

Mr. Speaker, one cannot even pray in America. Beam me up. Is this Communist China, or is this the United States of America?

Now, I believe Elian should have been sent back with his dad, but do we have a gulag portrayed, or what? I yield back the fact that our founders are literally rolling over in their graves.

DEATH TAX EQUALS DOUBLE TAXATION AND SHOULD BE OUTLAWED

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, a family that has suffered a loss of a loved one should not have the added grief of losing the family business, ranch, or personal savings; yet that is what is happening under our current Tax Code. Because of an archaic tax law, when a person dies in this country, an outrageous tax of 37 to 55 percent is levied on his or her property, even though the deceased spent his or her entire life paying taxes on that very estate.

The death tax is a form of double taxation that has devastated too many families and businesses. It has been estimated that one-third of small business owners will have to sell outright or liquidate a part of their business to pay death taxes. More than 70 percent of family businesses do not survive the second generation, and 87 percent do not make it to the third generation. In my district of Colorado Springs, a well-established family business had to close its doors in the face of an enormous estate tax bill. Small family-run businesses are the backbone of our Nation's strong economy and should not be forced to close down because of taxes.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support the Death Tax Elimination Act on this very day.

DEATH TAX IS UNAMERICAN

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

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, William Shakespeare once wrote, "For in that sleep of death, what dreams may come when we have shuffled off this mortal coil must give us pause."

Hundreds of years before the death tax was even conceived, Shakespeare captured the worries felt by thousands of Americans, hoping to leave their life's work to their loved ones. Sadly, this dying wish often does not come true for those trying to leave a small business or family farm to their relatives. The death tax thwarts them at every turn, costing surviving relatives up to 60 percent of the business or property's worth.

Mr. Speaker, this is blatantly wrong. Fortunately, today the House has an opportunity to right this injustice. Be-

fore us today is H.R. 8, the Death Tax Elimination Act. This common sense legislation challenges the IRS's assertion that grief also should be taxed. The death tax is un-American, and it deserves an appropriate burial.

Vote in favor of H.R. 8.

HUMAN INITIATIVE THWARTED BY DEATH TAX

(Mr. GILCHREST asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, today we are going to vote on a bill that will, in about a decade, eliminate what we have come to know as the death tax or the estate tax.

In this country, we lose about 1 million acres of agricultural land a year, 1 million acres; and it is not slowing down. In my State alone, we lose about 25,000 acres of farmland every single year. There is a lot of reasons for that. One of them is that when a farmer dies, in order to leave that farm or what we may call an estate to his children, they have to pay an enormous tax. To pay that tax, many of these young people, these young farmers that want to stay on the land, must sell a portion, if not all of that land, in order to pay the Federal Government their tax. This is wrong. We need to correct that.

Mr. Speaker, we need to correct the fact that human initiative needs an opportunity to be fulfilled, and that opportunity for farmers is to stay on the land. Today, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that everyone votes for this bill.

POSTAL SERVICE ISSUES ADOPTION AWARENESS STAMP

(Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind my colleagues that the U.S. Postal Service has recently issued an adoption awareness stamp.

As a proud grandfather of two adopted children, I am particularly aware of the need to call attention to this subject and to encourage more adoptions. We all know that every child needs support, guidance, and understanding of people who care enough to offer love, a home and a family. Far too many children in the U.S. are waiting to be adopted. Most have special needs, they are older, they often have emotional and physical problems; but they still need a home.

In my State, more than 400 children were placed in adoptive homes last year, but there are still 100 or more Nebraska children waiting for families right now.

Although Congress has passed laws to encourage adoption, we need more adoptive families, and if adopting a child is not an option, there are other ways to help: mentoring, contributing to any of the fine organizations that promote adoption, and certainly buy-

ing the special U.S. Postal Service adoption stamps will help call attention to this issue.

I encourage everyone to help find every child a loving family.

SLAVERY STILL EXISTS IN NEW MILLENNIUM

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, who would ever have thought that we would be talking about the horror of modern-day slavery in this new millennium?

Francis Bok is a 21-year-old native of southern Sudan. At age 7 he was captured and enslaved during an Arab militia raid on his village. Francis saw children and adults brutalized and killed all around him. He was strapped to a donkey and taken north, and for 10 years he lived as a family slave. He was forced to sleep with cattle and endure daily beatings and eat terrible food.

In December of 1996, Francis escaped to a nearby town where local policemen enslaved him again. Again he escaped. Eventually he reached Khartoum, the capital, where he was arrested by security forces and jailed for 7 months. After being released, Mr. Bok was able to make his way to Cairo, Egypt, and finally, in 1999, the U.N. resettled him in the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I met Francis yesterday. It is an incredible story. It is incomprehensible that slavery still persists in the world today. It is harder to understand why the Clinton administration has not made stopping slavery and genocide in Sudan a priority.

ALL CHILDREN HAVE STRONG POTENTIAL TO ACHIEVE

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

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this amendment on the 21st Century Community Learning Centers. I have been involved with education issues for almost 30 years. This experience has strongly reinforced for me that all children, regardless of income level or race, have the same potential for high achievement and healthy development when provided appropriate opportunities.

Thus our goal must be to support the development of quality after-school programs for all children, but especially those in low-income communities. Our goal should also be to see the expanded day programs linked to the core school day.

ISRAEL GRANTED MEMBERSHIP IN WEOG

(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, as a cosponsor of H.R. 3405, the Equality for Israel at the United Nations Act that pushed for equality at the U.N. for our closest ally, I am pleased that because of U.S. pressure, Israel has finally achieved a long-deserved, although partial, victory.

Israel for years has been refused entry into one of the 5 regional groupings and thus has been denied full membership at the U.N., although it has been a member since 1949. This has undermined and weakened Israel's ability to function effectively within the international community.

Israel has now finally been granted membership in the Western European and Other Group, WEOG; however, with conditions.

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Many of us will continue to push for Israel's full membership in the WEOG, as well as its membership in its rightful regional grouping, which is the Asian group. Israel has earned it. Few other countries have been tested in this manner and have given so much to protect the very principles upon which the United Nations was founded.

INTERNATIONAL ABDUCTION

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

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell the story of the abduction of Nocona Lynn Smith when she was 3 years old. Nocona was abducted by her mother, River Burton, and her grandmother, Francis Harris, and taken to Honduras on March 10, 1994.

An hour after the abduction, a State District judge ordered emergency custody for her father, Roy Smith. A warrant for the arrest of Nocona's mother was issued, but charges were dropped when she returned to Texas for a trial.

Nocona, however, did not return with her. She is still in Honduras with her grandmother, and her father's attempts to implement the Hague Convention have been in vein.

Mr. Speaker, Roy Smith and his daughter Nocona have missed out on 6 years of memories that are so important to families in the development of healthy and loving relationships. We cannot allow situations like theirs to continue to happen to any other families.

Congress passed a resolution urging signatories of the Hague Convention to uphold that agreement, and we must use that as a starting point for further action.

Mr. Speaker, we have taken a step in the right direction, and it is my hope that this House will continue that work and help bring our children home.

SUDAN

(Mr. WELDON of Florida asked and was given permission to address the

House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind my colleagues that today is National Sudan Day. Today there are activities going on in major cities across the United States focusing attention on the ongoing genocide in Sudan.

The Congress needs to make sure that everyone, especially the administration, knows about and acts upon the horrific killings, evictions, and enslaving that is going on, brought about by Sudan's Islamic fundamentalist regime.

The regime is on a deliberate campaign of genocide against the black Christians of southern Sudan. Eyewitnesses have given House and Senate testimony about slavery, torture, rape, mutilation, and killings of Christians.

Mr. Speaker, myself and other House Members have been taking action to bring this genocide into the limelight and to focus our efforts on stopping the brutality. I encourage my colleagues to continue to pressure the White House and the U.S. State Department to take an active part in stopping the genocide in Sudan and bringing the issue to the forefront of American foreign policy.

TRIBUTE TO LEONARD BASKIN, AN ORIGINAL AMERICAN ARTIST

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

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity this morning to pay special tribute to an extraordinary individual from my district who passed away last week in Leeds, Massachusetts, after a lengthy illness.

Leonard Baskin was an acclaimed artist with a unique style and vision whose sculptures, woodcuts, prints, and books are celebrated throughout the world. One can find an original Baskin on display in public collections from New York to Rome.

Here in our Nation's Capitol, his remarkable skills helped recreate both the Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Calvin Coolidge memorials. Quite simply, he has been called one of the finest sculptors of our time.

Born in New Brunswick, New Jersey, in 1922, Leonard Baskin was educated at Yale University, served in the Navy, taught art at both SMITH and Hampshire Colleges, and received countless medals and awards.

Mr. Speaker, his brilliant work touched and inspired many. As we mourn his passing today, I urge the Members of this House to join me in honoring this truly American original.

DEATH TAX REPEAL

(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, I rise today in support of the repeal of the death tax. I am a proud cosponsor of this legislation, and have been since I came here some 8 years ago.

Under the guise of making the rich pay their fair share, the death tax discourages savings and investment and has a negative impact on the entire economy. Ironically, those that are most affected by the death tax are not the wealthy. They have the resources to shelter assets. But family-owned businesses, which are often asset-rich and cash poor, cannot meet those requirements.

The death tax hits these businesses especially hard when the owner passes away. The result is that many family-owned businesses cannot survive in the family. Even prior to death, the death tax impacts many businesses, forcing the owners to divert money from productive uses, such as capital investment and job creation, to, guess what, estate tax planning.

So for those who are out there who would vote against the death tax repeal, please think again. They are not hurting the wealthy, they are hurting the little guy.

THE MULTI-MILLIONAIRE PROTECTION ACT

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

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, the so-called Death Tax Elimination Act should be called the Multi-millionaire Protection Act. It does tell America what Republican priorities really are.

Before anything else, the Republican leadership would give a huge, reckless and dangerous backloaded tax cut to only 2 percent of Americans, and more than half of the tax cut goes to the wealthiest one-tenth of 1 percent. That is right, more than half of it would be available to fewer than 60,000 families out of more than 60 million families.

Do the Republicans really believe that the Bill Gates and Steve Forbes and John Corzines need \$25 billion of tax cuts every year? Does anyone listening or watching today believe they need \$25 billion of tax cuts?

But the Republican leadership would give that multi-billion dollar tax cut before limiting class sizes to 18 for 3 million children, before establishing a prescription drug benefit as part of Medicare for 13 million American senior citizens who cannot afford the expense of insurance coverage.

It is a stunning revelation to know that the Republicans' highest priority is a huge tax cut that only benefits the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans. Vote for the substitute and against this giveaway.

TIME TO REPEAL THE DEATH TAX

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1