

beauty and vitality of this California valley and bought 52,000 acres in 1873. As the years passed by, the city saw slow growth and finally a boom when the railroad came through. By 1890, almost 800 people lived in the valley. Unfortunately, by 1935 the city had gone bust like so many western towns whose livelihood depended upon the railroad.

It would not be until 1987, more than fifty years later, that Murrieta Valley would once again come into its own. That year saw explosive growth for this sleepy little town. Totalling only 542 residents in 1970 and little more than 2,250 a decade later it found its population increase by a multiple of eight by 1991, to 20,000 residents, when Murrieta became an incorporated city. This year, as they celebrate their 10th Anniversary it finds itself the home of some 50,000 residents.

As a city and community, Murrieta has thrived with the greater control of its destiny over the last 10 years. That includes providing services from within the community instead of outside, such as police, fire and library systems of its own rather than contracting for these services.

In 10 short years, the City of Murrieta has seen its population and communities grow because of dedication to affordable housing, protecting the natural beauty of the valley, good schools, low crime and clean air. The city adopted its first General Plan after more than 50 public meetings to draft a vision of what the new city would become over the next several decades. The police department was created in 1992, the fire department in 1993 and the library system in 1998. Public services like these are what bind a city together along with the building of parks and recreational facilities and more. In fact, for their incredible progress as a city Murrieta has won numerous awards for innovation and performance.

Mr. Speaker, looking back, the city of Murrieta and its residents can hold their heads high with pride at what their once small town has become in only 10 short years. I wish to extend to them my congratulations as families, community leaders and business leaders gather on this Saturday, June 30th, to celebrate their 10th Anniversary. Congratulations to the "Gem of the Valley!"

PERSECUTION OF THE MONTAGNARD PEOPLES IN VIETNAM

HON. CASS BALLENGER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2001

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a resolution concerning the persecution of the Montagnard peoples in Vietnam.

The Montagnards are indigenous peoples of the Central Highlands of Vietnam who have long suffered discrimination and mistreatment at the hands of successive Vietnamese governments. In the 1960's and 1970's the Montagnard freedom fighters were the first line in the defense of South Vietnam against invasion from the North, fighting courageously beside members of the Special Forces of the United States Army, suffering disproportionately heavy casualties, and saving the lives of many of their American and Vietnamese comrades in arms. Today the Montagnards are singled out by the Vietnamese government

due to their past association with the United States, their strong commitment to their traditional way of life and to their Christian religion.

Due to this persecution, many Montagnards have attempted to flee Vietnam to other countries, including Cambodia. The Royal Government of Cambodia has announced that Montagnards found in Cambodia who express a fear of return to Vietnam will be placed under the protection of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees rather than forcibly repatriated to Vietnam. Unfortunately, it appears there is a policy of systematic repatriation of Montagnard asylum seekers to Vietnam by some officials of the central government. There also are credible reports that Vietnamese security forces are operating openly in the Mondulakiri and Ratanakiri provinces of Cambodia to repatriate Montagnards.

My resolution urges the government of Vietnam to allow freedom of religious belief and practice to all Montagnards, return all traditional Montagnard lands that have been confiscated, allow international humanitarian organizations to deliver humanitarian assistance directly to Montagnards in their villages, and to withdraw its security forces from Cambodia and stop hunting down refugees. It also commends the Royal Government of Cambodia for its official policy of guaranteeing temporary asylum for Montagnards fleeing Vietnam and urges the Cambodian government to take all necessary measures to ensure that all officials and employees of the local, provincial, and central governments fully obey the policy of providing temporary asylum. Finally, this resolution has the Department of State make clear to the Government of Vietnam that continued mistreatment of the Montagnard peoples represent a grave threat to the process of normalization of relations between the governments of the United States and Vietnam.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Montagnard peoples of Vietnam by cosponsoring this resolution.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SMALL BUSINESS WELFARE BENEFITS PROTECTION ACT

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2001

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, today, Representative NEAL (D-MA) and I introduced the Small Business Welfare Benefits Protection Act which deals with Welfare Benefit Plans governed by Section 419A of the Tax Code. The Code currently allows a deduction for contributions to multiple employer welfare benefit plans.

The purpose of this legislation is to provide some clarity to this section of the code in a fashion that protects pension tax law while allowing small businesses to provide important benefits, such as life and health insurance, long term care insurance and severance benefits to their employees. While any employer can utilize Section 419A plans, they allow small business to compete with large employers in attracting and retaining talented staff by enabling them to offer meaningful benefits like the ones I just mentioned.

Section 419A plans are independently trusteed and administered ensuring employees that

the funds set aside for their benefit are there when they need them most, when a company is facing economic difficulties. This is the right policy and we should do everything in our power to encourage small businesses to protect their employees against the proverbial rainy day.

In terms of clarifying the Code, my legislation would ensure that all full time employees benefit. The allowable deduction would be limited to the cost of the benefit for the year in which the deduction is taken. Finally, the bill would prevent an employer who terminates participation in plan from pilfering the assets of the plan at the expense of the rank and file employees.

This legislation will ensure that 419A plans work the way they were intended to by Congress, namely for the employees, especially small business employees.

ACKNOWLEDGING ALL THOSE SUFFERING WITH THE DEADLY DISEASE OF HIV/AIDS IN THE CARIBBEAN

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2001

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, while we take into account the millions who die each year in Africa from this deadly disease we know as HIV/AIDS, we must also focus our attention on the Caribbean, as the second largest population to become infected with this devastating disease, as reported in the front page of the Washington Post on June 19, 2001, for those who may have missed it, I submit it for the record.

Two-thirds of all those diagnosed with the AIDS virus in the Caribbean are dead within two years. What is even more outrageous is that AIDS is the leading cause of death in the Caribbean for those aged 15 to 45 and the numbers are growing.

About one in every 50 people in the Caribbean, or 2% of the population has AIDS or is infected with HIV, the virus which causes AIDS; more than 4% in the Bahamas, and 13% among urban adults in Haiti.

The UN estimates that there were 9,600 children infected in the Caribbean. Further, the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC) as well estimates that the overall child mortality rate will increase 60% by 2010 if treatment is not improved.

Clearly, there is a need not only for the United States government's assistance but also for those major private foundations that provide AIDS money for Africa to also develop programs that will come to the aid of those in the Caribbean.

I proudly commend Congresswoman DONNA CHRISTENSEN and her efforts to raise awareness in the community, as this disease is kept silent. I also commend the government of the Bahamas as being the only country in the region that has offered universal antiretroviral treatment over the last several years.

While we simply take medical services and treatment for granted in this country, as the number of AIDS cases decreases per year in North America and increases in the Caribbean; it is our obligation to help provide assistance to these governments in order for them

to provide a simple service to their people, enabling them to live prosperous and healthy lives.

A TRIBUTE TO LT. AUGUSTUS HAMILTON, JR. AND THE MEMBERS OF THE FORCED LANDING ASSOCIATION

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2001

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, today is June 28th. We are only a few days away from the July 4th Independence Day celebrations. As fireworks light up the sky, houses are adorned with crisp flags, and children gaze in wonder at the passing parades, we must not forget the many brave men and women who courageously sacrificed their lives to preserve the freedoms and ideals we all enjoy as Americans.

Throughout our short history, America's security as a nation has been tested and tried. It is truly a blessing that our youth have been spared the horrors of war. However, for all those who have known war and have died for the sake of this great country, let it be said that they did not die in vain. The gratitude felt by all Americans and our many allies throughout the world is immeasurable.

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Let us extend particular thanks to the veterans of World War II. During World War II, Adolf Hitler and his Nazi regime came alarmingly close to achieving world domination. It is difficult to envision what our world might have looked like had Hitler succeeded but, thanks to the heroism of World War II veterans, we will never have to find out.

I'd now like to share a story about one very special World War II veteran, a man by the name of Augustus Hamilton, Jr., and a remarkable group of people in France who have dedicated themselves to ensuring that the memories of World War II veterans endure. This story was told to me by Mr. Hamilton's niece, Beth White from Chicago, Illinois, and I want to thank Ms. White for taking the time to contact me.

Augustus Hamilton was born on January 4, 1922. At the age of twenty, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps the day after Pearl Harbor and quickly advanced to First Lieutenant of the 358th Fighter Group, 365th Squadron. By all accounts, he had always been a family hero—an athlete (amateur golf champion for the state of North Carolina and football star who attended the University of North Carolina on a football scholarship), good student, caring brother, and loving son. He was also a new husband and when he went overseas, his wife was pregnant with their child.

Lt. Hamilton served as a fighter pilot in World War II and was awarded an air medal with two oak leaf clusters. According to an excerpt from Thunderbolts over High Halden by Graham J. Hukins, "Lt. Hamilton was last seen diving on a flight of four enemy planes with another four on his tail. He is believed to have shot down one or two enemy fighters before he was killed in action, his Thunderbolt plane crashing into a hillside near Tillieres sur Avre, France. Lt. Hamilton had already finished his tour of duty and had his bags already packed ready to be rotated back to the

USA. He had volunteered for one more mission." Shot down behind enemy lines, he was initially listed as missing in action. Subsequent reports to Hamilton's family confirmed he was dead, but the military could not provide the family with any physical evidence such as dog tags.

At the time of his death, Lt. Hamilton had never met or seen a photo of his only son, for the baby was born when he was overseas. He had named his fighter plane after his wife and son, "Mrs. Ham/Lil Ham 3rd." Following the crash, several of his family members persisted in denying his death. He had told his family that if he were ever seriously injured in combat, he would not come home because he didn't want to be a burden. Remembering these words, his family hoped that he had somehow survived the crash but had decided not to come home due to his injuries, or perhaps had developed amnesia and could not contact them.

In 1993, almost half a century later, the gift of emotional closure was finally given to Lt. Hamilton's surviving family members by a French man named Jean Luc Grusson and his volunteer organization, Forced Landing Association. In an amazing demonstration of appreciation for the U.S. soldiers who fought in World War II, the members of Forced Landing Association devote themselves to finding each of the more than 150 crash sites reported within a 30 kilometer radius of Tillieres sur Avre, an area of intense air battles because of the close proximity of three German airfields. The Association was established in 1986 and has 11 members who live in France. To date, its members have discovered 30 crash sites, including that of Lt. Hamilton.

M. Grusson uncovered Lt. Hamilton's plane in 1993. He then spent a full year tracking down Lt. Hamilton's surviving family members to return Lt. Hamilton's dog tags, "wings" (a lapel pin), a belt buckle, and other items. When the Hamilton family asked M. Grusson why he and his associates devote so much time, energy, and personal expense unearthing these crash sites, he replied, "The pilots who gave their lives need to be honored. We owe these men our freedom. They gave us our country. We must honor them." M. Grusson's associate, Jacques Larousse, also shared a personal account of the profound impact American soldiers had on him as a young child. He explained that his mother washed the uniforms of American soldiers during the war to make money. When the Americans would come to their home to retrieve their uniforms, they always brought food and chocolate bars to M. Larousse and his mother. Given the scarcity of the time, the kindness of the Americans and their generous gifts made a lasting impression on M. Larousse.

M. Grusson and M. Larousse continue to revere these American soldiers as heroes to this very day. In fact, the members of Forced Landing Association are completing individual memorials at the crash sites of both Lt. Hamilton and Edward Blevins, Hamilton's squadron member. These sites will contain photographs and descriptive accounts of these men to commemorate their tremendous service. There will also be a ceremony on July 8th in remembrance of these fallen soldiers.

I applaud the tireless work of M. Grusson and the Forced Landing Association to keep the memory of our veterans illuminated. I hope that on this July 4th holiday, we will not take

for granted the countless freedoms we enjoy. Rather, I hope we always remember that such freedoms have been kept alive through the sacrifices of others.

INTRODUCTION OF EDUCATION BILLS

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 28, 2001

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce two bills designed to help improve education by reducing taxes on parents, teachers, and all Americans who wish to help improve education. The first bill, the Hope Plus Scholarship Act, extends the HOPE Scholarship tax credit to K-12 education expenses. Under this bill, parents could use the HOPE Scholarship to pay for private or religious school tuition or to offset the cost of home schooling. In addition, under the bill, all Americans could use the Hope Scholarship to make cash or in-kind donations to public schools. Thus, the Hope Scholarship could help working parents finally afford to send their child to a private school, while other parents could take advantage of the Hope credit to help purchase new computers for their children's school.

Mr. Speaker, reducing taxes so that Americans can devote more of their own resources to education is the best way to improve America's schools. This is not just because expanding the HOPE Scholarship bill will increase the funds devoted to education but because, to use a popular buzz word, individuals are more likely than federal bureaucrats to insist that schools be accountable for student performance. When the federal government controls the education dollar, schools will be held accountable for their compliance with bureaucratic paperwork requirements and mandates that have little to do with actual education, or for students performance on a test that may measure little more than test-taking skills or the ability of education bureaucrats to design or score the test so that "no child is left behind," regardless of the child's actual knowledge. Federal rules and regulations also divert valuable resources away from classroom instruction into fulfilling bureaucratic paperwork requirements. The only way to change this system is to restore control of the education dollar to the American people so they can ensure schools meet their demands that children be provided a quality education.

My other bill, the "Professional Educators Tax Relief Act" provides a thousand dollar per year tax credit to all professional educators, including librarians, counselors, and others involved in implementing or formulating the curriculum. This bill helps equalize the pay gap between educators and other professionals, thus ensuring that quality people will continue to seek out careers in education. Good teaching is the key to a good education, so it is important that Congress raise the salaries of educators by cutting their taxes.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join with me in returning education resources to the American people by cosponsoring my Hope Plus Scholarship Act and my Professional Educators Tax Cut Act.