

for more than six decades. I extend to them my sincerest congratulations and gratitude.

RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY
AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN LAOS

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 1999

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to introduce legislation that calls for democracy, free elections and basic human rights in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. This important resolution reaffirms and promotes our commitment to free and fair elections and basic human rights standards for the Lao people, especially the Lao-Hmong. While United States forces have departed Southeast Asia, the plight of the Lao-Hmong inside of Laos must not be forgotten.

The continuous allegations of persecution and abuse of the Lao people, especially the Lao-Hmong, must not be overlooked. The United States must investigate these allegations promptly. Lao-Hmong families are reported to be threatened daily under the Communist regime in Laos. We must focus public attention to address such allegations in attempt to finally bring a halt to this persecution.

I would like to remind my Colleagues that the service and contributions of the Lao-Hmong patriots had a major impact on achieving today's global order and the positive changes of the past decades. Extreme sacrifices were made by the Lao-Hmong in the jungles and in the highlands, whether in uniform or in the common clothing of the laborer. Thousands of U.S. soldier's lives were spared because of the Lao-Hmong patriots' support and help as they fought along side the United States forces in the Vietnam War. For their efforts, the Lao-Hmong deserve our thanks, our shelter and certainly fundamental human rights, freedoms, responsibility of democracy and openly-contested free and fair elections that will establish the right to self-determination in Laos.

Despite frequent statements about its commitment to the enforcement of human rights standards in the country, the Laotian government's actual practices deviate from such important principles. The Government may have learned to "talk the talk" and make paper promises, but they must be held accountable to "walk the walk." On a daily basis, the government violates the civil and political rights of Laotian citizens by denying them the basic freedoms of speech, assembly, and association. According to the State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1998, the Laotian government has only slowly eased restrictions on basic freedoms and continues to significantly restrict the freedoms of speech, assembly and religion.

Moreover, Amnesty International reports that serious problems persist in the human rights record of the Government of Laos. Such reports include the continued detention of political prisoners and the treatment of such prisoners in a manner that is degrading, abusive and inhumane. In February of this year, one political prisoner, Thongsouk Saysanghi, died in a remote prison camp in Laos. In addition, an unknown number of other political prisoners still remain inside of Laotian prisons.

Amnesty International has made repeated appeals to the Lao authorities to improve the conditions of the detentions of the prisoners. Such appeals have been ignored, resulting in this tragic death. That Thongsouk died and the unknown number of other prisoners still remain to be left in such critical conditions in the face of these many expressions of concern highlights not only the Lao Government's complete lack of care of its political prisoners, but its contempt for the opinion of the international community.

Specifically, my resolution calls upon the Laotian government to respect international norms of human rights and democratic freedoms as embodied in its constitution and international agreements; issue a public statement specifically reaffirming its commitment to protecting religious freedom and other basic human rights, fully institute a process of democracy, human rights openly and free and fair elections in Laos, and specifically ensures that the National Assembly elections, currently scheduled for 2002, are openly contested; and allow access for international human rights monitors, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and Amnesty International inside of Lao prisons and all regions of the country to investigate allegations of human rights abuse, especially those against the Lao-Hmong, when requested.

The United States must continue to ask the tough questions and not accept a blissful lack of knowledge as satisfactory. My resolution builds upon similar Senate action last Congress and amendments, which I have authored, that have been added to the State Department Authorization in previous House action, but have not been enacted into law due to other matters. Much more needs to be done in regards to this matter. U.S. policy and law must be changed if we expect results. Congress must ensure that the Lao Government is held accountable for their actions and inactions. Importantly, Laos is seeking normal trade and diplomatic relations with the United States and the global community. But, the policy and conduct of the Laotian government in regards to human rights must be transparent prior to putting in place such political and economic policy. We owe the people of Laos the moral obligation to remain diligent to their human rights circumstance and plight.

HONORING AND RECOGNIZING
SLAIN LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

SPEECH OF

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 11, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Police Memorial Week. It is a time when the citizens of the United States join the families, friends and colleagues of our Nation's slain peace officers, to honor and remember the sacrifices they have made.

On September 24, 1789, Congress created the first federal law enforcement officer, the United States Marshal. Five years later, on January 11th, 1794, U.S. Marshal Robert Forsyth became the first officer, in a long list of men and women who have given their lives

to protect and serve the communities of their beloved Nation. Since then, over 14,000 officers have died in the line of duty, including over 1,000 from the State of New York. The city of New York has lost more officers than any other department in the Nation, with more than 500 deaths. These heroes must never be forgotten, and their sacrifice must serve as a reminder that the price of a safer America, an America based on law and order, is being paid for by the blood and lives of our police officers.

Although our Nation's crime rate is at its lowest level in years, on average, one law enforcement office is killed somewhere in America nearly every other day. Over the past ten years, America has lost one police officer every 54 hours; over 1,500 men and women. Already in 1999, forty officers have given their lives in the line of duty, a poignant reminder that crime reduction comes at a stiff price.

Police Memorial Week is a time to remind us that when a police officer is killed, it is not a city that loses an officer, it is an entire nation. We must believe that the senseless murders and crimes against our Nation's bravest men and women will one day stop; until then we will do everything we can in order to remember and honor all of the law enforcement officers who have ever given their lives.

I would like to take this opportunity to recite the names of those fallen heroes from New York, who, in the name of duty, gave their lives over the past two years: Chief Constable Norman E. Carr Jr., Officer Robert McLellan, Officer Sean Carrington, Officer Gerard Carter, Officer Anthony Mosomillo, and Officer Matthew Dzriegowski. I would also like us to remember an officer from my congressional district Vincent Guidice of Stony Point, NY., who died in the line of duty on May 22nd, 1996. To our fallen officers, we express our Nation's gratitudes.

In your spirit, I will continue to fight for those laws that provide our Nation's peace officers with the tools needed to fulfill their mandate of making our communities a safer place in which to live.

I urge all Americans to visit the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington. It is a tribute to the dedicated service of our law enforcement officers and their distinguished service and sacrifice.

SUPPORT THE VETERANS SEXUAL
TRAUMA TREATMENT ACT

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 1999

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to make permanent the sexual trauma counseling and treatment services offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Veterans Sexual Trauma Treatment Act, which I also introduced during the 105th Congress, will enable more former military personnel who were subjected to sexual harassment or abuse during their military service to receive proper medical and psychological care.

A high incidence of sexual harassment and assault cases in the military have been reported in the past several years. While some of these cases have gained national attention,

many more have gone unreported. What is often not discussed is the issue of treatment and counseling for the victims of these offenses. The current law does not provide medical and counseling services for victims of these abuses. The Veterans Sexual Trauma Treatment Act would permanently authorize sexual trauma and treatment for active military personnel, reservists and national guard personnel. My bill would also require the VA to report to Congress regarding the use of sexual trauma programs and their collaborative efforts with the Department of Defense to educate and inform our armed forces personnel about sexual trauma programs at VA facilities.

Mr. Speaker, a greater number of women are entering the military each year. These services are needed. I am hopeful that my colleagues will join me by supporting this bill. I look forward to working with them to provide all veterans with the health care they have earned and deserve.

A TRIBUTE TO ALEXANDER FRIEDMAN

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 1999

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to salute a resident of New York who currently serves our country as a White House Fellow—Alexander Friedman.

Mr. Friedman is one of just 17 individuals nationwide to receive the White House Fellowship this year. Established in 1965, the fellowship allows outstanding citizens to participate in a once-in-a-lifetime experience by working hand-in-hand with leaders in government. Applicants are chosen based on demonstration of excellence in community service, academic achievement, leadership and professional experience. It is the nation's most prestigious fellowship for public service and leadership development.

Alexander Friedman co-founded Adventa.com, an Internet firm that provides business-to-business marketing information. He also founded Accelerated Clinical, a biotechnology service company dedicated to accelerating the clinical trial process for biotechnology firms. He earned his BA in politics from Princeton University and a JD/MBA from Columbia University. Mr. Friedman is also a founder of the 21st Century Roundtable, his generation's first civic venture-capital non-profit group. The organization pairs young leaders of non-profits with young professionals who can provide advice, services and financing. He has maintained his commitment to civic duties by founding Climb for the Cure, a national student effort that raised \$1 million for AIDS research through a climb of Alaska's Mt. McKinley, and also by serving as a small-claims court and family mediator in Harlem and the South Bronx. His tireless efforts on behalf of the people of New York have earned him the honor of becoming a recipient of such a competitive fellowship.

As a White House Fellow, Mr. Friedman has been assigned to the Department of Defense. In this capacity, he serves as acting policy co-

ordinator for the Cooperative Threat Reduction Office in the weapons protection, security and accounting effort, which is charged with protecting nuclear warheads in the former Soviet Union. He also analyzes and organizes the Department's and U.S. government's inter-agency assets to best respond to threats from Weapons of Mass Destruction. Further, Mr. Friedman created a prototype for the first Military-Business Leadership Fellowship and undertook a Marine Corps-wide analysis of organizational mission and implementation procedures.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize Alexander Friedman on the floor of the House of Representatives for his accomplishments and for being chosen to participate in the White House Fellowship Program. I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing Alexander Friedman many more years of success.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BOB RILEY

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 1999

Mr. RILEY. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained for the vote on final passage of H.R. 755 (rollcall 128). Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

A TRIBUTE TO FLORENCE WHITE

HON. DAVID D. PHELPS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 1999

Mr. PHELPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an outstanding citizen of Illinois' 19th District; Flora White. I would like to recognize Florence White for her years of dedicated service in the Macon County Schools, as well as her everlasting interest and hard work in preserving the history of Macon County.

Florence has very deep roots in Macon County. She is a direct descendant of William Warnick, who was the first sheriff of Macon County. Her great-grandfather, William Austin, helped plot the city of Decatur.

It is clear why Florence has been honored for this important recognition. She started her teaching career in 1924, presiding over several one-room schools in Macon County. In 1955, she was appointed assistant superintendent in charge of elementary education in the Lakeview unit district. She subsequently became principal in the Brush College #2 School and Spence School. She frequently taught in the Macon County Historical Society's Salem one-room schoolhouse in the Society's Prairie Village. Florence is the author of "Rural Schools of Macon County" and "Memorial Windows." She has received numerous awards from Decatur philanthropic organizations. Florence received her masters degree from Millikin University.

Florence's life has been dedicated to the achievement of excellence in education and the preservation of the history and heritage of

Macon County. For these reasons, I ask my colleagues to please join me in acknowledging a great American and Illinoian, Mrs. Florence White.

HONORING WEST POINT CADET ALISON JONES

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to honor the heroism of West Point Cadet 1st Class Alison M. Jones.

I was present at a recent dress parade at West Point when Cadet Jones was awarded the Soldier's Medal, the Army's highest peacetime award for bravery. According to the award citation, Cadet Jones was awarded the medal for "heroism above and beyond the call of duty following the terrorist bombing of the United States Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, on 7 August 1998."

Cadet Jones was spending the summer interning in Kenya just a few blocks away from the embassy. Despite being nearly knocked down by the explosion, she rushed to the American Embassy and entered, searching for survivors and helping recover human remains. On her own initiative, she then "established a check point to control entry into the embassy and facilitate the restoration of security and the organization of rescue efforts."

In her search for victims, Cadet Jones discovered a Kenyan man whose leg had been crushed as a result of the explosion. She used pieces of a ceiling beam to make a splint for him and kept him calm so he would not pass out.

Cadet Jones is the first female West Point cadet to be awarded the Soldier's Medal, which was established in 1922 by the War Department to recognize acts of bravery committed during peacetime. While several West Point cadets have received the award, Ms. Jones is the first since 1992. The Soldier's Medal is amongst the highest honors that can be bestowed upon an individual, as the level of bravery the medal honors is equal to that needed to win the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Cadet Jones, 21, is a native of Baltimore, Maryland. Upon graduation, she plans to join the widely-deployed military police. This will allow her even more opportunities to exhibit her courage.

On May 29, 1999, West Point will graduate its final class of the 20th century. The sort of bravery exemplified by Cadet Jones is precisely what West Point training promotes. Actions such as those taken by Cadet Jones will enable our military forces to maintain their strong posture well into the next century.

While Cadet Jones' modesty may lead one to believe that her life-saving efforts were not unusual, it is obvious that such heroism is indeed extraordinary. Her leadership is to be honored and commended, not just through the presentation of the Soldier's Medal, but by a recognition of her efforts by all my colleagues today.