

Houa Ly, a Hmong-American constituent of mine, disappeared on the border between Laos and Thailand. Eyewitnesses last saw him with Lao government authorities, a brutal regime infamous for human rights abuses.

For 3 years his family has suffered without any real answers. It has been three frustrating years.

His family is inspired, however, by the memories they still have of their life together as an American family and of Mr. Ly's incredible service to this country, saving downed U.S. pilots during the Vietnam War.

Our Nation will also remember him. The Lao government and its apologists should know for that me and many others, this case is an insurmountable obstacle that should block any effort towards normalizing relations between our two countries.

It has been three frustrating years, and for all of our work together with the Ly family, it often feels like we have gotten nowhere. But we will not give up. A U.S. citizen is mission. His family deserves answers, and we will keep fighting until we get them.

SUPPORTING THE RIGHT OF LEGAL IMMIGRANTS TO BENEFITS UNDER THE FARM BILL

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to applaud the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA) for his motion to instruct today that I ask my colleagues to support enthusiastically. It is important to explain the purpose and the force and the importance of the motion to instruct, and that is to reinforce the language that was offered in the other body regarding legal immigrants and the rights of legal immigrants to receive benefits under the farm bill, in this instance, food stamps. Legal immigrants are represented by us all—we owe them good and fair representation.

It is important to note that nothing is being taken from those who claim to believe that only benefits should ensure to citizens. Legal immigrants work, pay taxes, are our neighbors, and, most of all, they offer their lives for our freedom in the United States military.

□ 1015

This is a commonsense amendment, and it states that the United States House of Representatives truly believes in the equality of all. We cannot owe shame to this body by declaring that legal immigrants who work here and are part of this Nation and sacrifice their lives deserve not to have the benefits. We realize that the U.S. military, many of them, are on food stamps. Would we deny to them the rights of those of us who live and breathe the free air of this Nation? Vote for the Baca amendment.

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION LOSES CREDIBILITY

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, killing innocent civilians to achieve a political goal is unacceptable under any circumstance. But now we have received word that the United Nations Human Rights Commission has voted to condemn the State of Israel for a long list of supposed human rights violations without even once mentioning Palestinian violence. Worse than that, the resolution supports, and I quote, "all available means, including armed struggle," to establish a Palestinian State.

Now, the United States is on record of supporting an eventual Palestinian state. But we also know what "armed struggle" means in the current environment in the Middle East. It means a 17-year-old girl being promised all the glories of heaven if she will just strap a bomb to herself and go kill a bunch of innocent Israelis.

It is shocking that the U.N. Human Rights Commission would endorse violence against civilians. I think we should thank those countries who voted against this resolution, but we should express anger at the 40 countries who voted for it, including six from Europe. It is an outrage. As far as I am concerned, the U.N. Human Rights Commission has lost all of its credibility.

U.S. NEEDS COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY POLICY NOW

(Mr. HALL of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to begin a series of remarks on energy. Energy, or the lack of energy, has caused many of the wars of the world. Once again, the uncertainties of the Middle East have caused prices in oil markets to rise; and from what we read in the news, the current uncertainty is, unfortunately, likely to last for quite some time.

My goal with this series is simple: to impress upon my colleagues the need to develop a national energy policy, and that policy should include all of our resources: fossil fuels, coal, nuclear renewables, and yes, conservation. We need them all.

In this country we are blessed with an abundance of energy choices. We have abundant coal reserves, in fact, some of the largest in the world. We have a tremendous potential for the development of solar and wind resources; and even though for many years we produced huge volumes of crude oil and natural gas and even supplied some of the world with it at times, we still have significant oil and gas resources in the ground.

Much of the rest of the world is envious of our energy resources and the choices we have. In the coming days and weeks, I will address some of these options and see what we can do to bring them into reality.

CONTINUING THE SUCCESS OF WELFARE REFORM

(Mr. TIAHRT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I support President Bush's welfare reform. I am often asked what I consider some of the best accomplishments I have made as a Congressman. Well, I am very proud to have been a Member of the historic 105th Congress that passed the 1996 Welfare Reform Act.

Perhaps more than anything else that we have accomplished during my time in Washington, reforming welfare has given the most hope to American families. Welfare caseloads fell by 9 million since 1994. That means 9 million more Americans, 9 million more people are on the road to making their dreams a reality.

The number of mothers who are more likely to go on welfare, but instead have a job, rose by 40 percent between 1995 and 2000. Since 1996, nearly 3 million children have been lifted from poverty. In the African American community, the child poverty rate is at an all-time record low.

The success of the 1996 welfare reform law is beyond dispute. Our challenge and our great opportunity is to build on that success by letting more Americans work their way to freedom of dependence and follow the path to making their dreams a reality.

EXTENDING CONDOLENCES AND GRATITUDE TO CANADA

(Mr. SKELTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to express condolences to the families of the four Canadian soldiers who were killed and the eight soldiers who were injured during training exercises in Afghanistan. News reports say that these are the first Canadians to be killed in a combat zone in half a century.

Canada is a valued member of our coalition in the fight against terrorism and has been a valued friend of the United States for decades. I fear we do not express our gratitude enough to the Canadian people for their support and their friendship. In the face of this tragedy, it is important to thank Canada for its commitment to the fight against terrorism.

Our men and women in uniform, U.S. forces, as well as members of our coalition forces, take risks every day in support of our freedoms. Unfortunately, some of our best and brightest young people lose their lives in this cause. Canadian forces are fighting

alongside U.S. and European troops, seeking to hunt down remnants of Osama bin Laden's terrorist organization. We extend our condolences to our Canadian allies.

U.S. MUST STAND WITH ISRAEL

(Mr. TIBERI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, it is more important than ever that we as individuals and the United States as a Nation reflect on the historic link between the United States and Israel. Yesterday was the 54th anniversary of Israel's independence. The U.S. must stand with Israel now as it did in 1948 as the war on terrorism continues throughout the world.

For 54 years, Israel has existed as the only democracy in the Middle East. We must not abandon our work to bring a lasting peace to the region. The efforts of those trying to achieve this goal over the past few days and weeks should be applauded. However, we must also not forget Israel's right as a sovereign nation to defend itself and its people from terrorism.

Israel has stood by efforts of the U.S. to combat terrorism around the globe. Likewise, the U.S. must stand by Israel in its effort to eradicate the scourge of terrorism.

Let us be clear: attacks on civilians by suicide bombers are acts of terrorism.

REJECT MAKING THE TAX CUTS PERMANENT

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, today the majority party will ram through a bill making their tax cuts permanent; but it is not just tax cuts they will make permanent. They will make a \$4 trillion raid on the American Social Security trust fund permanent. They will make their \$1 billion raid on the Medicare trust fund permanent. They will take their temporary wound to Social Security and make it into a permanent scar.

Just when 40 million Americans will be entering Social Security, they will be permanently raiding it for \$4 trillion. They will be doing so as part of an ultimate dream to privatize Social Security and realize what one Republican called the hope that Medicare some day would just "wither on the vine."

Mr. Speaker, today's bill ought to be called the "Permanent Raid on Social Security," the "Permanent Injury to Medicare Act of 2002"; and we should reject it.

TIME FOR ACTION ON MEDICARE REFORM

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, it is time to take a serious look at the problems we have with Medicare. Medicare started for the right reasons; there is no question about that, and I do not think we can argue with that. We did not want the elderly going without the ability to have the proper health care. We all realize it is not perfect and we need to do something about the prescription drug portion of it.

But there is a bigger problem with Medicare, and that is the problem of access. Doctors are dropping out across this country in droves. They are dropping out because the compensation is too low, and we proposed this year to make it even lower. They are dropping out because there is a hassle factor of feeling that if they make a little clerical error, that they might be drawn in by the police and pulled before the courts.

I had a woman come to me in a town meeting the other day that said she brought her mother from Missouri to Colorado, and they had gone to 128 doctors trying to find care for her mother and none of them would take new Medicare patients.

If we do not have access, we do not have a program. Congress must stop ignoring this problem. It is time for action.

INDIAN SACRED SITES MUST BE TREATED WITH REVERENCE

(Mr. RAHALL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, yesterday at this time several Members of the House Committee on Resources Democratic Caucus rose to speak on a number of environmental issues as a prelude to Earth Day, which is April 22. As the ranking Democrat on that committee, today we continue with this theme.

My purpose this morning, however, is not to speak to the more traditional environmental concerns of which I share, but rather to draw attention to the destruction of sites located on Federal lands which are sacred to American Indians.

Valley of Chiefs, Montana. This area contains historic rock art and is used for ceremonial purposes. Yet the Bush administration believes it is a pretty good place to drill for oil and gas.

Indian Pass, California, a place where dream trails were woven. Yet the Bush administration has given the green light to a massive 1,600 acre open-pit gold mine there.

There are many other examples.

Most Americans understand a reverence for the great Sistine Chapel or a traditional church with steeple and a bell. I believe it is time we sound the alarm bell for Indian sacred sites and treat them with equal reverence. We are, after all, one Nation under God, and all of our religious beliefs must be protected.

WASHINGTON STATE NAMED WINE REGION OF THE YEAR

(Mr. NETHERCUTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, the State of Washington has long been known for its great people, its great natural beauty, its great companies like Boeing and Microsoft, and its great basketball teams. Now it has been designated with another honor, and that is "Wine Region of the Year" as endorsed by "Wine Enthusiast" magazine.

This designation is fully justified. Washington State is now the second largest wine producing State in the country. It provides \$2.4 billion to the Washington State economy, and it employs 11,000 people. It is a small business-focused industry, and it provides tremendously to the jobs and the agriculture community of eastern Washington and western Washington. It produced 100,000 tons of grapes in the year 2001.

So congratulations to the State of Washington, and congratulations to the wine industry in the State of Washington, which helps our agriculture economy, and thanks to "Wine Enthusiast" magazine for making this designation.

PROTECT LANDS SACRED TO INDIAN TRIBES

(Mr. KILDEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, as cochair of the Native American Caucus, I work on many issues on behalf of our first Americans. An issue that is of particular importance to me relates to protecting lands sacred to our Indian tribes.

Native Americans were the first protectors of this great land, and protect it they really did.

Long before my forefathers arrived here, it was the native Americans who respected, honored and gave thanks for all that nature provided. They knew never to take more than what was needed, and never disrespect or damage their sacred areas.

I am sad to see so many native American sacred sites under the threat of desecration and the active role our government often plays.

We have attempted over the years to enact legislation to protect these sites, but each time it falls short. We need to pass legislation that will put the full legal weight of the United States behind the preservation of native American sacred sites.

POSTAL SERVICE REFORM

(Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, on April 4, the postal