

dismissed from their jobs or persecuted because of their adherence to objective journalism.

October 3, 2002.

Mr. Speaker, on February 22, 2001 I participated, as part of a Congressional Delegation, in a roundtable discussion in Kyiv, Ukraine with several Ukrainian journalists. The consensus was a sad commentary on the state of censorship in Ukraine even then. The reporters were in agreement: There is no free press in Ukraine. I have since had the chance to meet with several more Ukrainian journalists throughout Ukraine and can tell the House that each report I received described differing levels of intimidation, censorship, and control by Ukraine's central authorities. I have documented some of these interviews on my official web site: www.house.gov/schaffer.

Mr. Speaker, I urge our colleagues in the House of Representatives to support foreign assistance programs and non-government organizations that promote independent mass media in developing countries such as Ukraine. Additionally, I urge the administration of Ukraine to complete investigation of the murders of Heorhiy Gongadze and other journalists, and to offer protection from physical violence and legislative mechanisms to defend them. I furthermore urge Ukrainian investigators to fully utilize the expertise of our Federal Bureau of Investigation as promised by President Leonid Kuchma during a meeting with the Congressional Delegation on February 22, 2001.

Finally, I encourage Ukrainian journalists to persist in their relentless pursuit of the truth. Their professionalism, courage, and if necessary, their personal sacrifice, are the essential elements in securing authentic liberty for their countrymen and delivering Ukraine to a righteous state of serene democracy.

**ON THE RETIREMENT OF COL.
ROBERT G. HICKS, USA, AFTER
30 YEARS OF DISTINGUISHED
SERVICE TO THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA**

HON. J. RANDY FORBES

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 17, 2002

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the outstanding career of Col. Robert G. Hicks who is currently the Executive Director for Public Health, Safety, and Security for the Defense Commissary Agency at Fort Lee, Virginia.

Colonel Hicks will retire after 30 years of distinguished service in the U.S. Army and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his selfless service to the Army and to the United States of America.

Colonel Hicks was born in Beverly, Massachusetts on May 18, 1949, and earned a Bachelors of Science Degree from Presbyterian College in Clinton, South Carolina. He received a four-year Army ROTC scholarship and later received his commission as a Second Lieutenant in June 1971 as a Distinguished Military Graduate. In 1975, he received his Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine from the University of Georgia, and a Masters in Food Technology from Texas A&M University in June 1989.

During his long and distinguished career Colonel Hicks has enjoyed assignments in Omaha, Nebraska, Fort Jackson, South Carolina, Defense Supply Center Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, The Hague, The Netherlands, The AMEDD Academy of Health Sciences in San Antonio, Texas, and as Commander of the 64th Medical Detachment in Landstuhl, Germany.

Colonel Hicks' military education includes the AMEDD Officer Advance Course and the Command and General Staff College. Additionally, Colonel Hicks is Board Certified in Veterinary Preventive Medicine, and a recipient of The Army Surgeon General's "A" Proficiency Designator and the AMEDD Order of Military Medical Merit.

Colonel Hicks' other military awards include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster, the Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Army Commendation Medal, and the Humanitarian Medal.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me, our colleagues, and Colonel Hicks' many friends and family in saluting this distinguished officer's lifetime of service. Colonel Hicks is the very embodiment of patriotism and it is fitting that the House of Representatives honors him on this day.

OUR LADY OF PEACE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 15, 2002

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4757, the Our Lady of Peace Act. I'd like to thank my colleagues for their hard work on this legislation.

This legislation will be a huge step forward for the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). It will provide grants to states for building databases related to NICS, enhancing state capabilities to utilize the system, improving final disposition of criminal records, and supplying mental health records, court-ordered domestic restraining orders and records of domestic violence misdemeanors.

This information will then be able to be transmitted by the states to NICS, ensuring that criminals and others who should not have access to weapons will not be able to purchase them. This strengthening of the background check system will save lives, and protect the ability of law-abiding citizens to purchase firearms.

H.R. 4757 would also require federal agencies to annually provide the FBI with information on regarding individuals who are not permitted to purchase firearms, increasing the accuracy of these background checks and further protecting, our communities.

The bill addresses legitimate concerns about the privacy of mental health records transmitted to NICS. It instructs the Department of Justice to work with states and local law enforcement on regulations for the protection of any mental health information sent to the system. I urge the department to implement the strongest possible privacy protection, so as to prevent the accidental release of this information.

Finally, the most important provision of this bill is the prohibition of the imposition of a

"gun tax" by charging fees for gun purchases through NICS. The Second Amendment provides us with the right to keep and bear arms, so the burden is on us to protect that right—without taxes, delays, or waiting periods for gun purchases by law-abiding buyers.

Again, I support this legislation, and urge our colleagues in the Senate to act quickly on this bill.

**TAIWANESE CELEBRATION OF ITS
91ST NATIONAL DAY**

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 17, 2002

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, on October 10, 2002, the people of Taiwan celebrated their 91st National Day. I would like to take this opportunity to extend to them my best wishes on this joyous occasion.

The people of Taiwan should be very proud of their achievements as their nation celebrates its rich history dating back to Dr. Sun Yat-sen and his launch against the Ching Dynasty in 1911.

As the 7th largest market for U.S. exports with total trade at \$51.5 billion in 2001, Taiwan is a significant trading partner and of great importance to our nation. After joining the world stage as an observer-nation of the World Trade Organization this past January, the Taiwanese and U.S. governments may now trade more equitably and form new alliances as the 21st Century evolves.

Taiwan distinguishes itself not only in the practice of international trade with other nations but also in its assistance in fighting terrorism. Taiwanese airports and seaports have tightened their security measures to protect citizens of all nations in its efforts in combating terrorism. The country also stands with the United States on safeguarding human rights and international cooperation.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that this great day be one of many for the Taiwanese people. As Taiwan celebrates its national day, I look forward to a further strengthening of the bonds that unite our two nations—a relationship built on our love of and commitment to freedom.

**SUPPORT FOR VALUE OF HUMAN
LIFE AMENDMENT, KUCINICH
AMENDMENT TO H.R. 5120**

HON. MAURICE D. HINCHEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 17, 2002

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, the Office of Management and Budget has been choosing ideology over economics when making decisions about environmental, health and safety regulations.

An ideology that devalues future generations and the environment.

An ideology that seriously distorts the benefits of public protection.

An ideology that says a 15 year-old who dies from a car crash is worth protecting more than a 15 year-old who dies from cancer following exposure at birth to a carcinogen.

OMB is forcing EPA, FDA, DOT and all other federal agencies to underestimate the

benefits of life-saving regulations and skew regulatory decision-making against protective safeguards. Mr. KUCINICH's amendment corrects a serious problem with OMB's way of calculating the benefits of environmental, health and safety regulations. This amendment addresses a fundamental, ethical question that underlies the practice of discounting the value of future reductions in fatal risk (also known as the value of a statistical life). This is a complicated issue, but I think I have a few questions to illustrate the point:

How much is it worth to you to never hear that your daughter, or grandson, or niece, or neighbor has Leukemia?

How much would you pay to reduce your spouse's risk of getting Multiple Sclerosis in 10 years?

What do you think a pregnant woman would pay to reduce the risk of her unborn baby developing asthma when he enters first grade?

For most of us, reducing the risk of danger is valuable—even if the risk is in the future. The fear, pain and dread of avoiding risk and protecting health are worth a lot now. OMB serves as the gatekeeper for regulatory reviews in the White House through its Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. Recently the head of this office, Administrator John Graham, issued a directive to federal agencies

concerning the implementation of cost-benefit analysis and is in the process of developing guidance on the discounting of life. Unfortunately, these requirements and other actions being taken by OMB will worsen the tendency of these cost-benefit tests to overstate costs and undervalue benefits.

One of the main ways in which cost-benefit tests can be biased is by placing a value on human life that is too low. One technique with this kind of bias is called discounting, which lowers the importance of someone's death if they die from a hazard that has a delayed effect, such as toxic chemicals, hazardous wastes, and cancer causing agents. OMB discounts the value of future risks at a 7 percent discount rate. This is significantly higher than those of many other federal agencies and many economists. The Kucinich amendment recognizes that the value of future risks in valuing a statistical life should not be discounted at all.

It is not true that non-monetary benefits, such as health, safety, and environmental benefits, are worth less tomorrow than if they were immediate. Discounting the value of future health, safety, and environmental benefits—which cannot be invested—at the same rate used to discount money is illogical because such benefits do not become less valu-

able over time, the way that money does. In some cases, particularly with respect to environmental regulations, benefits actually become more valuable. For instance, it would certainly be less costly to implement programs to reduce global warming in the present than to pay for its very costly consequences decades from now.

The shenanigans that surrounded EPA's arsenic rule highlight the importance of the Kucinich amendment. Don't tell me that a rule that reduces a child's risk of cancer by lowering arsenic exposure should be driven by controversial—and in my opinion venal—cost/benefit assumptions. By its very nature, discounting pushes regulatory decision-making in an anti-environmental direction by ignoring some of the most serious environmental threats to human health. This tilted playing field becomes the most exaggerated when the issues necessarily have a long time-horizon, such as nuclear wastes and climate change.

The Kucinich amendment helps to correct one of the most serious biases of cost-benefit analyses. The proper treatment of the value of life is one of the most important features we should expect from regulations designed to protect all of us. As a result, I fully support Mr. KUCINICH's "Value of Human Life Amendment."