

who were playing by the creek. The resulting fireball raced down the length of the creek for a mile and a half, killing King, Tsiorvas and an 18-year-old fly fisherman named William Wood. Swaths as wide as 200 feet along the creek were burned within minutes.

The explosion of June 10 caused millions of dollars in property damage and did immeasurable damage to the families and friends of Wade King, Stephen Tsiorvas, and William Wood.

I have long held reservations about our system of pipeline safety regulations. In 1996, I voted against the pipeline deregulation bill because I felt it removed too many essential safeguards.

Since the tragedy, I have redoubled my effort to improve the regulatory climate. I have been in close contact with industry, public interest groups, local officials, and Federal regulators and constituents and have emerged with significant concerns.

To name a few, pipelines are not required to be inspected thoroughly enough to ensure safety. Rules for training pipeline employees are woefully inadequate. Industry is not required to report spills under 2,100 gallons. Forty-five States have almost no role in regulating interstate pipelines which run through their jurisdictions.

Earlier this year I introduced H.R. 3558, the Safe Pipelines Act of 2000, which was cosponsored by the entire Washington State House congressional delegation as well as the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH). Thus I am pleased that today a bipartisan group of legislators gathered in front of the Capitol to talk about pipeline safety.

I would like to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRANKS) for introducing the new pipeline safety legislation, which I have cosponsored. The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRANKS) is the chairman of the subcommittee that oversees pipeline safety. So this is a very important step forward.

Just last month, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER) committed to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. DUNN) and myself to hold a hearing fully exploring this vital safety issue before the full Committee on Transportation. In addition, Senator MCCAIN has marked up a pipeline safety bill in his committee which is now ready for a vote in the full Senate.

I will continue to work for additional safety provisions on the bill as it moves through the committee process in the House. I will push for measures like hydrostatic testing, greater State participation, Federal safety certification for pipeline employees, and a 5-year time period for internal pipeline inspections.

Too many people have already been lost in tragic pipeline accidents. We must ensure pipeline safety now.

SCOUTING FOR ALL ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I introduced a bill, the Scouting for All Act, to repeal the Boy Scouts of America's Federal charter. The bill's cosponsors are sending a message to the Boy Scouts and to all Americans that the Congress of the United States does not support intolerance.

As my colleagues know, a charter is an honorary title Congress awards to organizations that serve a charitable, patriotic, or educational purpose. But to me there is nothing charitable or patriotic about intolerance, and it is not a value we want our children to learn.

Revoking the charter sends a clear message that Congress does not support this value, this value of intolerance. The supporters of my bill are not saying that the Boy Scouts are bad. We are saying that intolerance is bad.

I was a Girl Scout. One of my sons was a Boy Scout. And I know the values of scouting, and that is why I believe it should be available to all boys.

The decision handed down by the Supreme Court last month shocked me; but, most of all, it saddened me. Yes, the Boy Scouts fought hard to win their right to discriminate. But for me and the bill's supporters, this is not a question of whether the Boy Scouts have a right to establish anti-gay policy. It is a question of whether the Boy Scouts' anti-gay policy is right.

We believe that choosing to do nothing in response to the court's decision would only compound the injury and would reaffirm the Boy Scouts' message that intolerance is okay.

As I said, the Boy Scouts fought hard to win their right to discriminate. While they may have won this right, we strongly feel the Government should not be a participant in any policy that promotes discrimination or intolerance.

I truly believe that when brave people step up and say intolerance is wrong, we will and can make a difference.

One of those brave people is Stephen Cozza, a teenager from my hometown of Petaluma, California, who founded Boy Scouts For All, which is a national campaign to change the Boy Scouts' anti-gay policy.

To date, Stephen Cozza and his father, Scot Cozza, have gotten more than 51,000 signatures on a nationwide petition supporting the change in the Boy Scout policy and making scouting inclusive for all boys.

As Members of Congress, we also have a part to play. We have an opportunity, an opportunity to let the Boy Scouts of America know that we do not accept their exclusionary and intolerant policy.

I dread the implication and the repercussions should Congress choose not to act. If both the Court and Congress convey the message that discrimina-

tion is okay, I fear we encourage other organizations to discriminate as well.

Mr. Speaker, we are halfway through the first year of the new millennium, and we are still debating the pros and cons of discrimination. Did we not learn anything from the last century? All of our children need a tolerant environment in which to grow and learn. Straight kids and gay kids need to know that they are accepted. We must make it clear to those children that the Federal Government supports them and does not support intolerance.

I urge my colleagues to support our children. Join with me and the bill's cosponsors and support repealing the charter of the Boy Scouts of America. But let me repeat. We are not saying that the Boy Scouts are bad. We are saying, and we are saying in absolute terms, that intolerance is bad.

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NORTH KOREAN ATROCITIES

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of the numerous individuals being forgotten in the negotiations between the United States and the hard-line dictatorship in North Korea, those 200,000 plus people who suffer horrifying hardships in the prison camps throughout North Korea.

Despite the fact that the leaders of North Korea refuse to admit that these concentration camps exist, they are real. Individuals that I have met with who have escaped from these camps have said that they want the world to know of the evil that is perpetrated there, even against children.

One young man that I met with was imprisoned at the age of 10 because his grandfather was arrested, so they imprisoned the whole family. The North Korean regime incarcerates three generations of a family due to one generation's crime. What type of government imprisons a 10-year-old boy for his grandfather's crime? Certainly not a civilized one.

Another woman I met with described the terrible torture she endured because she was honest and would not embezzle material goods for her boss. As a result, her boss concocted false crimes, she was arrested, taken to a prison camp and routinely tortured to the point of losing consciousness. As soon as she lost consciousness, the security officials would pour water on her face, revive her and begin the torture process over again, all of this for 14 months. Then she was sentenced to 13 years in a reeducation camp.

Let me read some excerpts of testimony from torture survivors and escapees regarding the horrendous pain and suffering at the hands of this brutal and repressive regime, a regime that our administration is now looking to appease.

"Officers treated us like animals. They never explained to us what to do but communicated with the prisoners by whipping, kicking and cursing. While prisoners were being beaten, they couldn't stop working or look back at the officers. If a prisoner moaned or tried to avoid getting hit, she was put into solitary confinement, the worst punishment in prison. The solitary confinement cell was only high enough to allow a person to sit on the floor. Concrete thorns stuck out of the walls so the prisoner could not lean against them. The person could only sit and not move for many days. If prisoners were consigned to solitary confinement during the winter, their legs became paralyzed."

"The different forms of torture are too numerous to recount. Sometimes they put a wooden stick with sharp edges behind my knees, make me kneel, and then trampled my body with their heavy boots. At other times, they would hang me by the shackles on my wrists, high enough so that I was forced to stand on tiptoe. At night water would fill the solitary cell up to my stomach, depriving me of any sleep. During the long hours underwater my body would gradually swell up, making it difficult for me to keep my balance. If I fell, the guards kicked me until I scrambled up again in extreme pain and fatigue."

"The prisoners in the export factory were treated even worse than those in the other factories. Our days were a series of unendurable labor. Getting kicked and slapped was common. The female prisoners got used to an officer's kick or slap on the face. After a few years of little food, no sunshine, constant beatings and demanding work, prisoners began to lose the strength in their backbones. As the spine weakened, ligaments started popping out at the back of their necks. The prisoners became ugly like beasts. The export production was the fruit of unbelievable human abuse. These exports went to Japan, to Poland, to France."

I would ask, do we want to participate in this as well? Let me end with this quote:

"When pregnant women came to prison, they were forced to abort their babies. Poison was injected into the babies cuddled in their mother's wombs. After the injection, the pregnant woman suffered tremendous pain until the babies were stillborn about 24 hours later. Medical officers walked around the pregnant women and kicked their swollen bellies if they screamed or moaned."

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on. These are a few excerpts of people that I have met. We must not forget these people. We must fight to stop the painful, horrifying torture and the other human rights abuses the North Korean people are enduring at the hands of the brutal dictatorship ruling that country.

SELF-ENRICHMENT FROM NUCLEAR POWER PLANT PRIVATIZATION

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

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, just 2 weeks ago, the United States Enrichment Corporation made the devastating decision to close its uranium enrichment facility in Piketon, Ohio, where nearly 2,000 dedicated Americans work. This is devastating not only to my community and to my region of Ohio but it is devastating, I believe, to this country. Some 23 percent of all of the electricity that is generated in our country is generated through nuclear power plants. Nearly all of that material that is necessary to provide the fuel for these nuclear power plants comes from two sites, in Paducah, Kentucky, and in Piketon, Ohio.

Until 2 years ago, the industry which produced this vital fuel for our Nation was under the ownership and control of the United States Government. We made the decision to privatize this vital industry. We did so with the hope and belief that the industry would thrive and that the private company would keep its obligations to this Nation and continue to operate the two plants through the year 2004. Sadly, the leadership of this new private company has broken faith with our government and with the American people, and they have announced that they are closing the Piketon plant.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear. I am upset about this because of its immediate impact upon my district and upon the men and women who work in the facility in my district. But I am equally concerned because this decision can have a terribly adverse effect upon this Nation in terms of our national security and in terms of our energy security.

I am convinced that the management of this company cares for neither but simply is determined to do whatever it can to enrich itself, and the American people and the people who work in these plants can be damned.

That is why I am very, very pleased that the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BLILEY), who is the chairman of the Committee on Commerce, has recently written the CEO of this private company, Mr. Nick Timbers, a letter in which he expresses concern and asks certain questions. I would like to share a couple of paragraphs from Chairman BLILEY's letter to Mr. Nick Timbers. He says:

"Dear Mr. Timbers:

"As you know, the Commerce Committee is continuing its review of USEC privatization and its impact on our national security and the domestic uranium industry. I am writing to you with respect to recent troubling statements you have made on this subject and to obtain additional documents and information related to USEC privatization."

Then Mr. BLILEY continues:

"Quoting the Wall Street Journal editorial dated Thursday, June 28, 2000, you indicated that USEC's recent decision to close the Department of Energy's Portsmouth gaseous diffusion plant was made in response to congressional intent in privatization legislation. Specifically, you state that USEC's decision to close the Portsmouth plant was, quote, the reason Congress privatized the company, close quote."

Then Mr. BLILEY says:

"I can assure you that this is not the case. A single operating gaseous diffusion plant with no credible plan for a succeeding enrichment technology is not what Congress intended for the privatized company."

My understanding is that we will have hearings this fall, and we will delve into the matters surrounding the privatization of this company. I think Mr. Timbers has some explaining to do, and I think those responsible for the decisions that led to privatization within this administration have some explaining to do. I think there was a terrible, unacceptable, conflict of interest that existed when Mr. Timbers was given the authority to advise and to consult and to give direction as to how this company would be privatized because the decisions that he made resulted in his self-enrichment. This man, who was making as a government employee approximately \$350,000, ended up with a salary of some \$2.48 million.

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PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE FOR SENIORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening as I have on too many occasions to speak out about the issue of Medicare coverage for prescription drugs. I say too many because the time is up for this Congress to act and to modernize Medicare to cover the way health care is provided today.

We have the most wonderful health care system in the world. I know a gentleman who takes a pill once a month instead of having open heart surgery. The pill costs \$400. Medicare will cover the surgery. Medicare will not cover the pill. We have got to change and modernize Medicare so that our seniors are not left in the situation of getting up in the morning and saying do I eat today, do I get my breakfast, or do I get my medicine? Too many seniors in this country find themselves in that situation.

I have been conducting a prescription drug fairness campaign in Michigan now for a year. I set up a hotline, have asked seniors to write, to call, to share with me their situations so we can put names and faces on this problem and encourage, plead and beg with this Congress to act now.