

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO SUSPEND DUTIES ON CERTAIN IMPORTED RAW MATERIALS

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 4, 1997

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation which supports important regional and national interests.

My home, the Seventh Congressional District of Washington, is also the home of K2 Corp., the last remaining major U.S. manufacturer of skis and one of three major makers of snowboards in the United States. K2 conducts all significant manufacturing operations for skis and snowboards at its Vashon Island, Washington facility. In fact, all K2 snowboards and virtually all K2 and Olin-brand skis sold throughout the world are individually crafted by technicians on Vashon Island. Moreover, K2 sources almost all of the components for its skis and snowboards in the United States stimulating the U.S. economy through its purchases of raw materials from U.S. suppliers, especially in the Pacific Northwest region of the country. However, for two key ski and snowboard components, i.e., spring steel edges and polyethylene base materials, K2 has been unable to find a supplier of these products in the United States that can meet its needs. Therefore, K2 has been forced to import these products, which are subject to U.S. customs duties upon importation. This legislation provides for a temporary suspension of customs duty on the two raw materials which are vital to the U.S. production of skis and snowboards and which are unavailable from domestic producers.

K2 is working hard to remain viable in the highly competitive international market for skis and snowboards. In fact, K2 has endured as a U.S. ski manufacturer in the face of fierce price competition, while several other major ski companies no longer manufacture skis in the United States. This temporary duty suspension legislation would support jobs in the region, as well as K2's ability to continue developing innovative, fine quality products. Equally important, a temporary duty suspension would help K2 preserve and increase its competitiveness in the global marketplace.

K2 is the only major exporter of skis made in the United States. In addition, K2 is one of three principal exporters of U.S. made snowboards. Thus, K2's exports of U.S. manufactured skis and snowboards represent a substantial percentage of U.S. skis and snowboards sold worldwide. If K2 is unable to remain competitive in global and domestic markets, skis manufactured in the United States may disappear from the global marketplace. The temporary duty suspension proposed by this legislation would help prevent the shutdown of the only remaining U.S. producer of skis.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

HON. PATSY T. MINK

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 4, 1997

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing legislation to provide Social

Security disability beneficiaries with severe spinal cord injuries the same protections as are afforded the blind.

Spinal cord injury can result in paralyzing injuries that severely affect their lives, and their ability to provide for themselves and to work.

My legislation seeks to help those who have somehow overcome their debilitating injury and are able to earn some money, but who still need to retain basic support as is provided under Social Security Law.

Under the current law governing the Social Security Disability Program, applicants are eligible for benefits if they are determined to have the ability to earn no more than the substantial gainful activity [SGA] amount, which is \$500 a month.

The SGA is used in determining whether beneficiaries can continue to receive assistance. If they earn income over \$500 a month, they will lose these benefits.

The Senior Citizens' Right to Work Act of 1995 increased the SGA amount for blind individuals to countable earnings of \$1,000 per month, which took effect on January 1, 1997. This provision allows disabled individuals who are blind to qualify for Social Security disability, even if they can earn up to \$1,000 per month. It would also allow blind individuals to continue receiving benefits if they return to work and earn a monthly amount not in excess of \$1,000.

My legislation seeks to allow persons with severe spinal cord injury to have the same SGA as beneficiaries who are blind. These severely disabled beneficiaries should not be discouraged from working to help offset their needs which are at least equivalent to the blind, or even greater.

Social Security disability benefits should not be withdrawn from severely disabled spinal cord injured persons because they have the initiative and courage to earn up to \$12,000 a year. If they can help themselves notwithstanding their disabilities, they should be encouraged to do so. I urge my colleagues' support for this legislation.

THE FOUR CHAPLAINS

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 4, 1997

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the legacy of the four chaplains who gave their lives for others in the icy waters of the North Atlantic over 50 years ago. On the night of February 2, 1943 aboard the U.S.A.T. *Dorchester*, four chaplains—George L. Fox and Clark V. Poling, Protestant ministers; Alexander D. Goode, a Jewish rabbi; and John P. Washington, a Catholic priest—gave their life vests to four other men after their ship was torpedoed off the coast of Greenland.

The *Dorchester*, carrying 902 servicemen, merchant seamen and civilian workers, was one of three ships in the SG-19 convoy moving across the icy waters from Newfoundland toward an Army base in Greenland. The ship's captain, Hans J. Danielsen, recognized the danger of the trip, as the stretch of water in the North Atlantic was constantly patrolled by German U-boats and one of the ships in the convoy, the Coast Guard Cutter *Tampa*, had detected a submarine with its sonar earlier in

the day. At 12:55 a.m. on the morning of February 3, a German U-boat spotted the *Dorchester* only 15 miles away from its final destination and fired a deadly barrage of torpedoes. The hit was decisive, striking the starboard side, far below the water line.

Aboard the *Dorchester*, chaos set in. The direct hit had killed several men instantly, while others were seriously wounded. Throughout all of the pandemonium, according to those present, the four Army chaplains brought hope in despair and light in darkness. When the chaplains opened a storage locker and began distributing life jackets, they realized that there would not be enough for all the men aboard the ship. When there were no more life jackets in the storage room, the chaplains removed theirs and gave them to four frightened young men.

As the ship went down, survivors in the nearby rafts could see the four chaplains—arms linked and braced against the slanting deck. According to eyewitnesses, the chaplains were heard offering prayers for the soldiers who had died in the wreckage. Of the 902 men aboard the ship, 672 died, leaving 230 survivors. When the news reached American shores, the nation was stunned by the magnitude of the tragedy and heroic conduct of the four chaplains. As Francis B. Thorton notes in his book, *Sea of Glory: The Magnificent Story of the Four Chaplains*, "Catholic, Jew and Protestant; each proved that night that courage knows no distinction of creed, bravery no division of caste."

The four Army chaplains were posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and Purple Heart at a ceremony at Fort Myer, VA in 1944. Since these events, a chapel in Philadelphia honoring their heroic act of selflessness was dedicated by President Truman in February of 1951 and the chaplains were posthumously awarded a Special Medal for Heroism in January of 1961 by President Kennedy. Additionally, a memorial fountain at the National Memorial Park outside of Washington, DC was constructed in 1955 to attest to their extraordinary act of courage.

On February 2nd, the members of the Rockland County American Legion and the Orange County American Legion held their annual service to honor these heroic four chaplains.

The services had been organized in Rockland County by Joseph Vitulli, commander of the Rockland County American Legion, and Peter Medina, who serves as the chaplain and chairman. These services were conducted at St. Joseph's Church in Spring Valley, NY.

In Orange County, they were organized by former American Legion County Commander Roy Cowen, who read the saga of the Four Chaplains at the services conducted at St. Patrick's Church in Highland Falls.

The chaplains remain an enduring example of extraordinary faith, courage and selflessness.

On the night of February 2, 1943, Rev. Fox, Rabbi Goode, Rev. Poling, and Father Washington passed life's ultimate test. Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join in the commemoration of their heroic act of courage which we remember this month.