

making a state visit to the People's Republic of China in late February. As Secretary of State Colin Powell said, the United States and China have many common interests and also many disagreements, one of which is Taiwan.

I hope that President Bush will stand firm on the issue of Taiwan in his discussions with the Chinese. The United States and Taiwan have been maintaining strong relations for decades. In recent years, despite the lack of formal diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Taiwan, Taiwan has been unwavering in its support of the United States in all areas. In the wake of the Twin Towers tragedy, Taiwan went into deep mourning and its government ordered all flags lowered at half-staff for two days.

Taiwan stands with the United States on nearly all issues including safeguarding human rights and fighting terrorism around the globe.

Mr. Speaker, Taiwan is not an issue that divides the United States from China. As long as we stand firm on our principles of providing what Taiwan needs militarily, there will be stability in the Taiwan Strait and that is in everyone's best interests. I wish President Bush the best of luck in his journey to China.

BIPARTISAN CAMPAIGN REFORM ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 13, 2002

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2356) to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to provide bipartisan campaign reform:

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Chairman, I come to the floor today to ask my colleagues, what are we doing here? We are playing games, and I, for one, did not come to this body to play games.

America is being misled. We are being misled. Who is telling the truth?

To those of you outside this hall that think this is reform, I say to you it is as bad as the current situation—and that makes it worse, doesn't it? It's worse because you truly believe that this bill represents real reform. It doesn't.

And to those of you who stand in the way of real reform, I say to you, move aside.

All of these arguments on the "process" are lost on the American people who just want reform, pure and simple. We are playing a game with those who have more vested in the "process," than they do in principle. And when principles loses, what does that say about us?

Never did I think that my vote on dearly held principles would doom reform. But that is the conundrum that has been handed to me—those who would choose to kill reform and those who would choose "less reform" as "good enough" have boxed me into a corner. Who would have ever thought that "doing the right thing" may be the wrong move?

Many of my colleagues and my constituents alike know that I am a long-time supporter of campaign finance reform. I have been a strong supporter since we first began this struggle for real reform three years ago, and my party's opposition then and since has never stopped me from voting my conscience, holding to my principles.

I have always, and will continue to believe that a total ban on soft money is necessary to reform our campaign financing system, and I will cast my vote to ban soft money again. Likewise, I believe that we must practice what we preach, and so I will vote to make these reforms effective today, not more than two years from now. They are needed now, they were needed when we first began this reform movement.

This issue is not about winning elections, it can't be. It is about restoring the public's faith and confidence in what we do . . . it's all principle. It is about cleaning up a flawed system, where whether true or not, the perception is we are all bought and sold! I reject that thinking—I reject that label. I am not, and neither are far too many of my colleagues in this House, to let that label stand. We, as a collective body, are too good to let that perception be taken for granted by our fellow Americans.

For my votes on principle today, I will no doubt be raked over the coals by editorial boards, and people on both sides of the issue, and that's fine. I can take the heat because I know I am fulfilling the obligation I've been given by the good people of New Jersey's 11th Congressional District, and that is, to vote my conscience, in their best interests, all the while holding fast to principle.

My votes today will be principle over politics. I won't play games. How easy it would be to do what is "popular." To look the other way, and vote the way editorial boards want me to, or the way my leadership wants me to, or the way Common Cause wants me to. But what is popular, and easy, is not always what is principled, and that, for me, is an easy decision to make.

Today I vote for real reform. And with those votes, I stand on principle. Mr. Chairman, I hope I do not stand alone here today. But if need be, stand alone, I will.

H.R. 3733, THE VETERANS' CLAIMS CONTINUATION ACT

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2002

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, recently I introduced H.R. 3733, the Veterans' Claims Continuation Act. This important measure would allow the families of veterans to continue claims for benefits which are pending at the time of a veteran's death. This measure would also allow for continuation of other claims, such as a claim for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) by surviving spouses or claims by children eligible for benefits because of birth defects attributable to their parent's military service during the Vietnam War. This important legislation would assure that families receive the full benefits which would have been paid, if the claimant had survived.

Currently, if a veteran or other claimant dies while a claim is pending, the claim is extinguished. Under some circumstances, a new claim can be filed for "accrued benefits." However, payment of accrued benefits is extremely limited. Benefits can only be paid to a limited category of survivors and only if all of the evidence supporting the claim is in the claimant's file at the time of death. No more than two years of retroactive benefits can be paid.

The need for a change in law has been recognized by the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims. In a particularly egregious case, *Marlow v. West*, 12 Vet. App. 548 (1999), the court noted that the daughter of a combat wounded World War II veteran who had been erroneously denied benefits between 1946 and 1980 was precluded from pursuing his claim because the claim terminated at the veteran's death. In its decision the Court noted that the original decision in the case was a clear and unmistakable error, but because of the veteran's death, benefits otherwise due were not paid. The Court stated: "This is a case that causes one to understand the frustration of Charles Dickens' character Mr. Bumble, when he proclaimed, 'The law is an ass, an idiot.'" 12 Vet App. At 551. Veterans and their families are not served well by idiotic laws.

Currently, the Veterans' Benefits Administration has a backlog of almost 600,000 claims and another 100,000 appeals to the Board of Veterans' Appeals are awaiting action. While efforts are underway to reduce this backlog, it is inevitable that some claimants will die while their claims or appeals are pending. In some cases, veterans' families have incurred substantial expenses and suffered financial hardship while the claims have been pending. If benefits are justified, these families should be made whole.

Older veterans have expressed concern that VA uses delaying tactics, hoping that the veteran will die before the claim is allowed. I have no evidence that this is so. However the inability of family members to continue the claim and the limitation on any benefits payable to a two-year period in current law, may erroneously give veterans this impression. Claims for other government benefits, such as Social Security benefits are not extinguished when a claimant dies. The families of veterans, who have served our Nation honorably, deserve no lesser rights than Social Security claimants.

Mr. Speaker, I also note that the Independent Budget for Fiscal Year 2003 had called upon Congress to eliminate the restriction on payment of accrued benefits. The Veterans' Claims Continuation Act will accomplish that end and I strongly encourage my colleagues to cosponsor and support H.R. 3733.

WORKER RETRAINING INCENTIVE ACT OF 2002

HON. JOHN ELIAS BALDACC

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2002

Mr. BALDACC. Mr. Speaker, America's workers are facing tremendous pressures. Import competition continues to erode vital industries that are the economic foundation of communities across the country. At the same time, new jobs are increasingly hard to come by in the midst of a recession, especially jobs with good wages.

The Trade Adjustment Assistance Program was designed to help workers who are caught up in these forces and lose their jobs. It provides assistance so that these workers may seek training to gain new skills, and launch themselves onto a more stable and prosperous career path. This program serves a

wonderful purpose: it helps people to help themselves. It is not a handout, but rather a helping hand for anyone who had had a tough break, and wants to take charge of their future. Providing training opportunities is the best way to educate our work force, and help assure them better jobs and better lives.

Unfortunately, retraining is not always as attractive as it should be. The job placement rate for retrained TAA recipients is only 79 percent. The wage for those who do find jobs is only 81 percent of their previous salary in the first year. Under these circumstances, it is hard to convince a displaced worker that he or she is better off investing in a retraining program when getting a job in a new field appears to be a gamble, and a gamble with a low reward at that.

The shame of this situation is that the long-term prospects for retrained workers are much better than initial outcomes would make it appear. While the Department of Labor does not compile systematic data on job outcomes, state placement agents say that both wages and job stability are greatly enhanced within two to three years of retraining. What workers need is a bridge across that initial rocky period when wages are low and job placement is uncertain. That bridge leads to a better future, if only we can help them cross it.

This bill would create that bridge. It would implement an income tax credit equal to the Social Security payroll tax—OASDI—for both employers and employees, after workers have completed training through TAA. Both employees and the companies that hire them could claim the credit for the first year of employment for any worker whose salary is below \$60,000.

This bill would provide a crucial incentive for companies to hire retrained workers. Tying the income tax credit to the amount of the payroll tax makes the cost savings easily identifiable and attractive to businesses. At the same time, workers would get a badly needed salary supplement. This bill would make the prospect of retraining much more attractive for someone who has lost his or her job: they would know that businesses would be looking to hire them, and at a salary that is worth seeking.

I have always believed that the surest way to help our workers, and to help our economy, is to give people the best possible opportunity to compete and improve their lives. This bill helps businesses to invest in people, and helps people to invest in themselves.

INTRODUCTION OF THE INSIDER TRADING FULL DISCLOSURE ACT

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2002

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation, the Insider Trading Full Disclosure Act of 2002. This measure would ensure that consumers have adequate information about affiliate security transactions made by officers, directors, and board members with public companies.

As we have learned through the recent Enron collapse, it is critically important that in-

vestors have sufficient information about trades made by officers and directors of companies. With this information, investors will better understand the fiscal health of public companies in which they are investing.

Under current law, these insider trades can be disclosed many days after a transaction has occurred. I believe we must act to reduce the time frame in which these disclosures are made to the public. In fact, some of these transactions can be reported to the Securities and Exchange Commission up to 45 days after the calendar year in which the transaction occurred. In this Information Age, we should require better, real-time disclosure of these transactions.

My legislation would require these specified individuals to electronically file their disclosures one day after the transaction into the electronic database maintained by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). This database called EDGAR will be searchable and would permit investors to quickly ascertain whether officers and directors are making trades related to their public company. These disclosures include all types of affiliate security transactions, including stock sales by an officer and inside trades of securities by an officer to their respective company. With better warning, I believe that the public will be better served and we will be able to restore investor confidence in public companies.

Yesterday, the Securities and Exchange Commission proposed new steps to reform corporate governance rules. As a senior member of the House Financial Services Committee, I believe it is necessary for the Congress to act to make these requirements mandatory. Without required disclosures, I believe many officers and directors will simply wait to inform the public about the transactions made on their own behalf.

In order to prevent conflict-of-interest actions, we need to provide full disclosure about affiliate security transactions to protect investors and restore investor confidence in our public companies. I urge my colleagues to support this effort to require new timely disclosures of affiliate transactions related to public companies.

MINNESOTA STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DARLENE LUTHER, WHO
PASSED AWAY JANUARY 30, 2002

HON. BILL LUTHER

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2002

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Speaker, I want to express our family's most sincere thanks to the hundreds of people who have sent cards, flowers, memorials, e-mails and so many other demonstrations of sympathy. This tremendous outpouring of affection and love for Darlene has genuinely touched us and we deeply appreciate all of the memories, feelings, and prayers that help to make this difficult time more bearable.

This outpouring of affection has, I believe, also been appreciated by the public at large, people who maybe didn't know Darlene but who have seen the news coverage. We con-

tinue to get comments from people who never knew her but are obviously struck by the way in which a public official can be admired, respected and loved.

I often said that to meet Darlene was to immediately like her, and to get to know her was to love her. The truth of that became so clear in talking with the many people at the visitation and funeral. Everyone loved Darlene and they let me know it. It really was a wonderful, wonderful outpouring of love and support.

Losing a cherished member of a family is something all of us have in common and the shared experience of grief unites us as human beings. Darlene would probably be embarrassed by all of the attention she has received. She was both a private person and a public servant, but she would be pleased that so many different people form all political persuasions have honored her. It would be her hope that this would be a small step forward in her life-long effort to unite people.

Our family has lost a daughter, sister, mother, and wife. Our lives, though they will never be the same, have been tremendously enriched by having Darlene with us for as long as we did. In fact, out of all of the campaigns for office in which I've been involved, my favorite was when Darlene was first elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives. I was in the Minnesota State Senate then, which included the district where she was running, and I was also up for reelection. While campaigning, people would tell me, "I just love your wife," and of course, the best part of the campaign was when she got more votes than her husband. I always joked with her that if she ran against me, it would certainly end my political career.

Darlene was especially blessed with a generous spirit. Her favorite time of the year was the holidays because that gave her an additional reason to give gifts. She always had a little something during the holidays for anyone who touched our family during the year. We would tease her when we heard a car drive by that they must be coming for their Christmas gift. But her generosity encompassed so much more than gift giving. Darlene was generous with her smile, with her time, and with her love for her family, friends and her community.

God gave Darlene the gift of physical beauty, but she possessed other qualities even more lovely within her—kindness, generosity, a passion for justice and a commitment to helping others. Darlene was truly a beautiful person in every sense of the word. Her life has impacted so many people, and I hope and pray that her example continues to touch and guide each of us.

As we look to the future it is my hope that we will all remember the things that Darlene's life was truly about—family, friends, faith, the pursuit of opportunities for all and the understanding that a life committed to public service is one of the highest callings. Losing Darlene is immensely difficult, but we know that we do not grieve alone. Our state has lost a genuinely compassionate public servant—someone who was absolutely committed to helping those who need help and to creating equal opportunities for all.

There's a saying: "It matters not how long a star shines, what is remembered is the brightness of its light." Our children, Alex and Alicia, and I thank everyone who helped make Darlene's light shine very bright.