the establishment of the Aichi Club in Sacramento. He suggested collecting $50 to $60 from about 50 members who would then pay 15 cents in monthly dues. These fees were to be used to maintain a mutual aid fund, but was not accepted at the time.

Two years later, this community of immigrants agreed to form the Aichi Club and opened a temporary office in Sakuraya Ryokan. The club's mission was to maintain a high reputation, respect morality and promote friendship. In the years following, the members used the club to share their joys, sorrows, and hopes for a prosperous future in their new country.

Dues then were 15 cents per month and these fees enabled the club to assist fellow members who incurred expenses with medical care or funerals. The member accepting the assistance then paid the funds back to the club when they were able.

For many years, the club operated this way and grew to hold great significance in the Japanese-American community. The Aichi Kenjin Kai today is somewhat different. Today, with greater mobility and affluence, the Japanese-Americans have moved to all parts of the State, blending culturally with California's population. Additionally, the singular interests the early immigrants shared have given way to more diverse business and civic interests.

Other changes have reshaped the organization as well. Health insurance and ''Americanized'' funerals have impacted the need for the clubs' assistance in these areas. While the club still offers invaluable assistance with funeral plans and arrangements, its shift is toward a younger generation and its needs.

To attract younger generations, the Aichi Kenjin Kai has begun to host an annual Aichi golf tournament. Structured as a team grouping event, the tournament successfully promotes camaraderie within the membership and is a draw to the younger Japanese-Americans who will be relied upon to take the organization into the next century.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to recognize the many years of invaluable assistance this organization has provided to its membership. I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing many years of continued success to the Aichi Kenjin Kai.

INTRODUCTION OF THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT CONSERVATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 1997: JANUARY 7, 1997

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce legislation today to extend the African Elephant Conservation Act of 1988, an historic conservation measure that continues to be successful in its ongoing efforts to save the flagship species of the African Continent.

By way of background, my colleagues may recall that by the late 1980's, the population of African elephants had declined by almost half. In 1979, the total elephant population in Africa was approximately 1.3 million animals. In 1987, fewer than 700,000 African elephants were alive.

While drought, disease, and human population growth contributed to this dramatic decline, the illegal killing or poaching of elephants for their ivory tusks was the single most important reason why thousands of these magnificent animals were slaughtered. During its peak, as much as 800 tons of ivory were exported from Africa each year, equivalent to the deaths of up to 80,000 elephants annually.

In response to this serious problem, Congress enacted the African Elephant Conservation Act—Public Law 100–478. A primary objective of this law was to assist impoverished African nations in their efforts to stop poaching and to develop more effective elephant conservation programs. To accomplish that goal, the legislation created the African Elephant Conservation Fund.

Since its creation, Congress has appropriated over $6 million to fund some 48 conservation projects in 17 range States throughout Africa. In addition, over $7 million has been generated through private matching money to augment the Federal support made available through the grant program.

With these funds, resources have been allocated for conservation projects to purchase antipoaching equipment for wildlife rangers, create a comprehensive reference library on the African elephant, undertake elephant population census, develop and implement elephant conservation plans, and move elephants from drought regions in Zimbabwe. In fact, the Zimbabwe project was the first time in history that such a large number of elephants were successfully translocated to new habitats.

Without these conservation projects, I am convinced that the African elephant would have continued to decline and would have disappeared from much of its historic range. Instead, what has happened is that the population has stabilized and, in fact, is increasing in southern Africa, the international price of ivory remains depressed, and wildlife rangers are now much better equipped to stop unscrupulous individuals who are intent on illegally killing elephants.

The African Elephant Conservation Fund has provided desperately needed capital for projects in various African countries and a diverse group of internationally recognized conservation groups, including the African Safari Club of Washington, DC, the African Wildlife Foundation, Safari Club International, and the World Wildlife Fund, has participated in these efforts. In fact, the African Elephant Conservation Fund has been the only continuous source of new money for African elephant conservation efforts for the past 8 years.

In June of last year, the House Resources Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans conducted an oversight hearing on the effectiveness of the African Elephant Conservation Fund. At that time, a representative of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service testified that the Fund ''provided a critical incentive for governments of the world, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to work together for a common conservation goal. This is not a hand out, but a helping hand.''

While the African Elephant Conservation Fund has facilitated the development of a number of successful conservation projects, the battle to ensure the long-term survival of the African elephant has not yet been won. In fact, it is essential that this critical investment be continued in the future. Therefore, the fundamental purpose of my legislation is to extend the authority of the Secretary of the Interior to expend money from the African Elephant Conservation Fund beyond its statutory expiration date of September 30, 1998. I am proposing that the authorization of appropriations for the fund be extended until September 30, 2002.

With this extension, I am confident that additional worthwhile conservation projects will be funded and that the African elephant will survive in its natural habitat for many future generations.

I urge my colleagues to join with me in this effort by supporting the African Elephant Conservation Reauthorization Act of 1997.

SINGLE ASSET BANKRUPTCY REFORM ACT OF 1997

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill that addresses an injustice that exists within title 11 of the United States Code regarding single asset bankruptcies. This is the same language I introduced during the 104th Congress as H.R. 2815. My understanding is that the Judiciary Committee will include this measure in their technical corrections bill; however, I am introducing this bill as stand alone legislation to highlight the importance of this specific provision. I also understand that the Bankruptcy Commission has placed a particular focus on single asset bankruptcy and they recently held hearings in Washington, DC, to discuss this important issue.

The injustice within title 11 stems from an 11th hour decision made during the 103d Congress, which placed an arbitrary $4 million ceiling on the single asset provisions of the bankruptcy reform bill. The effect has been to render investors helpless in foreclosures on single assets valued over $4 million.

My bill will rectify this problem, by eliminating the $4 million ceiling, thereby allowing creditors to recover their losses. Under the current law, chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code becomes a legal shield for the debtor. Upon the investor's filing to foreclose, the debtor preemptively files for chapter 11 protection which postpones foreclosure indefinitely.

While in chapter 11, the debtor continues to collect the rents on the commercial asset. However, the commercial property typically is left to deteriorate and the property taxes go unpaid. When the investor finally recovers the property through the delayed foreclosure, they owe an enormous amount in back taxes, they receive a commercial property left in deterioration which has a lower rent value and resale value, and meanwhile, the rent for all the months or years they were trying to retain the property went to an uncollectible debtor.

My bill does not leave the debtor without protection. First, the investor brings a foreclosure against a debtor only as a last resort. This usually comes after all other efforts to reconcile delinquent mortgage payments have failed. Second, the debtor has up to 90 days to reorganize under chapter 11. It should be noted, however, that single asset reorganizations are typically a false hope since the

owner of a single asset does not have other properties from which he can recapitalize his business.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, my bill helps all American families by making their investments more secure and more valuable. The hard-working American families who depend on their life insurance policies and who have paid for years into their pensions will save millions in reduced costs. My bill protects the little guy from being plagued with years of litigation while a few unscrupulous commercial property owners continue to collect the rent to line their own pockets.

MINING LAW OF 1872 REFORM

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1996

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, today, I am reintroducing legislation to reform the mining law of 1872. I am pleased to note that the distinguished gentleman from California, GEORGE MILLER, is joining me in introducing this measure.

Mr. Speaker, we are sponsoring this legislation with the full knowledge that it will probably not see the light of day in the Resources Committee as long as that committee is chaired by our dear friend and colleague, the honorable DON YOUNG of Alaska. Indeed, this bill is the very same which passed the House of Representatives by a three-to-one margin during the 103d Congress. Reintroduced into the 104th Congress, our colleague DON YOUNG put it under lock and key.

This begs the question: Why reintroduce the bill?

The answer lies in the fact that there remains within the broad membership of the House of Representatives enough votes to pass meaningful reform of the Mining Law of 1872. Last Congress, for example, we reimposed the moratorium on the issuance of mining claim patents by a vote of 271 to 153 during House consideration of the fiscal year 1996 Interior appropriation bill. In addition, the bill we are reintroducing today, which was designated H.R. 357 in the 104th Congress, attracted 92 bipartisan cosponsors during that period.

The issue of insuring a fair return to the public in exchange for the disposition of public resources, and the issue of properly managing our public domain lands, is neither Republican or Democrat. It is simply one that makes sense if we are to be good stewards of the public domain and meet our responsibilities to the American people. This means that the mining law of 1872 must be reformed.

I and other Members will continue to work toward that goal during the 105th Congress. If reform can be accomplished within the context of the bill I am introducing today, so much the better. If this bill's fate is to serve as a rally cry for reform, with substantive reform efforts moving forward independently, than that is satisfactory as well. In any event, the eyes of the Nation will continue to focus, to an even greater extent than ever before, on how this Congress addresses natural resource issues such as this one. Congress ignores these matters at its own peril.

Following is a brief explanation of the Mining Law of 1872 and how the legislation I am introducing proposes to reform it:

MINING LAW OF 1872 REFORM

The year was 1872. U.S. Grant resided in the White House. Union troops still occupied the South. The invention of the telephone and Custer's stand at the Little Bighorn were still four years away. And in 1872 Congress passed a law that allowed people to go onto public lands in the West, stake mining claims, and if any gold or silver were found, mine it for free.

In an effort to promote the settlement of the West, Congress said that these folks could also buy the land from the Federal government for $2.50 an acre.

That was 1872. This is 1977. Yet, today, the Mining Law of 1872 is still in force.

And, for the most part, it is not the lone prospector of old, pick in hand, accompanied by his trusty pack mule, who is staking those mining claims. It is large corporations, many of the foreign controlled, who are mining gold owned by the people of the United States for free, and snapping up valuable Federal land at fast food hamburger prices.

Remaining as the last vestige of frontier-era legislation, the Mining Law of 1872 played a role in the development of the West. But is also left a staggering legacy of poisoned streams, abandoned waste dumps and maimed landscapes.

Obviously, at the public's expense, the western mining interests have had a good thing going all of these years. But the question has to be asked: Is it right to continue to allow this speculation with Federal lands, not to require that the lands be reclaimed, and to permit the public's mineral wealth to be mined for free?

Today, anybody can still go onto Federal lands in States like Nevada and Montana and stake any number of mining claims, each averaging about 20 acres. In order to maintain the mining claim, until recently all that was required was that the claim holder spend $100 dollars per year to the benefit of the claim.

In the event hardrock minerals such as gold or silver are found on the claim, they are mined for free. There are no requirements that a production royalty be paid to the Federal government, or for that matter, a rental be paid for the use of the land.

It is estimated that $1.8 billion worth of hardrock minerals are annually mined from Federal lands in the western States. Yet, the Federal government does not collect one penny in royalty from any of this mineral production that is conducted on public lands owned by all Americans.

Under the Mining Law of 1872, claim holders can also choose to purchase the Federal land being claimed. They can do this by first showing that the lands have valuable minerals, and then by paying the Federal government a mere $2.50 or $5.00 an acre depending on the type of claim. This is called obtaining a mining claim patent. Perhaps a good feature in 1872, when the Nation was trying to settle the West. But today there is hardly a need to promote the additional settlement of LA, San Francisco or Denver. Note: The Interior Department is currently subject to a Congressionally imposed moratorium on the issuance of mining claim patents which must be renewed on an annual basis.

Moreover, once the mining claim is patented, nothing in this so-called mining law says that it has to be actually mined. The land is now in private ownership. People are free to build condos or ski-slopes on the land.

For example, not too long ago the Arizona Republic carried a story about a gentleman who paid the Federal government $155 for 61 acres worth of mining claims. Today, these mining claims are the site of a Hilton Hotel. This gentleman now estimates that his share of the resort is worth about $6 million.

Claim holders can also mine these Federal lands with minimal reclamation requirements. The only Federal requirement is that when operating on these lands they do not cause 'unnecessary or undue degradation.' What does this term mean? It means that they can do whatever they want as long as it's pretty much what all of the other miners are doing.

The issue of Mining Law reform does not deal with coal, or that matter, oil and gas. These energy minerals, if located on Federal lands, are leased by the government, and a royalty is charged. Further, Mining Law reform does not deal with private lands. The scope of the Mining Law of 1872 and legislation to reform it is limited to hardrock minerals such as gold, silver, lead and zinc on Federal lands in the Western States.

The Rahall bill to reform the Mining Law of 1872 would prohibit the continued giveaway of public lands. It would require that mining claims are diligently developed. It would require that a holding fee be paid for the use of the land, and that a royalty be paid on the production of valuable minerals extracted from these Federal lands. And, it would require industry to comply with some basic reclamation standards .

INTRODUCTION OF PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL PREDATORS ACT

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 1997

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, today I reintroduce the Protection from Sexual Predators Act. Like many of you, I am tired of picking up the morning paper and reading about the latest serial rapist to be caught, only to see printed a laundry list of his previous convictions for sexual assault. Our constituents deserve to be protected from the country's worst repeat sexual predators.

The Protection from Sexual Predators Act passed the House last year by a vote of 411 to 4, and allows Federal prosecution of rapes and serious sexual assaults committed by repeat offenders. The measure requires that repeat offenders convicted under this section be automatically sentenced to life in prison without parole. In other words, two strikes, and you're in—for life.

It's time we got tougher on the most violent, repeat sexual offenders. These habitual sex offenders are a different kind of criminal—their recidivism rates are incredibly high, and they are known to strike again and again. Often these serial criminals will venture from one State to another, and if they are caught, they seldom receive the harshest penalties under the current law.

When my bill is passed into law, violent sexual predators such as John Suggs of New York City will not be free to rape again, and the Supreme Court will not need to deliberate whether to release lifelong child molesters back into society as in the case *Kansas* v. *Kendricks,* currently pending before the Supreme Court. This measure will make our streets and neighborhoods safer, for children, the elderly, and the women of this country.

My bill will require courts to hand down tougher sentences, ridding our communities and neighborhoods of the most brutal offenders who prey upon the most vulnerable in our society.