

youth of our Nation. On this special occasion, I send my very best wishes to him and his wife, Martha Rose and their two sons, Jonathan and James.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF SANTA CLARITA VALLEY'S BOY SCOUT TROOP 2

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 1997

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce that on Saturday, April 19, 1997, Santa Clarita Valley's Boy Scout Troop 2, will celebrate its 75th anniversary. Sponsored by the Kiwanans Club of Valencia, Troop 2 remains the largest troop in the valley, with over 130 boys currently registered.

Throughout the years, Troop 2 has served almost 3,000 boys and produced 65 Eagle Scouts while managing to remain an active part of the community. From helping distribute emergency water supplies in the aftermath of the 1994 Northridge earthquake to participating in the annual 4th of July parade, Troop 2's volunteer efforts serve as a reminder of the dedication and commitment of the Boy Scouts of America.

On behalf of the citizens of the Santa Clarita Valley, I am honored today to help recognize the tremendous accomplishments of Troop 2.

THE UNDER 12 SYRACUSE BLITZ BOYS SOCCER TEAM WINS NATIONAL INDOOR SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. JAMES T. WALSH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 1997

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the under 12 Syracuse Blitz Boys soccer team for winning the National Indoor Soccer Championship on March 17, 1997.

The North American Indoor Soccer Championship features qualifying regional tournaments at 20 sites around the country. The winning teams are then invited to participate in the grand finals. This dedicated group of athletes competed against 22 teams in their age bracket, including teams from Massachusetts, Maryland, Kansas, and Tennessee, as well as Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. It was Syracuse's second championship win in a row, as they won the indoor title last year.

Our central New York community is proud of the hard work and dedication displayed by the members of the 1997 Syracuse Blitz Boys soccer team.

Members of the 1997 Syracuse Blitz Boys under 12 National Indoor Champions are: Brian Knapp, Brian Perry, Mac Wilkie, Isaac Collings, Devin Dean, Josh Kristoff, Frank Monteleone, Patrick Ridall, Joey Spadaro, Alex Dowley, Brendan Quinlan, Joey Antonacci, Chris Paulus, Justin Crowley, and Matt Ponichtera. Coaches include Coach Bob Escobar, and assistant coaches Don Ridall and Craig Wilkie.

Congratulations to all the team members and coaches for their impressive achievements.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES EMERGENCY LEAVE TRANSFER ACT OF 1997

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 1997

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, on May 26, 1995, in response to the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, the Office of Personnel Management [OPM] transmitted to Congress the Federal Employees Emergency Leave Transfer Act of 1995. With jury selection just begun in the Oklahoma City trial, it is time to pass this bill that would enhance the use of transfers of leave to assist Federal employees who are adversely affected by disasters or emergencies as declared by the President. I am reintroducing the bill today as we mark the anniversary month of the bombing in Oklahoma City. The bill was passed by the Senate and House last year and failed to go to conference because of opposition to an unrelated amendment attached in the House.

In 1988, Congress authorized a 5-year test of voluntary leave transfer and leave bank programs within Federal agencies. These programs were designed to help employees faced with a medical or family emergency who had already exhausted all available leave. In 1994, the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee's Subcommittee on Compensation and Employee Benefits held a hearing on the programs, which documented their success. Legislation I authored making them permanent was subsequently enacted.

Current leave transfer law limits, in some situations, the transfer of donated leave from one agency to another. Current law also requires that donated leave be used only for personal or family medical emergencies, and that employees exhaust all personal leave balances before qualifying for leave donations.

In the wake of the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City in April 1995, affected employees were excused from duty without being required to use their available leave. This was made possible by OPM's efforts to coordinate agencies' existing leave transfer programs. It became apparent from this experience that such situations would be better handled by establishing in law the necessary authority for special leave transfer programs to address needs created by Presidentially declared disasters and emergencies.

Senator TED STEVENS (R-AK), chairman of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee first introduced OPM's proposal, S. 868, on June 21, 1995. The bill was approved by the committee, without amendment, on August 10, 1995. It passed the Senate by unanimous consent on October 19, 1995. The Congressional Budget Office determined that S. 868 would not affect direct spending or receipts, and that any administrative costs resulting from its implementation would be minimal.

S. 868 was referred to the House Subcommittee on Civil Service which did not hold hearings on the measure, but referred the bill to the full House Government Reform and Oversight Committee. The full committee attached several other measures, including the Veterans Preference bill, to S. 868, and the House subsequently passed the bill as amended. The Senate, however, failed to con-

sider the bill as amended and it did not become law.

The bill I introduce today is identical to S. 868. It requires that in the event of a major disaster or emergency, the President would have the authority to direct OPM to create a special leave transfer program for affected Federal employees. Employees need not be facing a medical emergency to qualify, they would need the leave because of the adverse effects of the disaster or emergency. The bill would allow agency approved recipients to use donated leave without having to first exhaust their own accumulated leave. It would allow employees in any executive agency to donate leave for transfer to affected employees in the same agency or other agencies. It would also allow agency leave banks to donate leave to any emergency leave transfer program established under this act. OPM would be permitted to establish rules for the operation of this special program.

The Federal Employees Emergency Leave Transfer Act enjoys the support not only of OPM but of the Federal employee organizations, has no budgetary impact, and has not been controversial. I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

IN HONOR OF THE PULASKI CADETS, INC., 164TH ANNIVERSARY MILITARY REVIEW AND BALL

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 1997

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Pulaski Cadets, Inc., an organization which will be celebrating its 164th anniversary on April 19, 1997. This momentous occasion will recognize the contributions of Danuta Sieminska, operations manager of the Polish and Slavic Federal Credit Union and Thomas Wojlawowicz, president of the Pulaski Day Parade at the annual Military and Review Ball to be held in the Crystal Ballroom of the United Poles in America in Perth Amboy.

The Pulaski Cadets, Inc., have a long and distinguished history of service to their fellow Americans. This independent company, named after the famous Revolutionary War Gen. Kazimierz Pulaski, was incorporated in 1833. Its roots extend back to March 1778 when General Pulaski, commander of the American Cavalry, received permission from the Continental Congress to form an independent legion headquartered in Baltimore. During the War for Independence, the Pulaski Legion participated in a number of battles including Egg Harbor, Yorktown, and Savannah where General Pulaski was mortally wounded.

After the Revolutionary War, the Pulaski Legion was ordered to report to New York to defend that region of the new nation. In 1833, some descendants of the Pulaski Legion veterans decided to organize their own unit and named it the Pulaski Cadets. The official title of New York City Guard was bestowed upon the Pulaski Cadets in 1839. This elite military unit was attached as 1st Company to the 11th Regiment and later to Company G of the 55th Regiment, which caused an awkward situation since the 55th Regiment spoke mostly in French. They were subsequently granted a

transfer to the 9th Regiment. During the Civil War, many of the commissioned officers served with honor and distinction. The organization of the Militia—now called National Guard—made it possible for the company to continue on an independent basis. This tradition was kept alive until shortly after World War I.

The organization of the Pulaski Cadets was revived in 1985 by Brig. Gen. Jan K. Krepa and his Adjutant LTC Dziekanowski. The mission of this newly revitalized group included providing educational opportunity for the young people of the area through the Pulaski Cadets Scholarship Fund. Over the past 12 years, more than \$12,000 has been distributed to qualified students attending American colleges and universities. This financial assistance has made a real contribution to the academic success of many fine young men and women.

It is an honor to have such an exceptional organization working on behalf of the residents of my district. The Pulaski Cadets, Inc.'s efforts to promote the educational achievement will be long remembered. I am certain that my colleagues will rise with me and pay tribute to an important piece of our American history.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OAK LANE COMMUNITY ACTION ASSO- CIATION

HON. ROBERT A. BORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 1997

Mr. BORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the Oak Lane Community Action Association [OLCAA] as they celebrate their 25th anniversary. In 1972 a group of citizens formed in organization based on the ideas of community action and involvement. As the group approaches their silver anniversary, they have upheld the ideals of the original founders.

OLCAA began their activism with a series of block meetings regarding quality of life issues in the neighborhood. They soon began expanding these meetings into all inclusive East Oak Lane town meetings. As the organization stands now, it not only has a positive impact on the neighborhood, but on the city of Philadelphia as well.

OLCAA has been able to take a diverse community and package its differences into a unified body of energy and strength. By working as a team, they have experienced successful community improvements in many different arenas. The group has sponsored initiatives such as integration in real estate, citizen safety programs, and educational and recreational projects at Ellwood School and the Oak Lane Library. With the 35th Police District as their partners, OLCAA developed the first Police Bike Patrol program in residential Philadelphia.

I wish to honor the members of this organization and community for diligent hard work and passion that should serve as a model to all communities in this Nation. They have focused their energy on creating a better community for themselves and their neighbors. Unselfishly, they have extended this focus to the city of Philadelphia and its residents. OLCAA has overcome obstacles to create a

neighborhood that fosters close relationships between citizens, and is a place of unity.

On their 25th anniversary, I would like to wish the Oak Lane Community Action Association continued success in their efforts, and I congratulate them on achievements already made.

CAMBODIA

HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 17, 1997

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, a couple of months ago, I took part in a congressional delegation that traveled to Cambodia. It was a distinctly unique opportunity to visit a country where the people democracy has taken root, although not without its fair share of difficulties, and has begun to grow and mature with the assistance of the United States.

First of all, I want to commend our fellow Americans in the United States Embassy in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, especially Ambassador Kenneth Quinn and Edward Birgell of the Agency for International Development. They have done an outstanding job in less than ideal circumstances, and I strongly believe that the growth of democracy in Cambodia is due in no small part to their efforts.

Ambassador Quinn and his colleagues at the United States Embassy play a pivotal role in Cambodia's development. Under Ambassador Quinn's guidance, they work on a number of extremely important initiatives. They provide assistance to Cambodia to rebuild the judicial system and implement the rule of law. They coordinate POW/MIA efforts with the Cambodian Government. They helped Cambodia draft labor laws in accordance with international standards. Most importantly, they are heavily involved with establishing and strengthening the democratic processes, which provides permanence to their work in Cambodia. Their achievements are truly remarkable, and I salute each and every one of them.

As most of you know, Cambodia has had a difficult time in the last few decades—a tumultuous history to say the least. In 1975, the country was torn apart and nearly decimated by the genocidal Khmer Rouge. The turbulent civil wars punctuated by short periods of rest did not end until the United Nations [U.N.] sponsored the October 1991 peace treaty followed by U.N.-supervised elections in 1993. As a result of the elections, a new democratically elected government headed by two prime ministers was established. This "power-sharing" arrangement, although somewhat unwieldy, was necessary to maintain the fragile partnership and put Cambodia in a positive direction for the last 5 years—a generally forward-looking, fledgling democracy with market-based economic policies, free press, multiparty political system, and nongovernmental organizations. It is fair to say that the last several years have been Cambodia's most peaceful and productive period in the 20th century.

Ripped apart by civil wars, the people of Cambodia are in the midst of rebuilding their nation. Cambodia still bears wounds from those past internal conflicts. For instance, the country is still a huge minefield. About 1 in 10

Cambodians have been injured by landmines. While there is a concerted effort to remove the landmines—over 1,500 people are employed specifically for this task—at the current pace, it will still take at least several decades. Still they persevere.

Unfortunately, the U.N.-brokered fragile partnership by necessity is rapidly fraying at the edges. With the 1998 national elections right around the corner, cooperation between the two prime ministers has almost ceased. The results are dramatic. Human and civil rights violations are rising and corruption is running rampant. These factors increase the political and economic risks resulting in a slowdown in foreign investment and aid. The downward spiral will result only in chaos.

This dramatic downturn deeply concerns me, for it undermines all the hard work of Ambassador Quinn and his colleagues in the U.S. Embassy to keep the peace. In my conversations and meetings with them, I was deeply impressed with their conviction and devotion to the Cambodian people. They have made tremendous personal sacrifices. In many cases, their families are unable to join them in Cambodia. Also, they work in facilities that are in dire need of improvements. I saw facilities that would not pass OSHA regulations here in the United States, and it deeply concerns me that our fellow Americans must work in such conditions. Moreover, Embassy staff are at a security risk, for there have been numerous threats against their lives. We should all be extremely proud that this group of devoted people represents us and our interests in Cambodia. They represent the epitome of public service.

It also undermines all of the hard work that the Cambodian people have put in—paid for by their blood, sweat, tears, and untold number of lives. They are amazing. I can honestly say that I have never seen a more inspired and hard working group than the people of Cambodia. Their resilience and perseverance deeply moved me. Over a million Cambodians were killed in one of the bloodiest genocides in history, yet they still persevere. Human and civil rights violations rise, yet they still persevere. Political violence occurs more and more frequently, yet they still persevere.

They persevere because the burning fire of eternal optimism in the face of insurmountable odds resides in the Cambodian people. I saw it in their faces. I heard it in their voices. I felt it in their deeds. They persevere because they have suffered under a totalitarian regime. And now, they have tasted democracy and have seen the shining city on the hill. They look to America and see the nation that Cambodia can be—a nation of freedom and opportunity. They look forward with the hope of a better tomorrow. They have tasted democracy, and they have no wish to go back.

We must reaffirm our commitment to Cambodia by fully supporting our Embassy in Cambodia. We must provide them with the resources necessary to do their job effectively. In the coming months as we consider the annual appropriation bills, I strongly urge my colleagues to consider the situations of our fellow Americans working in the Embassy and our Cambodian friends. Ambassador Quinn and his colleagues are promoting the basic ideals that form the core of our Nation in the great democratic tradition—the ideals that make America the greatest nation in the world. Let us do all that we can to give them the support they deserve.