

Cournoyer's winning script be inserted into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Finally, I also want to thank Amy for helping us to recognize today's youth and all that they have to offer to our country and its future.

"ANSWERING AMERICA'S CALL"

1995-96 VFW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM, RHODE ISLAND WINNER: AMY COURNOYER, POST 2274, ASHTON, RHODE ISLAND

America is not simply "calling" each one of us. It is yearning, urging, and persistently imploring. Its concerns echo in the halls of schools across the country. After all, youth is the essence of this country, for it is the collaboration of new ideas that have maintained America's longevity. If I may borrow a quote from John F. Kennedy, "It is time for a new generation of leadership, to scope with new problems and new opportunities. For there is a new world to be won."

Retracting America's history, it is evident that the very passion and integrity of youth and rebirth of ideas have had a positive impact on society. After all, the very foundation of our country is the Constitution which was created by people with this undying thirst for reform. Events such as the Boston Tea Party, the Civil Rights Movement, Space Exploration, and other advances in technology were all made possible thanks to youthful minds.

So, as a contemporary society we must have the wisdom to heed that very call. The call for youth of all ages to express themselves. The elders are called to pass on the wisdom that they have gained through experience to the youth so that they will attain greater knowledge. Moreover, this sharing of ideas between adults and adolescents brings about the third and most important virtue, understanding. For it is through understanding one another that things can be accomplished.

America is a tune. It must be sung together. Arguing with or belittling others are only obstructions in our quest for knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. America is calling each person, young and old, black and white, Catholic or Jewish, to break away from their old, cemented ways, and return to the simple, innocent, and unbogated ways of youth. I am not advocating a break in tradition, nor am I depicting a society of fools. I am simply suggesting that if we sing our tune in harmony, combining our individual talents to create a beautiful melody, then we are truly answering each others' call, which is indeed America's call—a microcosm of the macrocosm. We all contribute to the future of the world. Understanding is a building block for nonviolence. Martin Luther King professed that "Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time, the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence."

Man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.

"So do not ask for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." Everyone talks about a better world, a better place. But, actions speak much louder than words. In order to truly answer America's call we must begin with ourselves. Then we will radiate like sunbeams on the community. Adults, listen to the call of the youth, they have a lot to give. And youth, listen to your elders, they have much wisdom to offer also.

In conclusion, I am yearning, urging, and persistently imploring that we heed each other's call. Whether it be doing volunteer work, becoming a politician and working for the betterment of our democratic system,

becoming a research scientist and working for a cure for such deadly diseases as cancer and AIDS, or simply giving a friendly smile and treating each other with dignity and respect. Everything is a microcosm of the macrocosm. So if we want to truly answer America's call and create a better country, we must better ourselves. Then, and only then, are we truly answering America's call.

A TRIBUTE TO THE FIREFIGHTER CONGRESSMAN

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 23, 1996

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, on April 30, 1996, the Congressional Fire Services Caucus will pay tribute to the champions of public safety at the Eighth Annual National Fire and Emergency Services Dinner. Over 3 million citizens throughout our great Nation dedicate their lives to preserving our communities against the threat of fire and other types of disasters. They include firefighters, EMS providers, search and rescue teams, arson investigators, and instructors. The list goes on for somewhere, in each of our communities, we can name an acquaintance of ours who is prepared to respond when the alarm sounds.

Our understanding in Congress of the many challenges facing first responders has been enhanced throughout the years primarily because of one individual. CURT WELDON, our firefighting Congressman, is unique to Washington politics. Very few individuals who have served in this institution have been able to unite members from both sides of the aisle behind one cause.

Today, the Congressional Fire Services Caucus is the largest caucus in Congress. With an equal number of Republicans and Democrats, the Fire Caucus is a tribute to the relentless efforts of CURT WELDON to achieve greater recognition for first responders on Capitol Hill. Throughout the 8-year history of the Caucus, our dear colleague has traveled to the scenes of our country's worst disasters in recent memory. He was in New York City to witness the horrible aftermath of the World Trade Center bombing, in Dade County, FL, following Hurricane Andrew, and southern California after the Northridge earthquake. And each time he would return from these incidents, CURT would share his findings with fellow members to help us better understand the significance of these events and what Congress can learn from them.

On issues of great significance to the fire service and EMS, my colleagues and I often defer judgment so that we can follow Congressman WELDON's lead. When casting his vote on fire service issues, CURT is guided by his years of experience as a firefighter, where he rose through the ranks to become chief of the Marcus Hook Fire Department in Marcus Hook, PA. Each of the seven major fire service organizations, despite their differences on issues, can all come to an agreement when the issue is the benefits they have derived from one man's belief in their respective missions. That man being CURT WELDON.

When my fellow Fire Caucus cochairmen and I join the 2,000 national fire service leaders at the forthcoming dinner, we do so in thanks and appreciation to our dear friend,

CURT WELDON. This past year, he has endured some setbacks, most recently the passing of his mother, Catherine Weldon. A volunteer for charitable causes throughout her lifetime, Mrs. Weldon leaves behind a legacy supporting the fire service, American Red Cross, and other local causes. Her attributes touched many, most importantly her nine children.

What amazes me most about CURT is despite these setbacks, he continues to perform as if he were still a fire chief for Marcus Hook. Whenever the alarm sounds on Capitol Hill, CURT takes expedient action, always working in cooperation with his colleagues, to resolve whatever the emergency might be.

A friend first, and colleague second CURT WELDON represents the best in public service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHARLES H. TAYLOR

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 23, 1996

Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on March 12, I was unavoidably detained in my district during rollcall Nos. 56-59.

Roll No. 56 was on the rule accompanying the conference report to H.R. 1561, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Roll No. 57 was on a motion to suspend the rules and pass House Joint Resolution 78, granting additional powers conferred upon the bi-state development agency by the States of Missouri and Illinois. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Roll No. 58 was on a motion to suspend the rules and agree to House Concurrent Resolution 149, a resolution condemning terrorist attacks in Israel. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Roll No. 59 was on passage of the conference report to H.R. 1561, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea." This would be consistent with my "yea" vote on the bill June 6, 1995—rollcall No. 366—when it first came before the House.

UNICEF HELPING CHINESE ORPHANS

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 23, 1996

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member commends to his colleagues the following exchange of letters concerning the efforts of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to improve the plight of orphans in the People's Republic of China. The exchange of letters was precipitated by a well-documented investigation by Human Rights Watch—Asia, published in January 1996 under the title, "Death by Default."

Earlier this year, this Member wrote to Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF, urging that agency to expand its programs in China

and to work with the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child to examine China's performance in implementing its responsibilities under the UN Convention. In Ms. Bellamy's response, she describes UNICEF's program in China and provides some useful information on steps the Chinese Government is taking to improve conditions in the orphanages.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,

Washington, DC, February 2, 1996.

Ms. CAROL BELLAMY,
Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund, New York, NY.

DEAR MS. BELLAMY: I am writing to you regarding the tragic reports on the mistreatment of orphans in the People's Republic of China. As you know, these reports are based on a well-documented investigation by Human Rights Watch—Asia, published in January 1996 under the title, "Death by Default."

I was pleased to see the January 22, 1996, UNICEF announcement of an agreement with China to start a program to improve the care of orphans and disabled children in that country. The two training projects involved, while rather limited, represent a solid basis for increased cooperation between China and UNICEF in this crucial area. I urge you to continue to try to deepen UNICEF's involvement by expanding into all areas of the country and working with as wide a range of Chinese orphanages as possible.

There is another area where I believe UNICEF and the international community can contribute to improving conditions in China's orphanages. As a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the People's Republic of China has certain responsibilities regarding the care of children in state-run institutions. It is apparent from the Human Rights Watch report that China has failed to live up to those responsibilities in fundamental ways.

I urge appropriate agencies of the United Nations, including UNICEF and WHO, to work closely with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva to examine China's performance in implementing its responsibilities under the UN Convention.

Thank you for your efforts in this area. Please keep me informed of any developments.

Best wishes,

DOUG BEREUTER,
Vice Chairman.

UNICEF HOUSE,
New York, NY, March 11, 1996.

Hon. DOUG BEREUTER,
Vice Chairman, Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. BEREUTER: Many thanks for your letter of February 2 regarding the situation of children in the Child Welfare Institutes (CWIs) in the Peoples Republic of China. My apologies for the delay in responding, but I have been out of the country for much of the time since we met on February 9.

Over these past five or six weeks, our UNICEF country office in Beijing has continued its dialogue with the Government of China regarding the CWIs and I believe that they are producing some progress for the children who are living in them. As you may recall from our discussion, an understanding had already been developed with the Government in January regarding two specific adjuncts to our ongoing work in the country. The first, which implies a Needs Assessment of all institutes in the country, will identify the most "at risk" institutes throughout the

30 provinces and autonomous regions in need of a capacity building strategy which will train their staff, improve the standard of rehabilitation services, and establish improved management procedures. One Institute in each province will be upgraded to serve as a model and resource center for training and improvement of rehabilitation skills. The second focuses on in-service training of staff and trainers on child care, rehabilitation and management through National Training and Rehabilitation Centers under the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

However, in addition to the addition to these specific program activities, we have learned in the last two weeks of some importance policy changes that are underway as a result of UNICEF's cooperation with the Ministry of Civil Affairs on the situation of China's orphans. First, our China office has been advised that the Government will increase action at all administrative levels to heighten advocacy and mobilization to reduce abandonment of children. Following ratification of the Convention, the Government of China enacted the Law on the protection of Minors which considers abandonment of children a criminal activity. Second, the Ministry of Health will now provide all children found abandoned and to be admitted to any of the Institutes a complete health evaluation at a nearby hospital. Very sick children will not be forwarded to the Institutes, which do not have up-to-date medical equipment, until they have been treated. This was not done previously and will reduce the risk to seriously ill children. Third, the Government has decided to amend its present policy that the living standards of the children in the CWIs be the same as in the surrounding community. This policy has caused some disparities in the CWIs. The new policy will require a living standard that is somewhat higher than that of families living in the surrounding communities. Fourth, the Government has decided to increase the budgetary investment in the CWIs to renovate and improve their physical infrastructure.

Of course, as you have noted, the Convention on the Rights of the Child is a powerful tool with which to promote the minimum standards for the survival, development and protection of children that are now a part of international law. The Government of China has ratified the Convention and we look forward to our continuing cooperation with the Government to ensure that these standards become a reality for all of China's children.

Many thanks for your support.

Sincerely,

CAROL BELLAMY,
Executive Director.

ARIZONA'S VOICE OF DEMOCRACY
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

HON. BOB STUMP

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 23, 1996

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to announce that Matthew P. Reece, who resides in the Third Congressional District of Arizona, is the Arizona State winner of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Voice of Democracy Scholarship. Matt, a senior at Bradshaw Mountain High School, was named a national winner in the 1996 Voice of Democracy Program and the recipient of the \$1,000 Department of Wyoming and its Ladies Auxiliary Scholarship Award. VFW Post 10227 in Prescott Valley, AZ sponsored him. I am pleased

that Matt was among the 54 national scholarship recipients who received more than \$118,000. I commend to the attention of my colleagues Matt's award winning essay on "Answering America's Call."

ANSWERING AMERICA'S CALL

(By Matthew P. Reece)

Answering America's call is taking the time to pick up the phone and just listen. America is calling but if we fail to answer the call, America's voice will soon die away. So come on, pick up the phone.

Ring . . . Ring . . . Ri . . .

Hello.

Yes, this is America calling for the leaders of the 21st century.

Is this a crank call or what?

No. I'm surveying young people of America. I want to know your definition of democracy and if you think democracy will survive in the next century.

I don't know about definitions. I guess democracy is a government of, by, and for the people. Democracy is about freedom for the people. It's difficult to put in words. Some have tried. H.L. Mencken called democracy, "The art of running a circus from the monkey cage." George Bernard Shaw sneered, "It substitutes selection by the incompetent many for the appointment by the corrupt few." Educator Alexander Meiklejohn panned it as, "A government where you can say what you think, even if you don't think." Finally, Winston Churchill said, "Democracy is the worst system devised by the wit of man, except for all others. Obviously the intellectuals can't define democracy. Democracy defies definition. I, however, know that democracy is about people and their yearning for freedom, assuming responsibility for that freedom, and grabbing the golden ring of opportunity for life and the pursuit of happiness.

Young person . . . In speaking with others like you, democracy appears in disrepair: Voter turnout is at an all-time low, political campaigns are financed by the wealthy, special interest groups; the media has frozen our common sense and critical thinking. Our people are intensely concerned about drugs, crime, the crazies on the right and left; children having children, teens killing teens, sex and violence, soleless materialism and a gridlocked government that can't curb a national debt headed for the moon.

I've also heard that the "Political Vehicle" built by the founding fathers has degenerated into a "Runaway Antique at the risk of losing its wheels." I don't agree with the perception. I see democracy on a roll with new regeneration for the 21st century.

You see, Government is not democracy. Democracy includes; Sam Adams staging the Boston Tea Party, Martin Luther King leading a march on Washington, Rosa Parks refusing to give up her seat. Democracy is what happens when free men and women get together and make something for the good of all.

We have the freedom; we can assume the responsibility; we have the faith for opportunity. We can change a community, create a business, or even become president. We always have the choice.

In exercising that choice we have to recognize the freedoms given to us; such as the bill of Rights, where mankind is given; the right to free speech, the right to a trial by jury, the right to petition and protest against people or events that are unpopular.

In turn we must assume the responsibility for our freedom. We need to vote for what we believe in and continue what past generations have started; such as peaceful relations with other nations.

Finally, we must keep the faith that freedom of choice will exist in the 21st century.