

First, my bill will allow employees who are offered severance pay packages by their employers to exclude the first \$15,000 from their taxable income. No longer will the Tax Code punish displaced workers by taxing their misfortune. This income exclusion could be taken by the employee regardless of whether the reduction in force was voluntary or involuntary.

In addition, if an employer's severance benefit provides for payments for up to 3 years from the date of separation, my legislation would allow the employee the flexibility to elect to exclude all or some of the severance payment from their income for the 3 year period, up to the \$15,000 limit.

Second, the legislation will provide a \$2,000 refundable tax credit for retraining expenses incurred after a lay-off. This tax credit is in keeping with the common-sense principle that families and individuals know their retraining needs better than government-run retraining programs.

To ensure that this tax relief is available to middle class families, jointly filing couples with incomes of up to \$100,000, and single persons with incomes up to \$75,000, would qualify under my legislation for the full \$2,000 tax credit. The value of the credit is gradually phased out for persons earning higher amounts.

While I believe Congress should continue to reform and reduce red-tape in our Nation's patch-work of retraining programs, it is important to protect workers from slipping through the cracks of these programs' widely varying eligibility criteria.

This legislation will go a long way toward improving the efficiency of our Nation's labor markets, and I call on Members on both sides of the aisle to lend their support for this effort. Severance payments are designed to provide a financial cushion to help pad the blow of a work force reduction. When the Tax Code adds insult to injury by subjecting these families to a higher tax liability, it is clearly time to correct this insidious consequence.

TRIBUTE TO DELORES BACON-FINCH

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 1997

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Delores Bacon-Finch. Delores has been a dutiful employee for the New York Police Department as a police administrative aide.

During her professional career Delores has performed a number of duties. In 1985 she was assigned to the community affairs community meetings with the community council, the youth council, block associations, churches, and local development corporations.

A dedicated community activists, Ms. Bacon-Finch feeds the homeless, assists senior citizens, works with the Kiwanis Club, struggles to curb gun violence and drug trafficking. Delores even finds the time to visit hospital patients. The efforts of Delores Bacon-Finch are noteworthy and deserving of recognition. I am pleased to introduce her to my House colleagues.

REAUTHORIZATION OF EX-IM BANK

HON. J. DENNIS HASTERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 1997

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my support for reauthorizing the U.S. Export-Import Bank. By providing loans and guarantees that may otherwise be unavailable, the Ex-Im Bank is an invaluable tool to American workers and businesses, 80 percent of which are small companies.

In my home State of Illinois, 288 companies and 125 communities have benefited from the Ex-Im Bank in the last 5 years. During this time, Ex-Im financing helped to support the \$2.2 billion in exports my State produces, and the estimated 30,000 jobs that manufacture those exports.

The Bank is essential to the communities, constituents, and businesses in my district. Whether it's in Elgin or Aurora, Batavia, or West Chicago, companies and their employees are benefiting.

I wish to thank my friend from New Jersey, Representative ROBERT MENENDEZ, for joining me in making this a priority. I'm delighted that the chief deputy whips from each side of the aisle can come together in making this a bipartisan effort.

TRIBUTE TO NICOLE S. SUARD

HON. FRANK RIGGS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 1997

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the activities of Nicole S. Suard, who has made a tremendous contribution to Napa County, CA, which I represent. Today, "Nicky" is being presented with 1 of 20 Regional Role Model Awards in the 1997 Life Saves "Take a Bigger Role" awards program.

Nicky Suard sees a need and comes up with a solution. Seeing a need for a home for unwed teenage mothers, she recruited a group of people and established Choix de Vie—Choice for Life—which recently celebrated the birth of its 100th baby.

For years, there has been a shortage of activities for teenagers in Napa. In 1996, Nicky arranged for a building to be donated, recruited volunteers, and founded the Lytehouse, Napa Valley's teen center.

Knowing that many nonprofits in Napa County did not have the expertise or ability to prepare grant requests, Nicky Suard brought together a group of leaders from the community to establish the Community Foundation of Napa Valley. The Community Foundation's goal is to be an aggregate of permanent fund raising for the benefit of the Napa Valley through wills, trusts, and estate planning. All moneys distributed to go local nonprofit organizations. Ms. Suard also donates her legal services as the incorporating attorney for many local nonprofits.

As if all of this is not enough, Nicky Suard is as dedicated mother of two children, Tyler and Corey. She also volunteers as a parent-teacher at their schools, teaching crafts. In all of this whirlwind of activity, she is supported

and helped by her husband, Dr. Thomas Suard.

I have personally seen the results of Nicky Suard's efforts and have been impressed time and again with her hard work and commitment to the well-being of all people in the Napa community. Her vision, innovation, and accomplishments should be held up as a model for others.

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1996

SPEECH OF

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 16, 1997

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2264) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes:

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the Goodling amendment. While I believe that we should have national standards and expectations for all of our students, I do not believe these national tests will help us achieve that goal.

We cannot establish nationwide standards for our students if we fail to include all students in these national tests.

The fact is that too many students will be unable to participate in the President's proposed reading and math tests.

While I commend the administration's efforts to improve public education, I remained concerned that the proposed reading test will exclude too many children from the educational opportunity they deserve.

Limited English proficient students make up a significant percentage of kids in our Nation's classrooms. Unfortunately, the administration will not adequately accommodate the participation of these students.

We have tried to attain a compromise for LEP students, but the administration has failed to offer a comparable solution.

The administration says that it wants accountability from our schools. But who will account for the progress of children who cannot take these tests?

I believe that many more school districts will be affected than people realize.

Orange County, CA, for example, has long been considered an affluent, homogeneous area. My hometown, however, has rapidly changed over the years. The truth is, Orange County is now more diverse than ever, with many new Americans calling it home.

And Orange County schools have changed along with our demographics.

Currently, 30 percent of all Orange County students are limited English proficient. My congressional district is one of the better examples of how these tests cannot adequately assess all public schools and their kids.

Two out of four school districts in my congressional district will have over half of their students excluded from the reading test because of their large number of limited English proficient students.

Santa Ana Unified School District has 70 percent of its students classified as LEP, the sixth highest in the Nation. Garden Grove Unified School District has 43 percent of its students qualifying as limited English proficient, 11th highest in the Nation.

These are children from all over the world, Vietnamese children, Korean children, Hispanic children, and Romanian children who all want to learn and who all want high standards.

But we have no plan for what we will do with these children or how we will utilize the test results.

Of course, we need to have our students on track. But until we have a better idea of how these test results will be used, and how we can include the great many children who are still learning English, then I cannot be supportive of these national tests.

Please vote for the Goodling amendment.

IN HONOR OF ANN TRAPP

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 1997

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of Mrs. Ann Trapp, for her many years of service and countless contributions to her community.

Ann Trapp was born in Cleveland. In 1949, she graduated from the St. Vincent Charity School of Nursing. She went on to work as a registered nurse for the St. Vincent Charity Hospital for 34 years. During this time she was also a member of the American Lung Association for Practitioners of Infection Control, and a member of the Lung Association.

Mrs. Trapp was devoted to many political organizations. She was a Democratic precinct committee leader and a member and ward leader of the Democratic Executive Committee. She was the recording secretary of the Parma Democratic Club. She played a role in several political campaigns in Parma and Cleveland and was named Parma Woman Democrat of the Year in 1990.

Not only was Mrs. Trapp active in politics, she was dedicated to her church as well. She was a member of St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church for more than 40 years and served as a Eucharistic minister there. She belonged to Legion of Mary, Catholic Daughters, and Just Friends. She was also involved with the West Side Irish American Club and the Women's Guild of St. Vincent Charity Hospital and was a member of their alumni association.

Mrs. Trapp leaves behind 1 sister, 2 brothers, 4 daughters, 3 sons, and 15 grandchildren. She will be greatly missed.

UKRAINIAN INDEPENDENCE

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 1997

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to give tribute to a nation that has succeeded in its struggle to be a free, democratic nation. On August 24th, Ukraine celebrated its 6th year of independence.

Since August 24, 1991, When Ukraine declared independence from the former Soviet Union resuming its journey down the path to freedom and democracy, she has achieved success in many domestic and international arenas. Ukraine has worked hard to develop a target-oriented and balanced policy to achieve economic stability and build a truly democratic, economically developed state. The nation has worked to establish a solid foundation on which to build a true democracy. The foundation of a free market system has been established. The liberalization of prices, the currency rate, a mechanism of foreign trade, and privatization have all contributed to a developing market economy. The policy has resulted in a reduction in the annual inflation from 10,000 percent in 1993 to a projected 25 percent in 1997; the privatization of nearly 50,000 enterprises; and the adoption of a democratic constitution.

On the international front, Ukraine has worked hard to improve foreign policy by signing many important agreements with the international community: A joint Statement of the President of Ukraine and Poland on Accord and Unity; the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between Ukraine and the Russian Federation; the Agreement on the State-Border lines between Ukraine and Belarus; the Treaty on Good Neighborly Relations and Cooperation between Ukraine and Romania; and lastly, the Charter on a Distinct Partnership between Ukraine and NATO. They have participated in the first session of the Ukraine-United States Binational Commission Kuchma-Gore, which is a visible embodiment of a Ukrainian-American strategic partnership. Ukraine has also unilaterally and voluntarily disarmed all tactical nuclear weapons to continue the dream of a stable democracy.

To help foster freedom and democracy in Ukraine, the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus has been established. Representative JOHN FOX, Representative LOUISE SLAUGHTER, and Representative SANDER LEVIN, and I serve as co-chairs. The primary purpose of the caucus is to organize an association of Members of Congress who share a common concern for building stronger bilateral relations between Ukraine and the United States. The caucus wants to support Ukraine in its process of democratization and market-oriented reforms.

I stand here today to congratulate Ukraine on another year of freedom and progress in the quest for democracy.

IN RECOGNITION OF OPPORTUNITY, INC.: AN ORGANIZATION THAT LIVES UP TO ITS NAME

HON. JOHN EDWARD PORTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 1997

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to recognize Opportunity, Inc., an outstanding organization located in Highland Park, IL. This is truly a remarkable enterprise and a magnificent example of the initiative needed to help people move from welfare to work and a better life.

Opportunity, Inc. is a unique, not-for-profit contract manufacturer that employs 120 persons, most of whom have developmental, physical and/or emotional disabilities. Founded

in 1976 by local construction executive John Cornell, who still serves on the Board of Directors, the company will hold its annual Handicapable™ Leadership Award Dinner in Chicago on September 30. Noted conservative author and commentator, George F. Will, will be the keynote speaker.

The company's mission is twofold: First, to provide a mainstream plant environment in which handicapable people can work and earn a paycheck as well as the dignity that comes from being employed productively on a full-time basis; and, second, to provide its private sector customers with the best possible quality, price, and service.

As everyone understands, budget constraints compel us to look for ways to effectively address important needs without government subsidies, and Opportunity, Inc. is leading the way in this regard. A model of community response and innovation, the company has demonstrated how competitive and productive Handicapable™ employees can be. Opportunity, Inc. built and continues to operate the Nation's only not-for-profit, certified class 100,000 clean rooms for medical and surgical packaging. The firm's commitment to quality is so stringent that its principal medical/surgical customer—Baxter, International—has not rejected a single lot of product in over 7 years.

When I visited Opportunity, Inc. last year, however, I learned that its business success, while impressive, pales in significance to the positive contributions it has made to its employees' lives. I experienced firsthand how proud, dedicated, and competitive they are. As one man said to me, "Congressman, all we need is a fair chance to compete. That's what we get here at Opportunity and just look at the results!" Clearly, Opportunity, Inc. is an organization that lives up to its name.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent a congressional district that includes enterprises of this caliber. It is my pleasure to salute the employees, management, and directors of Opportunity, Inc. on the occasion of their annual dinner, and to extend my personal congratulations to Harold, Peter, and Ron Foreman, who are the recipients of this year's Handicapable Leadership Award for 20 years of service.

I also commend Opportunity, Inc. as an example to my colleagues, who believe, as I do, that we must look to the private sector and to the local level for alternative solutions to difficult social problems.

REAUTHORIZATION OF EX-IM BANK

HON. J. DENNIS HASTERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 1997

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