

RECOGNIZING 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

SPEECH OF

HON. ANÍBAL ACEVEDO-VILÁ

OF PUERTO RICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 24, 2002

Mr. ACEVEDO-VILÁ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of 4-H and I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this important resolution. This is a wonderful time to cherish our country's youth and their achievements. However, it is important to remember those who have fought for farmer workers fair treatment. One great example is Dolores Huerta. As we mark National Hispanic Heritage Month, I urge the leadership to bring House Concurrent Resolution 177 to the floor. This Resolution recognizes the achievements of a great American; moreover, of a great woman. Dolores Huerta was a leader for farm workers' rights. She was the cofounder of American Farm Workers with Cesar Chavez. They have fought for fair wages, safe working conditions, and against harmful pesticides. The Women's Hall of Fame recognized her great achievements by inducting her in 1993. Additionally, she has recently been named as one of the six women sustaining the American Spirit by the National Women's History Project. It is important that we bring special attention to this woman's achievements. In closing, as a original cosponsor to H. Con. Res. 177, I urge you to bring this to the floor.

CONSUMER RENTAL PURCHASE AGREEMENT ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 18, 2002

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 1701, the Consumer Rental Purchase Agreement Act. While supporters of this bill claim that it will protect the interests of consumers, it will do the exact opposite in my state of Minnesota and other states that have enacted strong protections against abuses by the "rent-to-own" industry.

If enacted, H.R. 1701 would pre-empt laws in Minnesota, New Jersey, Wisconsin and Vermont that currently treat "rent-to-own" as consumer credit transactions subject to state credit sales laws. These strong state laws protect consumers from being charged exorbitant prices for items purchased through "rent-to-own" transactions. Conversely, H.R. 1701 would require all states to treat these transactions as renewable leases subject to minimum disclosures.

H.R. 1701 would allow "rent-to-own" businesses to charge even more outrageous prices to consumers. While "rent-to-own" businesses must currently comply with usury laws that set maximum interests that may be charged for these transactions, H.R. 1701 will completely undermine this protection.

Further, this bill would allow the "rent-to-own" industry to avoid millions of dollars in legal penalties that are collected from businesses in violation of Minnesota's consumer

protection laws. With strong enforcement of these laws, Minnesota courts have collected \$30 million in penalties since 1997 from just one "rent-to-own" chain. Clearly, the "rent-to-own" industry stands to benefit greatly from the "get out of jail free" card that H.R. 1701 would provide.

During my time in the Minnesota House of Representatives, I fought attempts by the "rent-to-own" industry to strip these important protections from our state law. Now, as a member of Congress, I must fight these attempts again to protect the interests of the low- and moderate-income consumers who are targeted by the deceptive practices of the "rent-to-own" industry.

IMPACTS OF UNCOMPENSATED CARE ON SOUTHWEST BORDER COUNTIES

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 26, 2002

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, this morning, the United States/Mexico Border Counties Coalition released an important report detailing the increased healthcare burden incurred by our nation's twenty-four counties that share a border with our southern neighbor, Mexico. I am privileged to represent a congressional district that includes nearly all of the California/Mexico international border. As a result, I can tell this body firsthand what the study proves—border communities suffer a significant financial burden from providing unreimbursable healthcare services to undocumented aliens.

The study, titled "Medical Emergency: Costs of Uncompensated Care in Southwest Border Counties," estimates that at least 25 percent of the border county hospitals uncompensated care costs, or \$190 million in 2000, are incurred from providing services to undocumented aliens. In addition, emergency medical service providers lost about \$13 million providing care and transportation for illegal aliens injured while crossing the border.

In 1998, Imperial County alone incurred nearly \$1.3 million in unreimbursed healthcare services provided to undocumented aliens. Unfortunately, Imperial County is already one of the poorest counties in the country and certainly in the State of California. As a result, this financial burden is particularly difficult for this community to sustain. While the cost of healthcare delivery is high, it is not the only cost incurred on behalf of illegal aliens. In total, Imperial County estimates that, in 1998, it spent more than \$5.4 million providing services to undocumented aliens and that amount continues to increase.

At the same time, San Diego County is also bearing a significant cost for unreimbursable services provided to illegal aliens. The County estimates that in 1998 they spent nearly \$10.8 million for emergency medical care and over \$50 million in total services provided. Clearly, this money would be better spent delivering services to needy county residents.

The impacts of uncompensated emergency services does not stop at an affected hospitals' balance sheet. Healthcare costs and insurance premiums are on the rise, partially in order to cover the unreimbursable costs in-

curred by the healthcare institutions. Rising health insurance premiums are threatening employers' ability, particularly small businesses, to offer their employees affordable health care benefits. High liability costs and low levels of compensation are threatening the viability of emergency rooms and emergency transportation providers all along the border, and particularly in California where the healthcare system is already in crisis.

Throughout my tenure in Congress, I have fought for additional border security, not only to address safety concerns, but also as a way of addressing the financial impacts of caring for the undocumented alien population. The fact is, securing our international borders is the responsibility of the federal government. So it logically follows that providing necessary medical care for individuals who penetrate our border is also a federal responsibility.

To make matters worse, the federal border agencies, in order to avoid paying the costs associated with healthcare delivery to the injured alien, will report an emergency situation to local emergency personnel without officially taking control of the alien. As a result, when the ambulance picks up the undocumented alien for transport to the nearest hospital, they are also accepting total financial obligations for the immigrant. It is unacceptable for federal agencies to be passing on their responsibilities to our already financially-strapped local communities. This practice must come to an end.

The study makes several important recommendations for addressing these problems, all of which appear to have merit. The primary solution, however, is clear: border communities must be compensated for the costs incurred from caring for undocumented aliens. I plan to work closely with my colleagues who represent affected counties to find a solution to this problem and I hope my colleagues throughout the Congress will join us in this effort. After all, it is a matter of fairness and accepting responsibility of our federal obligations.

KYRGYZSTAN

HON. JOSEPH R. PITTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 26, 2002

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, the President of Kyrgyzstan, Askar Akayev, and the First Lady, visited the United States.

I rise to welcome them and thank them for their friendship.

Kyrgyzstan is centrally located along the Great Silk Road, an ancient economic and cultural trade route that connected Europe to Asia.

Kyrgyzstan has absorbed traditions from the East and the West, making its history rich and its people diverse.

Today, the Great Silk Road is being renewed and Kyrgyzstan, once again, is at the center.

Kyrgyzstan has made notable progress since its independence, but it still faces many challenges.

Over the past decade, Kyrgyzstan has moved to adopt democratic reforms and a market economy. However, the potential that Kyrgyzstan holds to be an example to the region has not yet been fully realized. The U.S.

must work closely with President Akayev to encourage additional reforms.

Still, the Kyrgyz people are hungry for democracy and thirsty for economic prosperity. The future of the Kyrgyzstan rests in the hands of its young people. And it is a bright future. With this in mind, it is encouraging to see the hard work of the First Lady of Kyrgyzstan on behalf of the children in her country. The U.S. must continue to support these efforts.

Kyrgyzstan has also been a strong supporter of the United States' war on terrorism. President Akayev has cooperated in allowing the use of an airbase in Bishkek and the government has helped with providing information on terrorist cells in the region.

A prosperous Kyrgyzstan is important for regional security and stability. Therefore, we must work together to continue building relations between Kyrgyzstan and the U.S.

116TH AIR CONTROL WING

HON. SAXBY CHAMBLISS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 26, 2002

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I support many of the transformation initiatives our military is undertaking. Through the vision and leadership of Secretary Roche and General Jumper, the Air Force has been a leading proponent of transformation. The Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System, or JSTARS, and the 116th Air National Guard unit at Robins Air Force Base are a prime example of a transformational mission. These unique units are on the verge of becoming even more transformational as they blend Air National Guard personnel into the active JSTARS unit.

On Monday, September 30, 2002 the Guard's 116th Bomb Wing and the active duty 93rd Air Control Wing will merge into a first of its kind "blended Wing." The new wing will operate all of the Air Force's Joint STARS aircraft. It is a mission of considerable importance. The J-STARS aircraft can find and track moving targets on the ground hundreds of miles into enemy territory and are prized assets and constantly in demand by theater commanders.

Developing a blended unit has proven to be a daunting task. However, the Air Force and members of both the 93rd Air Control wing and the 116th Bomb Wing have stepped up to the plate and cleared every hurdle in their way. Secretary Roche stated that "Outdated laws and policies would have to change to reflect requirements in command-and-control, fiscal, and personnel issues," and he was right. The members of the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve have worked tirelessly to achieve a "blended wing" and have done it in an exceptional fashion.

The Air Force has long been the model of full and seamless integration of the Reserve Components. Its Guard and Reserve associate programs are long-term success stories that maximize weapon system utilization while leveraging the expertise of Guard and Reserve personnel. Strong national defense rests on the foundation of a well-equipped, well-trained and mobile military force. The 116th

has been and will continue to be the pinnacle of professionalism and honor; and will continue to be ready—Anytime-Anywhere.

I would like to commend the vision, leadership, and stalwart dedication that Major General David Pothress, Colonel Tom Lynn, Colonel David Fadok, and all the people that helped make this day possible. It is the strong commitment by everyone involved to their country, to the war-fighter, and to Robins that makes this day truly great.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF SEPTEMBER

11

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 26, 2002

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, our nation was forever changed on the morning of Sept 11. The goal of Osama bin Laden was to demoralize us, create fear, uncertainty and instability in our country—he failed. Last week Congress met in New York to pay tribute to those who were killed, and I was reminded how strong and resilient our country truly is. Last September 11 we saw amazing displays of heroism and bravery. I will never forget the sight of firemen entering the World Trade Center risking their lives to save others.

We have also learned a great deal since Sept 11. We've learned that we are a vulnerable nation, and that we must lead an international coalition against bigoted, religious fanatics who believe they have the right to kill in order to impose their reactionary ideology on others. Many of us also have learned that in order to be true to American values, we must not undermine the fundamental principles and constitutional rights that our country was founded on.

As an American and a Vermonter, I was enormously proud of how our people responded to this crisis in terms of blood donations, financial contributions and coming together as a community to support the victims and each other. It is my hope that we will continue to show that same sense of community that we demonstrated in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks.

HONORING JUDGE JOSEPH LODGE

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 26, 2002

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to pay tribute to an extraordinary citizen of California's central coast, Judge Joseph Lodge. As both a judge and a teacher at the University of California, Santa Barbara, there is no question as to how much Judge Lodge has given to the Santa Barbara community and I am very pleased to have the opportunity to honor him.

In 1955, after graduating from the University of Michigan School of Law, Joe Lodge began his legal career by working as a clerk for the chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals, 6th Circuit. In 1956 Joe moved to Santa Barbara, which he has called home ever since. He became the first full-time attorney in the Santa

Barbara suburb, Goleta, and in 1958, at the young age of 26, he made the decision to run for a part-time judgeship in a local court. In 1965, after the South Coast courts merged, Judge Lodge became a full-time judge in the municipal court, although he still found time to continue teaching at UCSB. In 1998, Judge Lodge was moved to the Superior Court, where he sits now.

Judge Lodge holds the distinction of being the longest sitting trial judge in the State of California. Not only has he dedicated the last 44 years to presiding on the bench, but he has also spent the last 42 years teaching an extremely popular criminal justice course at UCSB. Since Judge Lodge has vowed never to retire, the residents of the central coast decided to throw him an "In-Lieu-of-Retirement Party" on the evening of Thursday, September 26.

The Santa Barbara community has benefited greatly from the many, many years of service Judge Lodge has dedicated. His wisdom and fairness has played a part in so many people's lives and it is truly fitting that we have the opportunity to honor him today.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO: J. NICHOLAS MCGRATH

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 26, 2002

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I recognize the life and passing of J. Nicholas McGrath of Basalt, Colorado. Mr. McGrath was a very prominent and well-respected attorney not only in the State of Colorado but also throughout the entire nation. As his family mourns their loss, I would like to pay tribute to the life and accomplishments of Nicholas McGrath before this body of Congress and this nation.

Nicholas McGrath graduated from Columbia University Law School in 1965 magna cum laude. After law school he clerked for Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. He is listed in Who's Who in America, Who's Who in American Law, Who's Who in the world, and Bar Register of Preeminent Lawyers in the United States. Mr. McGrath specialized primarily in land use law and litigation with the firm of Oates, McGrath, and Jordan, in Aspen, Colorado.

Despite a demanding career, Mr. McGrath still found the time to become actively involved in his community. Mr. McGrath participated extensively in many Basalt recreational programs and was president of the Basalt soccer club. He was extremely dedicated to expanding many of Basalt's youth programs throughout the community and is responsible for providing many kids with the opportunity to play organized sports. At his own children's sporting events, he was always Nick and Molly's biggest fan.

Mr. Speaker, it is in earnest respect that I recognize the memory of Mr. J. Nicholas McGrath before this body of Congress and this nation for the irreplaceable contributions he made to the community of Basalt and the State of Colorado. My sincere condolences go out to his wife Rosemary and to his children Nicholas and Molly McGrath. While his loss will be deeply felt, the memory of his kindness