

only real issue was whether his official vote tally would be in the 90s—typical for post-Soviet Central Asian dictatorships—or the 80s, which would have signaled a bit of sensitivity to Western and OSCE sensibilities. Any suspense the election might have offered vanished when the Supreme Court upheld a lower court ruling barring the candidacy of Nazarbaev's sole plausible challenger, former Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin, on whom many opposition activists have focused their hopes. The formal reason for his exclusion was both trivial and symptomatic: in October, kazhegeldin had spoken at a meeting of an unregistered organization called "For Free Elections." Addressing an unregistered organization is illegal in Kazakhstan, and a presidential decree of May 1998 stipulated that individuals convicted of any crime or fined for administrative transgressions could not run for office for a year.

Of course, the snap election and the presidential decree deprived any real or potential challengers of the opportunity to organize a campaign. More important, most observers saw the decision as an indication of Nazarbaev's concerns about Kazakhstan's economic decline and fears of running for reelection in 2000, when the situation will presumably be even much worse. Another reason to hold elections now was anxiety about the uncertainties in Russia, where a new president, with whom Nazarbaev does not have long-established relations, will be elected in 2000 and may adopt a more aggressive attitude towards Kazakhstan than has Boris Yeltsin.

The exclusion of would-be candidates, along with the snap nature of the election, intimidation of voters, the ongoing attack on independent media and restrictions on freedom of assembly, moved the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to call in December for the election's postponement, as conditions for holding free and fair elections did not exist. Ultimately, ODIHR refused to send a full-fledged observer delegation, as it generally does, to monitor an election. Instead, ODIHR dispatched to Kazakhstan a small mission to follow and report on the process. The mission's assessment concluded that Kazakhstan's "election process fell far short of the standards to which the Republic of Kazakhstan has committed itself as an OSCE participating State." That is an unusually strong statement for ODIHR.

Until the mid-1990s, even though President Nazarbaev dissolved two parliaments, tailored constitutions to his liking and was singlemindedly accumulating power, Kazakhstan still seemed a relatively reformist country, where various political parties could function and the media enjoyed some freedom. Moreover, considering the even more authoritarian regimes of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and the war and chaos in Tajikistan, Kazakhstan benefited by comparison.

In the last few years, however, the nature of Nazarbaev's regime has become ever more apparent. He has over the last decade concentrated all power in his hands, subordinating to himself all other branches and institutions of government. His apparent determination to remain in office indefinitely, which could have been inferred by his actions, became explicit during the campaign, when he told a crowd, "I would like to remain your president for the rest of my life." Not coincidentally, a constitutional amendment passed in early October conven-

iently removed the age limit of 65 years. Moreover, since 1996–97, Kazakhstan's authorities have co-opted, bought or crushed any independent media, effectively restoring censorship in the country. A crackdown on political parties and movements has accompanied the assault on the media, bringing Kazakhstan's overall level of repression closer to that of Uzbekistan and severely damaging Nazarbaev's reputation.

Despite significant U.S. strategic and economic interests in Kazakhstan, especially oil and pipeline issues, the State Department has issued a series of critical statements since the announcement last October of pre-term elections. These statements have not had any apparent effect. In fact, on November 23, Vice President Gore called President Nazarbaev to voice U.S. concerns about the election. Nazarbaev responded the next day, when the Supreme Court—which he controls completely—finally excluded Kazhegeldin. On January 12, the State Department echoed the ODIHR's harsh assessment of the election, adding that it had "cast a shadow on bilateral relations."

What's ahead? Probably more of the same. Parliamentary elections are slated for October 1999, although there are indications that they, too, may be held before schedule or put off another year. A new political party is emerging, which presumably will be President Nazarbaev's vehicle for controlling the legislature and monopolizing the political process. The Ministry of Justice on February 3 effectively turned down the request for registration by the Republican People's Party, headed by Akezhan Kazhegeldin, signaling Nazarbaev's resolve to bar his rival from legal political activity in Kazakhstan. Other opposition parties which have applied for registration have not received any response from the Ministry.

Mr. Speaker, the relative liberalism in Kazakhstan had induced Central Asia watchers to hope that Uzbek and Turkmen-style repression was not inevitable for all countries in the region. Alas, all the trends in Kazakhstan point the other way: Nursultan Nazarbaev is heading in the direction of his dictatorial counterparts in Tashkent and Ashgabat. He is clearly resolved to be president for life, to prevent any institutions or individuals from challenging his grip on power and to make sure that the trappings of democracy he has permitted remain just that. The Helsinki Commission, which I co-chair, plans to hold hearings on the situation in Kazakhstan and Central Asia to discuss what options the United States has to convey the Congress's disappointment and to encourage developments in Kazakhstan and the region towards genuine democratization.

"FOUR POINTS OF THE COMPASS":
BALINT VAZSONYI'S DIRECTION
FOR AMERICA—PART TWO

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 23, 1999

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to enter into the RECORD the second major speech by my friend Balint Vazsonyi at the Heritage Foundation. This speech follows up on themes which Balint developed two years ago in "Four Points of the Compass:

Restoring America's Sense of Direction" (CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Feb. 13, 1997) and is aptly titled "Following the Wrong Compass. The True State of the Union."

In his first presentation, Balint discussed the four principles which form the basis of the American system of governance as adopted by the Founders—the founding principles of the rule of law, individual rights, the guarantee of property, and a common American identity for all of us. In this latest effort, Balint contrasts these founding principles with the current social agenda of the left—social justice, group rights, entitlement and multiculturalism. Balint shows how this alternative agenda is not only contrary to America's founding principles, but is in direct conflict with those principles.

Mr. Speaker, I recommend to you and my colleagues that we read and consider the important thoughts contained in Balint Vazsonyi's speech, "Following the Wrong Compass: The True State of the Union."

[Given at the Heritage Foundation,
Washington, DC, Jan. 20, 1999]

FOLLOWING THE WRONG COMPASS: THE TRUE
STATE OF THE UNION

About two years ago, I gave a speech here with the title "Four Points of the Compass: Restoring America's Sense of Direction." I would like to begin with a review of America's response to that compass. As some of you recall, the attempt was to condense the most essential, most indispensable aspects of America's founding principles into a practical tool—easy to remember, easy to apply. Much is said about the ways America was meant to be, and what the Founders had in mind. But usually it is couched in very loose terms, partly because fewer and fewer people these days take the trouble to actually reading what the Founders have written. Most disappointingly, members of Congress who actually take an oath upon the Constitution of the United States give us speeches day after day, and television interviews night after night, revealing in the process that if they ever read the Constitution, it was a long, long time ago. Of course, they might simply have a different edition.

In any event, trying to sum up the most essential principles in a manageable number, gave me the idea two years ago of choosing four—because a compass has four points and, like a compass, these principles have provided America's bearings. And so, I proposed the rule of law—always point North—individual rights, the guarantee of property, and a common American identity of all of us.

In these two years, the "Four Points" have been made part of the Congressional Record and printed in many places: as a Heritage Lecture, in *Imprimis*, in many newspapers and periodicals, as well as in Representative American Speeches. The Republican National Committee decided to publish a version of it as the cover story in *Rising Tide* and it became the foundation of the book "America's 30 Years War: Who is Winning?" We have held panel discussions on Capitol Hill, and town meetings around the country. There seems to be general agreement about their validity, and opposition comes only from those who have a bone to pick both with America's Founders and with the U.S. Constitution itself.

Town meetings, and the ongoing conversation with the American people via radio and television talk shows in the last two years, have persuaded us that is a good path to follow. People find it helpful as a tool, not only in debates, but also for evaluating public policy.

Here is how it works. Every time somebody proposes a new law, a new statute, or an executive order, you ask whether it passes

muster when held against the standard of the "Four Points." The answers are easy because they either do or they don't. If they don't, then they have no place in the United States of America. Without that compass, what would make us American?

Taking the points one by one: Everybody seems to agree that the rule of law is a good thing. Alas, most people don't quite know what that means. One must read Article VI of the Constitution which says "This Constitution . . . shall be the supreme law of the land." Then, the proposition becomes clear. Individual rights are more problematic because one of the developments during the last 30 years was the proliferation of all sorts of "rights" which masquerade as individuals rights even though they are, in truth, group rights. In other words, these rights are claimed by certain people because of their membership in a particular group. Of course, the Constitution does not permit any such thing. Advocates of group rights learned how to dress up their demands as individual rights, and it is alarming how often they get away with it.

Yet the most troubling for all critics of the Founding is the third one, the guarantee of property. It is amazing how strong an emotional reaction it draws, which really proves what the English already knew when they wrote the Magna Carta in the year 1215: That the guarantee of property and the guarantee of liberty are joined at the hip. You either have both or neither. The absolute ownership of property is such a troubling idea for the other side that even the most benevolent among them is unable to stomach it.

The common American identity is something to which, again, many pay lip service, while making the greatest effort to do away with it. One person who, to my surprise, recently paid lip service to it, was the President last night, toward the end of his State of the Union speech. And, of course, one wished for an opportunity to ask him when he was going to issue the next executive order to set women against men, black against white, children against their parents, and South Americans against Europeans. Because that is certainly what his administration has been doing in spades ever since 1993.

By now, it must be clear that there is another compass in our midst, and perhaps the time has come to look at what that other compass is. It, too, has four points. Its North Star is the pursuit of social justice; instead of individual rights, it promotes group rights; instead of the guarantee of property, it advocates redistribution through entitlements; and in place of our common American identity, it favors what it calls multiculturalism. I think we need to examine these four points and try to understand what they mean. We need to, because of something the president said in his second Inaugural Address.

On January 20, 1997, Mr. Clinton called for a new government for the new century. Given that in the entire history of our nation the only previous call for a new government was issued in the Declaration of Independence and not since, I thought then and I certainly think now that, on this occasion, we must take the President seriously. There is also every reason that such a new government would be guided by that "other" compass.

What of its four points? First, social justice. The phrase sounds good, always has, always will. Social justice, after all, is justice isn't it? Well, the Preamble of the Constitution speaks about the establishment of justice. Does "social" add anything to that? If you look up F.A. Hayek, you find that he lists about 168 nouns that have acquired the qualifier "social" to the detriment of each

and every one of them. But let's take social justice at face value, just for the moment. Is anyone willing to define what it actually means? To date, I have not been able to find a single person who can do that, because it means something different every day. (I have been offering a reward of \$1,000 to anyone who can propose a lasting definition.) The Constitution, on the other hand, is the same—day in day out. There is nothing ambiguous about phrases like "Congress shall make no law . . ." or: "The right of the People to . . . shall not be abridged," or: "All legislative powers are hereby vested in a Congress of the United States." These are finite statements. For social justice to be a plausible replacement for the rule of law, it would have to offer comparable consistency, but of course it can not. It is almost painful to watch critics of the Constitution wrestling with this problem, desperately trying to claim that the rule of law and the pursuit of social justice can indeed live side by side. I submit they cannot and intend to demonstrate it.

Group rights of course do not require too much explanation. Again, the Constitution of the United States offers absolutely no foundation for any kind of group right. In fact, it knows nothing about groups, only about individual citizens, or "The People." There is nothing in between. Thus, every group right is in fact illegitimate. The tragedy is that not only judges and the executive branch, but Congress, too, participated in the enactment of various statutes that confirm rights upon groups. Worse yet, a Republican Presidential Candidate, Senator Bob Dole takes great pride in having engineered the Americans with Disabilities Act—one of the more recent creations of group rights. I suppose, some of you may say, "don't disabled Americans have rights?" Of course they do: exactly the same rights as every other American. They don't have rights because they are disabled, they have rights because they are Americans. And you can substitute anything else for "disabled" and come to the same conclusion. There is all the difference between pointing to certain people and saying: these Americans have not been given their full constitutional due. That's one thing. It is quite another to isolate a group and say, "we must give these people their own, special rights."

And what could be more different than the guarantee of property on one side and redistribution on the other? Property is everything we own—the shoes you wear, the salary you make. The other compass calls for its redistribution, because certain people are "entitled" to it. Here is another word: entitlement. Is there anything in the Constitution of the United States that entitles anybody to the fruits of the labor of another person? For that is what entitlement means, nothing less. The only way a person may be entitled to another person's possessions is if we disregard the Constitution.

And so we come to the last point, multiculturalism. If the suggestion is that we should look beyond our own borders and not merely read American literature or look at solely American paintings, then I would say every decent school for a very, very long time has taught World History, and World Literature, and World everything. We really didn't need a multicultural movement for that. If on the other hand the idea is that everything has the same value, and that those who have not produced literature should be given literature, and the rest of us be required to study it in order to give the appearance that every nation has literature worth reading—that's something entirely different.

Multiculturalism claims to celebrate our diversity, so here is another question: "What

is there to celebrate?" We didn't celebrate that we have arms and fingers, or other things we are born with. If you look around just this room, we have a lot to celebrate right here, because we are all different. It is just one of those nonsensical things, except that—while it is easy to make fun of it all—for many, it is deadly serious. It is serious for us, too, because this compass is likely to guide the 70% of Americans who give the President that approval rating. And if that compass is something to be taken seriously, we have to give it a name.

Why not call the original one—the rule of law, individual rights, the guarantee of property and common American identity—the "American way"? That is a fair designation because these are the essentials which define America. How do we find a name for the other compass? Let us work backwards. Multiculturalism is really another form of redistribution, only it is cultural goods being redistributed. Redistribution grows out of group rights, because certain groups are entitled to the fruits of redistribution, whereas others are not. And, of course, the whole idea of group rights grows out of the search for, and the pursuit of, social justice—whatever that means.

So, here we are, looking for a name. How should one call this doctrine, this compass? "Multi" does not suggest an all-purpose label, and "entitlement compass" just doesn't sound good. "Good compass"? It does not make much sense. How about going back to its North Star: social justice. Of course, justice is something that the English already contemplated in the Magna Carta and, certainly, the Framers have established in the Constitution. We need to focus on the first word in this two-word construct. Perchance we could make a noun of the adjective? Words ending in "-ism" are often used for political programs. If we add this to the adjective, SOCIAL-ISM comes out as the logical designation for this compass.

Are we in trouble! We will be advised immediately that this is not going anywhere—just look at where Joe McCarthy ended! But what if he didn't go about it the right way, because socialism was hurled at people as an accusation, as a pejorative, derogatory term? In any event, as an inflammatory word? Of course, then we were engaged in a war—cold most of the time, hot some of the time—against the Soviet Union, and we saw the Soviet Union as the representative of socialism. Even so, McCarthy came to grief. And now, when the Soviet Union is gone, most would think it ridiculous to invoke socialism. But what if the problem is the way we think of the word, and the way we look at what socialism is.

That is really where I would like to get your ear today, and your active help in the future.

Socialism, I believe, is the appropriate, scholarly, utterly unemotional designation of a grand philosophical idea in Western Civilization. Ever since Descartes started thinking about thinking, and other French philosophers followed in the 18th Century, then Germans picked it up where the French had left off, socialism has been in the making. For a long time, then, socialism has been with us as "the other grand idea" of Western Civilization, and will remain with us as long as there is an "us." There is nothing derogatory about it, and there is nothing "red" about it. Socialism is an idea about interpreting the world, and charting the future, that has had the benefit of some of the best minds in the history of the planet, and has held—and continues to hold—tremendous appeal to vast numbers of people. It deserves to be taken seriously, and it needs to be engaged on philosophical grounds. In every sense of the word, it holds the opposite view of everything this country was built on.

The "Four Points of the Compass," presented to you two years ago, represented a set of principles. Our American way is built on principles. These principles were laid down to create a set of conditions within which the citizens of this country can pursue their individual happiness—not social justice—their individual happiness, least hindered, with the fewest possible obstacles in their path. Thus, principles create conditions which are simply there as a tent under which people are safe and secure in their lives—their livelihoods, their possessions—and are able to do their best.

Socialism, as the four points of its compass demonstrates, has no principles. It has an agenda. The pursuit of social justice is an agenda. The creation of group rights is a continuation of that agenda. Redistributing the fruits of society's combined labors is an agenda. This is extremely important to realize because we have become very, very imprecise in our use of words. We ought not to speak of the legislative goals of the American side as an "agenda" because voters can say: "well, he has this agenda, and she has that agenda and it's my right to choose which agenda I like." I don't believe that the American way calls for an agenda. There may be specific legislative initiatives, there may be needs of the nation to be met, but I don't believe that the Framers gave us an agenda. They gave us specific principles, articulated as laws, within which we are free to pursue to our benefit—and to no one else's detriment—whatever is our life's dream. So first of all, we have to realize that there are principles on one side, and an agenda on the other. Principles provide the floor under your feet. An agenda pulls you in a certain direction. One is *guided* by principles, one is *driven* by an agenda. I am just trying to say this in as many ways as I possibly can.

Socialism cannot coexist with the rule of law because the most important aspect of the rule of law is its consistency. Yes, the Constitution may be amended through a very specific process and that's an important aspect of it. But its fundamental tenets—lets make no mistake about that—will never change because, if we amend those, the result will no longer bear any resemblance to the Constitution of the United States.

Thus, the rule of a law functions as a constant, whereas the pursuit of social justice demands that we change the law everyday in order to accomplish the agenda—which also changes everyday.

I submit that the label "socialism" is the one tool we possess that we have not used, and that could be our salvation. Not only because truth in labeling always helps. Let us not think of it as labeling, but as truth. The truth always helps, especially against an adversary that always runs from the truth. To use the word effectively, we have to understand what socialism is, and what it is not. Socialism is not red, or any other single color. The Soviet Union was but an episode in Socialism's three-hundred-year history. It was a long one, a troublesome one. But goodness knows, Nazi Germany was most troublesome, even though that lasted only 12 years. Eventually, it passed, the Soviet Union passed, Mao Tse Tung passed away, and even Castro won't live forever. All these have been episodes. These are not our true adversaries. Our adversary is The Idea, this intoxicating idea that is able to dress up in local colors and plug into the deepest yearnings of any nation.

In America, it did so in spades about 30 years ago. It found all the hot buttons of Americans, so there are millions of decent Americans today who honestly believe that the socialist agenda they have signed on to has American roots.

Back to colors. Socialism may have been red in the Soviet Union, but it was black in

Italy where it was called the Fascist Party of Mussolini, Mussolini's personal version of the Italian Socialist Party from which he had been expelled. It was brown in Germany under the National Socialists, but currently, in the same Germany, it is green. It wears blue at the United Nations. Want more colors? If you really want a Rainbow Coalition, look at socialism around the world. So, first let us not get stuck on color. Second, please let us not get stuck on a particular regime. There is all this confusion about socialism, communism, fascism. But we will know how to make head or tail of them once we realize that they all study the same books.

Fascism was simply Mussolini's version for Italy, having nothing whatever to do with the National Socialist German Workers party—Hitler's party—which ruled Germany during the years of the Third Reich. It was Stalin who thought it might be just a little uncomfortable and embarrassing for the Soviet Union—the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics—to have Hitler, too, designated as a socialist. So he ordered everyone, including his American agents—you remember, the ones that McCarthy was so dastardly to expose?—to start referring to Hitler's Germany as "fascist." It never was. It was a national socialist regime. And to point to minute differences between it and the Soviet Union doesn't make practical sense because the Soviet Union had 70-plus years to develop its ways. Hitler's Germany existed only for six years in peace time. After that it was engaged in a world war. Even during those six years, it was preparing the war, and so the various deviations from orthodox socialism really should not cloud the issue. We have to remember, also, that Karl Marx, already in the communist manifesto of 1848 differentiates among no fewer than seven versions of socialism, all of which he rejects in favor of his own, which he calls Communism.

Communism is nothing other than the castle at the end of the climb for all socialists. And please believe me there is no difference between this socialist and that socialist, and social democrat, and democratic socialist, and progressive, and liberal, and "people for the third way"—we are given different labels all the time. It is all socialism, and all of it leads to communism—yes, communism, and let us not be afraid of that word any longer. It will be a glorious time, we are told, for humanity when communism is established, and when social justice will have come to every man, woman and child in the world, for that's what communism is: One World, in which social justice has been accomplished.

Other issues tend to be confusing as well. Generically, the American way can also be called the Anglo-American way of interpreting the world and charting the future. By the same token, the opposite view may be called "Franco-Germanic." To begin with, only these four countries engaged in systematic thinking about these matters over the centuries. Individuals from other countries have made contributions, but only in these four countries—England, France, America, and Germany—have there been schools of political philosophy. The four schools resulted in two conflicting ideas. They are in conflict with regard to morality, law, and economic principles—in conflict all the way.

Thus, the divider has always been the English Channel and not the Iron Curtain. Of course, the English Channel has been there all the time, whereas the Iron Curtain was a very temporary fixture—thank goodness. But if that is true, how is it possible that France and England were allies in both world wars? Not difficult. Philosophically, as the books in our libraries confirm, the permanent alliance is between France and Germany. But naturally, when France is attacked and is unable to defend itself—as it

happened throughout this century—they reach for the people who are willing to die for them. And those were the British and the Americans. The alliance lasted as long as the French were in need. Read French philosophers, listen to French socialists and communists who are daily guests on our college campuses today. Like the Germans, they preach the socialist gospel. Exception: Voltaire. He admired the British political system and, when he openly said so in France, the authorities issued a warrant for his arrest.

Let us, then, rid ourselves of these confusing images and understand that these two gigantic ideas have been, are, and will be fighting it out to the end.

How does this affect the state of our nation?

Last night, the President would have you believe that it was just wonderful. It might be a matter of your vantage point, I think. Certainly, the Dow Jones has never been higher, but don't let that fool you. Having lost the university decades ago, we then lost the high schools, and now we have lost the entire educational establishment, all the way down to the day care center. Our children are being brought up to be socialists. Nothing else. Our media is manned and womanned mostly by socialists. If you doubt that, just remember that last week not a single network carried the charges against the president on the Senate floor, but yesterday when the president's case was to be presented, all network programs were preempted. Congress accommodates a growing number of representatives and senators who think nothing of inventing entire new passages for the Constitution, or reveal themselves as nothing more than members of the phalanx that surrounds the executive branch. United States Senators have taken to announcing their verdict before, or right after, taking an oath upon being impartial jurors.

If we really mean business, we have to use our chief asset. Yes, socialism is a great asset. We tend to engage in lengthy discussions about esoteric matters, like high taxes, low taxes, big governments, small governments. I say esoteric, because they are not tangible. What is high? What is low? What is big? What is small? Instead of interminable debates, which our side loses almost all the time, let us look Senator Kennedy, Senator Wellstone, Senator Boxer—the list goes on—in the eye and say: "What you are advocating Senator (or Mr. President, or Mrs. President) is covered by a very simple word, and the word is socialism. If you think it's great, why don't you tell us more about it?" And: "Why don't you tell us why you believe in it?"

"Are you calling me a socialist, sir? I demand an apology." "No, sir, I am not calling you anything. You are proposing a socialist agenda." Isn't that a great deal simpler than trying to explain why it is not mean-spirited to oppose the next federal education program? Isn't it a great opportunity to say: "My position on the issue derives from America's founding principles; would you tell the country where your position derives from?" Unless we will find it in our hearts to engage in this type of dialogue, unless we find the courage to fight the elections in 2000—possibly our last chance to divert a long-term disaster—by calling the compass of the other side what it really is, I don't think we should blame others, least of all the American people, for losing that election.

Millions of ordinary Americans appear to have accepted, and be promoting, the socialist agenda. There is every reason to believe that many minds would be changed if they were brought fact-to-face with socialism as

the doctrine they are following and advocating. We must explain that this is not "hate speech," but simply the appropriate designation. If we de-demonize and re-legitimize the word socialism, and reintroduce it to its appropriate place, I guarantee the outcome is going to be different. So we at the Center for the American Founding are going to issue a call to all good people, especially those who care deeply, such as yourselves, to engage in retreats, and seminars, and discussions, so that our own side can understand anew what socialism is, and what it is not.

And once we do that, we shall never look back.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR NATION'S SENIOR CITIZENS

HON. WILLIAM F. GOODLING

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 23, 1999

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to associate myself with the remarks of Mr. MCKEON regarding the Older Americans Act Amendments of 1999. For far too long—since 1995—the Older Americans Act has been left unauthorized. It is time we remedied this situation by working across party lines to fashion a bipartisan solution.

I have seen firsthand in my district how the Area Agencies on Aging work together with senior citizens to ensure that their lives are filled with dignity and self-respect. Without the essential programs of the Older Americans Act millions of seniors would be relegated to a world of almost complete isolation.

I applaud the work of Mr. BARRETT—who has volunteered to take a lead on this issue—along with Subcommittee Chairman MCKEON, Mr. MARTINEZ and Mr. CLAY. And, I pledge my support in working to pass an Older Americans Act Amendments of 1999, which both parties can take pride in, and one which, more than anything, benefits all seniors across the country.

WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP OUR NATION'S SENIOR CITIZENS

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 23, 1999

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, today, Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. CLAY, Chairman GOODLING and I are introducing the Older Americans Act Amendments of 1999. Our hope is that this bill will be the first step in an ongoing bipartisan effort to reauthorize the Older Americans Act. Nonetheless, it is important to remember that there is much work to be done when it comes to reforming and streamlining the provisions of the Older Americans Act.

Today's version of the Older Americans Act Amendments of 1999 represents a good-faith effort on the part of both parties to work together in this important venture. Over the course of the next several months, we are committed to having an open dialogue with all those who are involved in administering the Act's many programs. However, it is absolutely imperative that we keep those who we are trying to help—the frail and elderly—foremost in our minds.

INTRODUCTION OF THE GENERIC DRUGS ACCESS ACT OF 1999

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 23, 1999

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, the high cost of prescription drugs is one of the most pressing health care issues confronting the country's senior citizens, employers, managed care plans, state and federal drug programs. Controlling drug costs will be no easy task. One time-tested method, however, is timely access and availability of generic medicines once the patent on brand name drugs expires.

Generic competition has a dramatic impact on pharmaceutical costs. When a generic drug first comes onto the market, it typically costs 30 percent less than the brand name version. After two years on the market, the prices drop further to 60 or 70 percent of the brand name drug. The price of some generic drugs drop by as much as even 90 percent.

While these competitively priced alternatives are good for consumers, employers and government purchasers, they are not good for the brand name producer trying to maintain and protect monopolistic pricing. If there is no generic alternative available, consumers who need medicine have no choice but to buy the available brand drug and pay whatever it costs. It is for this reason that brand name drug companies launch aggressive campaigns to block or delay generic competition.

One tactic used by the brand industry to prevent generics from reaching the consumer is to convince state legislatures to pass unnecessary restrictions on the substitution of generic versions of brand name drugs. These restrictive laws are being advanced despite a scientific finding by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that the generic drug is equivalent and substitutable to the brand name product. The state campaign is nothing more than an attempt by the brand name companies to protect market share.

If these tactics are successful with the states, generic manufacturers could end up having to comply with 50 different sets of state laws before their products could ever reach the consumer. It would render the FDA stamp of approval meaningless. And it will only add extraordinary hoops for doctors and pharmacists to jump through before a generic medicine is dispensed. The ultimate losers are the senior citizens and other prescription drug purchasers who will be denied the access to equivalent generics and are forced to continue paying excessive brand prices for their medicines.

The bill I am introducing today, the Generic Drugs Access Act, would prevent drug companies from gaming the system. Very simply, this bill prohibits states from passing laws keeping generic drugs off the market once the FDA has determined that a generic drug is "therapeutically equivalent" to a brand name product. Most importantly, it will ensure that generic drugs get to the market in a timely fashion and provide consumers with access to low cost alternatives at the earliest possible time.

I urge my colleagues to lend their support to the effort to ensure low cost alternatives to brand name drugs are readily available to consumers and cosponsor the Generic Drugs Access Act of 1999.

RETURN THE FORESTS BACK TO THE PEOPLE

HON. MARY BONO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 23, 1999

Ms. BONO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to announce the introduction of the Forest Tax Relief Act (H.R.—), an important bill to let all our citizens enjoy the forests free from burdensome taxes. I am proud to announce that I have co-authored this bi-partisan bill with my dear colleague, Representative LOIS CAPPAS (D-CA.) Our original co-sponsors include Congressman MERRILL COOK (R-UT), Congressman PETER DEFAZIO (D-CA) and Congresswoman JO ANN EMERSON (R-MO).

Due to enabling legislation passed by a previous Congress, the United States Forest Service has implemented a new pilot project charging day users a per car fee to park on public lands. Dubbed the "Adventure Pass" by the US Forest Service, this is nothing but a new tax on using public lands. Many of my constituents question the fairness and merits of this tax, and I share their concern. This tax goes against the concept of experiencing our free and open land making it a hardship on locals and visitors alike.

Within the forests of the 44th Congressional district, the per car fee for an Adventure Pass is \$5. To residents in the communities of Idillywild, Anza, Hemet and San Jacinto and tourists who come to enjoy these precious lands, this fee is a source of much controversy. We have come to expect the freedom to enjoy this area without the inconvenience and tax imposed on us today.

To tax the Great Outdoors is offensive to the very concept of the national forest system. The forests are for the entire nation and therefore should be supported through the traditional funding process. Under this plan, Congress taxes Americans twice. It is now time to remedy this situation.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we are deterring individuals from discovering the wonder and beauty of our National Forests. We must encourage people to visit, not discourage them from doing so. When tourists go elsewhere, it hurts small businesses and it hurts our efforts to educate individuals on the importance of protecting this precious national resource. This tax serves as a barrier to working families, hikers, nature lovers and all those desiring access to our national forests.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this effort to return the forests back to the people.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 23, 1999

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, on February 2, while I was meeting in my office with some constituents, an apparent problem with the bell system led to my inadvertently missing the vote on rollcall No. 7, passage of H.R. 68—the Small Business Investment Company Technical Corrections Act. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."