

1999, Cadet Captain Ralph Ware of Aurora, Colorado, graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York.

The United States Military Academy is among the most prestigious military academies in all the world. The Academy selects only the best and brightest young people of our nation to serve and study at West Point for four years. Once admitted, the cadet must endure the most rigorous training, testing his mind, body and spirit on a daily basis. As the cadet meets each challenge, he is transformed into a new, multifaceted person, capable of serving his country in the face of any obstacle. This transformation culminates in graduation, where each cadet celebrates the achievements of the past and the possibilities of the future.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to congratulate Cadet Captain Ralph Ware and all of the West Point graduates. With confidence, I look forward to their leadership in America.

MANDATORY GUN SHOW BACKGROUND CHECK ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 17, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2122) to require background checks at gun shows, and for other purposes:

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Chairman, I support the McCarthy amendment because I believe that gun shows should come under the same laws as gun stores. When individuals buy a gun from a gun store, they must undergo a background check—we must have the same background check for gun shows.

This amendment will require under the Brady Law, the instant background check of up to 3 business days on all gun show transactions. This is fair. We should have no exceptions to the rule.

Imagine no background checks. According to the National Association of Arms Shows, over 5 million people attend nearly 5,200 gun shows each year in the U.S. No background checks or record keeping was done at these events.

According to Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder, if the 72-consecutive-hour rule had been in effect over the past 6 months for regular retail store purchases—more than 9,000 felons and other prohibited purchasers would have been able to buy guns because their background checks would not have been completed in time.

Now, if this could happen at gun stores—imagine if we do not have this 3 day period when purchasing a gun at a gun show? Why should we make it easier for potential criminals to purchase a gun? An increasing number of criminals—who couldn't pass a background check at a gun store—are finding gun shows to be an easy source of guns. Imagine all the people that have died—because someone bought a gun without a background check.

And let me remind you that under Mr. DINGELL'S amendment proposing a 24-hour background check—17,000 prohibited persons would have slipped through the system.

We do not want any more crimes to occur. We do not want any more children in jail. We do not want to go to any more funerals.

Let's regulate gun show sales the same way as gun store sales. Support the McCarthy amendment like the: National Alliance of Stocking Gun Dealers, American Bar Association, The Police Foundation, National Association of Black Law Enforcement Officers, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

RECOGNIZING CROSSROADS COMMUNITY HOSPITAL AND HILLSBORO AREA HOSPITAL

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 1999

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take one moment to recognize Crossroads Community Hospital in Mount Vernon and Hillsboro Area Hospital in Hillsboro for being mentioned in HCIA's "100 Top Hospitals: Benchmark for Success—1998."

It is comforting for me and the citizens of the 20th district of Illinois to know that we are receiving some of the best health care treatment provided in the Nation today. Health Care in America today is a vital issue. The successes of these Hospitals show that Illinois has given the issue the attention it deserves.

I am proud of the quality of medical care that these hospitals have provided to my district. The excellent service provided by Crossroads Community and Hillsboro Area Hospitals are symbols of the excellence in aiding and saving the beloved residents of the 20th district.

RECOGNIZING PROJECT '99 AT SHORE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 1999

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Project '99 at Shore Regional High School, which serves West Long Branch, Sea Bright, Oceanport, and Monmouth Beach, New Jersey. Project '99 is an innovative 4-day pre-graduation program that combines public service events with seminars on self-improvement.

The schedule contains activities that will be held throughout the community from June 21–24, 1999. To be eligible to participate in Project '99, students must maintain exemplary discipline and academic records, and also be involved in the planning and development of two different events.

The first three days of the project focus specifically on community service. Participants engage in dune grass planting, school beautification, and mural painting projects. In addition, students host a senior citizen breakfast, organize and run a field day at the Monmouth School for Children, and work with Habitat for Humanity.

On the final day of the program, students turn their attention towards preparation for life after high school. Events include classes in self-defense, personal finance and car maintenance, and a special health and fitness ses-

sion. Project '99 concludes with a motivational speaker and a barbecue send-off.

At a time when most seniors are involved only with celebrations and awards ceremonies, it is admirable that these students are choosing to take time and rededicate themselves to helping others. The personal qualities of compassion, awareness, and a commitment to public service emphasized by the Project '99 program are essential for the next stage of the students' lives.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in honoring the creativity of the students, teachers, administrators, and parents at Shore Regional High School who are finding ways to make even the last days of high school a valuable educational experience.

HONORING THE OUTSTANDING GRADUATES OF JOHN J. PER- SHING INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL 220

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 1999

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I ask you and my colleagues to join me in congratulating special graduates of the 12th Congressional District of New York. I am certain that this day marks the culmination of much effort and hard work which has led and will lead them to continued success. In these times of uncertainty, limited resources, and random violence in our communities and schools, it is encouraging to know that they have overcome these obstacles and succeeded.

These students have learned that education is priceless. They understand that education is the tool to new opportunities and greater endeavors. Their success is not only a tribute to their strength but also to the support they have received from their parents and loved ones.

In closing, I encourage all my colleagues to support the education of the youth of America. With a solid education, today's youth will be tomorrow's leaders. And as we approach the new millennium, it is our responsibility to pave the road for this great Nation's future. Members of the U.S. House of Representatives I ask you to join me in congratulating the following students from IS 220: Salutatorian, Weva Kalidahanova; Valedictorian, Carol Chan.

FAMILIES FIRST ACT

HON. TOM BLILEY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 1999

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Speaker, in time for Father's Day, I have introduced the Families First Act with Representatives JAMES OBERSTAR, DAVE CAMP, BOBBY SCOTT, DAN BURTON, EARL POMEROY, and JIM DEMINT. This bill that would make adoptions more affordable and provide children with loving homes. Sadly, many families wanting to open their homes and provide love to children are unable to do so because of the extremely high costs of adoption, which

range from \$8,000 to \$25,000. We want to alleviate these costs so that all children are given the chance to belong to a family.

The bill would allow penalty-free withdrawals of up to \$5,000 from IRAs for adoption expenses. In recent years, Congress has allowed penalty-free withdrawals for home expenses and college education. The Families First Act would allow people to save the penalty money from early IRA withdrawal and put it toward their children's education. Our bill would enable families to borrow money from themselves to start a family, as opposed to taking out a second mortgage or depleting their savings accounts.

It would also repeal the December 31, 2001 sunset for Employer-Supported Adoption benefits and make it permanent law. The Families First Act would exclude, for taxation purposes, any adoption benefits people have received from their employer. It is imperative that employers are supportive when employees decide to give a child a home, whether through adoption or birth. Many businesses provide adoption benefits to their employees, and we should do all we can to further promote these benefits.

The Families First Act is a bipartisan bill that emphasizes the importance of placing families first. When it comes to providing a child with a loving home, families must come first—not the IRS. By increasing the options for parents struggling to afford the high costs of adoption, the Families First Act will increase the number of children who will finally have a place to call home next Father's Day.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 1999

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 213, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

HONORING DR. ROCCO MARTINO ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 70TH BIRTHDAY

HON. CURT WELDON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 1999

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to my good friend and colleague, Dr. Rocco Leonard Martino, on the occasion of his 70th birthday. Dr. Martino is a pioneer and international authority in the planning and use of computers, as well as a member of the board of Rome's prestigious Gregorian University.

Highlights of Dr. Martino's career include graduating Summa Cum Laude from the University of Toronto in Mathematics and Finance, earning a Ph.D. from the Institute of Aerospace Studies for work in the re-entry of Space Vehicle and receiving an honorary doctorate from Neuman College in 1993 for his contributions in Information Technology. Dr. Martino served as a Professor of Mathematics and Engineering at the University of Waterloo and at New York University, is the founder

and Chairman of the Board of CyberNet Group, Inc. and recently completed 25 years of service as Chairman and CEO of XRT, Inc. In his role as a board Member on Rome's Gregorian University he serves as a consultant in the designing of one of the most advanced academic computer systems in the world. A devout Catholic, Dr. Martino is a leader in his local parish, St. Katherine of Siena in Wayne, PA and was formerly president of the Fathers' Club at both St. Aloysius Academy and St. Joe's Prep. Dr. Martino has managed to find a balance between two of his passions, theology and technology, and has contributed enormously to both fields.

Dr. Martino is nothing less than a visionary whose inventions and ideas are bringing computer technology into the next millennium. Yet, even though his scholarly title abbreviations run the alphabet in length (literally 26 letters long,) Dr. Martino will be the first to tell you that the most important thing in his life is not his inventions or titles, but his family. He is the embodiment of hard work, integrity and vision and I applaud his dedication to both his work and his family. I am proud to have Dr. Martino as my constituent, but I am even more honored to have him as my friend.

HONORING MRS. MARIE CRUMP

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 1999

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary woman, Mrs. Marie Crump, as she celebrates a birthday and as the community celebrates her years of leadership and service to Prince George's County.

Mrs. Crump began her service to Prince George's County in the 1950s when she became active in the 14th District Democratic Club and was elected treasurer. She also became quite active with the Young Democrats and soon distinguished herself as an invaluable resource of effort and knowledge.

In addition to volunteering for campaigns, Mrs. Crump also volunteered her time in service to Prince George's County's nonprofit community. She served as the local chair for the Red Cross, The Community Chest and the March of Dimes. In 1962, Mrs. Crump was selected as the Mother's March Chair for Birth Defects of Prince George's County and served in that capacity for 5 years.

As she retired in 1979 from an illustrious career with the County Treasurer's Office, she joined the Board of Directors for the Prince George's Civic Opera and has since devoted countless hours to its development for the enrichment and enjoyment of all Prince Georgians.

Mrs. Crump has spent over 40 years working to improve Prince George's County for all her citizens. She has made a profound impact on all those with whom she has worked and her life has been an example of the noblest of ideals—that of service to others.

Today, on behalf of the citizens of Prince George's County, I offer our thanks and our deepest gratitude for Mrs. Crump's lifelong work and I wish her the best as we recognize the magnitude of the difference she has made and as she celebrates her birthday with family and friends.

TAIWAN AID INITIATIVE TO HELP KOSOVAR REFUGEES

HON. SHELLEY BERKLEY

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 18, 1999

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, the President of the Republic of China recently made a statement which I believe would be of interest to my colleagues. On June 7th, President Lee Teng-hui announced that the Republic of China will donate US \$300 million to help Kosovar refugees rebuild their homes.

More than 782,000 ethnic Albanians have been forced to leave Kosovo since Yugoslav troops began ethnic cleansing in the region. Among them, 443,000 refugees fled to Albania and some 247,000 swarmed to Macedonia. The aid package will include emergency supplies for Kosovar refugees and contributions to long-term reconstruction efforts by the international community in Kosovo now that a peace plan has been accepted. Moreover, it also offers to arrange for Kosovar refugees to receive short-term technical training in Taiwan.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the Republic of China as a member of the world community for their continued commitment to protecting and promoting human rights. The announcement was both timely and insightful, fully demonstrating the ROC's concern for peace in the world. I submit the text of President Lee Teng-hui's statement to be printed in the RECORD.

PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT REGARDING ASSISTANCE TO KOSOVAR REFUGEES

The huge numbers of Kosovar casualties and refugees from the Kosovo area resulting from the NATO-Yugoslavia conflict in the Balkans have capture close world-wide attention. From the very outset, the government of the ROC has been deeply concerned and we are carefully monitoring the situation's development.

We in the Republic of China were pleased to learn last week that Yugoslavia President Slobodan Milosevic has accepted the peace plan for the Kosovo crisis proposed by the Group of Eight countries, for which specific peace agreements are being worked out.

The Republic of China wholeheartedly looks forward to the dawning of peace on the Balkans. For more than two months, we have been concerned about the plight of the hundreds of thousands of Kosovar refugees who were forced to flee to other countries, particularly from the vantage point of our emphasis on protecting human rights. We thereby organized a Republic of China aid mission to Kosovo. Carrying essential relief items, the mission made a special trip to the refugee camps in Macedonia to lend a helping hand.

Today, as we anticipate a critical moment of forth-coming peace, I hereby make the following statement to the international community on behalf of all the nationals of the Republic of China:

As a member of the world community committed to protecting and promoting human rights, the Republic of China would like to develop further the spirit of humanitarian concern for the Kosovar refugees living in exile as well as for the war-torn areas in dire need of reconstruction. We will provide a grant aid equivalent to about US \$300 million. The aid will consist of the following:

1. Emergency support for food, shelters, medical care, and education, etc for the Kosovar refugees, living in exile in neighboring countries.