

these tax overcharges to increase the size and scope of the federal government. Like President Bush, I believe that a government with unlimited funds becomes a government with unlimited reach. Thus, he is correct when he states that the solution is stop taking this excess money from the people who earn it in the first place.

At the same time the federal government is taking more than its fair share from our hard working Americans, our federal tax laws have become more and more confusing as special interests line up to get tax breaks. What we need to do is provide substantial tax relief in a simple and fair manner.

The first part of my bill is based on President Bush's across-the-board tax cut proposal. It will simplify and reduce the existing 15%, 28%, 31%, 36%, and 39.6% tax rates with four lower rates of 10%, 15%, 25%, and 33% over a period of 5 years. My tax plan will mean lower taxes for all working Americans.

Time and again, history has demonstrated that across-the-board tax relief has significant, positive economic benefits. Each time in the last century that tax rates were lowered, an economic boom followed. This was most recently demonstrated in the last 20 years. Under strong leadership, the malaise and stagflation of the 1970s melted into the prosperity of the 1980s. And the economic growth of the 1980s provided the venture capital to seed the technology revolution of the 1990s. The turning point of this remarkable economic transformation came on August 13, 1981, when President Reagan signed into law the largest tax relief bill in American history. The 25% across-the-board cut in income taxes, combined with prudent deregulation and anti-inflation monetary policies, helped unleash the longest economic boom in the 20th century. It is clear that providing tax relief in this manner will generate millions of jobs, raise living standards for tens of millions of Americans and increase our collective national wealth by several trillions of dollars.

Tax relief should encourage personal opportunity and economic growth instead of attempting to manipulate individual behavior based on Washington values. We must move away from Washington picking winners and losers by its manipulation of our country's tax laws. Recently, Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve System, reiterated his long-standing professional opinion that across-the-board tax relief is economically the best way to provide tax relief. Importantly, he stressed the unarguable point that Washington politicians will spend the current national surplus if it is not returned to its rightful owners, the American taxpayers. Consequently, Mr. Greenspan now agrees that we must make across-the-board tax relief a top policy goal.

The second part of my bill will immediately eliminate the marriage penalty in our tax code. This legislation rewrites the existing discriminatory tax laws in order to ensure that married couples will never be penalized on the account of their marital status. Married couples will be able to get standard deduction that is twice the amount of single tax filers. Currently, the standard deduction for a single American is \$4,550 but the married couple only gets \$7,550. Under my bill the married couple will get a standard deduction in the amount of \$9,100, which is twice the amount of the single standard deduction.

Importantly, my bill will also ensure that all income brackets are adjusted so that the mar-

ried brackets are twice the amount of the single brackets. Currently, American families pay a marginal tax rate of 28% on income above \$46,000, while an unmarried couple pays a marginal tax rate of 15% on total income up to \$54,000. That's just plain wrong. My bill will ensure that American families never pay a higher marginal tax rate than an unmarried couple.

It is simply wrong that Washington is punishing our American families by taxing our traditional values. Increasingly, our sons and daughters can not afford to marry. Consequently, they are less likely to dedicate themselves to their relationship and their children. We must eliminate this perverse disincentive for all American families.

I urge my colleagues to join me in providing meaningful tax relief for all taxpayers and immediately eliminating the marriage penalty in our tax laws.

HONORING SENATOR ALAN CRANSTON

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 6, 2001

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, today I remember an icon in California public service and a true role model for elected officials. Senator Alan Cranston embodied many attributes that symbol his dedication and commitment to serving the constituents he represented.

Senator Cranston spent 32 years in public office, including twenty-four as a United States Senator and rose to become a powerful force in the Democratic Party. After founding the California Democratic Council and winning two terms as state Controller, Alan Cranston was elected to the United States Senate in 1968, where he served until his retirement in 1993. Always a defender of the less fortunate, Senator Cranston fought for citizens of all races, ethnicities and income brackets, firmly believing that part of the American Dream was equality and opportunity for everyone.

In recognition of his astute leadership and perseverance, Senator Cranston was elected Majority Whip by his colleagues from 1977–1981 and 1987–1991 and served as Minority Whip from 1981–1987.

One of Senator Cranston's most admirable causes was his passionate advocacy of arms control. He was a profound believer in the United Nations and joined with former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to set up the Gorbachev Foundation USA, dedicated to eliminating nuclear weapons.

On a personal note, Senator Cranston was a frequent visitor to my 34th Congressional district where he would attend receptions at the Whittier home of our mutual constituents Kauzo and Mary Miyashita in support of the California Democratic Party. That is where my husband Frank and I first met the Senator in the mid 1980's.

Alan Cranston will be remembered as a superb mechanic of the political process and for being one of California's and the nation's most devout public servants. His leadership should inspire us all and I am proud to celebrate his life and his causes.

ASHCROFT NOMINATION

HON. MELVIN L. WATT

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 6, 2001

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following resolution of the North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers regarding the nomination of John D. Ashcroft as Attorney General of the United States.

NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF BLACK LAWYERS ANNOUNCES OPPOSITION TO THE NOMINATION OF JOHN D. ASHCROFT AS ATTORNEY GENERAL OF UNITED STATES

The North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers, founded in 1971 and representing over 800 African American Lawyers in North Carolina is dedicated to the pursuit of equal justice for all people. In defense of rights of African Americans and all persons believing in the pursuit of equal justice, we announce our active opposition to the confirmation of John A. Ashcroft for Attorney General of the United States. Our opposition is based upon Mr. Ashcroft's demonstrated hostility to ensuring equal justice and access to justice for all Americans.

The Attorney General is responsible for vigorous enforcement of our nation's civil rights laws—pursuing those laws in a fair, vigorous and consistent manner.

Ashcroft has opposed appropriately tailored race-conscious measures designed to remedy present and past discrimination. He even opposes programs that are constitutionally permissible under current Supreme Court precedent.

He repeatedly sponsored legislation to end affirmative action programs in employment, contracting and public programs. He sponsored legislation to end the Department of Transportation's Disadvantaged Minority and Women Business Program. He also sponsored legislation to make provisions similar to California's Proposition 209—which banned affirmative action—a part of federal law.

He opposed Bill Lann Lee because Mr. Lee expressed support for constitutionally permissible affirmative action programs—applying an ideological litmus test to this nomination as he has with judicial nominations. Ashcroft's efforts helped to prevent a vote before the full United States Senate.

As Attorney General and then as Governor, Ashcroft vigorously opposed efforts to desegregate St. Louis' public schools. His opposition was so great that the court almost ordered the State in contempt citing "continual delay and failure to comply" with a court order to submit a voluntary desegregation plan.

Governor Ashcroft vetoed legislation that would have allowed private non-profit, civic, religious and political groups to register voters in the City of St. Louis, he later vetoed a bill that would have allowed such registration in all of Missouri.

During testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Ashcroft said that he believed in and supported the President's ideas, which he termed "affirmative access"—already at work in California, Texas and Florida. He calls these programs which end affirmative action and have curtailed meaningful equal educational opportunities for women and minorities—a "good idea."

The Attorney General is the gatekeeper to the federal judiciary—playing a key role in whom the President selects for the federal bench.

Ashcroft has repeatedly blocked the consideration of qualified nominees. His record

shows that, as a Senator, he has repeatedly used tactics to block and delay votes on qualified women and minorities nominated to the federal courts.

Senator Ashcroft's decisive role in sabotaging the nomination of a well qualified African American, Judge Ronnie White, to the federal bench points to his disregard for judicial independence and his willingness to use ideological litmus tests in the judicial selection process.

Ashcroft spearheaded the party-line vote to defeat Judge Ronnie White's confirmation to a federal district court judgeship. He did this by misrepresenting Judge White's record, labeling him pro-criminal because of his death penalty record even though White voted to uphold the death penalty over 70% of the time.

The Attorney General should have the temperament, objectivity and commitment to fairness necessary to carry the awesome responsibilities of Attorney General.

Ashcroft's fervent and long-term commitment to his extremist political beliefs call into question his ability to suppress those political beliefs and enforce the constitutional principles with which he so profoundly disagrees. This extremist ideology also raises questions about his objectivity.

As a member of the Senate he made racially insensitive comments to Southern Partisan magazine that were divisive. Ashcroft applauded the magazine for its "heritage of doing that, of defending Southern patriots like [Robert E.] Lee, [Stonewall] Jackson, and [Jefferson] Davis." Southern Partisan has printed articles stating that African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and other immigrants have "no temperament for democracy, never had, [and] never will" and that these groups have dissipated the nation's "genetic race pool."

He further demonstrated his racial insensitivity when, as a United States Senator from a state with over 500,000 African Americans, he gave the commencement address and received an honorary degree from Bob Jones University, a school known for its racist policies and anti-Catholic bigotry. Although Ashcroft has claimed that he did not know about the policies of the University, he has refused to return the degree. The credibility of his denial is called into question when as governor he declined to appoint a professor to a state judgeship who had made supportive comments of the University in a law review article.

We are communicating our opposition to Senators Helms and Edwards as well as members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. We urge our membership to oppose vigorously this nomination. We join the multitude of organizations opposing this nomination.

EXPRESSING SYMPATHY FOR VICTIMS OF EARTHQUAKE IN INDIA ON JANUARY 26, 2001, AND SUPPORT FOR ONGOING AID EFFORTS

SPEECH OF

HON. ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 31, 2001

Mr. BLAGOJEVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my sympathy for the victims of the earthquake in Gujarat state in India, and I am proud to be a cosponsor of this resolution, which demonstrates our commitment here in Congress to the victims of this tragedy.

Over the past few days, Americans have been confronted with images of the devastation in Western India. Of course, Americans of Indian descent have been concerned for their family and friends. But no American who saw the extent of the tragedy in Gujarat could be unmoved by the fate of the citizens of our sister democracy. Americans and Indians share a bond forged by shared values. And that bond has motivated Americans to ask their government to play an active role in assisting the victims of this earthquake.

Thankfully, the administration has been quick to respond. By Sunday morning, an assessment team from the United States Agency for International Development was on the ground in Gujarat, determining needs and offering immediate comfort to victims. Since that time, the United States has provided generators, water purification equipment, tents and food to assist the survivors. The United States is continuing to work with relief agencies to get more critical assistance into the crisis zone as soon as possible. My colleagues and I in the Caucus for India and Indo-Americans have been working with the administration to minimize any roadblocks which could prevent the delivery of assistance.

I commend the administration for their quick response. But we here in Congress must ensure that as the immediate shock of this tragedy fades, our commitment to the victims does not fade along with it. Long after this earthquake passes from the headlines of American papers, we need to remember that people in Gujarat will be working to rebuild their homes, their businesses, and their lives. The leaders of our nation, the world's oldest democracy, must never forget our bond with the people of India, the world's largest democracy. I have written to the President and the Director of the United States Agency for International Development to urge them to show their commitment to assist India in the aftermath of this crisis. I will be working over the coming months to ensure that the United States provides what ever is necessary to ease the suffering of the victims of the Gujarat earthquake.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS MINUTEMAN MARCHING BAND

HON. JOHN W. OLVER

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 6, 2001

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the University of Massachusetts Minuteman Marching Band on its appearance in the 2001 Presidential Inaugural Parade. The Minuteman Marching Band was nominated by the Governor of Massachusetts and was selected by the Inaugural Committee to appear in the parade.

The Minuteman Marching Band has long been recognized for its excellence, receiving the prestigious Sudler Trophy in 1998. In addition, the band has a history of participation in Presidential inaugural festivities. The Minutemen marched in the 1981 Presidential Inaugural Parade and performed at the Inaugural Ceremonies in 1985.

The band, made up of 300 students, represents 16 states and over 90 Massachusetts communities. These talented students provide

an invaluable service to the student body of UMass-Amherst, and to the citizens of the state of Massachusetts. They performed admirably in the 2001 Inaugural Parade, and everyone from the UMass community is proud of their achievement. I am pleased to recognize the band's director, George Parks, and all the students in the band for their outstanding performance.

SUPPORT THE MONTGOMERY G.I. BILL IMPROVEMENTS ACT

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 6, 2001

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleague and fellow veteran, LANE EVANS, in reintroducing the Montgomery G.I. Bill Improvements Act. H.R. 1071 had the support of 160 of my colleagues in the 106th Congress, all of whom recognized, like our new Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi, that improving the military's primary education benefit, the Montgomery G.I. Bill, is wise policy for a number of reasons. It will reverse the military's deteriorating ability to recruit the number and quality of individuals it needs; it provides veterans the tools necessary to reenter the workforce; and, it expands access to higher education to the young men and women in uniform.

In 1999, the Congressional Commission on Servicemembers and Veterans Transition Assistance, chaired by now Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi, recommended overhauling and greatly improving the G.I. Bill. Our legislation is modeled on the Commission's recommendation, and I am encouraged and hopeful that the new Administration will work with us to pass this important bill. Clearly, Sec. Principi's appointment is a positive development.

America's military supremacy has been unquestioned since the end of the Cold War. In the Gulf War, Bosnia, and Kosovo we proved that our armed forces set the world standard for excellence. While much of our battlefield success has to do with the superiority of our weapons systems, weapons are only as good as the people who operate them. Our success on the battlefield boils down to the quality and ability of our troops.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the military is having increasing difficulty recruiting the quantity and quality of troops it needs to meet today's challenges. Recruiting shortfalls are a serious problem, and as statistics have grown worse, recruiting budgets have soared. In addition to new advertising campaigns, the services have resorted to gimmicks, including sponsoring drag racers, deploying psychedelic humvees, and offering emergency cash giveaways. I do not criticize the armed forces for these efforts, but they highlight the need for a greater, more effective recruiting tool. The best recruiting tool is education, and we would best help our armed forces by modernizing the military's primary education benefit, the Montgomery G.I. Bill.

The Department of Defense's Youth Attitude Tracking Studies (YATS) confirm that fewer young men and women are considering serving. This shouldn't come as a surprise. "Money for college" is the top reason young