

Kremlin is cracking down on privately owned news outlets who have been critical of government policies. In particular, I understand that the independent and highly regarded television station, NTV, has been pressured by officials who are displeased with its news coverage of the Kremlin. There are reports that the owners and reporters of NTV and other news organizations have been harassed, and that government agencies have threatened to deny operating licenses to these organizations, have attacked private media companies through state-owned media, and have issued veiled threats to nationalize NTV and other private media outlets.

Such activities undermine Russia's free and democratic nature. I find particularly disturbing reports that Yeltsin Administration head Alexander Voloshin has asked his staff to find any grounds possible by which to initiate criminal action against owners of private media enterprises. The most notable example is Mr. Voloshin's order to the Director of the Tax Police Federal Service to carry out inspections of the editorial offices of media outlets owned by Media Most, the largest privately owned media company in Russia, headed by Vladimir Goussinsky. The fact that Mr. Goussinsky has consistently submitted tax returns and paid all taxes required by current law since 1992 was apparently insufficient in stopping these egregious searches.

Free press may also be threatened on another front. In July, 1999, the government established a new Ministry for Publishing, TV and Radio with the task, according to Prime Minister Stepashin, of "consolidating" the government's "ideological work." This new ministry will have vast powers to oversee and control news content and other aspects of Russian media, including publishing, licensing regulations, advertising, satellite broadcasting, and press distribution. Mr. Speaker, I am extremely concerned about the possible effects that this new Ministry's policies might have on private and independent media outlets.

Whoever controls the media in Russia may well influence the outcome of the upcoming presidential elections. It is generally accepted that favorable television coverage of President Boris Yeltsin's re-election campaign made possible his ultimate success at the polls. In a democratic society, the diversity of opinion and variety of information that is fostered by a free and independent press is an important part of the political process. The subversion of independent media, especially at this critical juncture in the Russian political process, is disturbing.

If Russia's nascent democratic system is to succeed, freedom of the press must be preserved. I call on President Yeltsin and Prime Minister Stepashin to ensure that attacks on privately owned media are curtailed, and to publicly reinforce the government's favorable opinion toward freedom of the press in Russia.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY BONILLA
OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 27, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under

consideration the bill (H.R. 2587) making appropriations for the government of the District of Columbia and other activities chargeable in whole or in part against revenues of said District for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes.

Mr. BONILLA. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the fiscal year 2000 District of Columbia Appropriations Bill. This legislation is a well crafted bill that supports initiatives which reduce crime as well as promote educational opportunities for District residents. The bill makes these significant improvements at a cost to federal taxpayers \$230.6 million less than last year's bill. In addition, the bill continues current prohibitions on the use of these federal funds for abortions and needle exchanges.

I opposed several amendments which restrict the use of local funds or write local law. While these amendments are well intentioned and would be appropriately considered by this Congress in regard to federal law or the use of federal funds, Congress should not write local laws. We Texans don't want Congress making our local laws, and I respect the right of the City of Washington to decide their local laws, whether we agree with them or not. One of the foundations of our liberty is our federal system which divides responsibility between federal, state and local authorities. I believe we must respect constitutional divisions and focus on federal responsibilities. The fact that I object to these local decisions is not the issue.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL
RAILROAD SAFETY ENHANCE-
MENT ACT

HON. RONNIE SHOWS

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 30, 1999

Mr. SHOWS. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Federal Railroad Safety Enhancement Act of 1999. This bill is unique in two ways: it is premised on zero tolerance for railroad accidents and injuries, and it is supported by all of rail labor.

Railway accidents have caused people in my district to suffer tragically. Several approaches to rail safety will be considered and it is important that the voices of all concerned parties be heard. The Federal Railroad Safety Enhancement Act is an approach that has been crafted by a coordinated effort of the many unions representing railway workers. We must pay heed to the workers who operate and maintain our rail system, just as we must pay heed to rail management and federal authorities that oversee our railways. We must keep an open mind as we examine all proposals so that we can pass legislation that best address this urgent matter.

Mr. Speaker, over the past few years, the railroad industry has achieved a reduction in the number of fatalities and in the number of certain types of accidents, such as collisions and grad-crossing accidents. But the number of derailments and employee fatalities has remained almost unchanged, and some key safety issues have not been adequately addressed.

For example, it is clear that in rail transportation, as in other modes of transportation,

tired workers with insufficient rest present serious safety and health problems that must be addressed. While some individual rail unions continue to evaluate this issue in craft-specific needs, we do know with respect to hours of service and fatigue management that there are a number of loopholes in current regulations that must be closed, and updates that must be made, to the current regime.

Mr. Speaker, whether it is these issues or others such as certification, van crew safety, passenger safety service standards, etc., the fact of the matter is that current rail laws do not adequately address rail safety.

The bill I am introducing today is one approach that would go a long way in achieving new levels of safety in the rail industry. We must carefully consider all approaches to rail safety, but if the "Federal Railroad Safety Enhancement Act of 1999" is the most we can do at this time to reach that goal, then it is the very least we must do.

Mr. Speaker, I urge members to join in support of this important piece of legislation.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SPOKANE
TRIBE SETTLEMENT ACT

HON. GEORGE R. NETHERCUTT, JR.

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 30, 1999

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce The Spokane Tribe of Indians of the Spokane Reservation Grand Coulee Dam Equitable Compensation Act. This legislation will provide for a settlement of the claims of the Spokane Tribe of Indians resulting from its contribution to the production of hydropower by the Grand Coulee Dam. Similar settlement legislation was enacted in 1994 to compensate the neighboring Confederated Colville Tribes. That Act, P.L. 103-436, provided for a \$53 million lump sum payment for past damages and roughly \$15 million annually from the ongoing proceeds from the sale of hydropower by the Bonneville Power Administration to the Colville Tribes. The Spokane Settlement Act, which I am introducing today, provides for a settlement of the Spokane Tribe of Indians claims directly proportional to the settlement afforded the Colville Tribes based upon the percentage of lands appropriated from the respective tribes for the Grand Coulee Project, or approximately 39.4 percent of the past and future compensation awarded the Colville Tribes.

Although the Department of the Interior and other federal officials were well aware of the flooding of Indian trust lands and other severe impacts the Grand Coulee Project would have on the fishery and other critical resources of the Spokane and Colville Tribes, no mention was made of these impacts or the need to compensate the Tribes in either the 1933 or 1935 authorizations. Federal interdepartmental and interoffice correspondence from September 1933 through October 1934 demonstrate the government knew the Colville and Spokane Tribes should be compensated for the flooding of their lands, destruction of their fishery and other resources, destruction of their property and annual compensation from power production for the use of the Tribes' land and water resources contributing to power production.

Congress passed legislation in 1940 to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to designate whichever Indian lands he deemed necessary for Grand Coulee construction and to receive all rights, title and interest the Indians have in them in return for his appraisal of its value and payment of compensation by the Secretary. The only land that was appraised and compensated for was the newly flooded lands for which the Spokane Tribe received \$4,700. There is no evidence that the Department advised or that Congress knew that the Tribes' water rights were not extinguished. Nor had the Indian title and trust status of the Tribal land underlying the river beds been extinguished. No compensation was included for the power value contributed by the use of the Tribal resources nor the loss of the Tribal fisheries or other damages to tribal resources.

In a 1976 opinion, Lawrence Aschenbrenner, Acting Associate Solicitor with the Department of the Interior's Division of Indian Affairs, stated, "The 1940 act followed seven years of construction during which farm lands, and timber lands were flooded, and a fishery destroyed, and during which Congress was silent as to the Indian interests affected by the construction. Both the Congress and the Department of the Interior appeared to proceed with the Grand Coulee project as if there were no Indians involved there . . . It is our conclusion that the location of the dams on tribal land and the use of the water for power production, without compensation, violated the Government's fiduciary duty toward the Tribes."

The Colville settlement legislation of 1994 ratified a settlement agreement reached between the United States and the Colville Tribes to settle the claims of the Tribes to a share of the hydropower revenues from the Grand Coulee Dam. This claim was among the claims which the Colville Tribes filed with the Indian Claims Commission (ICC) under the Act of August 13, 1946. This Act provided for a five year statute of limitations to file claims before the Commission. While the Colville Tribes had been formally organized for over 15 years at this point, the Spokane Tribe did not formally organize until 16 days prior to the ICC statute of limitations deadline. In addition, evidence indicates that while the Bureau of Indian Affairs was aware of the potential claims of the Spokane Tribe, it does not appear that the Tribe was ever advised of the potential claim.

Since the mid-1970's, both Congress and Federal agencies have expressed the view that both the Colville and Spokane Tribes should be compensated. The legislation I am introducing today will provide for compensation to the Spokane Tribe. There is ample precedent for such settlement legislation that addresses the meritorious claims of a tribe and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HONORING AMERICA'S HEROES

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 30, 1999

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, early this month I had the privilege of presenting military

medals to several of my constituents—a recognition which was long overdue.

Julian Burnside was serving in the U.S. Army's 106th Infantry Division when he was captured by German Nazis during the Battle of the Bulge. He spent 10 days squeezed into a railroad boxcar with other U.S. soldiers. The conditions were so bad that the men had to keep their legs folded and were only fed 4 of the 10 days.

Julian was eventually taken to a prisoner-of-war camp near Dresden, Germany. While there, he was forced to pull bodies from piles of burned human remains and dig holes for their burials. During his captivity he suffered from frozen feet, malnutrition, dysentery and yellow jaundice.

On May 9, 1945, Julian was freed when his German captors surrendered to the Allies. He spent months recovering in a hospital before being discharged in October 1945. While in the hospital, someone told Julian about all of the medals that he was eligible to receive, including the Order of the Purple Heart for Military Merit, commonly called the "Purple Heart." An officer then told him that they were no longer giving the Purple Heart for injuries like his. Julian didn't care. He was just happy to be free.

But heroes like Julian Burnside should never be forgotten, and on July 3, 1999, I was honored to present Julian with both the Purple Heart and the POW medal. The Order of the Purple Heart is awarded to members of the Armed Forces of the United States who are wounded by an instrument of war in the hands of the enemy. It is a combat decoration.

The POW medal may be awarded to anyone who "was taken prisoner and held captive while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States, while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force, or while serving with friendly forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party."

The front of the circular medal features a golden eagle standing with its wings outspread against a lighter gold background, ringed by barbed wire and bayonet points. Although symbolically imprisoned, the American eagle is alert to regain freedom, the hope that upholds the prisoner's spirit. On the reverse side of the medal, there is the inscription: "For Honorable Service While A Prisoner of War."

Another American hero who should not be forgotten is Luis Reyes. Luis was also in the U.S. Army Infantry, but he served during the Korean War from August 1950 until August 1951. He was wounded in the Injin River area during the War and suffered a bullet wound in his leg. On July 3, I presented him with the Purple Heart for wounds received in action against an armed enemy.

That day, I was also honored to present the POW/MIA medal to the family of a third Army veteran, Lowell Pirkle. Lowell was killed while working for Air America in Vietnam in 1967. During his lifetime, he received two Purple Hearts, the Vietnam Service Medal and the Good Conduct Medal.

Lowell, who served two tours in Vietnam, was attempting to load wounded Laotian soldiers into a helicopter when the aircraft was hit by a rifle shell and exploded. The pilot and co-pilot escaped. Lowell and a Laotian soldier

were not so lucky. His body was not recovered.

Lowell was survived by his wife, Deborah, and two children, Robin and Scott. Lowell's family and the Air America Association pressed the federal government for information about Lowell after discovering he had never been listed among those missing in action.

The crash site was discovered in 1995, and Lowell's remains were identified by the U.S. Army in January 1998. On August 3, 1998—thirty-one years to the day after being shot down—Lowell was laid to rest in Arlington Cemetery.

The POW/MIA medal depicts a bald eagle, which symbolizes all unaccounted for Americans, amidst the bamboo of a Southeast Asian jungle. The eagle retains the American spirit of freedom in its vigilant stance. On the reverse side is a representation of the Vietnam Campaign Medal lying on a table, issued, but not yet claimed by its owner. The words, "You Are Not Forgotten" reflect the sentiment of family, loved ones, and all Americans waiting their return.

Mr. Speaker, Julian, Luis and Lowell all answered the call to duty when their country needed them. They are true American heroes.

IN RECOGNITION OF DEDICATED SERVICE BY MR. ROBERT TOBIAS

SPEECH OF

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 27, 1999

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, and colleagues, I rise today to salute a great American, Mr. Robert Tobias, the retiring president of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU).

Mr. Tobias' career at NTEU spans thirty busy years including the last sixteen as the union's president. As he led the fight on behalf of federal employees, he became a leading authority on these issues. In doing so he vastly expanded NTEU's influence in the halls of Congress and in the White House.

His accomplishments and memberships are an impressive collection of who's who and where's where. His memberships include President Clinton's National Partnership Council, the Executive Committee of the Internal Revenue Service, the American Arbitration Association board of directors and the Federal Salary Council that advises the President of the United States. He is the co-founder of the Federal Employee Education and Assistance fund and in 1996 was appointed by the President to the Federal Salary Council.

While this is an impressive listing of Mr. Tobias' commitments and involvements, I believe his lasting legacy will be the great contributions he helped achieve on behalf of America's federal employees.

Developing the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), restructuring the IRS, protecting the Federal Employee Health Benefits Plan, advocating the closure of the pay