

fully realize your potential, you can have it all. They did, Mr. Speaker. They fought very, very hard.

The championship of our women's soccer team won on the field in competition this weekend was more than a feel-good athletic victory but a victory for American women everywhere. From Liberty City in my district to Houston, to Los Angeles, the lives and hopes of young women everywhere have been expanded and transformed by a new set of American heroes, real-life role models who are confident, strong and female.

Their victory, however, was not just a victory for one team but a victory for all girls and all women and a victory for all America. And the culmination of a very long process, of title IX. Not too long ago, people said women athletics was perhaps a waste of time and money, that women could not perform. This victory shows, Mr. Speaker, that all that was needed for women was the opportunity to compete on an equal level.

I am a former athlete, Mr. Speaker. I ran track and played basketball in college more than a few years ago. I know the importance of role models in life and sports. I had outstanding role models like Lua Bartley and Babe Minor. Now, Mr. Speaker, little girls and women all across America have a new set of real-life American role models who are driven, determined, aggressive, tough and committed. That is our United States 1999 women's national soccer team.

This weekend's victory was a coming of age for women. In a real sense, it is something you cannot touch or you cannot quantify. Because little girls all over the world, Mr. Speaker, saw strong, independent and capable women playing soccer these past 3 weeks, they will realize that they are not crazy for wanting to do something out of the ordinary, to excel themselves in athletics. They are saying to themselves, "If they can play soccer and win, I can be a CEO of a Fortune 500 company."

Thank God for all of the dedicated soccer moms, Mr. Speaker, in this country that have driven their girls back and forth to rehearsal over and over again. May they continue to provide the continued support that fosters World Cup winners.

I am proud of our women's soccer team and what they have done for our national psyche and for the psyche of Americans from coast to coast. Girl power and the power of women, Mr. Speaker, live on.

IN MEMORY OF ASTRONAUT CHARLES "PETE" CONRAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, 20 years ago today, the NASA space laboratory Skylab fell to the earth in a

rain of blue, red and orange fire over the Indian Ocean in Australia. I rise today to honor the memory of an astronaut who largely contributed to the success of that program.

Charles "Pete" Conrad, who died last Thursday in a motorcycle accident at the age of 69, began service to his country as a U.S. Navy aviator after graduating from Princeton with an engineering degree. It continued when he was selected as a member of NASA's second class of nine astronauts. He flew on two Gemini missions, setting a space flight endurance record on Gemini 5, and commanded Gemini 11 which docked with another spacecraft, leading the way to the Apollo missions.

He is best known, though, for the distinction of being the third man to walk on the Moon. Apollo 11 captured the world's imagination, but the mission missed its landing site by several miles. Commander Conrad's mission proved that not only could we go to the moon but we can land on our target. This mission goal was essential if any scientific exploration of the moon was going to take place. Unlocking the mysteries that the moon presents requires the ability to excavate specific sites. Apollo 12 and Pete Conrad proved this to be possible.

Five years later, when Skylab was launched into orbit atop a Saturn V rocket, major damage was sustained which would have to be repaired in space if the microgravity laboratory program was to be useful. Pete Conrad answered the call to duty on the first manned mission to the space station. He and his crew mates repaired the damage in three exhaustive EVAs in addition to conducting a number of other experiments over the 3 weeks they spent aboard the station.

When he left NASA, Pete Conrad was never far away. His enterprising spirit took him into the fertile environment of the commercial space industry, first with McDonnell Douglas and then on his own with Universal Space Lines and several sister companies. The visionary Pete Conrad recognized that it will be up to private industry to truly open the commercial markets of space, so he created companies to design reusable launch vehicles and build ground tracking systems, with the goal of making it easier, cheaper and safer to put people and equipment into space.

Through my work on the Committee on Science, I had the pleasure of meeting Pete Conrad, as a matter of fact, most recently several months ago. I have always been impressed by the force of his personality. He seemed to exemplify the maxim of "attitude is altitude." At 5 feet 6 inches, Pete Conrad personified this quip with his eye toward enterprise and adventure.

□ 1915

Though highly regarded as a truly terrific pilot, he had a reputation as a joker. Upon setting foot on the Moon, he cheered, "Whoopee, that may have been a small one for Neil, but that's a long one for me."

Just last year he joked that he looked forward to his 77th birthday saying, "I fully expect that NASA will send me back to the Moon as they treated Senator Glenn, and if they don't do so, why then I will have to do it myself."

The life of Charles P. Conrad, Jr., serves as an example of the patriotism and sense of adventure that sets the United States apart and makes us all, as Americans, unique. I am proud to have known him in life, I honor him in death, and I marvel, as we all do, at his legacy.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 2448

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce H.R. 2448, a bill to restore fairness to our immigration system. Family reunification is a fundamental principle of U.S. immigration law. Another key principle gives American citizens priority over non-citizens when they seek to bring their relatives here.

Most of the time, Americans get their petitions handled first.

But an aberration arises when Americans seek to bring their unmarried sons and daughters here from the Philippines. In this case, U.S. citizens wait several years longer than legal residents.

The Department of State reports that such U.S. citizen petitions are backlogged to October 1, 1987, while legal resident petitions are backlogged only to August 1, 1992, a difference of five years. The law was never designed to make citizens wait longer than legal residents, and we must correct this problem.

Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleagues to imagine how devastating it is to achieve American citizenship, only to find that this move significantly postpones your own child's visa. It is a heartbreaking task to have to inform constituents of this sad fact.

My bill fixes this irregularity. Simply put, it ensures that a legal resident who files for a son or daughter to immigrate will not have to wait longer for his children to arrive after he gains U.S. citizenship.

U.S. citizenship is a great honor. By passing H.R. 2448, we can ensure that it remains a great privilege as well. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

H.R. 2448

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PREVENTING IMMIGRANTS FROM WAITING LONGER FOR IMMIGRANT VISAS AS A RESULT OF RECLASSIFICATION FROM FAMILY SECOND PREFERENCE TO FAMILY FIRST PREFERENCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 203 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1153) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(h) ASSURING IMMIGRANTS DO NOT HAVE TO WAIT LONGER FOR AN IMMIGRANT VISA AS A RESULT OF RECLASSIFICATION FROM FAMILY SECOND PREFERENCE TO FAMILY FIRST PREFERENCE.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in the case of a petition that has been approved to accord preference status under subsection (a)(2)(A) may be deemed to

provide continued entitlement to status under that subsection in the case of any alien petitioner who is subsequently naturalized as a United States citizen, if a visa is not immediately available to the beneficiary under subsection (a)(1)."

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) takes effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and applies to petitions filed before, on, or after such date, without regard to when an alien petitioner was naturalized as a citizen of the United States.

REPUBLICANS IN CHARGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFFER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, returning today after a week-long Fourth of July district work period, I had an opportunity over that break to meet with so many Coloradans who celebrated the 223rd anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the launching of our great Nation. Many of those individuals look forward to the future of our country with great hope and optimism for some who are disturbed somewhat by the tenor of the political process here in Washington, D.C., and that was emphasized perhaps most dramatically just this morning before I hopped on the plane to come back to Washington.

I held a town meeting, as I do every Monday morning half the distance between Fort COLLINS and Loveland in my district. It allows constituents an opportunity to meet and discuss over breakfast the many issues facing us, but there was a woman who stood up and commented on a remark that she had seen, and I had seen it as well in the media, about a colleague of ours here in the House from the Democrat side of the aisle, said that there was a Member of the minority party, saw no reason for the Democrats to cooperate or to compromise or to work with the majority party in Congress; that it would be to their political advantage to see a Congress that did nothing.

Well, it is the kind of disturbing comment that I think strikes most Americans as unfortunate certainly, and they are hoping that there are those who are willing to stand up in spite of those kinds of sentiments and lead the country regardless.

The rantings of Democrats might lead one to believe Congress is doing nothing important, but important things are being accomplished despite Democrat opposition and liberal stonewalling.

As my colleagues know, 7 months having passed since the bizarre series of events and criminal denials leading to the second impeachment of a sitting President, America is still reeling from its bewildering constitutional exercise. Self-serving claims of our liberal counterparts to the contrary, Mr. Speaker, America does not suffer a do-nothing Congress.

Still, the several important Republican accomplishments seem to have

been lost on the morass of most pathetic adventures at the White House. Much of the distraction can clearly be blamed on the unfortunate slide further into the gutter of a darkening American political culture. Months of intense persistence and live impeachment news coverage coupled with round-the-clock, Hollywood-style political analysis by neophyte pundits has cast a warped and unhealthy light on this Congress.

Mr. Speaker, our democratic republic needs and craves active participation by citizens who earnestly care about our future, and now more than ever this pursuit must emanate from a genuine desire to secure a better America to ensure a stronger republic and honor those brave men and women who lived and died defending our great country.

What we saw in 1998, however, was a sort of Jerry Springer show meets C-Span where the American people were given front row seats and encouraged to cheer whenever one politician threw furniture at another. To be sure, certain politicians supplied ample fodder for these exhibitions, and many I confess contributed directly to the further denigration of American politics. But there were many more in Congress who dutifully fulfilled their constitutional responsibility and took very seriously their oaths to preserve and protect our republic. These are the same Members who, despite the frenzied pressure and ridicule of the Oval Office and the media, advanced the vitally important process of governing.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans can be proud. Our proposals to deliver a balanced budget are on schedule, including a much-needed replenishment of our national defense and programs. Republicans are also spearheading education initiatives to return autonomy to parents and States in managing their schools; and biggest of all, we have passed the balanced budget blueprint saving Social Security and Medicare while still providing much-needed tax relief for American families and their businesses.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the balanced budget amendment resolution, H.J. Res. 1, which I introduced on the first day of the 106th Congress, will constitutionally bind the government to spending no more than it collects in Federal revenues. Republicans will keep spending in line to allow us to begin paying down the massive debt accrued over 40 years of Democrat taxing and spending policies.

But despite the surreal Clintonesque atmosphere which perverted the current political order in Washington, Mr. Speaker, there remain committed Republicans, loyal hard-working Americans who are legitimately concerned for our country and who wish to see it move forward for the good of our children. Our challenge now is to lead the rest of America to abandon Jerry Springer politics in favor of the same common sense and divine providence upon which our Founders relied when

they launched the greatest republic in the history of human civilization.

PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MOORE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to express my support for a Patients' Bill of Rights act in the strongest and most personal terms. I have been in office less than 200 days, and I have grown tired of explaining to my constituents why this Congress does not want to extend basic rights and protections to patients in this country.

One of my constituents who suffers from ovarian cancer was refused surgery by her HMO on the grounds that the surgery was experimental, although this particular procedure had a greater success rate than other procedures approved by the HMO.

And on a more personal basis, my wife about 4 years ago was told by her physician she needed surgery. We scheduled an appointment with her physician, and he happened to be a high school classmate of mine and treated my wife for about 14 years. During the conference with her physician, I asked the doctor what needed to be done to accomplish the surgery, and he told me that it would be simple.

Number one, we just needed to schedule surgery, and number two, he would write a letter to her insurance company in California and get authorization for this surgery. Well, he wrote the letter, and 6 days later he got back a letter from the insurance company saying:

Dear Dr. Sullivan, before we approve this surgery and authorize payment for this surgery, we want you to do this test and this test and this test.

Dr. Sullivan was furious about this letter back from the insurance company because essentially it was his attitude that she was, my wife was his patient. Everything this insurance company knew about my wife's case was from medical records provided by Dr. Sullivan to this insurance company in California, and yet they were trying to tell him how to practice medicine in Kansas.

After about 5 months of wrangling back and forth, finally there was approval and authorization for this surgery, and it worked out fine. But the point is every time I tell this story back in my district, I see heads nod in the crowd because people have had a similar experience with an insurance company; and I think it is time in this country that we extend basic protections and rights to patients who need them to assure a balance between insurance companies and patients to make sure that we are talking about patients here and not just about profits.

Mr. Speaker, the Senate is debating managed care reform this week. Let us give this issue a fair hearing in the