

respect to product liability reform, securities litigation reform, and reform of the federal Superfund program. More importantly, I sponsored legislation that has helped reduce frivolous class action lawsuits brought against mortgage brokers.

This year, I voted to support H.R. 1875, the Interstate Class Action Jurisdiction Act. This legislation recognizes that many class action lawsuits do little to help consumers, but allow personal injury lawyers to collect millions of dollars in legal fees. H.R. 1875 is an important step in helping reform a legal system that has been abused time and time again.

Legal reform is a complex issue. The legal system must function to provide justice to every American. This does not mean, however, that the status quo is perfect. When lawsuits and the courts are used in excess or to the detriment of innocent parties, the system must be reviewed and reformed.

Let me acknowledge the BRCALA board of directors for giving of their valuable time and energy: the Honorable Phillip Bissett, BRCALA chairman; Joseph Brown, Jr.; Dr. William Howard; Gary O. Prince; the Honorable Joseph Sachs; and the Honorable Michael Wagner—directors and supporters dedicated to BRCALA; and Nancy Hill, BRCALA executive director.

Mr. Speaker, the Baltimore Regional Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse has declared September 18 through September 22, 2000, as "Lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week" in Maryland.

I want to commend every person involved in this worthwhile effort for their dedication and commitment.

#### A TRIBUTE TO HON. ROBERT W. BLANCHETTE

#### HON. BUD SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 4, 2000*

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to one of the true leaders in the renaissance of America's rail transportation system. Robert Blanchette, who died last week, was literally present at the creation when our private-sector railroads suffered financial collapse in the 1970s, and then returned to financial stability after 1980.

After graduation from Yale Law School and service as an Air Force legal officer, Mr. Blanchette began his legal career in railroading as the general counsel of the New Haven Railroad in the late 1960s. While serving in that post, he also became executive director of the America's Sound Transportation Review program, one of the first modern efforts to analyze the ills of the transport system and recommend needed changes.

Bob's next major post was counsel to the bankruptcy trustee of the Penn Central Railroad, which entered bankruptcy in 1970 and collapsed in 1973. At the time, Penn Central was the largest corporate bankruptcy in U.S. history. Based on his outstanding performance as counsel, Bob was later installed first as bankruptcy trustee, then chairman of the board, and chief executive officer.

As one who arrived in Congress in the midst of what became known as "the wreck of the Penn Central," I can personally attest to the

gargantuan effort required to deal with massive creditor claims against the Penn Central estate, while at the same time helping to fashion Conrail as the federally created successor to the various bankrupt Northeastern freight railroads. Bob handled these daunting tasks with characteristic acumen and aplomb. Eventually, thanks to the groundwork laid during Bob's tenure with the Penn Central, Conrail became a thriving railroad that was fully privatized in 1987 and was recently purchased by Norfolk Southern and CSX.

When Ronald Reagan took office in 1981, Bob was named Federal Railroad Administrator. This was an era of massive and long overdue change, when the entire freight railroad industry was being transformed and rehabilitated through the deregulation of the Staggers Rail Act. Bob was at the center of efforts to modernize all federal policies affecting the rail transport system.

In 1983, Bob returned to private law practice, representing the French high-speed rail enterprise, TGV. Later, from 1990 to 1997, he served as general counsel to the Association of American Railroads.

Those who worked in or with the railroad industry can attest to Bob's razor-sharp mind and analytical skills. He was able easily to grasp the most complex issues, and equally important, to fashion sensible proposals for addressing those issues. Without exception, Bob was the consummate gentleman, and a constant source of dry wit and good humor. He never shrank from discussing and dissecting the rail transport policy issues of the day, on or off Capitol Hill.

Throughout his professional career, Bob remained intensely proud of his French heritage, and an unabashed Francophile, always ready to discuss French culture, cuisine, and of course, wine. He was truly un homme extraordinaire, and will be sorely missed by all who had the good fortune to know him.

#### MR. TRACY JOHNSON HONORED WITH NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION AWARD

#### HON. DONALD A. MANZULLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 4, 2000*

Mr. MANZULLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Tracy Johnson of Freeport, Illinois, a town in the congressional district I am privileged to represent. Tracy is a modern-day hero who works tirelessly to prevent crime in northern Illinois.

On September 29, 2000, Tracy joined seven other citizen crime fighters from around the country to receive the SBC Communications Award of Excellence in Crime Prevention. Nationally recognized comedian Joe Piscopo presented the award during the "2000 National Conference on Preventing Crime" in Washington, DC. This year's eight winners, selected from nominations across the country, have all made major impacts in their communities with their innovative crime prevention strategies.

Tracy received this special honor because he helped spearhead the Coalition for a Safe Community, a comprehensive partnership of organizations and people planning and acting to prevent crime throughout Freeport; started an education and action crime prevention pro-

gram for youth; and developed a job training and placement center for young mothers, among other activities.

I wish to thank Tracy and the numerous individuals with whom he works for their tireless efforts to make our communities safer.

#### NATIONAL DAY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA

#### HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 4, 2000*

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, as the Republic of China's 89th National Day approaches, I wish to congratulate President Chen Shui-bian and the people of Taiwan for their continuing economic success and political reforms.

On this festive occasion, it is my hope that Taiwan and the Chinese mainland will soon begin a serious dialogue on reunification issues. The time is approaching for both sides to work out their differences and find a way to co-exist without antagonism. I am certain the people on Taiwan look forward to the day when they will be able to celebrate October 10th without the fear of a bellicose neighbor threatening not only their political freedom, but also their very lives.

I also would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to Ambassador C.J. Chen, who recently returned to Washington after several years in Taipei. A distinguished diplomat, Ambassador Chen is now Taiwan's chief representative in the United States. Ambassador Chen is an industrious and experienced diplomat who has worked diligently for many years to strengthen ties between the United States and the people of Taiwan.

Mr. Speaker, Taiwan has become a beacon of democracy in an area of the world which has known authoritarianism for centuries. The upcoming celebration of National Day in the Republic of China is a timely reminder of the importance of our friendship and support for Taiwan.

#### AMERICAN COMPETITIVENESS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY ACT OF 2000

SPEECH OF

#### HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 3, 2000*

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, in 1998, Congress passed legislation to raise the H-1B caps to 115,000 visas per year. That legislation included important provisions to ensure that American workers would not be displaced by those holding H-1B visas. This included requirements for employers to file applications with the Department of Labor showing that they will pay the H-1B worker the "required wage rate" and that a strike or lockout was not occurring at the job site.

Unfortunately, that legislation was not enough and already the 115,000 H-1B visa limit for Fiscal Year 2000 has been reached. Tuesday, the Senate passed S. 2045 to increase the H-1B cap to 195,000 through 2003

and included several important worker training and education provisions. It is now time for the House to pass this bill as well.

This bill includes provisions so that 55% of the H-1B education and training fees go toward Department of Labor demonstration programs and projects to provide training for workers. Twenty-two percent of the fees will go toward low-income scholarships and fifteen percent of the fees will go toward National Science Foundation grants for math, technology and science education in primary and secondary schools. It also provides after-school technology grants to encourage youth education in these subject areas.

Earlier this year, I cosponsored "The Helping to Improve Technology Education and Achievement Act of 2000" introduced by Congresswoman ZOE LOFGREN and Congressman DAVID DREIER. This bill was critical to the debate on this issue and I am proud to have worked with those sponsors, as well as with members on both sides of the aisle who have been dedicated to bringing this bill to the floor.

I recognize the enormous difficulties that the current worker shortage poses to high tech companies. At the same time, however, I want to insure that we do all that we can to reach the best and brightest in America and providing opportunity for and training to American workers as well. Today's bill is attentive to both of these needs. I urge all of my colleagues to vote for S. 2045.

PASS THE CARAT ACT: H.R. 5147

HON. TONY P. HALL

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 4, 2000

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, many of us are gravely concerned about the role the trade in diamonds has in fueling some of the most brutal wars in Africa. Much is made of the fact that the number of these diamonds is small—between 4 and 15 percent. The reality is that blood diamonds account for 30 percent of the profits the industry earns.

The link between diamonds and war is well-documented, and I urge our colleagues to get the complete story by requesting a briefing by U.S. intelligence agencies. In the meantime, I am submitting for the RECORD a selection of excerpts from respected publications. This is by no means exhaustive, and it omits reports on the industry's recent efforts to repair its damaged reputation.

I hope this selection is useful to the American public—which buys two-thirds of the world's diamonds. And I urge my colleagues to review this situation and join in efforts to combat this terrible trade.

"The flow of uncut diamonds from rebel-held mines to market centers around the world—valued at hundreds of millions of dollars a year—is keeping rebel armies in Angola, Congo and Sierra Leone supplied with tanks and assault rifles and even uniforms and beer, American and European officials say." U.S. May Try to Curb Diamond Trade That Fuels Africa Wars, *New York Times*, 8/7/99.

"The brutal war in Sierra Leone, which left thousands maimed and mutilated, was prolonged by at least 18 months because of the ability of the rebels to quickly trade diamonds for arms, an Administration official

said. . . ." U.S. May Try to Curb Diamond Trade That Fuels Africa Wars, *New York Times*, 8/7/99.

"In many African nations, the natural resources that should be used to feed and educate people are instead being used to destroy them. . . . Loot, not better government, has motivated the psychotically brutal guerrillas of Sierra Leone." The Business of War in Africa, *New York Times*, 8/8/99.

"Sierra Leone was founded in the 18th century as a safe haven for freed slaves. At the close of the 20th century, its people are enduring horrors at the hands of their countrymen and bearing scars from a civil war of atrocities perpetrated by an army of thugs and desperadoes." The Amputees of Sierra Leone: Civil War's Brutal Legacy, *Washington Post*, 10/18/99.

"The eight-year conflict that has shattered this country and brutalized its 5 million people has been fueled by foreigners' hunger for diamonds. . . . These conflicts are singularly brutal, scholars say, because many of their sponsors are outsiders with little motive to limit destruction." Diamond Hunters Fuel Africa's Brutal Wars, *Washington Post*, 10/16/99.

" . . . a prosthetics specialist for Handicap International . . . said he had never seen a double-arm amputee until he came here. 'It was shocking,' he said, 'I don't think you will find double amputees of the upper limbs anywhere else in the world—maybe isolated cases, but not like in Sierra Leone.' In the Amputee and War Wounded Camp. . . . the double amputees are considered the unluckiest. Those without arms . . . openly express envy of those with a missing leg, who will one day wear trousers over an artificial leg, or those with at least one good arm. . . . a psychologist who treats the amputees, said the Revolutionary United Front appeared to have selected men whose maiming would most profoundly affect the social order. 'It was the goal of the rebels to take away their role as men, fathers and husbands.'" Sierra Leone Measures Terror in Severed Limbs, *Washington Post*, 8/22/99.

"The residents of this camp [for amputees] lost their arms and feet to a rebel force that spread terror among Sierra Leoneans not by killing but by leaving people . . . as living, limbless symbols of its savage power. The campaign worked." *Sierra Leone Measures Terror in Severed Limbs*, *Washington Post*, 8/22/99.

"That dazzling diamond necklace you buy for that special someone at a swank Fifth Avenue jewelry store may be funding the activities of a canibal gang in Sierra Leone. . . . It's the dark side of the diamond industry. . . . and the profits—estimated to be \$2 billion a year—are funneled back to some of the worst mass killers this century has ever seen. The money is used to buy arms and military hardware, and to hire private mercenary firms to keep these internal African conflicts raging, according to a recent report by the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research." *Dirty Diamonds*, *New York Post*, 11/9/99.

" . . . are New York diamond dealers worried about having their glittering product follow in the footsteps of the fur coat and labeled parish products? 'No . . . We've weathered many storms before. We'll weather this one too.'" *Dirty Diamonds*, *New York Post*, 11/9/99.

"Some of Africa's worst violence—in Angola, in Congo, in Sierra Leone—where hundreds of thousands have died or lost arms and legs: This turmoil has been financed in large part by stolen diamonds that end up in jewelry stores around the world. . . . There is so much money at stake, it won't be easy to stop rebels who have used the beauty and value of diamonds to create misery and

death in Africa." ABC World News Tonight, 11/26/99.

"In an African tragedy, the world's purest gems are funding one of the dirtiest wars in history." *Diamonds in the Rough*, *Time*, 12/6/99.

"More than 10,000 people had been murdered, raped, abducted or maimed by rebels in a campaign of calculated terror. In their vividness and gratuitous cruelty, the mass amputations epitomized the powerlessness of ordinary Africans at the turn of the millennium. They also marked a climactic spasm in a grinding eight-year civil war shaped by familiar patterns. Outsiders exploited Sierra Leone's diamonds and other resources. . . . The international media paid little attention. And the great power stood aside, numbed by Africa's wars and poverty." *Peace Without Justice: The Other War*, *Washington Post*, 1/9/00.

"Rebel armies in Angola, the Congo, and Sierra Leone wage brutal civil wars funded by an extensive, smuggled diamond trade. The rebels take control of a diamond mine, falsify a few documents, and then sell the diamonds in the international markets. . . . Rebels in Sierra Leone used their diamond money, funneled through dealers in Liberia, to build an army that started with just 400 volunteers, into a fighting force with more than 20,000 paid soldiers." *Is Your Engagement Ring Funding a Civil War?*, *Shewire*, 2/23/00.

"In many parts of Africa, diamonds don't mean glamour, purity or eternal love. Instead, they mean slaughter and sadistic brutality. In civil wars in Angola, Congo and Sierra Leone—among the world's bloodiest yet most ignored conflicts—guerrilla groups earn hundreds of millions of dollars annually from mining and exporting diamonds. They use the money to buy huge arsenals and terrorize enormous expanses of countryside." *Glittering Currency of African Warfare*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 3/6/00.

"The diamond-financed escalation of war in Angola in the last decade has cost the lives of about 500,000 people while displacing about four million others, according to human rights groups and the United Nations." *U.N. Sees Violation of a Diamond Ban by Angola Rebels*, *New York Times*, 3/11/00.

" . . . the glittering stones have become agents of slave labor, murder, dismemberment, mass homelessness and wholesale economic collapse." *New York Times*, 4/6/00.

"Sierra Leone remains one of the poorest countries, despite its diamond wealth. Or rather because of it. 'The diamond mines are central to the conflict in two ways. One, they provide the spoils. Two, providing the RUF with the money to continue waging war.'" *A Conflict Rooted in Rebels and Diamonds*, *Christian Science Monitor*, 5/15/00.

"Clausewitz called war 'the pursuit for politics by other means.' But war is just as often a device for the pursuit of business. In Sierra Leone, war is caused by diamonds. The limb-chopping rebels of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) started out in 1991 as a small band. Then they captured the diamond region, got rich and became a very big band. . . . They fight not to win but to keep hold of the diamond trade." *Diamonds are for Killers*, *Washington Post*, 5/16/00.

"The international diamond trade needs to be regulated . . . Better accountability is not too much to ask of an industry with annual retail sales worth \$56 billion. Western governments can carry on financing peace-keeping missions while their consumers finance mayhem." *Diamonds are for Killers*, *Washington Post*, 5/16/00.

"Sierra Leone is being ripped apart because of diamonds. The Revolutionary United Front, or RUF, the leading rebel group, controls the country's richest diamond areas . . . refugees have no hope of