

know that label signifies compliance with basic worker protection laws and human rights guarantees. But in the CNMI, that made in USA label is used to conceal systematic exploitation.

Last week, President Clinton and garment industry leaders announced a U.S. apparel industry partnership dedicated to eliminating sweatshop working conditions around the world. Those efforts must also focus on our own soil, on the CNMI, where conditions that could not be tolerated anywhere elsewhere in America flourish with the blessings of the local government.

In the CNMI, human rights and the basic rights all American workers are supposed to enjoy are routinely brushed aside in the pursuit of an economic miracle. The CNMI Government is currently spending in excess of \$1 million in an unprecedented effort to paint a highly favorable picture of its economy.

But the record indicates this is no economic miracle; it is an economic mirage, built on exploited foreign labor.

Freed from U.S. immigration and minimum wage laws, the CNMI—

Uses its immigration policy to open its borders to a flood of foreign workers—from the Philippines, China, and other Asian countries—that now outnumber the indigenous population.

Maintains a minimum wage of as little as \$2.90 an hour for garment workers—and far less for household workers and farmers—despite promises to bring wages to the Federal level.

Ignores employer restrictions against U.S. laws—such as the right to unionize and to receive all wages earned, instead maintaining a bureaucracy that makes it all but impossible for workers to seek redress.

Fails to prosecute aggressively those who mistreat and abuse foreign labor by forcing them into prostitution and other types of involuntary sexual activity, who restrict their expressions of political beliefs, and who deny them the wages they have earned. In fact, many workers have said that speaking out against battery and rape, against unsanitary living barracks, against illegal wage withholdings, long hours or violations of their work contract, can result in prompt deportation and the forfeiture of their wages.

Congress in recent years, on a bipartisan basis, has called upon the CNMI to end these abuses, but with little effect. In fact, the CNMI Government has passed several laws that actually roll back worker protections, and broke a promise to the U.S. Congress to raise its minimum wage across the board, to the Federal level.

This continuing pattern of abuse and indifference to human exploitation demands a rapid response from the Congress and from the Clinton administration. Today, along with several cosponsors, I am introducing legislation to protect the integrity of the "Made in USA" label by only permitting its use when all applicable labor laws are obeyed.

This legislation will increase the minimum wage in the CNMI in stages until it matches the Federal level.

Lastly, this legislation will also bring the CNMI under the Immigration and Naturalization Service which, unlike the CNMI's Government, has the skills and resources to establish credible and enforceable policies that do not sanction the exploitation of men and women.

HOME EDUCATION WEEK

HON. ROY BLUNT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 1997

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to voice my support along with the Missouri State Senate and the Missouri House of Representatives for home education. The Missouri General Assembly has designated the second week of May as Home Education Week. Missouri has been recognized as a leader nationwide in the home education movement. Home Education Week is a good way to acknowledge those parents in Missouri who have helped to establish a strong foundation for quality home education.

Home education has always been unique because it provides the opportunity for children to be taught by their parents or someone the parents trust. Home educators are able to meet the individual needs of their children by designing educational lessons for each child. They also provide children in home education numerous opportunities to learn through hands-on activities, where they are able to apply what they are learning in real-life settings. The one-on-one interpersonal ties that are developed in home education between a parent and their children establish solid mentoring relationships.

I know of many families in the Seventh District of Missouri that I represent who educate their children through more than just their textbooks. They regularly take field trips and conduct science experiments so that they can apply what they are learning. I know one family who has entered award-winning projects in the Ozark Empire Fair in science and drawing competitions as well as winning awards regionally and statewide in speech contests. The Will Purvis family is one of many southwest Missouri families who are making a visible difference in the education their children through home education.

I want to thank each parent who has made the decision to educate their children at home. This decision requires a great amount of dedication. This dedication requires planning and preparation that involves many extra hours and late nights of preparation. Their dedication results pay off in home-educated students that do well when they compete with their peers nationwide in private and public schools and in higher education. We should continue to support their dedication as they continue to make a visible difference.

IN HONOR OF TERTULIAS DE ANTANO AND ITS FOUNDER LIDIA GIL-RAMOS: MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR SENIOR CITIZENS IN NORTH HUDSON COUNTY

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 1997

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an exceptional woman, Ms. Lidia Gil-Ramos and the exceptional organization which she founded, Tertulias de Antano. The contributions of Ms. Lidia Gil-Ramos and

Tertulias de Antano will be celebrated at the group's 23d Anniversary Dinner Dance to be held at Schutzen Park in North Bergen, NJ, on Sunday, April 27, 1997.

Such a well-respected program, Tertulias de Antano, is the result of the unwavering dedication of its founder Lidia Gil-Ramos. Before arriving in Union City, NJ, in 1965, she taught both elementary school and elderly farm workers in her homeland of Cuba. Education was also a personal passion for Ms. Gil-Ramos. She earned her masters degree from the University of Havana. This extraordinary woman then became director of a large nursing home in San Miguel de los Banos, Matanzas in central Cuba.

Upon arriving in America, Ms. Gil-Ramos found employment as an income maintenance specialist for the Food Stamp Program in Jersey City. Her dedicated service to senior citizens began with the Cuban refugee program in her adopted hometown of Union City. There Ms. Gil-Ramos witnessed the difficult process of adjustment experienced by many Cuban seniors in their new environment. Resolved to make a positive difference in the lives of the senior citizens in the community, Ms. Gil-Ramos instituted the Tertulias de Antano recreational program on October 13, 1974.

Ms. Gil-Ramos is the heart and soul of Tertulias de Antano. This invaluable program dispenses information concerning English-language programs, health care issues, and community events to area seniors. Presently, this uniquely beneficial program is applauded by senior citizens from countries throughout Latin America who have found a new home in Hudson County. Ms. Gil-Ramos' vision and commitment to excellence are evident in the pleasure experienced by senior citizens who have benefited from the services of Tertulias de Antano.

It is an honor to have Ms. Lidia Gil-Ramos and Tertulias de Antano as parts of the community in my district. They are shining examples of what can be accomplished when people work together toward a common goal.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 1997

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained on the evening of Thursday, April 17, 1997, during rollcall vote No. 85. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE ISSUES STAMP TODAY HONORING RAOUL WALLENBERG

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 1997

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, today at a extremely moving ceremony at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, a stamp honoring Swedish humanitarian and Holocaust hero Raoul Wallenberg was issued. This is a most appropriate step, and I congratulate the Postal Service for this action. Raoul Wallenberg was

responsible for saving as many as 100,000 lives in Budapest, Hungary, in the closing days of World War II.

It is most appropriate that we honor Raoul Wallenberg with a U.S. stamp. In this age devoid of heroes, Wallenberg is the archetype of a hero—one who risked his life day in and day out, to save the lives of tens of thousands of people he did not know, whose religion he did not share.

Mr. Speaker, I want to salute the men and women of the U.S. Postal Service, and Postmaster Gen. Marvin Runyon, for their help and support in recognizing and honoring the legacy of Raoul Wallenberg. The cooperation and assistance for today's ceremony from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and its staff was invaluable in today's most impressive ceremony.

I want to offer special thanks to a number of individuals who participated in today's ceremony: my colleague, Senator CARL LEVIN; Miles Lehman, chairman of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council; S. David Fineman, Postal Service Governor; and my granddaughter Chelsea Lantos-Swett. I also want to pay tribute to the efforts of Ilene Munetz Pachman, who energetically pursued her dream of a stamp honoring Raoul Wallenberg, and my wife Annette, who has devoted so much of her life to making known the story of Wallenberg and worked tirelessly for the release of Wallenberg from Soviet prison. We were honored at the Holocaust Museum today with the presence of a number of our colleagues from the Congress, as well as a number of representatives of the diplomatic corps.

Born on August 4, 1912, an heir of a prominent Swedish banking family, Raoul Wallenberg studied architecture at the University of Michigan in the 1930's. In 1944, at the urging of the United States Government's War Refugee Board, he was appointed a Swedish special diplomatic envoy to Hungary. Without regard for his own safety, Wallenberg went to Hungary and worked to save tens of thousands of Jews from Nazi death camps, primarily by issuing Swedish protective passports and establishing safe houses under Swedish diplomatic protection where Jews were able to find some protection from Nazi thugs. Wallenberg also is properly credited with saving as many as 70,000 lives when he stopped the bombing of the Jewish ghetto in Budapest by boldly threatening a Nazi general.

What makes Raoul Wallenberg's incredible heroism so tragic is the fate he suffered following his extraordinary exploits in Budapest. He was arrested by Soviet military officials on January 17, 1945, and disappeared into the shadowy, half-world of the Gulag. It is the ultimate irony that this man, who did so much for so many, suffered such a fate. That tragedy is further compounded by the uncertainty surrounding the ultimate fate of Raoul Wallenberg. In 1957, the Soviet Government issued an official statement that Wallenberg had died in 1947 from a heart attack. The Russian Government reaffirmed again in 1991 that he had died in 1947, but they provided no additional details or other confirming evidence.

Mr. Speaker, the stamp that is being issued today features a profile portrait of Wallenberg on the telephone. In the background, a group of Holocaust survivors looks over his shoulder. A Schutzpass, the protective passport document which he issued in an effort to save the lives of Jews destined for extermination

camps, is shown in the upper left corner. Burt Silverman, the designer of the stamp, is an established artist whose work has appeared on the cover of the New Yorker magazine.

In recognition of his heroism, the U.S. Congress has recognized and honored Raoul Wallenberg on a number of occasions in the past, acknowledging the debt of the United States and all humanity to this great man. In 1981 the Congress enacted and President Reagan signed legislation I introduced making Wallenberg an honorary U.S. citizen. Wallenberg was the second individual after Sir Winston Churchill to be recognized by being made an honorary U.S. citizen.

In 1986 in cooperation with our former colleague Bill Lowery of California, we renamed the section of 15th Street, S.W., where the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum is now located, as "Raoul Wallenberg Place." In 1994, the Congress approved legislation to place a bust of Raoul Wallenberg on permanent display in the U.S. Capitol.

Whatever Wallenberg's fate, his heroic achievements remain a shining beacon in the darkest moment of human history. This hero of the Holocaust, whose heroism saved tens of thousands of lives, has achieved international recognition, respect, and admiration. People everywhere remember his courageous deeds in Budapest and the incalculable injustice of his incarceration in the Soviet Union. This recognition today—issuing a United States postage stamp in his honor—is only the latest appropriate tribute to this outstanding human being.

My wife Annette and I owe our lives to Raoul Wallenberg, an authentic hero of the Holocaust. In one of the tragic ironies of history, this man who saved tens of thousands disappeared into the Soviet Gulag. His deeds must never be forgotten. The commemorative Wallenberg stamp will help us remember this beacon of hope that shined in history's darkest moment.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISASTER RELIEF TAX ACT OF 1997

HON. WALLY HERGER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 1997

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Disaster Relief Tax Act of 1997, a bill which will provide important relief to taxpayers affected by a Presidentially declared disaster.

Earlier this year, California experienced the worst flooding in State history. In the Sacramento Valley, levee failures on the Feather River, the Bear River, and the Sutter Bypass caused extensive flooding of over 80,000 acres in residential and agricultural areas. Nine Californians tragically lost their lives in these floods, and some 120,000 others were displaced from their homes. In total, the floods caused more than \$1.6 billion in damage. A full 48 of the State's 56 counties were declared Federal disaster areas, including each of the 10 northern California counties that I represent.

Today, the newspapers are filled with more heart-breaking stories of incredible flooding—this time in North Dakota. We are once again reminded how easily lives and communities can be uprooted by the force of nature.

Unfortunately, for Americans who fall victim to such disasters, the problems they face don't necessarily subside with the waters. Inflexible tax law and undue administrative burdens often cause individuals added grief when dealing with the Internal Revenue Service. In the wake of these recent disasters, it is altogether appropriate that the Federal Government do what it can to help provide relief to these taxpayers.

The Internal Revenue Service, through regulations and other guidance, routinely extends many tax-related deadlines for disaster victims. However, many other deadlines are firmly set by law and the IRS is not permitted to extend them through administrative regulations. My bill will authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to extend these tax deadlines for a period of up to 90 days.

Taxpayer actions covered by this legislation include the filing of tax returns, the payment of taxes, and the filing of petitions with the Tax Court. Additionally, my bill would allow taxpayers to retain eligibility for any credits or refunds during the Secretary's prescribed extension period. All rights associated with this eligibility would also be extended, permitting taxpayers to file appropriate claims for these credits and refunds and to bring suit upon these claims.

Mr. Speaker, this problem of inflexible tax laws was highlighted by a recent IRS news release, dated March 12, 1997. In it, the agency announced that it had extended certain deadlines related to pension plans for taxpayers affected by federally declared disasters. However, it also listed a series of deadlines that the agency could not administratively extend because they are firmly set by law. My bill would grant the IRS the appropriate authority to extend any deadlines faced by taxpayers victimized by such disasters.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation also simplifies the process by which taxpayers establish their disaster losses for tax purposes. Often, as a result of a Presidentially declared disaster, individuals seek Federal loans or Federal loan guarantees to help them rebuild their homes or businesses. To obtain these loans or loan guarantees, taxpayers must have their property damage appraised by the Federal Government. Incredibly, however, these taxpayers may have to obtain an additional appraisal to establish the amount of their losses for tax purposes. I believe that this duplication is an unnecessary burden to impose on taxpayers who have already been victimized by disasters. Taxpayers should be allowed to use appraisals performed or authorized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Small Business Administration, or other Government agencies to calculate their disaster losses. My bill explicitly authorizes the IRS to issue regulations or other guidance implementing this change, and I anticipate that this would be done promptly upon enactment.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Internal Revenue Service should have the appropriate authority to do what is fair. The Disaster Relief Tax Act of 1997 does just that. Americans who have already been victimized by floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, or other Presidentially declared disasters should not also be victimized by inflexible tax laws and undue administrative burdens. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this important and much-needed legislation.