

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

DRUGS AND GUNS ACT OF 1999

HON. WILLIAM F. GOODLING

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 1999

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation intended to keep firearms out of the hands of those convicted of misdemeanor drug offenses. Current federal law prohibits a person convicted of a felony crime involving drugs and firearms from owning a firearm. However, those convicted of lesser drug offenses can legally own a gun. My legislation would impose strict penalties and fines for misdemeanors during crimes such as use or possession of an illegal substance when a firearm is present. Similar to legislation I have introduced in the past, my bill has had the endorsement of the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police and the National Association of Chiefs of Police.

Quite simple, this bill would expand current law to treat individuals who commit less-serious drug offenses in the same manner as people involved in other drug crimes, such as drug trafficking. Those found guilty of simple possession of a controlled substance, and who possesses a firearm at the same time of the offense, will face mandatory jail time and/or substantial fines in addition to any penalty imposed for the drug offense. Mandatory jail time and fines would be required for second and subsequent offenses.

The guilty party would be prohibited from owning a firearm for 5 years. Exceptions could be granted depending upon the circumstances surrounding each individual's case. Current law states that a person convicted of a drug crime can petition to the Secretary of the Treasury for an exemption to the firearms prohibition provided it would not threaten public safety. This legislation will not affect a law-abiding citizen's right to own a firearm.

By imposing stiff penalties on people convicted of lesser drug offenses where a firearm is present, we will send a serious message that the cost of engaging in this activity far outweighs the benefit. If my bill becomes law, individuals owning firearms for legitimate purposes (hunting, target-shooting, collecting, or personal protection) and who also engage in the use of illicit drugs will think twice before participating in their drug-related endeavors, facing the prospect of enhanced penalties and the loss of their firearms.

Mr. Speaker, the 104th Congress passed legislation to provide increased enforcement on our borders to reduce drug trafficking, and the 105th Congress passed the "Drug-Free Communities Act," to establish a program to support and encourage local communities who demonstrate a comprehensive, long-term commitment to reduce substance abuse among youth. Both measures became law. I urge my colleagues to continue to focus its efforts on the drug war by passing this legislation in an effort to crack down on this criminal behavior. Drugs and guns are a lethal combination that must not be tolerated by a civilized nation.

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY RECOGNIZES THE 1999 ASIAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE CELEBRATION AND ASIAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 1999

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Asian-American Heritage Month and the many diverse accomplishments of Asian-Americans. I also recognize the Asian American Heritage Council of New Jersey, an organization dedicated to celebrating, integrating, and uniting Asian culture in America. Asian-Americans have a long history of meaningful contributions to the United States.

On May 22, 1999, the Asian American Heritage Council of New Jersey will sponsor a statewide Asian-American Heritage Celebration in Edison, NJ. This organization, which incorporates various Asian-American groups in New Jersey, was founded by Dr. Stephen Ko in 1992. Each year a different ethnic group organizes a celebration in May; this year the activities are being planned by Chinese-Americans and will include dancing and shows by various organizations.

The Asian-American Heritage Celebration's keynote address will be delivered by my colleague from Oregon, the Honorable DAVID WU. Congressman Wu is the first Chinese-American to be elected to the U.S. Congress.

The contributions of Asian-Americans to the society and culture of New Jersey and the United States are a vital part of the American fabric. I hope all my colleagues will join me in recognizing the Asian American Heritage Council of New Jersey.

TRIBUTE TO OUR LADY OF MERCY SCHOOL

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 1999

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to pay tribute to the faculty, parents, and students of Our Lady of Mercy School in Montgomery County, MD, for winning the Blue Ribbon Excellence in Education Award from the Department of Education.

Our Lady of Mercy School has a tradition of academic excellence, intellectual curiosity, fundamental moral and religious values, and an atmosphere of care and respect. The school's mission sets goals which foster students' personal growth, empowers students as active learners, and encourages critical thinking and problem solving. Linkages with communities beyond Mercy help students develop an understanding of different cultures and an appreciation of global interdependence.

In 1998, Mercy received reaccreditation by the Commission on Elementary Schools of the

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools for its unique project on inclusive education in regular schools. Mercy's Educational Excellence Program: A Model for Inclusive Education identifies inclusive education as one that serves the physically and mentally challenged, empowers the talented and gifted student, and uses a multicultural perspective across the curriculum.

Academic and non-academic services are revised as Mercy's student population grows and changes. The needs of Mercy's stakeholders have served as the catalysts for the Rainbow and anti-drug programs, prayer partners, inclusive life skills instruction, academic tutors, and family health seminars. The role of Mercy's community is to partner in the education of students, to create a forum for adult learning, and to raise responsible, socially concerned individuals.

The Mercy Parent Teacher Organization coordinates parent volunteers to assist the school in the total education of the children. During the 1997-98 school year, 96.5 percent of Mercy's families volunteered. Mercy provides parents with educational opportunities through in-house and outside seminars, guest speakers, health programs, print materials, and private consultants.

As a former teacher, I wish to congratulate Our Lady of Mercy School for creating the right atmosphere for learning. I am proud of their well-trained staff, their supportive parents, and their excellent students. I wish them continued success in creating the excellence in education needed for tomorrow's schools.

HONORING BOB STONE'S RETIREMENT

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 1999

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Bob Stone, who is retiring after more than thirty years in the federal government representing the highest ideals of government service. For the past six years, Bob has been Vice President AL GORE's right hand man in leading the reinvention of the federal bureaucracy. Reinventing government is often referred to colloquially as "REGO" and Bob has been commonly called "Mr. REGO" for his dedication and commitment to creating a government that works better, costs less, and gets the results Americans desire.

I first met Bob during the 1980s when he was a deputy assistant secretary in the Defense Department. He helped resolve a complex situation that ended up benefiting both the Defense Department and Northeastern Pennsylvania. Although I had dealt with hundreds of federal employees, Bob stood out as a creative and thoughtful public servant who was absolutely committed to making government work. His dedication to improving the functioning of the Defense Department during

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Republican Administrations was brought to the attention of Vice President GORE, who deserves a great deal of credit for recognizing Bob's talents and allowing him to run the National Performance Review in a competent and non-partisan manner.

In leading hundreds of career civil servants in the reinventing government initiative, Bob has helped produce some remarkable results: more than \$136 billion in savings, a workforce that is smaller than when John F. Kennedy was President, 640,000 fewer pages of internal rules, and the creation of more than 3,000 customer service standards that citizens can use to judge how well agencies are serving their customers. I was struck by Bob's undying belief that government can work if front-line employees are empowered with the ability to exercise common sense. Bob's inspirational mantra was, "Federal workers know what's not working in government and—if empowered—can make government work better and cost less."

Beyond creating a government that was smaller and worked better, Bob wanted to create a movement. As Vice President GORE said at Bob's retirement ceremony, "Bob's goal was to 'fan the flames of reinvention' among front line employees, to empower them to reinvent their workplaces and how they deal with their customers—to bring common sense to government. He did this, and more."

Bob Stone is the epitome of the hard-working, unrecognized public servant who is dedicated to doing whatever it takes to accomplish his mission in a thoughtful and creative way. I speak for many in this Congress when I express my gratitude to Bob for the key role he has played in restoring Americans' belief that government can do the right thing. I wish him and his wife, Roxanne, a happy retirement when they join their children and grandchildren in California. We will miss you, Mr. REGO, but hope your spirit of service and reinvention will live long in the federal government.

IN HONOR OF THE DEDICATION OF
CENTER HIGH SCHOOL

HON. DOUG OSE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 1999

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give special recognition to a high school in my district that has its eye on the future and its students on the road to success. Center High School in the Center Unified School District will be dedicated on May 22 after undergoing extensive remodeling of its facilities to accommodate, among other things the continuing emergence of high technology in the classroom, and the growing demand for improved mathematics and science education.

The dramatic changes at Center High School come at a time when this school district faces tremendous challenges in coping with a significant loss of student enrollment due to the imminent closure of McClellan Air Force Base. Despite such a daunting obstacle, forward-thinking trustees, administrators, faculty members, school staff, parents and others in the community moved ahead with plans to give students at Center High School their best possible chance to succeed in a rapidly changing world. It should come as no surprise

that this particular school district took such a leadership role. Even as the Gold Rush swept through California and well before the Pony Express began to link my state to the rest of the nation, one of the area's very first schools opened its doors to students in what is now the Center Unified School District. For almost a century and a half, this community has focused on future generations.

At its dedication ceremony, Center High will show off its state-of-the-art science complex and adjoining computer lab, a new mathematics wing with adjoining computer lab, a new library with multiple computer research stations, a new 500 seat performing arts theatre and music building, a special education wing, and a technology-based curriculum integrated in the school's Media Communications and Business Academies.

It also should be noted that student achievements at Center High School are truly remarkable. Most recently, both the student newspaper and yearbook received the Gold Crown Awards from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association—their equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize. It is the only school in the nation to win top honors for both publications. In addition, Center High freshman William John was recently selected to represent California in People to People International at a United Nations conference in Switzerland this summer.

It is refreshing and hopeful for all of us to witness the rebirth of Center High School and to honor the tremendous success of its students. I urge you to join me in congratulating all those involved for a job well done.

STATEMENT ON KOSOVO

HON. ROBERT A. WEYGAND

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 1999

Mr. WEYGAND. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month the House debated several resolutions regarding the current situation in Kosovo. I take this opportunity to address that situation and each of those resolutions.

The current situation in Kosovo is indeed a tragedy. People are being forced from their homes, families are being destroyed, people are being murdered because of their ethnic identity. If I may, let me recount some sobering facts. To date, over 603,000 Kosovar-Albanian refugees have been forced from their homes, an estimated 3,700 people have been murdered, and approximately 400,000 people are roaming the Kosovo countryside.

Unfortunately, we have seen this type of activity far too often. Many of us have taken to this very floor and condemned the actions of the Nazis in World War II, the Ottoman Empire during the Armenian Genocide, the Chinese at Tiananmen Square, the treatment of the East Timorese by the Indonesian Government, and the murder of over a million Rwandans. All of us also condemn the actions of Slobodan Milosevic in his efforts to "cleanse" the former Yugoslavia of ethnic minorities.

In my view, the United States is the world leader in the efforts to promote democracy and basic human rights. As that world leader, not a police force but a leader, the United States must take its responsibility seriously. Therefore, we must play a role in stopping ongoing genocides, preventing future genocides,

and promoting freedom and democracy around the world. Unfortunately, this sometimes requires the use of United States military force.

There is a great deal of debate over whether this operation in Kosovo is in our interests. I believe it is. As part of our role in the world, the United States needs to take action to preserve and in some instances expand alliances that will encourage the establishment of the democratic principles we all cherish. As such, we must remain an active leader in the NATO alliance.

The NATO alliance was formed to provide a strong measure of security to Europe, which in turn provides a measure of security for the United States. Political, military, and economic instability threatens U.S. national security and economic interests. This is a region where two world wars began and the threat that this conflict could spread to neighboring countries is real. It is without a doubt that preventing the spread of this conflict is in our security interest.

During the debate, the first bill the House considered was H.R. 1569, introduced by Representatives FOWLER and GOODLING. This bill would prohibit the President from using any funds for the deployment of "ground elements" without congressional authorization. This legislation is far too broad in its scope. It would prevent using U.S. "ground elements" to rescue U.S. military personnel or civilians should that be necessary, it would restrict U.S. participation in a peacekeeping operation, it would handcuff the President from responding with "ground elements" to a direct threat to U.S. personnel, and it would have even prohibited the rescue of the three U.S. POW's.

Passage of this bill, in my view, gives President Milosevic permission to act without fear that the United States will respond with the swiftest and most forceful action if necessary. Many have argued that we cannot tell our enemies what we will do or how we will act, but this bill tells Milosevic exactly what Congress will allow President Clinton to do.

While at this time I do not think the use of "ground elements" is necessary, I do not believe that we should take any option off the table for any period of time. I do not believe that we should handcuff the President or our military leaders from taking whatever action they need to in responding to a developing situation. This bill would do exactly that. For the reasons outlined above I voted against this bill.

The next resolution the House considered was House Concurrent Resolution 82, introduced by Representative CAMPBELL of California. This resolution would have required the United States to withdraw, in 30 days, from its participation in the NATO operations. I also voted against this resolution. The unilateral withdrawal of U.S. forces from this operation would signal to the world that we do not support the NATO operation and that the United States is willing to ignore its role as a world leader.

House Joint Resolution 44 was the third resolution the House considered. This resolution was a declaration of war by the United States against Yugoslavia. We are in our third month of air strikes against Yugoslavia and that is too early to discuss a declaration of war. We need to continue the air campaign, which is having some success.

This is a time when we need to support both our men and women in harm's way and