

anticompetitive conditions which would complicate an Open Skies agreement with the United Kingdom. He never talked with anyone from the Department of Transportation.

Fourth, more than 4 years after having any representation of British Airways, having had no financial interest in his former law firm's representation of British Airways, having had no contact with British Airways in any official capacity even to this day, and conforming to the letter and spirit of the ethics requirements, he has continued to act, as he has throughout his public career, with the highest ethical standards. Indeed, he continues meeting the highest standards and has now decided to go beyond anything required and recuse himself from further involvement on this issue until DOT makes its administrative finding.

Fifth, this is confirmed by the following statement which was approved by the highest ethics official in the State Department:

Under Secretary Eizenstat's recent discussions with EU officials regarding the British Airways-American Airlines alliance were fully consistent with Government ethical guidelines and regulations.

No law or regulation requires recusal in this case. Government ethics rules require that an official not participate in a matter only in two instances: when the official has a financial interest in the matter or when the matter involves in certain cases a former client whom the official represented within the last year. Neither instance applies here: Under Secretary Eizenstat does not have a financial interest in this matter; he last represented British Airways 4 year ago.

Under Secretary Eizenstat's 1993 statement of recusal on British Airways, referred to in the JOC [Journal of Commerce] article, resulted from his representation of the British Airways on a matter unrelated to the AA/BA [American Airlines/British Airways] alliance. The recusal was limited to the period when he served as U.S. Ambassador to the EU, a position that he no longer holds. Neither the law, the Congress, nor Government ethics officials required that he continue this recusal when he assumed his present position as Under Secretary.

His current recusal provides as follows: "Finally, I will recuse myself from participation on a case-by-case basis in any particular matter in which, in my judgment, it is desirable for me to do so in order to avoid the possible appearance of impropriety, despite the lack of any actual conflict." Both Under Secretary Eizenstat and Department ethics officials have believed that the Under Secretary need not recuse himself under this provision from discussions with the EU on the AA/BA alliance because 4 years have passed since he represented BA and because his representation of BA was on a different issue than the pending area.

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF MONTEREY-SALINAS TRANSIT

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 1, 1997

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I have the distinct honor and privilege of representing California's 17th Congressional District and,

on behalf of all the residents of the central coast, I would like to commend to my colleagues' attention the 25th anniversary of Monterey-Salinas Transit.

The Monterey Peninsula Public Transit System Joint Powers Agency was formed by the cities of Carmel, Del Rey Oaks, Monterey, Pacific Grove, Seaside, and the County of Monterey on October 1, 1997. As the predecessor of Monterey-Salinas Transit, it served the Monterey Peninsula area, later expanded to provide service to the cities of Marina, Salinas, and Watsonville, now serving all of Northern Monterey County.

I am proud to claim that my district has been among the first in the country to promote community livability and sustainable development initiatives that enhance the quality of life for all its citizens. Monterey-Salinas Transit recognizes the benefit of sustainable development and the need to utilize clean technologies. One-quarter of the bus fleet is powered by clean natural gas [CNG] and future plans call for the total MST fleet and support vehicles to be fueled with CNG, a much more environmentally friendly source of fuel.

It is the foresight of the MST member jurisdictions that has enabled the transit service to be on the cutting edge of technology and service, with ridership of some 4 million passengers each year, including a paratransit van service for disabled customers, and a waterfront area visitor express service for tourists. As we stand on the threshold of the 21st century, I am pleased to commend Monterey-Salinas Transit for providing 25 years of exemplary public service to the central coast of California, and ask my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to wish them well on the next 25 years.

TRIBUTE TO ANGELO VOLPE

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 1, 1997

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the most enthusiastic person I have ever met, Angelo Volpe, the president of Tennessee Technological University.

Angelo Volpe is a distinguished scholar and scientist that any university would be proud to have as a president. During Dr. Volpe's 10 years tenure as the president of Tennessee Tech, he has brought energy and a level of enthusiasm that is contagious to the entire community. As the founder of Sharing the Vision, a university-wide fundraising campaign, President Volpe has made the dream of college a reality for many students who could not afford tuition. He not only recognizes the value of a university education, but also acknowledges the need for a campus that meets a wide range of student needs. During his tenure, President Volpe has overseen the creation of a new library and a recreation and fitness center. These additions have greatly expanded student resources and added to the stature of the university.

Angelo Volpe's strong chemistry background is also an asset to the university. He came to Tennessee Tech from East Carolina University and I know they must still feel the loss of this talented and visionary man. His pursuit of scientific knowledge has made him a member in

good standing in such organizations as the American Chemical Society, the Tennessee Academy of Science, and a past president of the Tennessee College Association.

Although a Brooklyn native, Dr. Volpe has adjusted perfectly to southern life and has made Cookeville, TN his home. He is a tireless leader in the field of education and a prominent member of the Cookeville community and the Rotary Club. But no man is an island. Dr. Volpe has had the support and advice of his able wife, Jennette. Jennette has a Ph.D. in psychology and has been invaluable in assisting her husband with his duties as president of Tennessee Tech. They are active members of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church and in the local community.

I am grateful that President Volpe will continue to lead Tennessee Tech into the 21st century. I know that with Dr. Volpe at the helm, this university will continue to prosper. He has given of his time, expertise, and energy to make Tennessee Tech an outstanding university and in turn, I would like for us to recognize his accomplishments today and wish him luck in the coming years.

REFORMING THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

HON. NEWT GINGRICH

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 1, 1997

Mr. GINGRICH. Mr. Speaker, I submit for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD a series of letters between myself and the White House on the subject of reforming the Internal Revenue Service.

The correspondence sadly demonstrates how removed from the concerns of the American people the White House appears on this important topic. Last week, the entire country saw ordinary taxpayers as well as IRS agents and managers offer dramatic testimony on many of the outrageous practices of the agency. Apparently, the White House staff were the only people in the country not to be concerned about this abusive behavior.

I hope that the White House will join with millions of American citizens and commit to reforming the IRS immediately.

THE SPEAKER,

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, September 29, 1997.

President WILLIAM J. CLINTON,
The White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT, I was gravely disturbed to read the comments in the press today from your top economic advisor, Gene Sperling, on the subject of reforming the IRS.

Americans have watched with horror in recent weeks as hearings in the Senate and House have uncovered dozens of documented instances of gross incompetence, harassment, and abuse of authority by agents of the IRS. According to the testimony of past and current IRS employees—some of whom were forced to disguise their voices and hide their faces for fear of retaliation—it has been standard practice within the agency to target poor individuals who could not afford to fight and to measure agents' performance on the number and amount of seizures they make.

Clearly the IRS is out-of-control and needs to be reformed. Every year we delay will result in tens of thousands of additional nightmares for taxpayers who are unfairly targeted, hounded, abused, and bankrupted by the agency.

That is why I am so greatly alarmed by the comments of your top economic advisor today that reform efforts are "a recipe for conflicts of interest" and a "serious step backwards." Surely you do not agree with Mr. Sperling's bizarre assertion that the bipartisan recommendations of the IRS reform commission headed by Rep. Rob Portman (R-OH) and Sen. Bob Kerrey (D-NE) would lead to "less accountability" and "less trust." Does Mr. Sperling truly speak for you when he said that you will "vigorously oppose" those recommendations?

If you do not repudiate the statements made by Mr. Sperling today, you will have allied yourself with the IRS' bureaucratic machine and turned your back on the millions of Americans who have been pulled through its gears. I urge you to immediately disavow Mr. Sperling's remarks and make clear your personal commitment to reforming the IRS.

Sincerely,

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House.

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, September 29, 1997.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House, U.S. Congress, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER GINGRICH: Thank you for your letter of September 29 regarding our approach to IRS reform.

As Mr. Sperling noted this morning in stating the Administration's position, we are firmly committed to reforming the IRS. This is a long-held commitment that recent congressional hearings have only helped reaffirm. As Mr. Sperling reiterated this morning "much more needs to be done" and we have put forward a "very strong reform agenda." President Clinton made that commitment clear when he signed the Taxpayer Bill of Rights into law last year: "We say to America's taxpayers, when you deal with the IRS, you also have privileges and we respect them. You have protection and we will help provide it. You have rights and we will shield them."

Earlier this month, Secretary Rubin outlined a comprehensive plan to build on those reforms and to modernize and restructure the IRS. This builds on the intensified oversight Treasury has provided over the last two years. Our reform plan mirrors many of the recommendations made by the Kerrey-Portman Commission. Our reform plan would strengthen oversight, increase accountability, and provide for increasing advice from the private sector. The plan would also grant the Taxpayer Advocate greater independence and build on our efforts to promote electronic filing.

To improve management at the IRS, we have nominated a top-notch private-sector information management expert, Charles Rossotti to head the agency. We believe he can bring his cutting-edge private sector expertise, particularly in the area of customer service, to that agency. His nomination is pending before the Senate, and I hope we can put his skills to use as soon as possible.

There is one area where we strongly disagree with the plan supported by the House Republican leadership. The President strongly opposes a part-time private board that would oversee the operations of the IRS. We believe that such a private board would foster less accountability and create the potential for wide-scale conflicts of interest, as

Mr. Sperling noted this morning. Undoubtedly, the type of people qualified to serve on such a board would have their own business before the IRS; that potential for conflicts of interest would make impartial oversight difficult at best. That concern about conflicts of interest is shared by, among others, former IRS Commissioners from both Democratic and Republican administrations, Brookings Institution scholars, and the New York State Bar Association.

I hope we do not let our differences over the responsibilities of a private advisory board stand in the way of meaningful, bipartisan reform of the IRS. The American people deserve better. As Mr. Sperling said today, we were "appalled" and "extremely disturbed" by the tales of abuse of individual taxpayers described in the hearings. Such behavior has no place in this administration as Mr. Sperling's full comments this morning make perfectly clear.

We are encouraged by the measures that the IRS has undertaken to correct those abuses and eliminate any practices that may have inadvertently encouraged them. Secretary Rubin has assured me that he will redouble our efforts to root out cases of malfeasance and promote accountability at the Internal Revenue Service. To promote real reform at the IRS, I hope we can work with you in a bipartisan, constructive spirit.

Sincerely,

ERSKINE B. BOWLES,
Chief of Staff.

THE SPEAKER,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 30, 1997.

President WILLIAM J. CLINTON,
The White House, Washington, DC.

Dear Mr. President. With all due respect, Mr. President, your staff just doesn't seem to get it. For five years, the administration officials in charge of the IRS have fiddled while the agency has burned the hopes and dreams of thousands of innocent taxpayers. Fortunately, the bipartisan Portman-Kerrey commission has put forth real reforms to help the taxpayers.

Now, despite recent congressional hearings that have uncovered the extent of the malfeasance and mismanagement within the IRS, your staff has taken the indefensible position that this same group of political appointees should be allowed to continue supervising the agency.

In separate statements yesterday, both your top economic advisor and your Chief of Staff made the ludicrous assertion that placing a non-partisan private board of directors—unbeholden to any political interest—in charge of the IRS would foster "less accountability" and "less trust" in the agency.

Instead of this independent board, your administration has proposed the creation of an internal board made up of 15 current political appointees from within the IRS, the Department of Treasury and the Office of Management and Budget. In other words, your response to the dozens of horror stories we have heard from innocent taxpayers over recent weeks is that we leave exactly the same people in charge who have already failed to solve the problem.

Worse, several of the current officials who would make up such a board are also donors to the Democratic Party and Democrat candidates. In the midst of all of your administration's ongoing campaign finance scandals, do you really expect to restore the confidence of the American people in the IRS by putting some big-donor Democrats in charge of "non-partisan," "objective" tax collection.

Earlier today, you said that we must "not try to sweep any of these problems under the

rugs." I agree. The only way to ensure a genuine housecleaning at the IRS is to appoint a private, independent board of directors for the agency.

I urge you to drop your opposition to reform and join with congressional Democrats and Republicans as we take action to restore public confidence in the IRS.

Sincerely,

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House.

HONORING MARIO & CELIA JIMENEZ ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF MARIO'S TACOS

HON. ESTEBAN EDWARD TORRES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 1, 1997

Mr. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a very special couple and dear friends, Mario and Celia Jimenez of Mario's Tacos in the City of Pico Rivera. On Saturday, October 4, 1997, Mario, Celia, and hundreds of members of the community will celebrate the 30th anniversary of Mario's Tacos.

Mario and Celia own and operate this family restaurant in my congressional district. Over the last 30 years, they built their small taco stand into a thriving business, expanding to its current large family eatery. It is known throughout the community for the traditional Mexican and American dishes that are served in a friendly family oriented atmosphere. Over the years, Mario's Tacos has endeared itself to the residents of Pico Rivera and surrounding communities and has become a common place for friends and family to join together.

A sense of family and a dedication to the community are values held dear to Mario and Celia. The success of their business can be credited to their impenetrable faith and belief in family and community. Each of their children, Mary, Mario, Jr., David, Martha, and Norma has contributed their time and efforts to making this family business a success. Mario and Celia instilled in their children a strong work ethic and a belief that with determination their children could accomplish anything.

Their successful business has afforded them the opportunity to give back to the community. Mario and Celia support various school and charitable organizations. Because of their strong belief in our young people and the education that they were denied, they contribute much of their time and money to community youth projects, school programs and activities that support quality education in their native country of Mexico, as well as in the United States.

Mario has established and works with a variety of international aid organizations, assisting poor communities in Mexico and South America gain access to health care, emergency, and educational resources. Locally, Mario and Celia have helped those less fortunate by providing meals for senior citizens and homeless. Also, Mario has been an unwavering supporter of the 34th Congressional District Congressional Awards Council, which recognizes young people in my congressional district for their volunteer contributions in the community.

Mr. Speaker, it is with pride that I rise to recognize the Jimenez family for their strong