

Union was collapsing and hostile militant forces were rising in the Caucasus, the predominantly Armenian population of Artsakh is still far from being safe and secure. Shunned by the world at large and increasingly threatened by the rise of militant Islamism in the Caucasus, the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh sets an example of perseverance and commitment to freedom and independence.

The current plight of the people of Nagorno Karabakh is a sorry situation since the Armenians of Artsakh are among the oldest distinct population groupings on earth. Armenian settlements and a distinct political entity have existed in Artsakh since the 2nd century B.C. Armenian independence prevailed there until the collapse and partition of the first Armenian state in the 5th Century A.D. At that time, between 480 and 483, Mvoses Khorenatsi wrote the monumental "History of Armenia" under the auspices of Prince Sahak Bagratuni—a manifestation of the centrality of Artsakh in Armenian civilization. In the late Middle Ages, the Armenian principalities retained their independence under Persia's nominal rule.

The Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh were among the first in the region to embrace Christianity back in 301 A.D. in the aftermath of the missionary activities of St. Gregory the Illuminator. In this context, the repeated destruction and rebuilding of the Monastery in Amaras symbolizes the resilience and determination of the Armenians of Artsakh. First built around 330 A.D. by St. Gregory the Illuminator, it has been repeatedly damaged and destroyed by countless invaders—such as the Arabs, the Persians, the Mongols and the Turks—only to be rebuilt again and again by the local population. The Monastery in Amaras was last damaged by the Azerbaijani forces in 1992, during Nagorno Karabakh's bitter war for independence. It has since been rebuilt and its centrality in Armenian religious life restored.

The Armenians' quest for independence has long historical roots. In the late 1980s, as the population of the then Soviet Union was awakened to rediscover nationalist roots, as well as cultural and religious heritage, so did Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh. By then, they had a history of quest for independence despite Soviet oppression. Significantly, since 1923, Nagorno Karabakh was a distinct Autonomous Region within Azerbaijan—a status that reflected the population's distinction. The Armenian population was restive since the thaw of the early 1960s, including riots in the late 1960s demanding self-determination within the confines of the USSR.

In the late 1980s, the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh were alarmed by the rise of Turkic militancy in Azerbaijan. The legacy of the 1918–1920 slaughter of Armenians by Turkish and Azerbaijani forces—especially the March 1920 destruction of Shushi, an Armenian cultural center that lost its Armenian population and character until recaptured in May 1992—was revived by pogroms in Baku and "ethnic cleansing" of Armenian population throughout the region since 1988. No less alarming was the Azerbaijani blockade aimed to starve the Armenian population into surrender and self-imposed exile. Hence, once the Armenians' quest for self-determination was rejected by the Soviet and subsequently Azerbaijani authorities, the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh embarked on their quest for independence as the sole guarantor for their self-survival.

On September 22, 1991, the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh declared their independence and vowed to defend the Armenian character of their land. They then withstood a three-year long brutal war in which the vastly superior Azerbaijani forces strove to destroy them completely. Presently, the population of the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh is a mixture of the local population and Armenian refugees from parts of Nagorno-Karabakh still held by Azerbaijani forces, as well as ethnically cleansed Armenian communities in other parts of Azerbaijan, most notably Baku. They are trying to rebuild their country. A mere 150,000–200,000 people surrounded by a sea of hate with only a corridor to Armenia as a life-line of sustenance.

Therefore, we should recognize the determination of the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh to preserve and revise their heritage and take control of their lives. In an era where the United States has stood up to the rights of endangered minorities to self-determination, stability, and betterment of life, we should not neglect the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Armenian people of Artsakh. They have already fought and sacrificed enormously in order to attain these rights. On their independence day, they deserve not only our congratulations, but our recognition and help, so that they can continue to grow and develop free of existential threats.

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD J. LIEN

HON. DARLENE HOOLEY

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 1999

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD a few words expressing the profound gratitude and esteem I have for a very special public servant in my congressional district. Richard J. Lien has served the public as a Social Security Field Representative for the last 25 years. He has also been one of Social Security's special congressional liaisons for more than a decade. We will lose Dick to retirement on September 24.

My staff and I have worked with literally dozens of congressional liaisons, and it is no exaggeration to say that Dick is the best of the best. Dick has worked with nearly every member of my staff and helped thousands of my constituents with problems ranging from the easily fixable to the nearly impossible. Dick tackled problems big and small with his characteristic persistence and compassion for those he was trying to help.

There was the time he got a woman her lost Social Security check just in time to prevent her home from being foreclosed. The time he got a young American girl living in Jerusalem a replacement Social Security Card in a week, so she could complete important State Department paperwork. The time he forwarded a young man—on Christmas Eve—more than \$20,000 owed him in back disability pay.

I could go on and on until I had filled several volumes. My constituents have called him a savior, a godsend, and even Santa Claus. And I haven't even touched on the work he has done for the other members of Oregon's Congressional Delegation and our predecessors.

Through his years of service to the public and the Congress, Dick has been unfailingly professional, courteous, and persistent. He never gave up on a tough problem or complained, though he often bore more than his share of work. Dick will be sorely missed—by Oregon's members of Congress, by the Social Security Administration, and by the countless Oregonians he helped, many of whom probably never knew he was the one making sure they got their Social Security checks every month.

Dick, today I salute you, my staff salutes you, and Oregon salutes you. May you have a peaceful and well-deserved retirement.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2488, TAXPAYER REFUND AND RELIEF ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. CASS BALLENGER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 5, 1999

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to offer my support for the compromise version of the Taxpayer Refund and Relief Act of 1999, a tax relief package which is a consequence of our strong economy and the successful 1997 Balanced Budget Agreement. The commitment to tax relief demonstrated by Chairman BILL ARCHER and the

For over three decades, Ernie Dillon contributed to the community through a lifetime of civic accomplishments in the areas of education and health care in Santa Cruz county. Ernie worked tirelessly to raise monies for Dominican Hospital and was also instrumental in acquiring the funding for constructing Cabrillo Community College.

As an avid global adventurer and for his devoted service to promoting the welfare of the people in Santa Cruz county, Ernie Dillon will be sorely missed and always remembered for his great contributions spanning an entire lifetime. My thoughts remain with his family.

Members of the Committee on Ways and Means, and their counterparts in the other body, is the main reason we are debating this legislation today. Chairman BILL ARCHER deserves special recognition for his drive to return excessive federal income taxes to the American taxpayers.

We have pledged to return to taxpayers only the surplus dollars generated from excessive federal income taxes. It is important to note that H.R. 2488 conditions the tax reductions on there being no increase in the public debt. Specifically, if this debt increases, H.R. 2488 would delay the next phase of tax reductions for one year. This so-called "trigger" was included to reassure voters that the tax cuts would be forthcoming only if the expected budget surpluses materialize over the next ten years.

Even if this \$792 billion tax relief would become law, Congressional Republicans expect to reduce the public debt from \$3.7 trillion to \$1.6 trillion over the next ten years (a reduction of over \$2 trillion). The public debt is the debt resulting from the federal government's sale of Treasury bonds to mutual funds, individuals and foreign investors. The amount of public debt reduction will be twice the amount returned in tax relief. We will be paying down the public debt and, as a result, keeping interest rates low and the economy strong.

Fundamentally, I believe this bill continues the progress Congressional Republicans have made in returning to Americans and their families more control over their lives and over the federal government. Unlike President Clinton who plans to veto this tax relief, we believe that our constituents can make better decisions about spending their wages than Congress, the White House and Washington bureaucrats.

I support this historic \$792 billion tax relief package which offers taxpayers a one percent reduction in all individual income tax rates and virtually eliminates the marriage penalty. In addition to provisions designed to reform pensions and enhance retirement security, H.R. 2488 would: expand education savings accounts, student loan interest deductibility and prepaid tuition plans; provide more money to school districts for school construction or renovation; make health insurance and long-term care insurance more affordable and accessible; provide an additional exemption for taxpayers caring for elderly family members at home; lower the capital gains tax and phase out the estate tax; protect child, education and child care tax credits by phasing out the alternative minimum tax; and allow a deduction to cover the cost of prescription drug insurance coverage for seniors once Congress passes Medicare reform.

I welcome these changes in the tax code and those contained in the Taxpayer Refund and Relief Act of 1999 which address employee stock ownership plans, or ESOPs. The compromise bill contains a provision (Section 2 of the ESOP Promotion Act of 1999, H.R. 2124) which would expand the deduction of dividends paid on ESOP stock. Such simplification of the tax code will be a welcome change for ESOP companies and their employees who wish voluntarily to reinvest their dividends in more company stock.

Finally, I am grateful for the adoption of a Senate provision which addresses ESOPs set

up by S corporations, ensuring that this change in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 is not misused. If enacted, this change would resolve any unintended consequences of our 1996 and 1997 tax laws and ensure employees of S corporations can participate in ownership through an ESOP.

Again, I am pleased by the positive leadership taken by Chairman ARCHER and the Ways and Means Committee to reward hard-working taxpayers and their families, small businessmen and women, and to boost employee ownership.

RECOGNIZING SHELDON'S HORSE, THE SECOND CONTINENTAL LIGHT DRAGOONS

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 1999

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise today to revisit the proud and distinguished history of one of General George Washington's first commissioned cavalry units, Sheldon's Horse, the Second Continental Regiment, and to recognize the efforts of the members of the current-day Sheldon's Horse for their efforts in keeping their history alive.

During the War of Revolution New York Campaign of 1776, the usefulness of a detachment of Connecticut militia troopers under the command of Major Elisha Sheldon and the intimidation of some of the Continental Army infantrymen by similar British units led George Washington to call for the addition of light horsemen to the Continental Army. Congress directed Major Sheldon to raise a light dragoon regiment and appointed him lieutenant colonel commandant of cavalry.

Consisting of troops from Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Jersey, Sheldon's Horse participated in engagements in Northern New Jersey, the defense of Philadelphia, New York (1779), Connecticut (1779), New York (1780), New York (1781), and Connecticut (1781). The unit served as Washington's "eyes," scouting and skirmishing with the British advance forces and denying the British supplies and forage. The unit was recognized by our French allies as the best equipped and best trained regiment in the American Army. After the war, the Regiment was disbanded on November 20, 1783, after being furloughed five months earlier with General Washington's last encampment at Newburgh, New York.

By act of the Governor of Connecticut, the Second Continental Light Dragoons has been reactivated in 1980, as a representative ceremonial unit of the State of Connecticut to serve as historic functions. Under the leadership of Commander Salvatore F. Tarantino, present day Sheldon's Horse is worthy of its proud legacy. Great effort is made to observe actual historical data to ensure authenticity of appearance and purpose. Sheldon's Horse is recognized as one of the finest reenactment units in America. Sheldon's Horse continually wins awards for best military appearance, best drill, best field (battle) performance, and best historical demonstration.

Mr. Speaker, historical perspective of our national experience and its accurate preserva-

tion are a vital part of that which defines us as a nation. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the work of today's Sheldon's Horse in preserving the unit's distinguished history and in perpetuating it for current and future generations of Americans.

IN MEMORY OF AMORY UNDERHILL

HON. PETER DEUTSCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 14, 1999

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Amory Underhill, an outstanding community leader who will be greatly missed by the entire Florida community.

Graduating from John B. Stetson University in 1936, Amory practiced law in DeLand, Florida, for four years before joining the military. In the United States Navy, Amory served active duty for three years as a Lieutenant Commander. After completing his term of service as a Naval officer, he distinguished himself as an attorney in the Department of Justice where he was admitted to practice before the Supreme Court in 1946. As a member of the American, Federal, Florida, and District of Columbia Bar Associations, Amory truly demonstrated his strong belief that through his law experience he could improve the lives of others.

In addition to his tremendous work in law, Amory Underhill was distinguished in his devotion to higher education. At various times in his life Amory served as a Trustee at both Stetson University and Saint Leo College, and this extraordinary interest in education did not go unrecognized by either of these institutions. In 1974, he was presented with the distinguished Alumni Award by the Stetson University Alumni Association. Saint Leo College presented Amory with an Honorary degree—Doctor of Humane letters—in 1980. Lastly, in recognition of his tremendous accomplishments, Stetson University has created the Amory Underhill Award presented annually in his honor.

Adding to his already extraordinary resume, Amory Underhill was continually involved in community service throughout his life. This interest dates back as far as 1946, when he became a member of both the Young Democrats of America and the Florida State Society. Amory was so interested in addressing the concerns of Floridians throughout his life that he became a Trustee of the Florida House in 1973. He was also member of the Florida Chamber of Commerce and of the American Legions Military Order of World Wars. Participating in the DeLand Elks and in the DeLand Kiwanis Club, he was very well respected by the entire Florida community for this intense devotion to his work as well as interest in improving the world around him.

In summary, Amory's exemplary work and civic involvement were truly outstanding and he will dearly be missed by the entire Florida community. However, I am grateful to say that we are lucky to have so many wonderful memories of his life and work.