

second, because they are so vibrant, they are so alive, they are so quizzical, they are so questioning, all over the country. I have had the privilege of being at the University of Maine and the University of San Diego State. I have had the opportunity to visit Gonzaga University and the University of Miami. So it is spread across the country, and all of them, all of them, are interesting. They are all worth spending some time with. I would encourage that.

I would hope that we, wherever we go and whatever we say and do, will have the grace to glorify this institution, so human, so imperfect, and yet so fraught with great opportunities, to uphold its standards and defend its honor, so often attacked, so frequently misunderstood, to the end that there might be a better and firmer appreciation of this hallowed form of government that was endowed by those who wrote our Constitution. Because I am convinced that, with all of its faults and flaws and human imperfections, it still is, just as it was in Abraham Lincoln's time, and may it forever remain, the last, best hope of earth.

Thank you for this great honor.

Mr. MCHUGH. It is very clear that Jim Wright is as eloquent with his second jaw as he was with his first.

Jim, we are truly proud of you and take joy in your being with us today and giving us the opportunity to honor you for your many years of service.

I would like at this point sort of extra-record to invite our former distinguished minority leader and friend, Bob Michel, to say a word.

Mr. MICHEL. Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, thank you so much for the opportunity to say just a few things, particularly prompted by our Association's giving the award this year to our former Speaker, Jim Wright. When I got the notice of it, I thought there could be no better choice and am so appreciative he has been so well received and under the conditions.

I tell you, I have been privy to several of the columns that Jim has written, very descriptive, and they move you just about to emotional tears with his eloquence.

I hope those of you who have not yet maybe had the opportunity to express your feelings in the letters that we find in the book that we have given Jim that you will do that. You can always add letters to that. It is a nice package of mementoes to keep.

You know with what sincerity Jim appeared here today with his very nice remarks, and I just want to join in congratulating him and the Association, particularly, for their choice in selecting our former Speaker to receive this honor today.

Thank you again. Jim, all the best to you.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you very much, Bob. Thanks to all of you for being with us today and participating, especially since it was a special opportunity to honor Jim Wright.

We have a program for the rest of the day. We hope that many of you will be able to participate in it. Of course, tonight we have our dinner.

So, again, thank you for being with us. This does conclude the 29th Annual Report of the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress. Thank you.

Mr. ERLBORN (presiding). The Chair again wishes to thank the members of the United States Association of Former Members of Congress for their presence here today.

Before terminating these proceedings, the Chair would like to invite any former Members who did not respond when the role was called to give their names to the reading clerks for inclusion on the role. Good luck to you all.

The Chair announces that the House will reconvene at 10:45 a.m.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 28 minutes a.m.), the House continued in recess.

□ 1047

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS) at 10 o'clock and 47 minutes a.m.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 669. An act to amend the Peace Corps Act to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2000 through 2003 to carry out that Act, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 101-509, the Chair, on behalf of the Secretary of the Senate, announces the appointment of James B. Lloyd, of Tennessee, to the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress.

#### PRINTING OF PROCEEDINGS HAD DURING RECESS

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the proceedings had during the recess be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and that all Members and former Members who spoke during the recess have the privilege of revising and extending their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

#### SUPPORT TAKE-HOME PAY INCREASE FOR AMERICANS

(Mr. KNOLLENBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, this year Federal taxes will consume almost 22 percent of the Gross Domestic Product, which means the Federal tax burden is at an all-time high.

With the economy strong and the Federal Government running a surplus, there is no excuse for taxing the American people at a higher rate than was needed to win World War II.

On the opening day of the 106th Congress, I introduced a bill to cut taxes across the board by 10 percent. The plan is the fairest and the simplest way to cut taxes because it benefits everybody who pays Federal income taxes.

An across-the-board tax cut would save the average American family some \$1,000 a year, money they can use for anything, for a down payment on a home, or to put aside for retirement. Either way, I know it would be better spent and better used by the family who earned it than by the Washington bureaucrat who yearns for it.

I urge my colleagues to support this common sense plan and increase the take-home pay of all Americans.

#### TRIBUTE TO NATION'S POLICE OFFICERS

(Ms. SANCHEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute the police officers of this Nation, especially those of the 46th Congressional District of California, Orange County police officers.

Seven hundred thousand police officers serve the United States each day. Most Americans probably do not know that our Nation loses on an average one officer every other day. That does not include the ones that are assaulted and injured each year.

More than 14,000 officers have been killed in the line of duty. The sacrifice for California officers is the greatest: 1,205.

The calling to serve in law enforcement comes with bravery and sacrifice. The thin blue line protecting our homes, our businesses, our families, our communities pay a price. So do the loved ones that they leave behind when the tragedy strikes.

We cannot replace the officers we lose. We cannot bring them back to their families or departments. All we can do is grieve their loss.

Today we fulfill the most solemn part of our obligation to America's police officers. We promise that, when they do make the sacrifice, that he or she earns a place of the highest national distinction and respect from the United States Government.

#### TRIBUTE TO DUANE MASENGILL, FAVORITE TEACHER

(Mr. ARMEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, last week was Teacher Appreciation Week, and I missed my opportunity to pay my respect to a favorite teacher we have in my district in Coppell, Texas. Duane Masengill teaches world geography and current events.

Duane drives 25 miles to work every day. While that puts an extra burden on his family, his wife Jennifer says she does not mind because he is so happy doing what he does.

I have had the opportunity to visit Duane and his students. I have seen the rapport he has with his students.

Duane, while you still need a haircut, and I think the youngsters will agree with me, you are in fact a devoted teacher.

I always believe that we can tell a great deal about the quality of the effort, the quality of the commitment made by a teacher when we see the quality of morale and preparation when we stand before a classroom. Duane's students are always bright, energetic, enthusiastic, and able. They quiz us hard.

So, Duane, let me just say congratulations. Some people spend a lifetime building a career. You are spending a career building lifetimes.

#### BRING GOD BACK TO OUR SCHOOLS AND OUR NATION

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, a Federal court ruled in Texas that a school program that allowed clergy that counsel troubled students was unconstitutional. Another Federal court ruled that a Florida policy of allowing prayer at graduation ceremonies was unconstitutional. Unbelievable.

These book-smart, street-stupid judges better look in the mirror of a troubled America, because it is clear, students can be counseled by convicts in our schools, not clergy. Students can read about devil worship, not God. Students can burn a flag at a school, but cannot say a prayer. Beam me up.

It is time to amend the Constitution of this country and not only bring God back into the schools, but bring God back into our Nation.

#### MARRIAGE IS A GOOD THING; ABOLISH MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

(Mr. SCHAFFER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, marriage is a good thing. This Congress has an historic opportunity to do something it should have done long ago, abolish the marriage tax penalty.

Many young couples are surprised to learn the government actually penalizes people for getting married an average of \$1,400 per year for middle income families.

The people have long known the government does a lot of foolish things. Even liberals have to admit the government has thousands of stupid taxes and regulations, programs that actually make things worse instead of better, and inefficiencies that seem to be immune to reform.

The marriage tax penalty is just so wrong that it stands among the ugliest symbols of everything wrong about a government that is too big, too arrogant, and too oblivious to the concerns of the average people who struggle every day to get ahead, make ends meet, and raise their children in peace.

Why does the government make it so much harder for people who want to get married? I urge Members on both sides of the aisle to right this terrible wrong. It is high time we abolish the tax on marriage.

#### IN HONOR OF CZECH REPUBLIC AND POLAND FOR CONDEMNING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN CUBA

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, tonight the Cuban American community honors the Czech Republic and Poland for their recent successful efforts to condemn the ongoing human rights violations in Cuba before the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

The Czech President said recently that both the Czechs and the Cubans encountered similar political fates, suffering the multiple adverse effects of the same ideology still advanced by the government of Cuba.

The Center for a Free Cuba event tonight will also serve to commemorate Cuban independence, which will be celebrated during the month of May, and the role of women in the struggle for freedom in Cuba.

Because of that, Elena Diaz Verson Amos will be honored for her commitment to the cause of freedom and democracy and human rights.

I urge my colleagues to join us tonight at 6 p.m. in room 106 of the Dirksen building for the Center for Free Cuba reception.

#### NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE

(Mr. WICKER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, as Members of Congress, we have an obligation to report that the United States is vulnerable to a missile attack. That is right. Some of the world's most dangerous and unstable dictatorships are developing weapons which could reach the United States mainland.

The bipartisan Rumsfeld Commission has said we could soon face a missile strike with little or no warning. Yet, our President is still reluctant to act on this important issue.

The North Korean missile tests last summer forced administration officials to admit grudgingly that this threat is real. But the President's response has been weak. It includes support for only a limited ground-based system with questionable value. The administration also worries that a defense shield might violate the ABM Treaty, the same pact the Soviets violated for years.

Mr. Speaker, each day we delay, the threat of a missile attack increases. Congress is taking action to deploy an effective missile defense system. I urge the President to join us in addressing this critical matter of national security.

#### NATIONAL POLICE OFFICERS WEEK

(Mr. FOSSELLA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, this is National Police Officers Week. I rise today to pay tribute and offer my thanks to the law enforcement officers throughout our Nation who stand at the front line protecting the American people.

These brave men and women risk their lives every day so that our community may be safe, that our children, parents, and grandparents need not live in fear of criminals.

All too often, we see the tragic consequences that come with such awesome responsibility. Hundreds of times each year, America is forced to confront the horror that one of our finest has lost his or her life.

We mourned as a Nation last year when two officers who worked right here, Officers Gibson and Chestnut, were killed trying to protect innocent tourists when a madman entered the United States Capitol with his guns blazing.

Where I live, on Staten Island, we experienced loss twice last year, and our community still grieves for Police Officer Sal Mosomillio and Officer Gerald Carter, both of whom made the ultimate sacrifice.

I can use words like hero, courage and bravery to describe these two men, but the truth is that no words can truly do them justice. In fact, I think both officers would be embarrassed by such descriptions because, in their minds, they were only doing their job.

The same could be said of Police Officer Matthew Dziergowski, a dedicated official who was killed earlier this year and has left one son and his wife who was pregnant at the time he lost his life.

Mr. Speaker, the New York City Police Department right now and the men and women who serve our city every day are under constant attack. The morale is at an all-time low. But let them know and let them stand assured that there are a lot of people out there who appreciate the job they do, the