

PROTECT CHINA'S WORKERS

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 22, 2002

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call attention to the suffering of the working class in China. I recently read an article, "Worked Till They Drop" by Philip P. Pan, in the Washington Post on May 13th, 2002, and it shocked me. According to the Washington Post, 19-year-old Li Chunmei died due to work exhaustion. She had been on her feet for nearly 16 hours that day, running back and forth carrying toy parts from machine to machine. Later that evening, she had complained that she was very tired and hungry. During the night, her roommates had awakened to the sounds of violent coughing and tracked the source of the sound to find Ms. Chunmei curled-up on the bathroom floor, coughing up blood. They immediately called an ambulance, but she died before it had arrived.

Cases of *guolaosi*, meaning "over-work death", are never documented but many local journalists estimate that dozens occur in the Pearl River Delta area alone, the manufacturing region north of Hong Kong where Ms. Chunmei's factory, Kaiming Industrial, is located. What is sad is that nothing is being done about these horrible deaths. The majority of these workers are young men and women who travel many miles from their poor villages to earn a living in China's factory towns. Many of them never finish school, being taken out by their parents to help work on the farm or in the family business. By the age of 15, most of these youths are urged by their parents to seek employment in a factory to support the family.

These young migrant workers are considered second class citizens in China's industrial cities, receiving less access to the weak courts and trade unions. Many do not even know the Chinese word for labor union! The factories, many of them backed by foreign investment, that they work in are drab, concrete dormitories. Life inside can be compared to the feudal system. An average day begins around 8:00 a.m. and can last until 2 a.m. Breaks are rare. The conditions that these poor souls have to work in are tragic as well. In most of these factories there is no air conditioning, with the temperature climbing above 90 degrees at times, and the air is full of fibers. The average salary for a runner, which was Ms. Chunmei's position, is about 12 cents an hour and, even during the busy season, one might earn as little as \$65 a month, with no money received for overtime work. Moreover, benefits are non-existent and managers tend to make deductions from the workers' salaries for items never received. Managers also tend to impose arbitrary fines on the workers, which include penalties for spending more than five minutes in the bathroom and wasting food during meals.

When these young workers try to complain about these conditions to their supervisors or government officials, they are told to return to their jobs or they will be fired or even arrested. Local officials often overlook labor rights and safety violations, eager to take bribes and generate tax revenue. The concept of subcontracting further complicates the situation, as many foreign investors rely on these contrac-

tors to carry out their operations. It is due to this complicated web that overseas corporations avoid responsibility for the rights of China's working class.

In the case of Li Chunmei, it took her father 28 days to get someone to take responsibility for what had happened to his daughter. He was lead on a wild goose chase when finally the police concluded that Li Chunmei died because of an illness and that her death was non-work related. Her poor father could do nothing about the ruling and now the family again is struggling to make ends meet, this time with empty hearts that money will never be able fill.

Mr. Speaker, I have attached excerpts from this piece but I strongly urge my colleagues to read this article in its entirety. This is an issue that we can no longer ignore. As China and the U.S. improve trade relations, we must continue to press China to improve its labor, environment, and human rights record in general. Let us do all we can to help these young individuals, before we read of another Li Chunmei.

EXCERPTS FROM: "WORKED TILL THEY DROP" BY PHILIP P. PAN, WASHINGTON POST, MAY 13TH 2002

"On the night she died, Li Chunmei must have been exhausted. Co-workers said she had been on her feet for nearly 16 hours, running back and forth inside the Bainan Toy Factory, carrying toy parts from machine to machine. When the quitting bell finally rang shortly after midnight, her young face was covered with sweat..."

"... Her roommates had already fallen asleep when Li started coughing up blood. They found her in the bathroom a few hours later, curled up on the floor, moaning softly in the dark, bleeding from her nose and mouth. Someone called an ambulance, but she died before it arrived."

"The exact cause of Li's death remains unknown. But what happened to her last November in this industrial town in southeastern Guangdong province is described by her family, friends and co-workers as an example of what China's more daring newspapers call *guolaosi*. The phrase means "over-work death," and usually applies to young workers who suddenly collapse and die after working exceedingly long hours, day after day."

"These new workers are younger, poorer, and less familiar with the promises of labor rights and job security that once served as the ideological bedrock of the ruling Communist Party. They are more likely to work for private companies, often backed by foreign investment, with no socialist tradition of cradle-to-grave benefits. The young migrants are also second-class citizens, with less access to weak courts and trade unions that sometime temper market forced as China's economy changes from socialist to capitalist. Most of all, they are outsiders, struggling to make a living far away from home."

"Li was a runner... always on her feet... 'She had the worst job, and the bosses were always telling her to go faster,' said one worker on Li's assembly line... 'There were no breaks, and there was no air conditioning.' He added that the air was full of fibers, and with the heat from the machines, sometimes temperatures climbed above 90 degrees."

"Runners required no special skills, and were paid the least, about 12 cents per hour, workers said. During the busy season, including extra pay for overtime, Li could earn about \$65 a month. But there were deductions. Workers said the company withheld about \$12 a month for room and board and charged them for benefits they never re-

ceived. For example, workers said they paid for the temporary residence permits they needed to live and work in Songgang legally, but never received them. Managers also had the power to impose arbitrary fines, including penalties for spending more than five minutes in the bathroom, wasting food during meals and failing to meet production quotas, workers said."

Another colleague, Zhang Fayong, recalled that Li once purchased a new dress, then refused to wear it. She said Li was amazed she had spent money on it, and afraid she somehow might ruin it. After her death, her father found the dress among her belongings, folded and wrapped in plastic, he said. He also found a stack of laminated snapshots, taken at local photo parlors for 50 cents apiece... They show Li with her friends... She looks surprisingly young, just a teenager with long black hair, holding flowers, or saluting, or sitting with an ID tag pinned to her blouse... She was smiling in only one picture."

"Immediately after learning of his daughter's death, Li Zhimin traveled to Songgang. For 28 days, he said, he tried to get someone to take responsibility of what happened... Finally, police gave him a letter that said a district medical examiner had concluded Li Chunmei 'suddenly died because of an illness while she was alive.' There were no other details, and the local labor bureau declared her death 'non-work-related'... Li said he was unhappy with the finding, but was helpless to do anything about it."

A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO FARMWORKER APPRECIATION DAY

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 22, 2002

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pride that I rise to pay a very special tribute to an outstanding event taking place in my district in Northwest Ohio. On Saturday, August 3, 2002, people from across the district will gather in Liberty Center to celebrate Farmworker Appreciation Day.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that farming is the backbone of our nation. From the earliest days of our nation's history, hard-working men and women have taken to the fields to plant and harvest crops and raise livestock in order to feed their families, their neighbors, and their fellow countrymen.

Farming is an honorable profession that takes a great deal of skill, patience, and hard work. Those hardworking men and women who work on our nation's farms deserve much credit for helping to make our lands productive.

Through the arduous process of working and cultivating the soil, these farmworkers help prepare the ground, plant the crops, and harvest the food we need to live. The life of a farmworker is a tough lifestyle. Like the farmer, the farmworker must endure the ever-changing seasons from the harshest winters to the sun-drying, waterless droughts to rain-soaked days that lead to disastrous floods. Farmworkers watch the fields as thunderous storms race across them damaging the crops from which they make their living. However, through it all, farmworkers continue to the fields to do their work.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture is vitally important to the Fifth District of Ohio as we are home to

nineteen percent of all of Ohio's farmland. We know that the economy of our part of Ohio depends on farming and a big factor in our prosperity is due to the tireless efforts of farm-workers who bring in the crops. I can think of no better way to celebrate the contributions of these individuals than to take part in Farmworker Appreciation Day.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleagues to join me in paying special tribute to farm-workers by helping me to proclaim August 3, 2002, as Farmworker Appreciation Day. We thank them for all they have done and wish them the very best for the future.

CONGRATULATING LUIS RAUL AND OLGA CERNA-BACA ON THEIR 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 22, 2002

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 50th wedding anniversary of my good friends, loyal patriots, and loving parents and grandparents, Luis Raul and Olga Cerna-Baca. As family and friends gather to celebrate this joyous occasion, I too would like to recognize them at this special time.

Fifty years ago, in New Orleans, Louisiana, while studying English, Luis Raul Cerna-Baca, 33, married a lovely young woman of 17, named Olga Augello. Together, they raised five children, Luis Raul, Juan Francisco, Oscar, Maria Cecilia, and Olga, and were blessed with nine grandchildren.

Their life together serves as a reminder to us all of love, family, civic duty, charity, and the determination of the human spirit. Their work on behalf of human rights and justice for the people of Nicaragua has earned them international recognition and the respect of the people of Nicaragua, the United States, and throughout our global community.

Love has flourished between these two hearts, but not without dedication and hard work. Following their hearts throughout their 50-year journey has led to happiness and a loving life together. However, their love story is one that is still in progress and I can attest firsthand that their love for each other has grown even stronger through the years and serves as an inspiration to us all.

This celebration of 50 years is a remarkable accomplishment and is to be commended by all of us. It is a great honor to provide a tribute for a loving couple who have committed themselves to each other for so many years.

Accordingly, on behalf of the Congress of the United States, permit me to rise to extend our congratulations to Luis Raul and Olga Cerna-Baca on their 50th Wedding Anniversary and to wish them many more years of good health and happiness together.

SALUTING THE LATE VICE-ADMIRAL THOMAS J. KILCLINE

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 22, 2002

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to honor the life of Vice Adm-

ral Thomas J. Kilcline, who passed away on July 11 at the age of 76. He was a resident of McLean in northern Virginia.

Admiral Kilcline was a decorated naval officer who served his country for four decades. After graduating from the Naval Academy in 1949, he quickly became a distinguished naval aviator, flying in Korea and commanding a tactical carrier-based squadron in Vietnam. Rising through the ranks, he became commander of the Naval Base at Subic Bay in the Philippines and later commander of U.S. Naval Forces in the Philippines.

He also spent time as the head of naval officer distribution in the Bureau of Naval Personnel. He managed flight test programs at the Navy's test center at Patuxent River in Maryland and later was the program manager in charge of the acquisition of RA5C aircraft in Washington, D.C. Many members may remember him in his position as the Navy's chief of legislative affairs from 1978-81. Ultimately, he ascended to become the commander of Naval Air Forces in the U.S. Atlantic Fleet.

After retiring from the Navy in August of 1983, Admiral Kilcline served as the national president of The Retired Officers Association for nearly 10 years. At the time of his passing, he was a member of the Board of Directors for Alloy Surfaces, Inc. and Kilgore Flares, two defense-related companies. Additionally, he and his wife were active members of Saint John's Catholic Church in McLean, Virginia, and the Cursillo Movement.

Tom Kilcline and his devoted wife of 52 years, Dornell, were the parents of four children and the grandparents of seven.

Thomas J. Kilcline was a true American patriot who served his country with distinction. On behalf of the entire House, we extend our deepest condolences to his family, to his friends, and to the thousands of Navy personnel who were fortunate enough to have known and worked with him.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. FRANK MASCARA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 22, 2002

Mr. MASCARA. Mr. Speaker, on July 18, 2002, I was unavoidably absent for personal reasons and missed rollcall votes numbered 319 through 323. For the record, had I been present I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 320, 321, and 322, and would have voted nay on rollcall votes 319 and 323.

CONGRATULATING ELIZABETH MOORE-STUMP

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 22, 2002

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Elizabeth Moore-Stump, who has devoted 33 years of her life to public service. Elizabeth is the daughter of the late Elizabeth Thornton Moore and the late great world-boxing champion, Archie Moore.

Elizabeth received her degree in Social Welfare at San Diego State University and used it

to help her beloved city. In 1966, Elizabeth began her career in public service working for the State of California Department of Rehabilitation. Her professional career with the City of San Diego included the Regional Youth Employment Program (RYEP), Community Relations and Community Services departments, and culminated with her appointment in 1985 by the City Manager to the newly established Management Assistant position of Equal Opportunity Program Coordinator. Elizabeth left the City of San Diego in 1989 to join the San Diego Unified Port District and establish their first Equal Opportunity Management department. In 1999, she was appointed Senior Director of Administrative Services and the District Clerk.

Besides working as a public servant for San Diego, Elizabeth has also devoted a lot of her time to various community activities. She served from 1976 to 1983 as a board member of the San Diego Urban League. Since 1987, she has been on the board of the Catholic Charities of San Diego, and starting in 1990 has been a member of the San Diego Police Department's Crisis Intervention Team. Beginning in 1998, Elizabeth has been a member of the Airport Minority Advisory Council (AMAC). AMAC is a national aviation trade association established to promote equal opportunities in employment and contracting within the nation's airport system. After serving as AMAC's Secretary and Vice-Chair, she was elected President and Chairperson.

Mr. Speaker, I know Elizabeth will continue to serve her community and I join Elizabeth's friends and family in thanking her for all that she has done for the City of San Diego.

RECOGNIZING PAM MUICK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SOLANO LAND TRUST

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 22, 2002

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, we rise today to recognize Pam Muick who is leaving as Executive Director of the Solano Land Trust after six years of dedicated service to her community.

During her tenure, thousands of acres of farmland and open space have been preserved in Solano County to be enjoyed by people for generations to come. Some of the acquisitions she brokered include:

The 1,500 acre Jepson Prairie Preserve, which has a world-wide reputation as an oasis for native California plants, spring wildflowers, rare and endangered species and vernal pools;

The 1,500 acre Lynch Canyon Preserve, which is a working cattle ranch with hiking trails and panoramic views of Mount St. Helena, the Napa Valley, Mount Tamalpais, San Francisco Bay, Mount Diablo, Suisun Bay and the Sacramento River Delta;

The 1,000 acre King-Sweet Ranch located between the cities of Fairfield, Benicia and Vallejo that will eventually become the cornerstone of a regional park system in Solano County; and