

the U.S. economy that depends on foreign tourists.

The driving force behind the INS proposal is the attempt to improve our homeland security and to prevent terrorists from entering our country. Although I believe that INS reform is badly needed to better address our homeland security concerns, I am completely convinced that limiting visitor visas to 30 days will do nothing to better protect us from terrorists, and will in fact only place severe, undue burdens on the lawful, decent individuals abroad who come to visit the United States.

I would like to expand on exactly who would feel the effects of this proposal. It is the grandmother or grandfather who lives in another country and chooses to come to the United States to spend time with their family that has settled here. Is 30 days enough time to reunite a family? Is 30 days enough time, if thousands of dollars and over 24 hours have been spent traveling to the United States? Is 30 days enough time to spend with a newborn grandchild, or a grandchild getting married? I do not think so.

Mr. Speaker, over 70,000 people in the United States have signed a petition against this proposal in the last 10 days or so. Interestingly enough, the INS has not thought so, or has not agreed with this proposal for the past 10 years. In fact, they have suggested the opposite.

The INS is arbitrarily changing this law in response to September 11, but the change will be ineffectual in preventing further terrorism. In fact, there are two detrimental effects that I foresee with this proposal.

First, if visitors are provided only a 30-day visa, it is likely that upon entrance to the United States, these visitors will apply for a visa extension. This type of extra paperwork is the exact reason why the INS extended the visitor's visa to 6 months, so tourists could accomplish the purpose of their visit, leave the United States within the given time here, and not further overload the INS. This will not be the case if the 30-day limit is implemented.

Mr. Speaker, the second reason, I think, which is so important, is that we are all aware of the impact on the tourism industry in the United States after September 11. The airline industry and tourism industry would be drastically affected by the decrease in visits to the United States that would be a result of visitors finding that 30 days is not worth the great effort required to visit the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the INS has thought about this, but I think they need to reconsider. I urge the INS to reconsider their proposal. It will in no way fight terrorism, and only serves to trample on the legitimate visits from relatives with legitimate residents of the United States.

"SHOE BOB" AND INTERFAITH OUTREACH TEAM UP TO HELP HOMELESS IN MINNESOTA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a true servant leader who proves, year after year, that one person can make a big difference in the lives of people in need.

Bob Fisher of Bob's Shoe Repair in Wayzata, Minnesota has raised more than \$1 million over the past 6 years by his winter "sleep-outs" to help people who are homeless.

This past winter alone, on behalf of Interfaith Outreach and Community Partners, "Shoe Bob," as we affectionately call him, raised \$520,000 for Interfaith Outreach's community housing fund during his 30-day sleep-out for the homeless.

Sleeping outside in subzero temperatures in Minnesota winters, that has become Bob Fisher's trademark. Bob's well-worn tent and sleeping bag have not only raised badly needed funds to provide housing, but his sleep-outs have raised public awareness of the housing shortage and the increasing number of homeless families in our Lake Minnetonka community, State, and Nation.

Bob is teamed up with other caring people at Interfaith Outreach and Community Partners who distribute the housing resources he raises to homeless families.

Led by one of Minnesota's greatest humanitarians, LaDonna Hoy, and supported by an active board of truly charitable community leaders, Interfaith Outreach helps kick off Bob's sleep-out for the homeless each and every year.

More than 500 supporters gathered on November 17 to kick off last year's sleep-out, featuring a soup supper with bread, hot chocolate, and water served by the Girl Scouts. And thanks to the Boy Scouts, four campfires kept everyone warm along Lake Street in Wayzata as the various churches that support Interfaith Outreach provided song and spirit.

The distinguished mayors of our five neighboring communities issued their "Housing Week" proclamation, and 200 young students joined Bob Fisher in sleeping outside on the first night in the 2001 cold. Two local bank employees also slept outside with Bob to offer their support.

Mr. Speaker, I know firsthand that Bob's sleep-outs are a true ordeal, as I slept outside in December of 1997 in below-zero temperatures as part of Bob's sleep-out for the homeless. It was a night of bone-chilling cold, well spent, as we raised several thousand dollars to help bring homeless families in from the cold.

Mr. Speaker, every year the fundraising goal for Bob Fisher's sleep-outs gets higher, reflecting his strong commitment, infectious enthusiasm and energy, as well as the increasing need

for more affordable housing in the Twin Cities' western suburban area.

Bob Fisher, Interfaith Outreach, and the people of our Lake Minnetonka communities are already looking forward to this year's "Housing Week," November 16 to 23, 2002, which will once again be kicked off by Bob Fisher's sleep-out for the homeless. In fact, Interfaith Outreach and Community Partners is working hard to expand this campaign by encouraging communities throughout Minnesota and the Nation to follow Bob Fisher's example.

I urge my colleagues to take Bob Fisher's story back to their communities and tell their constituents how one person in Minnesota, a cobbler with a big heart, has made a big difference in the lives of countless homeless people.

Tell America the story of "Shoe Bob" and his mission to help homeless families secure affordable housing. Tell America how one person has increased awareness of the homeless problem, bolstered community involvement in addressing the housing shortage, and raised more than \$1 billion to help families with their housing crises.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, Bob Fisher has proved that one person can make a big difference in the world, as he has walked in the shoes of the homeless. We salute you, Bob Fisher, just as we salute Interfaith Outreach and Community Partners.

Our gratitude also goes out to all who have supported Shoe Bob's sleep-outs for the homeless. He is truly doing the Lord's work, and he represents the absolute best in public service.

Thank you, Bob Fisher. Thank you to all my friends at Interfaith Outreach and Community Partners, and to the entire Lake Minnetonka area, those who have supported this worthwhile, important drive to help people who are homeless.

URGING MEMBERS TO CONSIDER COSPONSORING IMPORTANT LEGISLATION CONCERNING SCIENCE EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, we are at the end of Earth Day week. I have always felt that if one is a Member of Congress, the best way to celebrate Earth Day and the week in which it occurs is to legislate. After all, we are Members of Congress. We can do more than hug trees and go to river sites.

Congress is now all entangled in the energy bill and the ANWR controversy, but there are many noncontroversial matters that need to be taken up in legislation.

I invite Members to go on to two bills I introduced this week. One is called the Academic Excellence In Environmental Sciences Act of 2002. It aims to make environmentalists and scientists

of young people. We have a real dearth of scientists today. More and more of our kids are going off and doing other things. Yet, in a very real sense, these youngsters are the best messengers for the environment, especially since they are going to inherit whatever environment we leave them.

This bill would encourage hands-on recycling to help children cultivate habits that conserve our resources. While they are at school they learn how to do recycling. My aim is also to help them concretize their interest in science and their understanding of scientific concepts, so as they learn about recycling, science comes alive for them, and they are encouraged to study math and science, to get interested in science earlier, and to maintain that scientific interest.

I see the need for it. I just nominated five of my youngsters to the academies, and I am encouraging my school systems to do more with science and math in order that I will have more youngsters to nominate to the academies.

Getting them involved in recycling helps them to understand science better.

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Second bill is called the National Urban Watershed Model Restoration Act. It is aimed at the problem of urban watershed. We all know and love watersheds in the great blue yonder, but the fact is our great cities are often located right in the center of watersheds, terribly polluted. I use my own river, the Anacostia River, which runs through our neighborhoods, as a model for the country so that this notion of working with the EPA, with the Corps of Engineers, and importantly involving the community in clean ups and in preservation of the watershed is what I seek to accomplish.

This would not be cleanup activity. It would be scientific. It would not only clean up communities; it would be a scientific watershed clean up, but done in collaboration with the community so that when it is cleaned up it stays cleaned up. We are located right here on the banks of Anacostia, but my folks cannot get to the Anacostia.

We are about to develop the waterfronts; and when, in fact, the waterfronts get opened up, what they will see is a river polluted by the national government, the Government of the United States of America. That is why I think we ought to begin here with the Anacostia and then go to the great watersheds. They are in New York. They are in L.A. They are in Baltimore. They are across the United States. Because they have been in cities, people have not paid much attention to them. They have been polluted industrially or, in our case, by the Federal Government. This would be on a 75/25 percent basis use Federal, State, and local funds to begin the cleanup of urban watersheds.

You cannot revitalize a community without revitalizing its river. When

you do both, you transform an entire city and an entire area. We would never allow such polluted rivers to be in our countryside. We must not allow them to encroach on our large cities, especially since these cities are now beginning to develop along the waterway. We are doing that in the District of Columbia, our Nation's capital. The one difference between us and you is the Federal Government is responsible for our pollution.

We are going to begin here and spread this idea throughout the country. I would like my colleagues to go to both of these bills and look for their "Dear Colleague" letters soon.

PETE CONRAD AWARDS BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Charles Pete Conrad Astronomy Award Act. This act is intended to encourage amateur astronomers to discover new and attract previously identified asteroids and other heavenly bodies, particularly those that threaten a close approach to the Earth. This act is named after the legendary pilot, astronomer and space entrepreneur, Pete Conrad, who I was honored to know. He was a constituent of mine as well. Unfortunately, he passed away after a tragic motorcycle accident just last year. Charles Pete Conrad made history and today in his honor and in his memory I am introducing a bill that could help protect the United States of America and, yes, the entire world.

Pete Conrad more than anything else was a patriot who loved his country and felt that space would provide peace and prosperity for all of human kind. This act contains three categories of awards. The first category is an award for the amateur astronomer who discovers the largest asteroid crossing in near-Earth orbit.

The second category, an award to an amateur astronomer for discovering asteroids using information derived from professional sources and locating newly discovered asteroids.

The third category, an award for those who provide the greatest service to update Minor Planet Center's catalog of known asteroids.

Let me just state that for those people who believe that there is no threat and that we live in a world today where those movies that talked about asteroids colliding with the world and the threat that it posed, that that is all science fiction, I have got bad news for them. It is not science fiction.

There are numerous examples of asteroids and comets in the last few years that have come very near to the world and not been undetected until the last minute or even after they pass by the world. One of them was coming in from the Sun and was not seen until

after it passed the Earth's orbit. If any of these asteroids or comets would have hit the Earth, it would have been a catastrophic occasion, perhaps killing hundreds of millions of people. Perhaps in one case in the past, millions of years ago, that is perhaps what eliminated the dinosaur life on our planet.

The following is a list of examples of recently observed asteroids:

An asteroid about 300 meters in size crossed a near-Earth orbit about 500,000 miles from our planet in October of last year.

An asteroid about the size of three football fields made its closest approach to the Earth (roughly the same distance: twice the Moon's distance from the Earth) on January 7, 2002.

An asteroid reportedly the size of an 18-story building on a close approach to Earth (just a bit farther out than the Moon) was observed on March 8.

The disturbing point about this asteroid is that it was seen from Earth again only after it had moved out of the glare of the Sun and into the night sky on March 12.

For each nearby asteroid that is spotted there are several that pass entirely unnoticed.

Some researchers estimated that there are roughly 25 asteroids, roughly the size of the one observed on March 12, cross a near-Earth orbit that is closer than the Moon.

Astronomers believe that the number of undiscovered asteroids far exceeds the known list currently available to the scientific community.

We need to know if there is a threat coming at the world. And having our young people, giving them awards, having amateur astronomers look into the sky to help us find those objects is something that we are mobilizing the people to help us discover that possible threat. If we see something coming at us that is years away, then we can handle that. We can do something about it. If we do not find out until a mere month or two beforehand, the Earth could be in real danger.

I was the chairman of a hearing in which we had the experts testify on this issue; and one expert said, Congressman, you do not have to worry about that. There is about as much chance of a comet hitting the Earth as it is of you going to Las Vegas and getting a royal straight flush. And I said, Oh, my gosh. I did get a royal straight flush once. I remember that happening.

So this is a real threat, but it is not something we have to fear. It is something we have to look at and try to find a way to identify threats. It is called Home Planet Defense. We need to pay some attention to it; and then if an asteroid does threaten us, we will be able to identify it far in advance and deter it from its path so it would not hurt the people of the world.

This is the purpose of this Pete Conrad bill. We want to get our young people more interested in space and science and mathematics. This bill is a way to do it. The awards will be administered by the Smithsonian Institution, and I am asking all of my colleagues to join me in co-sponsoring the Pete Conrad Award bill because this bill will do a great deal in bringing to our