

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO REMOVE THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND AND MEDICARE OFF-BUDGET

HON. JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR.

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, over the years, the Federal Government has raided the Social Security trust fund and Medicare and diverted the money earmarked for retirement and medical benefits to a host of other programs. This would be bad enough if Social Security faced no financial crisis. But the program is projected to start running cash-flow shortages around 2013, which makes the misuse of the trust fund unconscionable. I have recently introduced legislation calling for a constitutional amendment to remove the Social Security trust fund and Medicare off-budget. I encourage each of my colleagues to support this measure.

Supporters of the Social Security accounting system claim the trust fund is in fine shape, storing the surpluses in a massive fund that will ensure that benefit checks keep flowing until 2032. The truth is when Social Security's costs exceed tax receipts, the Government will have to raise taxes and/or borrow more money to help pay benefits.

Since 1983, Social Security has collected more in taxes than it spends on benefits and other costs. This year, the payroll tax surplus will total about \$52 billion. By 2007, the cumulative surplus is estimated to be \$435 billion.

In the past, these funds have been spent on everything from defense to welfare. In return, the trust fund has been issued nonmarketable Treasury bonds, which are merely promises to repay the money with interest at a later date in time. In short, IOU's from the Government to itself. To date, the IOU's in the trust fund total over \$800 billion.

The best and only way to shield the Social Security and Medicare trust funds from spending raids is to exclude their funds from Federal budget calculations. Currently, several bills have been introduced that would do just that. However, none of those bills call for amending the U.S. Constitution to ensure that raiding the fund is impossible.

The fundamental goal of the Social Security and Medicare programs is ultimately to guarantee savings and medical coverage for retirees. The Federal Government has made a contract with the American people. Let's show that we are serious about addressing the retirement system's long term solvency problem. Again, I urge each member to support this constitutional amendment.

TRIBUTE TO JUSTIN JOSLIN AND ROGER BISHOP

HON. HEATHER WILSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mrs. WILSON. Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to your attention the humanitarian acts of Justin Joslin and Roger Bishop, two students of Sandia High School in Albuquerque, NM.

In November 1998 these two young men were driving around after school when they saw a slow-moving vehicle veer dangerously across oncoming traffic toward houses. The driver of this vehicle appeared passed out, her head tipped back against the seat. Without exchanging a word, both young men sprang into action to stop the car, saving the woman and possibly others, from injury. Justin stopped his car, and he and Roger jumped out and ran along opposite sides of the other vehicle. Roger grabbed the passenger's door, which was locked and Justin grabbed the drivers' door and was able to jump in. Justin pressed on the brake and put the vehicle in park. The 66-year-old driver had apparently fallen unconscious. She was treated at a local hospital and released.

Too many times we hear of bad news in our communities or situations that could have concluded better if someone would have acted with concern and compassion as these young men did. Justin Joslin and Roger Bishop showed that they care about others and are willing to act in a humanitarian way when they see a need.

TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT FIRST CLASS JAMES DOLAN

HON. GEORGE W. GEKAS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Sgt. First Class James Dolan, of Jonestown, PA, who recently earned the title of Soldier of the Year for the Pennsylvania National Guard. SFC Dolan, who serves full-time at Fort Indiantown Gap in Annville, is the assistant inspector general for the PA Army National Guard.

This award is well-earned by an individual who carries himself with great professionalism and distinction in the finest traditions of our country's military history. The noncommissioned officers corps serves as the backbone of the army, and the benchmark that SFC Dolan has set is emblematic of the lofty standards traditionally set by our nation's noncommissioned officers. In order to achieve this honor, SFC Dolan was interviewed by evaluation boards who ranked his technical proficiency, leadership skills, and military knowledge and bearing.

This award was given to an excellent soldier who has maintained a brilliant military record.

In addition to the almost 13 years he has spent in the National Guard, he served for 4 years in the Marine Corps, enlisting after graduating from high school. Despite his success, SFC Dolan remains modest, citing the exemplary work of other Pennsylvania Guardsmen. He is in quite a good position to determine the proficiency of his colleagues, as it is his duty to inspect unit readiness throughout the state. In this capacity, he helps review a third of the National Guard every year.

SFC Dolan, in the true spirit of the minuteman, initially joined the same National Guard unit in which his father served. He currently lives with his wife, Vincenta, who is also a member of the PA Guard, and their 10-month old daughter, Kaitlin.

The honor of the title of Soldier of the Year is a great one. That the award is in such good hands bodes well for the future of the Pennsylvania National Guard. The people of Pennsylvania can feel secure in the knowledge that men and women like SFC Dolan are working for them. It is an honor to pay tribute to him today.

HONORING COLORADO GIRLS STATE BASKETBALL 3A CHAMPIONS—EATON HIGH SCHOOL

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my heartiest congratulations to the Eaton High School girls basketball team on their impressive State 3A Championship. The victory, a hard fought 50-47 win over Pagosa Springs High School, was a thrilling contest between two talented and deserving teams. In championship competition, though, one team must emerge victorious, and Eaton proved themselves the best in their class—truly second to none.

The State 3A Championship is the highest achievement in high school basketball. This coveted trophy symbolizes more than just the team and its coach, Bob Ervin, as it also represents the staunch support of the players' families, fellow students, school personnel and the community. From now on, these people can point to the 1998-1999 girls basketball team with pride, and know they were part of a remarkable athletic endeavor. Indeed, visitors to this town and school will see a sign proclaiming the Girls State 3A Championship, and know something special had taken place there.

The Eaton basketball squad is a testament to the old adage that the team wins games, not individuals. The combined talents of these players coalesced into a dynamic and dominant basketball force. Each team member also deserves to be proud of her own role. These individuals are the kind of people who lead by example and serve as role-models. With the increasing popularity of sports among young

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

people, local athletes are heroes to the young in their home towns. I admire the discipline and dedication these high schoolers have shown in successfully pursuing their dream.

The memories of this storied year will last a lifetime. I encourage all involved, but especially the Eaton players, to build on this experience by dreaming bigger dreams and achieving greater successes. I offer my best wishes to this team as they move forward from their State 3A Championship to future endeavors.

CONGRATULATING ST. GREGORY
THE ILLUMINATOR CHURCH OF
FOWLER

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate St. Gregory the Illuminator Church of Fowler, CA, upon its re-opening. St. Gregory the Illuminator is the fourth oldest Armenian Church in the United States.

St. Gregory first opened its doors in 1906 as the Armenian Apostolic Church. The services were held in the Episcopal Church of Fowler, and officiated by Father Sahag Vartabed Nazaretian, pastor of the Holy Trinity Church in Fresno. During this time, the congregation of the St. Gregory Church consisted of 75 to 100 families.

In 1907, the First Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Church was celebrated. Immediately following the liturgy, the congregation elected a board of trustees, their objective being the selection of a suitable site for a church building. On April 15, 1909, the present church site in Fowler was selected and purchased.

Construction of the church building on February 3, 1910. On April 17, the church was consecrated in a ceremony in the presence of a large congregation. The St. Gregory Church became the fourth established Armenian Apostolic Church in America, under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America.

Over the years, the original church building has expanded, and a church hall and Sunday school classes have been added. In 1993 the church decided to expand further. The site has since been enhanced by a park, basketball and volleyball courts, a playground and a courtyard, all of which are frequently used and enjoyed by parishioners. Most recently, construction has taken place to expand the sanctuary and church offices; a library and conference room have also been added. During this time of construction, services have been held in Markarian Hall, and a drastic increase in the congregation has been observed, making the re-opening of the sanctuary highly anticipated.

It is the memorable event that St. Gregory celebrates as it serves its third generation of Armenians, as well as many converts. It is the prayer of the parish that St. Gregory will be able to meet the challenge of inspiring those who worship in and make St. Gregory their spiritual home.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating St. Gregory the Illuminator Church of Fowler on its longtime serv-

ice to the Christian community, and its efforts to serve better through expansion. May it long continue its growth and success.

UNITED CONFEDERATION OF TAINO PEOPLE DAY

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the taino people and the importance of observing the United Confederation of Taino People Day.

The Taino people are the descendants of the first Native Peoples of the Americas to greet Cristobal Colon (Christopher Columbus) in the year 1492, and have a distinctive spiritual and material relationship with the lands, territories, waters and coastal seas which they have traditionally been connected to, occupied and used from time immemorial.

The Taino people have the collective and individual right to identify themselves as indigenous, to be recognized as such, and to practice, revitalize, develop and transmit to coming generations the past, present and future manifestations of their distinct identity, ethnic, cultural and spiritual traditions, history, language, and customs.

The Taino people, beyond international and political borders, have taken positive steps for the recognition, promotion and protection of their collective and individual rights and freedoms, by organizing themselves for their spiritual, social, political, economic, and cultural enhancement.

The Taino people, being represented by indigenous organizations, such as Caney Quinto Mundo, Concejo General de Tainos Borincanos, Fundacion Social Luz Cosmica Taina, Presencia Taina, Taino Ancestral Legacy Keepers, Ciboney Tribe, and Cecibajagua, have in solidarity chosen representatives themselves and established the United Confederation of Taino People.

The United Confederation of Taino People is celebrating its first historic anniversary, which coincides with, and recognizes the United Nations International decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples, and the equinox that signals the beginning of the planting cycle that the Taino People have observed for thousands of years.

Mr. Speaker, March 27, 1999 is the United Confederation of Taino People Day. I encourage my colleagues and all of the people of the United States to observe that day with the respect and dignity it deserves and to learn more about the great contributions of this people to our country and civilization.

TRIBUTE TO ONORINA LEACH

HON. HEATHER WILSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mrs. WILSON. Mr. Speaker, I wish to bring to your attention an honor received by Onorina Leach, Science Teacher at Highland High School, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Mrs. Leach was profiled in the November 1998 na-

tional magazine Cable in the Classroom for her innovative methods to use technologies in the classroom.

Mrs. Leach is a regular user of video in her science class. She has found that by supplementing the traditional text method of teaching she is able to reach different kinds of learners. Some students favor auditory and visual information processing. Mrs. Leach has found that to reach more students more effectively she must present the material in as many different ways as she can.

In addition to her responsibilities as a science teacher, Onorina Leach is the coach of Highland High School's United States Academic Decathlon team. Also, Mrs. Leach is using video to help prepare the Highland High School Decathlon team for competition. The students participating in the United States Academic Decathlon learn study skills, time-management skills and social skills. A compliment given to Mrs. Leach by a student she had years ago summarizes Ms. Leach's dedication to her students. "You know, Mrs. Leach, Academic Decathlon did not necessarily prepare me for graduate school, but it did prepare me for life."

Please join me in honoring and thanking Onorina Leach for the difference she is making in the lives of her students and to our great community of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

MY COMMITMENT TO FREE AND FAIR TRADE FOR AGRICULTURE

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, Colorado agriculture increasingly depends upon the export market to expand sales and increase revenues. The expanding world trade in agriculture has a significant impact on both the U.S. trade balance and on specific commodities and individual farmers.

No sector of the U.S. economy is subject to more international trade barriers than agriculture. The import quotas, high tariffs, government buying monopolies and import bans imposed by other nations, coupled with the overwhelming number of trade sanctions and embargoes imposed on other countries by our own government, cost the American agriculture industry billions of dollars each year in lost export opportunities.

These barriers continue to grow in spite of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Without question, they are devastating the ability for American agriculture to effectively compete, particularly at a time when exports now account for 30% of U.S. farm cash receipts and nearly 40% of all agricultural production. It is abundantly clear, that in addition to free trade, America must guarantee fair trade.

The 1996 Freedom to Farm Act returned control of farming operations to producers in exchange for sharp restrictions on the level of government support. The goal was to provide U.S. farmers with the flexibility to run their operations according to the marketplace. But in exchange, the U.S. government has a clear responsibility to ensure that our farmers and ranchers have the ability to compete fairly