopted a comprehensive set of reforms of the section 404 program.

Kim Putens made a major contribution to the wetlands regulatory reform victory in the House. We all know that no victory on a major issue in the House of Representatives is achieved easily and without an enormous amount of work. There are 435 of us and our staffs to educate on the issues; there are innumerable inquiries to which to respond; there are press inquiries and the need to keep private sector coalition participants informed and coordinated in their activities. Obviously, Kim did all of these tasks successfully and for the first time in 18 years, a House of Congress took action on this controversial regulatory program.

Mr. Speaker, again I thank Kim for her efforts and wish her the best in her future endeavors.

LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE
SERVICE DELIVERY TO VETERANS

HON. G.V. (SONNY) MONTGOMERY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 1996

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing legislation to enable VA to provide health care to Medicare-eligible veterans who cannot now gain access to VA care.

The VA's health care system serves a veteran population made up almost exclusively of veterans whose eligibility for care is based either on their income or on their service-incurred disability. Under tight budgets that for years have not fully kept pace with rising health-care delivery costs, most VA facilities have shut their doors to veterans with income exceeding VA's means test—approximately \$21,000 in the case of a veteran without dependents. While eligible for VA care, these veterans have neither an entitlement to care nor sufficient priority to assure them access. Many, however, are former VA patients, locked out of a system on which they once depended. VA now provides care to only a small number of these individuals. In all, only 2 percent of VA's patients are higher income veterans.

While large numbers of veterans who routinely receive VA care are also Medicare-eligible, VA is barred under existing law from receiving Medicare reimbursement for their care. Veterans' advocates have, understandably, long bristled at what appears to be VA subsidization of the Medicare trust fund. This has prompted calls for legislation to reimburse VA for care provided Medicare-eligible non-service-connected veterans.

This bill provides for Medicare payments to VA only for higher income, Medicare-eligible veterans who are largely shut out of the VA system today. The bill would further limit the circumstances under which VA could receive Medicare payments—to covered veterans who enroll in a VA managed-care plan. My legislation would provide a long-sought avenue for former VA patients to regain access to VA care. At the same time, it could actually lower Medicare costs, as proposed in pending Medi-

care reforms, by encouraging numbers of Medicare beneficiaries to abandon the traditional fee-for-service Medicare Program in favor of enrollment in a lower cost managed-care plan administered by VA.

REMEMBERING THE TRAGEDY OF
THE "LEOPOLDVILLE"

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 1996

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to pay tribute to 802 brave American soldiers who lost their lives while defending freedom during World War II. Until recently, the tragic story of the 66th Infantry Division remained untold in U.S. history. These men made the ultimate sacrifice for their country and are worthy of a much greater tribute than the statistics or the footnotes in history books that have already been granted to them. As the worst troopship loss in World War II, and the third worst naval disaster in U.S. history, the story of the sinking of the *Leopoldville* deserves full recognition.

On Christmas Eve, 1944, 2,235 American soldiers were crossing the English Channel as reinforcements to fight in the Battle of the Bulge, when their Belgian troopship, the *Leopoldville*, was torpedoed and sunk 5½ miles from Cherbourg, France. The result was a tremendous loss of lives—almost one-third of the division was killed. There were 493 bodies that were never recovered from the English Channel. Most of the soldiers who lost their lives were young boys, from 18 to 20 years old, barely out of high school. They represented 46 out of the 48 States that were part of the Union at the time.

However, the most tragic and troubling part of this story is the American public's general ignorance of the facts. All of us, and particularly the family members of the lost soldiers, should be told the full story of their loved ones' valiant efforts in their fight to preserve democracy.

Therefore, I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering and honoring those that gave their lives in protecting the ideals that all Americans cherish. I would also like to remind my colleagues that this story should hold a special place in ever State's history. Simply put, the 802 soldiers that lost their lives deserve the proper respect and remembrance for their sacrifice, and those that survived need to be recognized for their valor.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF
FREDERICK MCKINNEY

HON. GLENN POSHARD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 1996

Mr. POSHARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of Mr. Frederick McKinney, who died on March 2 in Decatur, IL, at the age of 66. Frederick lived a full life, giving not only to his family and friends, but to his country and community. I would like to send my condolences to his wife, Louise, as well as to his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchild, and let them know that the city of Decatur has lost a dear friend.