

Berman, a bill that will enhance the operations of our federal courts: H.R. , the "Federal Courts Improvement Act of 2002."

In July of 2001, H.R. 2522, the "Federal Courts Improvement Act of 2001", was introduced by Mr. Berman, and myself, at the request of the United States Judicial Conference. It contains provisions that the Conference believes are needed to improve the Federal Court system. These proposals cover judicial process improvements and judiciary personnel administration, benefits, and protections.

On July 26, 2001, the Subcommittee held a hearing on H.R. 2522. Based on the testimony received and the discussion of the entire text, Representative Berman and I are introducing a new bill which contains those proposals that we believe will be most successful in improving the Federal Judicial System.

H.R. is necessary legislation for the proper functioning of our Article III U.S. Courts. It is non-partisan and non-controversial. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

TRIBUTE TO GIRL SCOUT GOLD AWARD RECIPIENT

HON. JOEL HEFLEY

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 10, 2002

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to salute an outstanding young woman who has been honored with the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. Gold Award by the Girl Scouts-Wagon Wheel Council in Colorado Springs, Colorado. She is Alicia Wadle, of Girl Scout Troop 446.

She will be honored in June of 2002 for earning the highest achievement award in Girl Scouting. The Girl Scout Gold Award symbolizes outstanding accomplishments in the areas of leadership, community service, career planning and personal development. The Girl Scout Gold Award can be earned by girls, age 14-17 or in grades 9-12.

Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., an organization serving over 2.6 million girls, has awarded more than 20,000 Girl Scout Gold Awards to Senior Girl Scouts since the inception of the program in 1980. To receive the award, a Girl Scout must fulfill five requirements: earn four Interest Project patches, earn the Career Exploration pin, earn the Senior Girl Scout Leadership Award, earn the Senior Girl Scout Challenge, and design and implement a Girl Scout Award project. A plan for fulfilling the requirements of the award is created by the Senior Girl Scout and is carried out through close cooperation between the girl and an adult Girl Scout volunteer.

As a member of Girl Scouts-Wagon Wheel Council, Alicia began working toward the Girl Scout Award in 2000. She completed her project in the area of beautification of school property. Alicia assisted a local elementary school in updating a school playground in need of repair. She completed a ground mural of the United States, enabling children to learn about each state. Alicia also scraped and painted and refurbished playground equipment.

The earning of the Girl Scout Award is a major accomplishment for Alicia, and I believe she should receive the public recognition due

her for this significant service to her community and country.

COMMENDING THE NATIONAL ETHNIC COALITION OF ORGANIZA- TIONS AND RECOGNIZING THE ELLIS ISLAND MEDAL OF HONOR

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 10, 2002

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding work accomplished by the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations (NECO), recognize the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, and commend its founder and chairman William Denis Fugazy.

NECO's mission is to preserve ethnic diversity, promote equality and tolerance, combat injustice, and bring about harmony and unity among all people. Since its founding in 1984, the multi-ethnic coalition has sponsored programs, activities, and education initiatives designed to break through the walls of ethnic misunderstanding and ignorance. NECO is the largest organization of its kind in the United States consisting of more than five million family members. It serves as an umbrella group for over 250 organizations that span the spectrum of ethnic heritage, culture, and religion.

In the past, NECO has raised more than \$1 million during the refurbishing of Ellis Island for its Immigrant Wall of Honor, where the landmark names of 200,000 immigrants to the U.S. are inscribed. They also contribute resources to the Forum's Children Foundation, a sister humanitarian organization, whose mission is to bring children requiring life-saving and life-enhancing surgery from disadvantaged countries to the United States.

NECO also is involved with immigration/racial issues and community relations. They have worked with the New York City Mayor's Office, the New York State Governor's office and the New York City Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) on developing strategies to eliminate anti-immigrant feelings, promote ethnic tolerance and understanding, and prevent hate crimes. They have worked to enhance the quality of living among all Americans by collaborating with community groups in the coordination of programs such as the Family Exchange Peace Program that bring thousands of school children and their families together to raise awareness of the City's diverse racial and ethnic heritage and the James Byrd Jr. scholarship that provides tuition support for students graduating from high school.

In 1986, NECO established the Ellis Island Medals of Honor Award that pays tribute to the ancestry groups that comprise America's unique cultural mosaic. Over 17,000 individuals are nominated each year. To date, approximately 1,400 American citizens have received the award. These individuals are remarkable Americans who exemplify outstanding qualities in both their personal and professional lives while continuing to preserve the richness of their particular heritage. Past Ellis Island Medals of Honor recipients have included several U.S. Presidents, entertainers, athletes, entrepreneurs, religious leaders, and business executives, such as William Clinton, Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter, Gerald Ford,

George Bush, Richard Nixon, Mario Cuomo, George Pataki, Bob Hope, Coretta Scott King, Rosa Parks, Muhammad Ali, Barbara Walters, and Attorney General Janet Reno.

Finally, the success of NECO can be attributed to its Founder and Chairman of the Board, William Denis Fugazy. The energy that Mr. Fugazy brings to his philanthropic work is evident in the numerous accolades bestowed upon the NECO. His passion for honoring ethnic Americans, who through their achievements and contributions, have enriched this country and have become role models for future generations, is truly a blessing.

HONORING ASSEMBLYMAN

MICHAEL N. GIANARIS

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 10, 2002

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a rising star in New York politics, Assemblyman Michael N. Gianaris, for his deep commitment to public service and his neighborhood of Astoria in New York City. Assemblyman Gianaris will be honored this coming Saturday, April 13th by the Powhatan and Pocahontas Democratic Club for his contributions to the organization and the entire community.

A native and lifelong resident of Astoria, Mr. Gianaris was born to Nicholas and Magdalene Gianaris. After attending Public School 84, Junior High School 141 in Long Island City, he went on to prestigious pursuits by graduating Summa Cum Laude from Fordham Law School, and earning his Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School. Civic service became a passion early, beginning in 1988 when he served as Chair of a voter registration committee which registered more than 10,000 voters in the New York metropolitan area. He quickly plunged into public service as an aide to my predecessor, Congressman Tom Manton and later served as Governor Mario Cuomo's Queens County Regional Representative. In both of these positions, Mr. Gianaris worked to ensure that the residents of Queens had full access to government services.

Before he sought elected office, Mr. Gianaris practiced as a litigator in private practice for more than two years. He also served as Associate Counsel to the New York State Assembly, where he worked on several measures that were enacted into law.

In addition, Mr. Gianaris has served the his community in many capacities, including serving as a member of Queens Community Planning Board #1, Legal Counsel to the United Community Civic Association, and a Board Member of the Eastern Orthodox Lawyers Association.

In 2000, Mr. Gianaris took his legislative knowledge and extensive familiarity with the community to the voters of New York's 36th Assembly District, winning the seat by a large margin. Since his election to the New York Assembly, Mr. Gianaris has exhibited strong leadership on environmental issues by fighting to reduce pollution from Queens powerplants and other sources. Environmental protection and the health of Queens residents will continue to be the top priorities for Assemblyman Gianaris.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing Assemblyman Michael N. Gianaris for investing so much in his community. He has only just begun what will be a long and distinguished life in public service to the people of Queens.

TRIBUTE TO TERRY A. MATHENY

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 10, 2002

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Terry A. Matheny, of South Carolina, a courageous and dignified man for his personal strength and volunteer work with physically and mentally challenged individuals.

Mr. Matheny was born with a congenital birth defect called clubfoot, which took several surgeries and many years of rehabilitation to overcome. He graduated from Fairmont State College in West Virginia from which he received a Bachelor of Science degree. Mr. Matheny received a Master of Science degree from West Virginia University. He is currently working with the USDA-REE-Agriculture Research Service and has worked at the Coastal Plains, Soil, Water, and Plant Research Center in Florence, South Carolina for twenty-three years.

Mr. Matheny's life experiences led him to develop a strong desire to help others less fortunate than himself. He has been actively involved with helping physically and mentally challenged individuals for the past eighteen years. In 1983, Mr. Matheny became a member of the local Civitan Club and Civitan International, which is a volunteer community service organization. Mr. Matheny has been a coordinator and helper in the South Carolina State Special Olympic Games. His involvement in the Special Olympics includes helping to supervise sporting events, helping with the awards ceremony, helping to provide entertainment between sporting events, and helping to serve lunch for hundreds of Special Olympians and volunteers.

His long career achievements include six USDA-REE ARS Certificate of Merit awards for outstanding performance at duties at the center. Mr. Matheny has served on the American Society of Agronomy's Student Essay Committee for three years. He has also been involved in the Civitan's adopt-a-dorm project, which adopted one of the housing units at the Pee Dee Mental Retardation Center. Mr. Matheny also helped organize and construct a park at the Pee Dee Mental Retardation Center.

I commend Mr. Matheny for his service to the physically and mentally challenged individuals who have dreams of participating in the Special Olympics and helping to turn those dreams into reality. Mr. Matheny is a fine citizen in every respect and I wish him continued success and Godspeed. Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me today in honoring Terry A. Matheny.

TAXPAYER PROTECTION AND IRS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2002

SPEECH OF

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2002

Mr. MOORE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to explain my reluctant vote against H.R. 3991, the Taxpayer Protection and IRS Accountability Act.

I am pleased that the House proposes to make several reasonable adjustments to the tax code on the eve of the April 15 tax return filing deadline. During my time in Congress, I have supported tax relief in all its forms, including reductions in income taxes, estate taxes and the marriage tax penalty, as well as common sense reforms that simplify the federal income tax code for all tax-paying Americans.

I strongly support the provisions of this bill that would waive penalties that taxpayers are forced to pay for first-time, unintentional errors on their tax returns. H.R. 3991 permits the IRS to waive penalties for such errors committed by a taxpayer with a good history of tax compliance. This provision enjoys widespread bipartisan support, and is long overdue.

Further, I support the provision in this legislation that will reduce interest and penalties that taxpayers must pay due to IRS errors. Under H.R. 3991, all taxpayers will have 21 days to return an erroneous refund before the government can begin to charge interest.

Additionally, I am pleased that this measure would extend to April 30 the due date for electronic filing and paying individual income taxes.

While I support the provisions in H.R. 3991 that would simplify the tax code for individuals and small businesses in the Third District of Kansas, I am frustrated that this bill includes language that would exempt from federal reporting requirements "527" political groups that currently are required to comply with state and local election reporting laws that are "substantially similar" to the federal rules.

I have significant reservations about voting for a bill that could partially reverse the recent success of campaign finance reform legislation. Simply, the provision that the Ways and Means chairman added during committee consideration of this measure goes too far. This language would allow special interest groups to avoid federal election laws by organizing at the state and local levels.

While I fully expected opponents of campaign finance reform to attempt to undermine the legislation that President Bush signed into law on March 27, I am surprised and extremely disappointed that supporters of the campaign finance status quo have attached this anti-reform language to an otherwise non-controversial taxpayer rights bill that I want to support. Consequently, I intend to vote against this legislation. I hope reformers in the other body will block any congressional attempts to rollback reasonable reporting requirements that will shine the light of day on special interest money in the political system.

Madam Speaker, the American people share a widely held belief that special interests

and the very wealthiest campaign contributors wield too much influence in our government. This belief is corrosive to citizen participation in our democracy. The recent passage of the most significant campaign finance reform legislation in thirty years, which will ban soft money and limit issue ads, should make our campaigns and elections more open and hopefully will counter a growing cynicism in our country toward politics and political candidates.

I will continue to support simplification of the federal tax code for individuals and small businesses across the country. At the same time, however, I made a promise to my constituents that I will fight to reform the campaign finance system during my time in Congress, and I intend to keep my word by voting against this bill. I hope that the House will have an opportunity to consider a clean version of the taxpayer rights legislation. If so, I will vote for this important legislation. For now, I hope that my colleagues in the House will join me in urging the other body to oppose any attempts to exempt special interest 527 groups from common sense disclosure requirements.

TAXPAYER PROTECTION AND IRS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2002

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 9, 2002

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my opposition to the inclusion of the controversial "527" provision in this bill.

I am appalled by the Leadership's efforts to railroad us on this issue. By manipulating the rule to try to prevent the Minority from offering amendments, the Leadership has clearly shown that they support the old way of conducting campaigns. This otherwise bipartisan bill has now become mired in these blatant attempts to undo the progress we've made on campaign finance reform.

We recently passed landmark bipartisan legislation that enacted real reforms in the way we finance our elections. As part of that effort, this body voted for stricter disclosure requirements for groups who sponsor so-called "issue ads" so that we could bring honesty back to the American political process.

Now here we are less than two months later, and the Leadership is already trying to open up loopholes in existing law so that some organizations would be exempt from filing reports about contributions and expenditures.

What would this mean for the end to soft money? These supposedly independent groups would become the channels for Big Money to continue to control our elections.

We've voted to take soft money out of politics. A vote for this legislation is a vote against the American people.