

rights that combines rigorous external focus on abuses while simultaneously working to promote positive trends within China including, in the case of Tibet, Chinese willingness to engage with the Dalai Lama to resolve Tibet issues. I am convinced that this principled, purposeful engagement will produce results over the long-term.

We have also continued to raise individual cases of concern. Most notable is the issue of the welfare and whereabouts of Gendhun Cheokyi Nyima the boy recognized by the Dalai Lama as the Panchen Lama and his parents, who have been held incommunicado now for nearly 5 years. When we received disturbing, unconfirmed reports the boy had died in Gansu province and was cremated in secrecy, our Embassy made formal representations expressing concern about his whereabouts and welfare. Although the reports of his death were unsubstantiated and thought to be untrue by the Tibetan exile community, the Administration publicly urged the Chinese Government to address continuing concerns of the international community about the safety and well-being of the child by allowing the boy and his family to receive credible international visitors, and to return home freely. The Chinese government has continued to refuse to allow direct confirmation of his well-being.

In response to an inquiry from the Congress, the Chinese Government acknowledged the whereabouts and earlier ill-health of Ngawang Choephel, the Tibetan ethnomusicologist and former Middlebury College Fulbright Scholar who was incarcerated in 1996 and is now serving an 18-year sentence on charges of subversion. We have repeatedly urged the Chinese government to allow his mother to visit him while incarcerated, as is her right under the Chinese Prison Law. However, her repeated requests to be allowed to visit him have not been granted. We have also urged China to release Ngawang Choephel on medical grounds as a humanitarian gesture.

WHAT I'VE BEEN DOING OVER THE LAST YEAR?

Over the past year I have made it a point to learn all that I can about Tibetan issues so that I am able to ensure the effective presentation of these issues in our U.S.-China bilateral discussions. I have maintained close contact with the Dalai Lama's Special Envoy to Washington, Lodi Gyari. Throughout the year, I requested meetings with the Chinese Ambassador, however, such meetings have not been granted. I am hopeful that this year I will be able to sit down with the Ambassador and discuss the Chinese government's views on social, political, and economic issues related to Tibet, as well as explore ways we can help get the dialogue back on track.

I've met with scores of people from like-minded countries, government officials, people from foundations and academia, experts in U.S.-China relations and NGO officials. Each meeting has produced ideas on how to improve the situation inside Tibet, as well as substantive thoughts about how to restart dialogue. Despite the fact that I am the only Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues world wide, my appointment has prompted other nations to identify counterparts to discuss this issue. I realize now that there is a wealth of knowledge and talent around the world interested in helping to improve the situation in Tibet. In fact, I just returned from Brussels where the European Parliament held an all-Party Parliamentary Session on Tibet to discuss multilateral efforts and how we can best coordinate future strategies.

In January I visited Dharmasala, India in my capacity as Assistant Secretary for Population, Refugees and Migration. The pur-

pose of my trip was to evaluate and review the \$2 million in assistance programs the United States provides for Tibetan refugees.

After receiving a very warm welcome, I had the opportunity to meet with many members of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) to discuss the grant. I was overwhelmed by the tremendous sense of good will and community, especially among the younger generation despite the fact that this generation has never even seen Tibet. I learned on my visit that nearly the entire Central Tibetan Administration is made up of Fulbright Scholars. These bright, young adults undoubtedly had much more lucrative opportunities in the United States, Europe or India, yet a remarkable 96% have returned to Tibetan settlements to make their talents available to the CTA. Equally impressive is how traditional Tibetan culture is integrated into nearly every facet of daily life.

However, having just been to Nepal in October where I met with new arrivals who were traumatized and had endured great hardship while crossing the Himalayas, I was anxious to visit the transit center in Dharmasala where all new arrivals spend some time before being placed in settlements throughout India. During my visit the center was teeming with refugees. The new arrivals were quiet, but far more animated than the refugees I had seen in Kathmandu just three months earlier. The rooms were crowded, but clean and orderly. Many were wearing the new shoes and dark pants they received after arriving at the Kathmandu reception center. Attached to the transit center was a small, three-room medical clinic for routine medical care.

Although the USG grant makes a very positive impact on the lives of these refugees by providing support for the reception centers, preventive health care, basic food, clothing, clean water and income-generating projects, I am looking into funding repatriation for Tibetans that return to Tibet from the PRM budget as well as exploring ways that IO's, NGO's, and private industry might be helpful in developmental assistance.

Additionally, I met with the Dalai Lama twice over the past year and I look forward to seeing him this summer when he is in Washington for the Smithsonian Folk Life Festival. During the meetings I have had with him, he reiterated his concern about the marginalization of the Tibetan people living in Tibet and requested that I devote some attention to finding ways to improve the lives of those still in Tibet through culturally sustainable enterprises. As I began to narrow down options on ways to be helpful, Congress appropriated \$1 million to support activities which preserve cultural traditions and promote sustainable development and environmental conservation in Tibet. The responsibility of the earmark was assigned to the Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs and my office will have an important role in managing the money and monitoring the performance of these new programs over the course of the year.

A Congressional Notification is before Congress which would allocate \$750,000 to the Bridge Fund for several agricultural and micro credit initiatives in Tibet. The remaining \$250,000 will be made available through a competitive process for NGO's who qualify for project funding.

CONCLUSION

The treatment of Tibetans by the Chinese government over the past 50 years has been inconsistent with international norms and standards of respect for fundamental human rights. The Dalai Lama has shown enormous courage in accepting the impracticality of insisting on independence and calling for "genuine autonomy" within Chinese sov-

ereignty. Chinese spokesmen have responded by stating their willingness to engage in a dialogue with the Dalai Lama if he renounces independence and pro-independence activities. The problem appears to be solvable. Ultimately it comes down to a question of will, especially on Beijing's side. There are significant Chinese interests that could be advanced in moving forward on Tibetan autonomy. The Dalai Lama is still active and healthy; his prestige will be crucial in carrying the opinion of the Diaspora and most Tibetans in the autonomous regions. Only he can ensure the successful implementation of a negotiated settlement.

Conversely, maintaining order over an unhappy population is a drain on the resources of a still developing country. Widespread knowledge of China's human rights offenses in Tibet has brought about pressure on China's leadership to explain its Tibet policy to the international community. My impression is that the situation in Tibet deeply troubles China's international partners and foreign leaders and that this is affecting their diplomatic engagement in Western countries.

Since China's number one priority is the stability and the unity of the PRC, Chinese leaders may find that a more enlightened policy toward Tibet would be an important step toward enhancing the respect they have earned from the economic transformation of their country. It is my sincere hope that parties will resume dialogue that looked so promising in 1998. Preservation of Tibet's unique cultural and religious traditions depends on it.

In closing, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to testify today. I look forward to working with you another year on this extremely important issue.

TRIBUTE TO BASTROP HIGH SCHOOL ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 6, 2000

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to the Student Council Energy and Environment Committee of Bastrop High School in Bastrop, Texas. This dedicated group of students has been working diligently on projects to increase awareness about energy conservation and the environment.

Some of their projects include trash pick-up, recycling, efficient driving and car maintenance training, and coordination of Earth Day festivities in Bastrop on the third weekend of April. They have also spread information by way of books, pamphlets and posters around their community. Not only has their work improved the safety and appearance of the campus and surrounding area, but it has also increased feelings of school unity and pride among the students.

Their local focus is an example to all of us that local involvement is key to solving most problems faced by Americans today. I am proud to represent such a responsible and dedicated group of young people.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in saluting the Student Council of Bastrop High School. This is an excellent way to show sincere appreciation for those who take the time and energy to improve their communities for themselves and others.

HONORING THE WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. RICHARD BURR

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 6, 2000

Mr. BURR of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, although yesterday was the day for the Michigan State men's and University of Connecticut women's basketball teams to shine, I wanted to take this opportunity to recognize the winners of the other national championship that took place during the month of March. While North Carolina and Duke both performed admirably during the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament, only one team from Tobacco Road returned home this past weekend with the champion's hardware and only one team from the ACC will begin next year's season on a winning streak—my hometown Wake Forest Demon Deacons—the past Thursday evening in Madison Square Garden the Deacons easily disposed of Notre Dame to win its first national invitational tournament. Now the critics of this tournament will be quick to call Wake Forest the “65th best team in the Nation”—a reference to not making the NCAA field of 64. And several Wake fans, in midst of a 3–9 mid-season slump, might have taken a 65th place finish, but the Deacons, led by Coach Dave Odom and his staff chose to turn this season around, winning 8 of its last 9 games, salvaging a 22–14 record and a national championship. Credit for this victory goes to all the Deacon players, from leading scorer Darius Songalia and NIT Tournament MVP Robert O'Kelley to strong bench support from Craig Dawson and Josh Shoemaker. The Deacons losing only two players from this year's team, look to carry the momentum of this late season success into next year's season, when they hope to readily hand over the NIT championship trophy as they make their way to the ultimate goal—the NCAA Tournament.

Once again—congratulations to Wake Forest.

H. RES. 458, AUTISM AWARENESS

HON. RICHARD H. BAKER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 6, 2000

Mr. BAKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the importance of autism awareness, as well as to offer my support and to express my admiration for my constituents, Shelly and Aiden Reynolds, for their hard work and dedication in co-founding Unlocking Autism.

Unlocking Autism is an organization dedicated to raising public awareness about autism as well as raising money for biomedical research. This organization has launched a national awareness project called Open Your Eyes, and is striving to collect 58,000 pictures of persons with autism from across the United States. This collection will debut in Washington, DC from April 5th thru 9th of this year.

The Hear-Their-Silence Rally is a response to the fact that autism and related conditions have been estimated to occur in as many as 1 in 500 individuals (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 1997). This statistic is

higher than the incidences of Multiple Sclerosis, Downs Syndrome, or Cystic Fibrosis. At least 400,000 people in the United States are affected, and yet little is known about this disease.

When people become aware of a disease, they will begin to strive for, and demand action to further the understanding and prevention of that disease.

To this end, I am pleased to be sponsoring legislation that will express the sense of the House of Representatives. I urge the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee to recommend to the Postmaster General a commemorative postage stamp which would further the cause of autism awareness and place autism before the American people.

Shelly and Aiden Reynolds have used the reality of their son Liam's diagnosis of autism to fuel their fight to bring this disease to the fore front of national awareness. Countless others have joined their efforts. A commemorative stamp would give a face to those individuals afflicted with autism. Let us give them a voice

CHRISTINE BELL—A GOOD CITIZEN

HON. JERRY MORAN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 6, 2000

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to submit this outstanding essay on “good citizenship” for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. It was written by one of my constituents, Christine Bell, a high school student in Morland, KS who won first place in an essay contest sponsored by the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution in Hays, Kansas. Christine's essay reminds us all that it is an honor to be a citizen of the United States and that the key to maintaining our freedoms and liberties is to exercise them. She pays tribute to our founding fathers, the veterans, and active military who put their lives on the line for our country and reminds us all what has been risked to protect the red, white and blue. Christine also points out that there are numerous ways to serve our country in addition to the military. Voting in elections and removing your hat during the Star Spangled Banner are to small ways that Christine mentions people can show good citizenship.

I was extremely impressed with Christine Bell's essay and her belief in the need for good citizenship. I hope she will continue her efforts on behalf of the merits of good citizenship. Treating others with respect is the most basic concept of maintaining freedom, and Christine has already discovered this early in her life. I congratulate Christine on her insight and her efforts in promoting good citizenship and respect for those who have made this country so great.

OUR AMERICAN HERITAGE AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO PRESERVE IT

“I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.” Students of this nation once stood in their classrooms with their right hand over their heart in allegiance to the flag which symbolizes their freedom. Students across the country no longer stand to pledge allegiance to their flag every morning and many could not correctly recite the pledge if asked to do so.

When I attend ball games and watch the parents' example. I begin to see why respect

for the flag has been lost. Many adults do not remove ball caps, and the majority fail to put their right hand on their heart or even look at the flag when the “Star Spangled Banner” is sung.

Have Americans forgotten how fortunate they are to live in a free country? The fathers of this country fought to break free from the bondage of Great Britain. Many lives were lost as blood and tears were shed for the freedom of every single person who lives in the United States. On July 4, 1776, we declared independence and then won, in battle, the right to that independence.

When I talk to soldiers in our United States Army, I find that these people truly desire to preserve a nation so well-founded. Our soldiers are very honorable and deserve respect for volunteering their lives to serve this country. Our veterans deserve even more recognition for fighting for our country.

Why then, do United States soldiers have to put up with mocking civilians who implicitly spit on and shame them? These ignorant civilians do not realize that the tax money they are so fervently worried about is spent to serve them in times of crisis. The money our government invests in armed forces is to protect and preserve this country that serves its citizens. The lack of respect for the flag and for our soldiers, however, is not the only downfall in the American public.

With every presidential election of the twentieth century, the number of those who vote has systematically lowered. If that trend continues at the rate it has, after only a few more elections, the number of votes will be so low that we, as voters, may lose our right to vote for the President of the United States. In a country where the people have such an opportunity to make their voices heard, it is said to see less than half of the eligible voters cast a vote. The people of America need to take more interest in their country and strive to preserve their rights. If we do not exercise them, we very well may lose them.

The individuals in our government also need to earn respect and become the honorable leaders they should be. Honesty would be a very good first step. Americans have lost respect for President Clinton because of his occasional inability to tell the truth. The Clinton sex scandals are not far in the back of our minds, and the events at Waco, Texas have brought controversy also.

A combination of honesty, respect, and remembrance may just be the key to preserving our American heritage.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF NURSING RESEARCH

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 6, 2000

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I stand today as a former nurse and strong supporter of the National Institute of Nursing Research, to draw your attention to the tremendous challenges faced by women suffering from chronic health conditions that affect their productivity and quality of life. I urge my colleagues to join me in making the advancement of women's health a national priority.

Because of my nursing background, I know first-hand that it is imperative to assure access to quality healthcare. And as a woman, I know that we have special health needs. Studies show that women suffer from a variety of ailments such as heart disease, breast cancer,