

THE 85TH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER CROATIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 1997

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to congratulate St. Joseph the Worker Croatian Catholic Church in Gary, IN, as it celebrates its 85th anniversary as a parish this Sunday, September 28, 1997. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Father Benedict J. Benakovic, parish pastor, on this special occasion. The 85th anniversary festivities will begin with a Mass of Thanksgiving at 11 a.m. at the church, celebrated by the Most Reverend Dale J. Melczek, Bishop of Gary. After the service, a banquet will be held at the Croatian Center in Merrillville, IN.

I would also like to commend the members of the St. Joseph the Worker Parish Council for the work they have put forth in the planning of this momentous event. Members of the 1997 parish council include: Fred Benich, John Benich, Frank Bestich, Peter Bianco, Francis X. Coman, Mary Coman, Charles Doherty, Antoinette Dorochoff, George Flores, Irene Flores, Charlene Gyurko, Mary Horan, Patricia Howorth, Sophia Kruzic, Jasmine Kuyachich, Mary Mandly, Richard Mandly, Ann C. Marlow, Marta McCobb, Karl Metz, Marie Michalak, Marian Nicksich, Peter Podnar, Ann Wozniak, Charles Yelusich, and Paul Yurkas.

The founding of St. Joseph the Worker Croatian Catholic Church began in 1906 with the arrival of Croatian immigrants to the growing city of Gary, IN. A mixture of small business owners and steel workers, the immigrants immediately experienced prejudices and a language barrier. To foster a sense of belonging and community, they colonized and sought a parish of their own, where the church services would be spoken in their native language. With a large donation from the Gary Land Co., a Croatian Catholic church, called Holy Trinity, was built in 1913.

Holy Trinity Church, which would later be named St. Joseph the Worker, prospered over the years with the hard work of its clergy and parishioners. Shortly after the church's founding, Rev. Charles Jesih of Croatia began St. Joseph's expansion when he founded a parochial school for the education of the parish's youth. In 1919, a three-room school opened in the church hall, and, in 1921, a convent was completed to accommodate the nuns who taught at the school. With the onset of the Depression, the parish encountered problems of debt and the relocation of parishioners to the Glen Park area of Gary. By the 1940's, it had become apparent that the church would need to relocate, and in spite of the debt incurred during the Depression, construction of a new church, school, and convent was completed in 1945. As the parish continued to grow, it was determined in 1950 that an even larger church would be needed to accommodate new parishioners of different nationalities. Under the leadership of Father Venceslav Ardas, funds were secured from individual parishioners and church organizations for the construction of what would become a beautiful Romanesque style church. The church was completed in 1956, and consecrated St. Joseph the Worker in May of that year.

Since its founding, St. Joseph the Worker has continued to celebrate its Croatian heritage as an integral part of parish religious and social life. Over the years, ties to Croatia were maintained with the dedicated service of Croatian-born pastors, the preservation of masses in the Croatian language, and a concern for events transpiring in the homeland. With the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, St. Joseph the Worker parishioners eagerly joined Croatians throughout the world in providing humanitarian aid to victims of the war-torn region. In the early 1990's, the parish celebrated both the recognition of Croatia as an independent nation and the visit of Cardinal Franjo Kuharic, Archbishop of Zagreb. The founding of such social organizations as the Croatian Catholic Union and the American Croatians United also contributed to the preservation of the Croatian heritage in the Gary community. Through the dedication of St. Joseph parishioners, these organizations sponsored numerous festivals and projects, which have served to introduce traditional Croatian food, music, and customs to future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in congratulating the St. Joseph the Worker parish on the 85th anniversary of its founding. As someone of Croatian descent, I commend the leadership that past and present parishioners and clergy have displayed in preserving their ethnicity while faithfully fulfilling the ideals of their Catholic religion. I wish St. Joseph the Worker parish continued prosperity and many blessings for a bright future.

ON INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO MAKE NONREFUNDABLE PERSONAL CREDITS CREDITABLE AND THE STANDARD DEDUCTION AND THE DEDUCTION FOR PERSONAL EXEMPTIONS DEDUCTIBLE FOR AMT PURPOSES

HON. BARBARA B. KENNELLY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 1997

Mrs. KENNELLY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to make good on a promise we made the American people. The recently enacted Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 promised American families both an education and a family credit. Unfortunately for many American families these credits will turn out to be phantom credits.

Many average families will be thrown into the alternative minimum tax [AMT] simply because they take advantage of the new child and education credits. This happens because individuals pay the greater of regular tax reduced by nonrefundable credits or the AMT not reduced by refundable credits. And because both the family and the education credit are added back for purposes of the AMT, families with children are more likely to be thrown into the AMT simply by using these credits. In the case of families with three or more children young enough to be eligible for the family credit, the bill permits the family credit against the employee share of FICA so that the minimum tax is no longer a problem for those families. However, it will be an unpleasant surprise for many others.

In 2002, 2 million families will be thrown into the AMT because of the family credit alone. For example:

A single mother with two children in daycare with \$51,400 in gross income would lose all of her child credit plus \$141 of her dependent care credit in the year 2000 because she gets thrown into the AMT.

A two-parent family with three children, including one college freshman and \$67,000 in gross income would lose \$1,477 of their \$2,500 combined family and HOPE scholarship credit because they get thrown into the AMT.

A two-parent family with two children in college and \$64,100 in income would lose \$723 of their Hope scholarship credit because they get thrown into the AMT.

This simply makes no sense. Therefore, today I am introducing legislation which would make nonrefundable personal credits, including the dependent care, child and education credits, creditable and the standard deduction and personal exemptions deductible for AMT purposes.

The AMT was meant to assure that sophisticated taxpayers couldn't zero out their taxes. It was never intended that your children would throw you into the AMT. I would urge my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation and keep our promises to the American people.

AMERICA RECYCLES DAY

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 1997

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation that would express the sense of the House that the country ought to give itself a pat on the back for its progress in recycling. I am joined in this effort by Mr. PORTER, Mr. GEJDENSON, and Mr. GILCREST and I am proud to have them as partners in this worthy effort.

This resolution would suggest that the House believes it appropriate that a national celebration of America Recycles Day be designated. This would be a day to celebrate the progress the country has made in establishing and integrating recycling programs in each state, in hundreds of cities, in thousands of communities.

Whether it be the simple act of depositing an old Coke can in an aluminum recycling bin, or meticulously separating brown glass from green glass from clear glass and hauling them all down to the city recycling center, it is clear that Americans have learned that recycling is a valuable means of conserving resources, saving money, and keeping our environment clean.

When you look at the trash that we generate in a year's time—208 million tons worth—it is clear that it is incumbent on us to use less, recycle more and find new ways of managing our finite resources. The numerous recycling programs throughout the country are dedicated to this cause and each person who recycles ought to be commended for their dedication to a cleaner, safer environment.

The resolution I introduce today with my colleagues will hopefully be a catalyst for more Americans to recycle and continue this positive and simple means to a better future.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the resolution be printed following my remarks.

H. RES. —

Whereas the people of the United States generate approximately 208,000,000 tons of municipal solid waste each year, or 4.3 pounds per person per day;

Whereas the average office worker in the United States generates between 120 and 150 pounds of recoverable white office paper a year;

Whereas the Environmental Protection Agency recently estimated that the recycling rate in the United States has reached 27 percent of the solid waste stream;

Whereas making products from recycled materials allows the people of the United States to get the most use of every tree, every gallon of oil, every pound of mineral, every drop of water, and every kilowatt of energy that goes into the products they buy;

Whereas manufacturing from recycled materials creates less waste and fewer emissions;

Whereas recycling saves energy, reducing the need to deplete nonrenewable energy resources;

Whereas it is estimated that 9 jobs are created for every 15,000 tons of solid waste recycled into new products;

Whereas recycling is completed only when recovered materials are returned to retailers as new products and are purchased by consumers;

Whereas buying recycled products conserves resources and energy, reduces waste and pollution, and creates jobs;

Whereas more than 4,500 recycled products are now available to consumers;

Whereas the United States has a two-way, use and reuse system of recycling and buying recyclables; and

Whereas Americans support recycling, but need a regular reminder of the importance of buying recycled content products, the availability of recycled content products, and how to recycle: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) it is the sense of the House of Representatives that November 15, 1997, and November 15, 1998, should each be designated as "America Recycles Day"; and

(2) the House of Representatives requests that the President issue a proclamation calling to the people of the United States to observe each America Recycles Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

OHIO LAWSUIT ABUSE AWARENESS WEEK

HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 1997

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, the week of September 22–27, 1997, has been recognized in my home State as Ohio Lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week. Ohio Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse [OCALA] has worked tirelessly over the last few years to help reform our legal system. Citizens across the State of Ohio have organized behind OCALA to fight the problems of lawsuit abuse. Almost everyone agrees that America has become an overly litigious society. In the Federal courts alone, the number of lawsuits filed each year has tripled in the last 30 years to more than 260,000 cases per year. This dramatic growth in litigation carries high costs for the U.S. economy: manufactur-

ers raise their prices, withdraw products from the market, discontinue product research, and reduce their work force. The total cost of litigation in the United States is estimated to be approximately \$150 billion per year, substantially higher than any other country and 2½ times the international average. While it is important to protect those who are truly victims, we must reform our system to prevent frivolous lawsuits.

Republicans in the 104th Congress worked hard for meaningful reform of our Nation's legal system, and over the President's veto we enacted legislation protecting employers from abusive strike suits brought by the securities bar. Unfortunately, our efforts with broader-based legislation intended to end lawsuit abuse, restore fairness to the legal system, and ensure that real victims—not greedy lawyers—are fairly compensated was vetoed by President Clinton at the urging of trial lawyers.

Despite this setback, I will continue to work hard with my colleagues in Congress and with organizations like OCALA to pass bipartisan, commonsense legislation that will end lawsuit abuse and protect American consumers and workers.

While OCALA has thousands of supporters in the State of Ohio, I would like to take the opportunity to recognize some individuals who have given countless hours to advance the need for ending lawsuit abuse. They are Dana Smith, executive director of OCALA, Jackie Fox, chairwomen, Dr. Claire Wolfe, Dr. David Rummel, Gerald Miller, Ken Blair, Jr., James Martin, Oran Elliott, Jack Koester, and Peter Beck, each directors and supporters of the continual efforts of OCALA.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend all of the individuals who are involved in Ohio Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse for their dedication to this important endeavor. Ohio and the country as a whole need organizations like OCALA which will continue to fight against lawsuit abuse and for legal reform that is fair to all American citizens.

INTRODUCING THE 21ST CENTURY STUDENT FINANCIAL AID SYS- TEM IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1997

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 24, 1997

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the 21st Century Student Financial Aid System Improvement Act.

This month the class of 2001, the first class of students to graduate in the new millennium, entered college. These students are preparing for the challenges of the information age. Unfortunately the system to help them finance their education is not measuring up to the same challenges.

As chairman of the subcommittee with jurisdiction over Federal higher education policy, I am responsible for the programs which provide Federal assistance in obtaining a higher education. I am pleased that the ranking minority member of that subcommittee, Mr. KILDEE has joined me as an original cosponsor of this legislation. We have listened to students, parents, and college officials, with whom we share the goals of—a simple and less bureaucratic system of student aid; a

modern student aid system which is easy for students and parents to use; and an efficient and less expensive system that ensures that taxpayer funds are being well spent.

Unfortunately, today, under the current system, taxpayers are paying more and students are getting less. The Department of Education's budget for information systems has tripled over the last 5 years. Next year alone it will spend over \$300 million on systems contracts to deliver student aid. Yet despite these significant expenditures, the current system is still wrapped in miles of redtape, requires dozens of paper forms, and suffers from needless processing delays and breakdowns.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that there is a better way for the Department of Education to do business. In fact, under the legislation that I am proposing today, the Department's student financial aid systems would be run more like a business—adopting the best practices from the private sector and focusing on bottom line results.

This legislation would establish a business-like performance based organization to manage the computer systems thereby ensuring that the Department of Education is not wasting money due to poor contract management. The Chief Operating Officer hired to manage this organization will be charged with: Simplifying the process of applying for financial aid for students and their families; and integrating student financial aid systems to improve efficiency, save money, and prevent fraud and abuse in the programs.

According to the GAO, the Department of Education has failed to resolve its longstanding management problems in the Office of Postsecondary Education, its data quality and management controls are inadequate, and its financial statements for the student loan programs cannot be audited. A customer-focused, performance-based organization within the Department, run by an experienced Chief Operating Officer, can take the steps necessary to properly reengineer the current systems and contracts. In fact, the Department's own inspector general and the Independent Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance have both advocated this approach. It is also consistent with the recommendation to fundamentally restructure the routine processing of Federal student aid to take advantage of the best private sector practices, which was put forth to the subcommittee by the American Council on Education and 22 higher education associations in their recommendations for their reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

This legislation would also require the Secretary to work cooperatively with the higher education community to adopt common and open electronic data standards for key elements in the delivery system such as digital signatures, personal identification numbers, and single institutional identifiers. By adopting these common standards, we can make great strides in simplification by eliminating paper forms, and unnecessary steps in the current process.

Students and their families deserve a modern student aid system that meets their needs. I urge my colleagues to join Mr. KILDEE and me in this effort, and to cosponsor this important legislation.