

strongly urge the Governments of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia to engage in serious dialogue to improve the transparency, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency of POW/MIA investigations.

I am thankful to have had the opportunity to have worked with the League on this important issue. It is a pleasure to bring recognition to one of our family groups which has toiled so long and so hard in support of our servicemen and women. I wish Ann Mills Griffith, Dick Childress and their team a safe and productive visit to Southeast Asia and I look forward to their report upon their return.

A TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE
OLIVER OCASEK

HON. TOM SAWYER

OF OHIO

HON. RALPH REGULA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 1999

Mr. SAWYER. Mr. Speaker, my colleague, Mr. REGULA, and I rise to honor Oliver Ocasek—one of Ohio's most distinguished citizens. On May 20, Oliver Ocasek will receive the YMCA of the USA's Volunteerism Award—the YMCA's highest honor. The YMCA is honoring Ocasek for his more than 50 years of service to youth organizations. We rise today, not only to recognize his deserved selection for this award, but to recognize a lifetime of service to the people of Ohio. Sen. Ocasek's devotion to education extends well beyond his volunteerism with the YMCA. He co-founded the Ohio Hi-Y Youth in Government Model Legislature program with Governor C. William O'Neill in 1952 and supervised it throughout his service on the Ohio-West Virginia Board of the YMCA. He has served on the greater Akron area boards of Goodwill Industries, Shelter Care, and the Salvation Army. He also has been a professional educator in a wide variety of capacities: a teacher, a principal, a school superintendent, and a professor at both the University of Akron and Kent State University. He was instrumental in bringing together our regional institutions of higher learning to create the Northeastern Ohio Universities' College of Medicine. He capped his educational service with three terms on Ohio's State Board of Education.

This breadth of service to youth is impressive by itself. But alone, it does not capture Oliver Ocasek's contribution to the people of Ohio. Oliver Ocasek was one of the most influential legislators in the Statehouse, where he served in the Senate for 28 years from 1958 to 1986. In the 1970's, he became the first Senate President elected by his peers due to a change in the Ohio Constitution. Along with Republican Governor James Rhodes and Democratic House Speaker Vernal Riffe, Sen. Ocasek made many of the decisions to keep state government moving forward. He was an expert on Ohio's complex school funding system and used his knowledge, experience, and position to benefit local students. His enormous influence came from his savvy and from the hard, tedious work of studying, debating, refining, and reaching decisions on difficult and often contentious state issues.

He is astute, well-steeped in history, a gifted orator and a man of heart-felt compassion. Oliver Ocasek's larger-than-life ambitions drove him hard in politics and in civic life in general, not in search of personal gain and glory, but in order to use his talents and positions to care for the least of his brothers and sisters. Last year in the *Akron Beacon Journal*, Sen. Ocasek expressed his philosophy: "Nothing breaks my heart more than for a child to not have parents who care or to not have a chance for a good education. That's been my commitment—my life—to provide a good education for all children." His leadership has inspired tens of thousands of young people touched by his commitment to education and to the YMCA youth programs over the last half-century.

Today, many people disparage public service and doubt that one person can make a difference. Oliver Ocasek would profoundly disagree. And more importantly, his efforts and their recognition by the YMCA are the evidence to the contrary. His service to the people—and particularly the youth—of Ohio shows that, with hard work and commitment, one person can make a difference. And we are grateful for the difference that he has made.

TOP TEACHERS

HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 1999

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I insert the following letters into the RECORD.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 15, 1999.

Ms. CAROL SHESTOK,
Norman E. Day Elementary School,
Westford, Massachusetts.

DEAR MS. SHESTOK: Congratulations on being honored as one of the top teachers in Massachusetts. This is a well deserved reward for your special ability to really make a difference in the lives of your students at Norman E. Day Elementary School in Westford.

Too often, talented teachers go unrewarded for the valid work that they do. That is why I am so pleased that you were deservedly honored for all the attention, care and dedication that you have given to your students.

Again, congratulations on your recent honors.

Sincerely,

MARTY MEEHAN,
Member of Congress.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, April 16, 1999.

Mrs. GAIL FITZGERALD DOWNING,
Tewksbury, Massachusetts.

DEAR MRS. DOWNING: Congratulations on being honored as one of the nation's top 40 teachers through USA Today's annual ALL-USA Teachers Team Award. It is a well deserved tribute to your special ability to really make a difference in the lives of your students at Russell Street Elementary School in Littleton.

Too often, talented teachers go unrewarded for the work that they do. That is why I am so pleased that you were deservedly honored for all the attention, care and dedication that you have given to your students.

Again, congratulations on your recent honors.

Sincerely,

MARTY MEEHAN,
Member of Congress.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE
INTERNET GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1999

HON. RICK BOUCHER

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 1999

Mr. BOUCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my Virginia colleague BOB GOODLATTE, with whom I am privileged to cochair the Congressional Internet Caucus, in the introduction of two bills which taken together will address the major challenges confronting the Internet today.

Heretofore, congressional debates on issues affecting the Internet have been ad hoc and have addressed single issues only. The legislation we are introducing today will provide the first comprehensive framework for debate by the Congress of the major current Internet policy challenges.

The passage of both bills will truly promote the growth and development of the Internet:

First, passage of the legislation will result in greater broadband deployment and an increase in the speed by which people connect to the Internet from their homes and their places of work. Telephone companies will be required to file plans with state public service commissions for the deployment of DSL services in all local exchanges where the deployment is both technologically feasible and economically reasonable. Today, only 50,000 subscribers nationwide have DSL service. Our legislation will result in those numbers increasing dramatically.

We also seek to encourage competition in the provision of DSL services by reducing the regulatory burden on the offering of DSL for telephone companies which agree to make re-conditioned loops for the provision of DSL services available in a timely fashion to competitors.

To ensure an increase in Internet backbone capacity and to stimulate competition in the offering of backbone services, the legislation enables Bell Operating Companies to carry data across LATA boundaries to the extent that the data is not a voice-only service, whether or not the Bell Operating Company has obtained approval to offer inter-LATA services under section 271 of the 1996 Act. This provision will strongly encourage investment in the Internet backbone and the creation of greater competition among Internet backbone providers. That competition is essential to assure the retention of the current peering arrangements which promote low-cost Internet services.

Our legislation gives legal voice to the policies of Internet Service Providers which are designed to protect their facilities from bulk mailings of unsolicited electronic advertisements. Spam can seriously degrade the performance of the Internet and clog the facilities of Internet Access Providers to the disadvantage of all users. In some instances, Internet Service Provider facilities have even crashed due to the onslaught of spam. If service providers have restrictive policies concerning the

use of their facilities by spammers, those policies should be enforced, and our legislation provides the mechanism for the enforcement.

Our legislation also makes it a criminal offense intentionally to falsify Internet domain, header information, date or time stamps, originating e-mail addresses or other e-mail identifiers or intentionally to sell or distribute any computer program which is designed or produced primarily for the purpose of concealing the source of routing information of bulk unsolicited electronic mail. This provision strikes at the practice of bulk e-mailers who through the use of specially designed software change the origination information in e-mail messages as each small cluster of messages is sent. That practice is used to defeat the blocking software of Internet Service Providers which deflects from their facilities large volumes of messages originating from a single source.

The legislation will encourage electronic commerce by giving full authorization to properly authenticated electronic signatures. A variety of laws require a written document with a written signature for the enforceability for certain kinds of contracts. Our legislation will give full legal effect to contracts constructed online and prevent either party from disavowing the contract due to the absence of a physical written signature, if the identity of the contracting parties is properly authenticated and if certainty is created that the text of any document they construct has not been changed. The legislation sets forth specifics for obtaining that authentication.

We propose to create a new right of privacy for Internet users. In response to the growing practice of web site operators of collecting information from web site users either directly through a registration form or indirectly through the implantation of a "cookie" on the user's hard disk, the legislation requires that all web site operators post their information collection and use policies in a conspicuous manner so that web site users will be informed of the information collected and the use to which that information is put and have an opportunity to exit the web site without any information being collected if the visitor objects to that collection and use of information. The provision will be enforced by the Federal Trade Commission.

Finally, we propose to assure that all Americans retain complete freedom to select the Internet access provider of their choice. As the Internet has grown and developed, most Americans have connected to the Internet over telephone lines. While the telephone company has provided the transport, everyone has been free to select the company that will provide the Internet access. Even in instances where telephone companies offer both transport and Internet access services, the law has protected the right of the telephone company's customers to select an Internet access provider other than the telephone company.

Unfortunately, as the cable industry begins the deployment of cable modem services, a different model is being pursued. At the present time, there is no federal law restricting the ability of cable companies to package their transport services and their affiliated Internet access services and require that customers purchasing high-speed transport also purchase the cable company's affiliated Internet access service. The largest cable multiple system operators are, in fact, bundling transport with Internet access and requiring that the af-

filiated Internet access services be purchased by cable modem customers.

There are more than 2,000 Internet access providers nationwide. The vast majority of the ISPs are startup companies who have brought a new level of entrepreneurship to the telecommunications industry. Many of them will become the competitive local exchange carriers who will offer competition not only in the provision of Internet access, but in the offering of local telephone service and other telecommunications services as well. They will be important contributors to the competitive local exchange industry we envisioned when we wrote the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

But these ISPs are severely threatened by the deployment by cable television companies of broadband Internet transport connections which also bundle affiliated Internet access services. The broad bandwidth of these services will surely attract a large clientele, much of which will be the existing customer base of independent ISPs.

If the cable television companies are permitted to force their cable modem customers to purchase their affiliated Internet access services as a condition of subscribing to their high speed transport service, many independent ISPs will be foreclosed from a large portion of their existing customer base and from market growth opportunities. The legislation we are offering today assures that this anticompetitive practice will not occur and that all Internet transport platforms in the future will be open, much as telephone company transport platforms are open today.

I am pleased to be participating on a bipartisan basis with Representative GOODLATTE in offering this legislation, the enactment of which will assure that the Internet more rapidly achieves its potential to be the multimedia platform of choice for the delivery of voice, video and data.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE INTERNET FREEDOM ACT OF 1999

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 1999

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the introduction of the Internet Freedom Act of 1999. This bipartisan legislative initiative, which I am introducing along with Congressman BOUCHER of Virginia, addresses the challenge that face the Internet by building on the strengths that have made the Internet the major engine of growth and development in the new Information Age. The legislation ensures that the qualities that have provided the explosive growth of the Internet in recent years will continue into the new millennium. The initiative addresses the crucial challenges currently facing the Internet and its future: providing freedom from burdensome government regulation, ensuring consumer choice through open competition, and protecting consumer-friendly open access to the Internet.

The Internet is currently at a crossroads. One path continues to encourage the principles mentioned above: freedom, competition, and consumer choice. The other path, which is looming on the horizon, is characterized by heavy government regulation, limited competition, higher prices and less choice for con-

sumers. Following this path could mean that any company with market power can restrict the ability of businesses to compete on the Internet, and the ability of consumers to access the Internet provider and content of their choice could be subject to the control of a single company. The Internet as we know it—open, competitive, and easily available to consumers—will cease to exist. That path, unfortunately, is the one we are following now.

Congress must act now to ensure that the qualities that made the Internet a revolutionary tool for both business and users—deregulation, competition, and easy consumer access—remain fundamental components of the Internet for future generations. The Internet Freedom Act accomplishes this by achieving three goals.

The first goal of the Internet Freedom Act is deregulation: the bill gets the FCC out of the business of regulating the Internet. It accomplishes this by eliminating existing FCC regulations that are inhibiting the development and rollout of certain types of broadband Internet service in non-urban and rural areas.

Broadband technology is up to twenty times faster than the old modems used for Internet access, and can be compared to the old "T-1" telephone lines offered for \$1,000 a month, but at a fraction of the cost. In some areas, it is now possible to obtain broadband Internet service, in a variety of forms, for as low as \$40 a month. The development of broadband technology has the potential to not only make fast Internet access available to consumers and small businesses, but to make it affordable as well.

The FCC is currently ignoring its responsibility under the Telecommunications Act of 1996 to provide regulatory relief to incumbent phone companies by removing existing regulations on data traffic that were originally intended to encourage competition in voice traffic. The FCC regulations currently prohibit the incumbent phone companies from competing in the Internet backbone market. The "backbone" is the very high speed, high capacity lines that crisscross the country linking major cities. Existing suppliers of Internet backbone are simply unable to keep up with the demand for high speed, high capacity backbone bandwidth. They also have little incentives to invest in many parts of the country that are far away from the main backbone routes. Our legislation would allow local phone companies into the backbone market, increasing competition and lowering prices for businesses and consumers.

In addition, many areas of the country are located far from these backbone pipes (often but not exclusively in rural areas). Traffic from these areas must be hauled to the closest backbone connection point (often miles away) and the connections used for this are of much smaller capacity than those on the backbone. More backbone investment will mean that more facilities will eventually become available in more places than ever before. Local phone companies and others may be able to justify building major connection points to the Internet in more locations, allowing traffic to be aggregated by ISPs and encouraging the build-out of more connections closer to customers. This will make it possible for more customers to be able to access the Internet without being required to make a long distance call.

The second goal the Internet Freedom Act accomplishes is freedom of competition: One