

MIAMI—DADE COMMUNITY COLLEGE CELEBRATES NURSE DAY

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 12, 1999

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to Miami-Dade Community College's Medical Center and to the Florida Student Nurse Association which will celebrate Nurse Day on April 12, 1999.

The Medical Center Campus of my alma-mater, Miami-Dade Community College, graduates about 350–400 nursing students each year and adequately prepares them for a successful outcome on their examination for their Registered Nurse license. In addition, the college graduates the highest number of Associates degrees in Allied Health of any other college or university in the entire Nation.

The Nursing profession attempts to assist persons, families and the community to attain the best health status possible. The nursing program offered at Miami-Dade Community College empowers its participants with invaluable knowledge and experience in order to effectively promote good health and serve the firm of the South Florida community.

I congratulate MDCC's Medical Center for the outstanding accomplishments the nursing program has achieved in our community and I wish the faculty, staff, and all of its graduates perpetual success.

THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE REFORM ACT

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 12, 1999

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, the Olympic Games hold a special place in the hearts of Americans. We all have our favorite Olympic memory. For some, it's Jesse Owens' courageous performance in Nazi Germany in 1936, or Wilma Rudolph's three gold medals in 1960. For others, it's Mark Spitz's incredible 11 swimming medals, or the U.S. hockey team's "Miracle on Ice" in 1980. Sadly, however, the spirit of fair play that epitomizes the Olympic movement has been tarnished by recent controversies involving the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Over the past few months, we have learned how IOC members have received large sums of cash and lavish gifts from cities vying to host the Olympic Games. These cash payments and gifts were intended to influence how IOC members voted on which cities would be chosen as Olympic hosts. One quarter of IOC members have already been implicated in these allegations. The truly sad aspect of this scandal is that this culture of greed and corruption has been flourishing for years. Those involved in the scandal clearly deserve blame, but so too does the system that allows such a culture to develop.

Since the bribery allegations first surfaced last November, the IOC has shown that it is unwilling to take the necessary steps to reform itself. Consequently, I am introducing "The International Olympic Committee Reform Act." This bill is aimed at restoring the integrity and

dignity of the Olympic Games. The process by which cities are selected to host the Olympic Games should be based on which city would be the best host, and not on the amount of money that is spent on gifts for IOC members.

This bill is based on a series of proposals recommended by an independent commission led by former Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell. Among other things, the Mitchell commission recommended that the IOC ban the giving or receipt of gifts of more than nominal value. The commission also recommended that the IOC subject its members and leadership to periodic reelection. The bill I have introduced today would prohibit American corporations from providing any financial support to the IOC until the IOC adopts the Mitchell commission reforms.

I regret that this legislation has to be introduced. I had hoped that the IOC would adopt the necessary reforms on its own accord. It is apparent, however, that the IOC is reluctant to take strong and immediate action. Perhaps, the only thing that will get the IOC's attention is if American corporate money is cut off.

Currently, the IOC derives a substantial portion of its operating revenues from American corporations: NBC has paid \$3.5 billion for the television rights for the next five Olympic Games; and nine American corporations each pay \$10 million a year for the right to be an official Olympic sponsor. Quite simply, the IOC could not operate without American corporate money.

In recent editorial in the Los Angeles Times, Olympic gold medalist Frank Shorter wrote: "The United States, through corporate sponsors and the funding provided through the [U.S. Olympic Committee]. Is the single largest contributor to the Olympics. Its voice is one the IOC simply cannot ignore."

It is my hope that this bill will be the first step in restoring the legitimacy of the Olympic movement. In the past, Congress has been quick to act when it has disapproved of the activities of foreign countries, international organizations, and multinational corporations. We should be no less willing to act when Olympics are involved. I ask all my colleagues to join me and support this legislation. As Senator Mitchell explained, "The Olympic flame must burn clean once again."

HONORING THE METROHARTFORD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ON THEIR 200TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 12, 1999

Mr. LARSON. Mr. Speaker, on April 10, 1999, the MetroHartford, CT, Chamber of Commerce marked its 200th anniversary. I rise today to honor and recognize this momentous occasion.

On July 1, 1799, 43 community merchants and professionals gathered at the home of John Ripley on Main Street and signed their names to a document officially organizing the Hartford Chamber of Commerce. Since its organization, the MetroHartford Chamber of Commerce has tirelessly pursued the goals of civic support and economic promotion to make Hartford a bigger and better industrial and commercial city. For the last 200 years, the

Chamber's traditions of business and principles of living have carried the greater Hartford region to the front list of municipalities in the country.

For example, during the First World War, the MetroHartford Chamber of Commerce played a critical community support role, financing an evaporation plant to preserve fruits and vegetables, improving housing conditions for African-Americans moving from southern States to work in Hartford's defense industries, and providing emergency funds for the families of soldiers killed in action in Europe. The Chamber became one of the first organizations to establish a registry and canvass local community businesses to help find work for returning soldiers and disabled veterans.

In the years following the Great Depression, the MetroHartford Chamber of Commerce built plants for companies, secured air mail and passenger service, supported the development of roads and highways, established a Better Business Bureau, advocated for the creation of trade schools, and promoted traffic safety and fire prevention programs. During the 1960's, the MetroHartford Chamber of Commerce organized antipoverty programs such as the Community Renewal Team, and again turned their efforts toward building and rehabilitating housing for community residents who otherwise could not afford it.

Today, we stand on the dawn of the 21st century, and on the heels of one of the worst recessions in history the MetroHartford Chamber of Commerce is once again playing a critical role in the revitalization and economic development of the greater Hartford area. Whether it is working with local communities and businesses on projects such as Riverfront Recapture aimed at reclaiming the history, beauty, and community embodied along the banks of the Connecticut River, or the Adriaen's Landing aimed at making Hartford the showcase city of the new millennium, the MetroHartford Chamber of Commerce stands as a testament to what can be achieved by those who have faith in their community.

INTRODUCTION OF THE RON BROWN TORT EQUALITY ACT OF 1999

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 12, 1999

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, we are reintroducing the Ron Brown Tort Equality Act today because it is the first opportunity to commemorate the third anniversary of the tragically needless crash of the plane carrying Commerce Secretary Ron Brown and 34 others in Croatia. Congress was out of session on the actual anniversary date, April 3rd of this year. This uniquely poignant accident will be remembered as a singular American tragedy. It is still hard to believe that 33 Americans and two Croatians were killed in a crash that our government could have prevented. The 33 Americans on board that plane were from California, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. Since the crash, my cosponsors and I have regarded it as a

solemn obligation to accomplish two purposes: (1) help secure damages for a loss that can never be repaid, and (2) help see that no such accident occurs again.

We reintroduce the bill today spurred on by the vigilance of the families who lost their loved ones in the crash and who are intent on preventing other such tragedies. Since the last introduction of the bill on April 15, 1997, the families have been invaluable allies in helping us gain cosponsors and in keeping this bill alive. Just last week, members of the families met with congressional staff from the offices of cosponsors and me in a valuable strategy session. One result of that meeting and of further consultations with the families is the reintroduction of the Ron Brown tort Equality Act of 1999 today.

The families deserve more than the official funerals, the much deserved tributes, and our continuing grief. They deserve more than the insult to their injury that would remain if the law are not altered in light of the tragedy and families are not fully compensated. I believe that the Congress eventually will do the right thing and that the President will sign the right bill.

The Air Force Accident Investigation Board report was honest and forthcoming. It concluded that the accident resulted from the negligence of federal employees involving three independent causes, "any one of which had it not existed would have prevented the accident." The command gave authorization to flight procedures that had not been properly reviewed and approved; the aircrew made errors in planning and executing the flight; and the approach to the airport was improperly designated. In addition, inadequate training was a substantial contributing factor. When negligence is this pronounced, compensating the victims also has a deterrent effect on those responsible for assuring that such serious negligence is not repeated.

Thus far, however, there have been few indications that federal authorities are serious about assuring that no such tragedy occurs again. Two Article 15 disciplinary actions, two letters of reprimand, and 12 other actions were taken against particular officers. Is this all that our government can do? Following the shocking crash in Croatia, is this the extent of the federal obligation?

First, for the families of civilian federal employees, there is the obligation to do more than grant a few thousand dollars through the Federal Employee Compensation program. Our obligation is to amend the law to reach the very few instances of gross negligence, like this horrendous crash, that may occur. The bill would allow federal civilian employees or their families to sue the federal government but only for gross negligence by its officers or employees. Because there will be few instances where gross negligence can be shown, this is a small change in our law. This change will allow the families of federal employees to seek the compensation they have every right to expect while leaving the integrity of the federal government's worker compensation system intact.

There also were non-federal employees on that fated plane for whom no compensation is possible today. Astonishingly, federal law does not allow compensation when private citizens are killed or injured overseas. The failure of the Federal Tort Claims Act to allow for any compensation for civilians is either callous or

an oversight in the law, and I believe that it is in need of correction. After all, private citizens can sue under the Act for the same injuries when they occur in this country. My bill would allow individuals who do not work for the federal government, or their families, to sue the United States for negligent or wrongful acts or omissions that occur in a foreign country.

We also introduce the bill because we know our government would want to deter such accidents in the future. We especially introduce this bill today for the families of those killed with Ron Brown on April 3, 1996, and I urge the Congress to pass this bill this session. The families who lost their loved ones deserve nothing less.

TRIBUTE TO VIRGIL G. LOVITT

HON. ROB PORTMAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 12, 1999

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, on March 24, 1999, the city of Sharonville, Ohio, lost one of its finest citizens. Virgil G. Lovitt, a leader in the business world as well as the community, passed away at the age of 63. A great friend to many people, myself included, he did more for Sharonville quietly from behind the scenes than most people will ever know.

A very successful businessman, Mr. Lovitt founded a State Farm insurance agency in 1957. In 1985, he represented Ohio for the annual agents field planning conference at the home office in Bloomington, Illinois. He was a State Farm Millionaire Life agent over 20 times. He was one of the first State Farm agents in Ohio to receive the series 6 security license. At the time of his death, he was national director and a member of Insurance Risk Management and a committee member of the Family Motor Coach Association.

However, when people think of Virgil Lovitt, most will remember his willingness to serve and his desire to improve the lives of those around him. As a result of his commitment to serve the public, he spent 1963–1975 as President of the Sharonville City Council. He was Sharonville's ward chairman for over 20 years. Mr. Lovitt was also a member of the Hamilton County Republican Central Committee and Executive Committee, chairman of the Hamilton County Tax Incentive Review Board and member of the Sharonville Chamber of Commerce.

Remarkably, he made time to be involved in the civic world as well. He was a past President and Secretary of the Sharonville Kiwanis Club and started its annual Halloween party. He was honored as the Kiwanian of the year as well as Kiwanian of the year for Spiritual Aims. Mr. Lovitt was active in the Sharonville arts and crafts show for 22 years.

Even more important to Virgil was his family. He was married to his wife Marilyn for 44 years and they had two children. Their son Virgil is the mayor of Sharonville, and is married to Tracey; they have three children—Amanda, Glen and Amberly. Their daughter, Vickey Sasser, is married to Dennis and they have two children—Andrea and Andrew. Virgil was a devoted husband, father and grandfather and will be missed the most by his beloved family.

Mr. Speaker, Virgil Lovitt's drive to serve his fellow man can stand as an inspiration to us

all. He was a true community leader and his life's work will stand as a constant reminder to me and all who knew him that service to others is a noble call to be answered.

GROUND TROOPS IN KOSOVO

HON. WILLIAM F. GOODLING

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 12, 1999

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a bill that will prohibit the use of Department of Defense funds for the deployment of U.S. ground troops into Kosovo unless authorized by law and approved by Congress. The intent is to require the Executive Branch to seek the advice and consent of Congress before sending our troops into harms way within the borders of Kosovo. It is vital that the will of the American people be heard on this important matter through a formal debate and vote in the United States Congress.

While the President continues to state his intent not to send ground troops to Kosovo saying air strikes are our best option, he is also indicating that troops would only be sent into a "permissive environment." Meanwhile, military experts are questioning whether NATO can realistically end this crisis in Kosovo without sending in ground troops. Others are saying it may be too late to send troops. This confusion and uncertainty is reason enough to have a well thought out, studied and deliberate debate and vote on a decision to deploy troops into a combat area.

The deployment of ground troops dramatically changes the dynamics of this crisis because it places our armed forces directly in the middle of a civil war. We should all be mindful of what our nation went through the last time we intervened in a civil war in the 1960's—a war that tore our nation apart both politically and socially, and resulted in the loss of over 58,000 American lives.

Congress must not be derelict in its duty to have a say in this matter. The President must seek the advice of Congress, and Congress must vote up or down on whether to send U.S. ground troops to Kosovo. Our sons and daughters in the military deserve no less.

Many issues demand further discussion. What is Congress' role and authority on the issue of deploying ground troops? Do we have vital national security interests in Yugoslavia? Is this war worth risking American lives? If so, how many? Based on the President's stated goals, it is a winnable war? How many bombs and missiles does it take to significantly "degrade" the military capabilities of the Yugoslavian military forces.

How long will U.S. troops be stationed in this region? Do we have the resources to place our troops in this region for an extended period of time at the expense of more vital and real security threats—including East Asia? As a result of military downsizing, do we still have the manpower and weapons supply to fight a three front war should the event arise in the Middle East, Asia, and the Balkans? How will this mission affect the morale of our armed forces? Is the role of our military a peacekeeping and nation building force or a defense against attack on the United States, its interests, and its citizens?