

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE MERGER OF PICADA AND DANE COUNTY YOUTH CONNECTION

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer my congratulations to the staff and board of directors of the newly merged PICADA and Dane County Youth Connection. This recent collaboration has been positively received by members of the community and civic leaders, who recognize the importance of high profile prevention and early intervention strategies. Such work is far reaching and immeasurable. The practice of making healthy choices is crucial for individuals and families in Dane County. I invite my colleagues to proudly join me in commending the union of these two exemplary organizations.

CELEBRATING THE MEMORY OF MATTHEW SHEPARD

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the memory of Matthew Shepard. One year ago, this 21-year-old college student died in a hospital bed in Fort Collins, Colorado, the victim of a brutal and senseless act of hate. I don't think anyone will ever forget the imagery of him being pistol-whipped, beaten, robbed, tied to a rough-hewn fence and left for dead on a cold October morning outside of Laramie, WY. And all of this because he was gay.

It is ironic that his life would be taken in such a violent way, considering the fact that Matthew wanted to dedicate his life to creating a world of peace and promoting human rights. He did not die in vain. His death shook us by our shoulders and forced us to deal with the issue of hate crimes and come to grips with the hate that brews in so many people's hearts. A crime motivated by hate is more than just another crime committed against an individual—it is intended to put fear into a whole community whether it is the African-American, Asian, Latino, disabled, gay and lesbian or senior communities.

Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. Every person is entitled to respect and human dignity, and no person should live in fear for being who they are. Our nation is strong because of our diversity, not in spite of it. We must speak with one voice to erase violence and hate from our communities and from our hearts. And we must pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act. This piece of legislation may not end all hate violence, but it will send a strong message that this Congress will not tolerate hate crimes, and that people who commit such acts will be met with swift and equal justice. And it will renew our commitment to creating an America where there is "liberty and justice for all."

IN RECOGNITION OF JOAN KRON

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Joan Kron as she is honored by the Saul Weprin Democratic Club on Sunday, October 17th, 1999 at the club's 42nd annual dinner dance.

Joan Kron has been a long time member of the Board of Governors of the Saul Weprin Democratic Club. She is an experienced educator who has been employed by the New York City Board of Education for twenty four years. For the last twenty years, Joan Kron has been the Resource Room teacher at P.S. 186 in Bellerose, Queens.

An alumini of Lehman College, Joan Kron earned a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education and a Master of Arts in Special Education. She is currently pursuing a Certificate in Supervision and Administration from Queens College.

For the past year, Joan Kron has served as the UFT representative for her school and has been involved with various union issues. She is a passionate community activist who has given both of her time and her energy to a number of worthy causes.

Joan Kron is a devoted wife to her husband, Barry, and dedicated mother to her daughter, Beth, and her son, Jonathan. Beth is currently attending SUNY College at Oneonta and Jonathan attends Townsend Harris High School.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in extending my congratulations to Joan Kron as she is honored by the Saul Weprin Democratic Club for her years of dedicated service to the community.

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND BENEDICT J. BENAKOVIC

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Reverend Benedict J. Benakovic on the 50th Anniversary of ordination into the priesthood. On Sunday, October 17, 1999, the parishioners of St. Joseph the Worker Croatian Catholic Church in Gary, Indiana, will honor its jubilarian priest. Father Benedict's 50th Anniversary festivities will begin at 11:00 a.m. with a Mass of Thanksgiving at the church, followed by a reception in the church hall.

Father Benedict was born on January 18, 1923 in Slavonski Brod, Croatia. He entered the minor seminary of the St. Jerome Province of the Croatian Conventual Franciscans on September 6, 1935, and pronounced his solemn vows on December 26, 1945. He completed studies in philosophy and theology at the Archdiocesan Seminary in Zagreb, Croatia, and was ordained a priest on June 29, 1949 in the cathedral in Zagreb. Father Benedict offered his first Mass on Sunday, July 3, 1949 in Zupanja, his family's hometown.

After one year of military service, Father Benedict was appointed assistant pastor at St.

Anthony Church in Zagreb. In 1962, he was sent to the United States to minister to the faithful in a Croatian parish. On February 13 of the same year, he came to Gary, Indiana, where he has lived ever since. The very Reverend Andrew G. Grutka, Bishop of Gary, appointed Father Benedict assistant pastor of St. Joseph the Worker Croatian Church in Gary, Indiana. In 1972, Father Benedict was appointed Pastor, and has remained in that position for the past 27 years.

Father Benedict has never believed that his work as a priest was limited to Sunday mornings. Even though he is extremely dedicated to the people of his parish, Father Benedict has never restricted his humanitarian activities to only his parishioners. Instead, he aids as many people as he can, no matter what the circumstances are. In fact, in October of 1994, Father Benedict was awarded the Columbian Award by the St. Thomas Council, a Catholic fraternal organization based in Hobart, Indiana for his outstanding service and commitment to the community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my distinguished colleagues join me in congratulating Reverend Benedict on his 50th Anniversary of ordination into the priesthood. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend him for his service and dedication to our country, and especially the citizens of Indiana's First Congressional District.

TRIBUTE TO CHRIS FINK

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize one of our country's great veterans, Mr. Chris Fink. Chris received his commission as an Ensign in the U.S. Naval Reserve on October 10, 1941. Shortly after World War II began, he was assigned to the Pacific as a dive-bomber with the U.S.S. *Enterprise*.

Chris was one of eleven Navy pilots assigned to defend the recently captured island of Guadalcanal. On the day following his arrival, Chris' squadron attacked the Japanese transport *Kinryu Maru*, sinking the vessel and denying the Japanese the opportunity to land its 1,000-man force on the island. Three days later, Chris bombed the lead ship of Japanese destroyers, once again thwarting the enemy's attempt to take Guadalcanal and earning the nickname "Never miss'em" by his fellow airmen.

Returning from Guadalcanal, Chris was awarded the Silver Star by Secretary of Navy Frank Knox for his bravery and actions. He soon rejoined his squadron and would later take part in numerous more naval missions, including campaigns over the Philippines, the China Sea, Japan, Formosa and Wake Island. Because of his success, Chris was called back to the U.S. to participate in the War Bond Tour, which would travel the country and rally people to purchase bonds to finance the war.

Following World War II, Chris became the 23rd naval flier to receive a helicopter pilot's license, which was still considered an experimental aircraft, and traveled to several bases across the country demonstrating its potential. During the Korean War, Chris directed carrier-

based air strikes against North Korean forces and took on several assignments, including Commander of Fighter Squadron 54, Executive Commander of the U.S.S. *Wasp*, Deputy Commander at Naval Air Station, Memphis, and Navy Liaison at Sikorski Aircraft Company.

In 1966, after 25 years of faithful service, Chris retired from the Navy having earned numerous awards and medals, including the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Presidential Unit Citation, and the National Defense Medal.

Mr. Speaker, in an era when our nation's veterans are often not given sufficient recognition, outstanding leaders, such as Chris Fink, exemplify the courage and dedication of our nation's military and remind us all what it means to be an American hero.

TRIBUTE TO NEW MEXICO PARENTS OF THE YEAR

HON. HEATHER WILSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Mrs. WILSON. Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to your attention the recipients of the 1999 New Mexico parents of the year award. This award is administered by the New Mexico Parent's day coalition. As we recognized these parents, I thank them for the role they play in strengthening and restoring the foundation of our country—the family.

Bob and Tina Schmitt, Los Lunas; Steve Trujillo, and Barbara Gauna Trujillo, Albuquerque; Kent and Carolyn Cummings, Las Cruces; Ronald and Joy Jones, Albuquerque; David and Rose Ostrovitz, Albuquerque; Robert and Mary McCray, Las Cruces; and Pete and Catherine Powdrell, Albuquerque.

Please join me in thanking these parents for their dedication to raising good citizens and their contributions to New Mexico's future.

EXPORT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 13, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1993) to reauthorize the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and the Trade and Development Agency, and for other purposes:

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Chairman, I rise in favor of this amendment to require the public disclosure of environmental impact statements for all OPIC projects designated "Category A". It requires information disclosure for environmentally sensitive OPIC Investment Fund projects such as oil refineries, chemical plants, oil and gas pipelines, large-scale logging projects and projects near wetlands or other protected areas. Current OPIC Investment Funds are not subject to any transparency requirements. Furthermore, no specific information on these projects is contained in OPIC's annual reports.

As a consequence, Congress, the public and the residents living near OPIC have no knowledge of the potential environmental and related financial and political risks. What is the taxpayer's interest in these projects?

Taxpayers are liable for OPIC investments overseas if they fail. Private corporations and investors make investments in OPIC Investment Funds. OPIC-supported funds, in turn, make direct equity and equity-related investments in new, expanding and privatizing companies in "emerging market" economies. While taxpayer money is not actually invested in these funds, taxpayers are liable for the investments should they fail. These funds have invested in more than 240 business projects in over 40 countries. Recent estimates show that the total amount in Investment Fund programs will soon reach \$4 billion.

Since taxpayers are exposed to millions of dollars of potential liabilities, I believe OPIC has a responsibility to Congress and the public to operate in an open and transparent manner. The lack of environmental transparency conceals environmentally destructive investments of these funds not only from Congress and the American public, but also to locally-affected people in the countries where OPIC projects are run.

For example, a 1996 FOIA lawsuit focusing on OPIC activity in Russia revealed that an Investment Fund project was involved in clear cutting of primary ancient forests in Northwest Russia. Russian citizens, expecting democracy building assistance from the U.S. Government, had not been provided with any environmental documentation. In fact, according to documents obtained in the lawsuit, an OPIC consultant had falsely documented the Russian citizens' support for the harmful, irreversible logging of pristine forests.

OPIC Investment Funds have also been involved in a gold mine in the Côte d'Ivoire in the area of a primary tropical forest which is opposed by local citizens. Reports of other troubling projects are also being circulated. Conservation groups have filed FOIA requests to obtain the names, nature, location and environmental impact assessments for all OPIC investment fund projects. OPIC, however, continues to conceal the environmental consequences of these questionable investments from the public.

What little information that has been uncovered about these funds reveals a checkered environmental record. With environmentally and socially sensitive projects being a main focus of the funds, public disclosure of environmental impact assessments is even more crucial.

Organizations such as the National Wildlife Federation, Friends of the Earth, Institute for Policy Studies, Environmental Defense Fund, Sierra Club, Center for International Environmental Law and Pacific Environment and Resources Center have long advocated for increased transparency in OPIC Investment Fund projects.

Representatives of these organizations met with the new OPIC President in February where he agreed with their assertion that these funds should be transparent when it comes to the environment. OPIC recently launched a \$350 million equity fund for investment in Sub-Saharan Africa which will include transparency and public disclosure provisions. But there are still 26 other funds which remain shrouded in secrecy.

With almost \$4 billion dollars invested in these programs, and OPIC's sketchy environmental record, it is ever more important that OPIC be held accountable to the public regarding its investments in environmentally sensitive projects.

The ideal legislation to correct the lack of transparency in Investment Fund projects would require the public disclosure of Environmental Impact Assessments conducted on all new investment projects. It would also allow for a public comment period where citizens, especially those living in the affected area of the project, could voice their opinions of the project. In the case of projects already underway, a renegotiation of contracts to allow for public disclosure would be required to avoid breach of contract concerns.

If we can't have full transparency in all Investment fund projects, then OPIC should not be involved in projects that are environmentally sensitive.

While projects like oil refineries, gas and oil pipelines, chemical plants that produce hazardous or toxic materials, and large-scale logging projects may be necessary for the industrial development of developing countries, holding the US taxpayers liable for investments in projects that could pose serious environmental or health risks to local populations with no public oversight or disclosure is unacceptable.

It is OPIC's policy, as outlined in the Environmental Handbook to conduct rigorous internal Environmental Impact Assessments on all environmentally sensitive projects. Environmental impact assessments are also required by law as found in Executive Order 12114 and Public Law 99-204. However, while the assessments for insurance and finance projects are publicly disclosed, assessments on Investment Fund projects are not. Accountable government demands that these assessments be disclosed.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment and shed some light on OPIC's environmentally sensitive Investment Fund projects.

MOVING FORWARD TO PROTECT ROADLESS AREAS IN AMERICA'S NATIONAL FORESTS

HON. STEPHEN HORN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, the effort to protect as much as 40 million acres of roadless area throughout our National Forest System took an important step forward this week. The President has directed the National Forest Service to prepare an environmental analysis on how best to conserve and safeguard the roadless areas in numerous forests across our nation.

While approximately 60 million acres in our National Forest System remain untouched, these unspoiled areas have been left unprotected from future mining, logging, and road-building. Without the development of a science-based policy for managing roadless areas, these unspoiled lands may become susceptible to a wide variety of ecological problems. Some of the problems include: an