

And then as has often happened in the history of Cyprus an opportunity was lost. Mr. Denktash, the Turkish Cypriot leader, would not take the Annan plan to his people for a referendum. Denktash abandoned the Annan plan. And a frustrated U.N. closed up shop and went home.

And then something wonderful happened. Mr. Denktash unilaterally opened up the borders. Some on Cyprus and in Congress have looked upon this action with suspicion, but I don't think anyone can dispute that the results have been overwhelming positive for the Cypriot people. There are a lot of experts with different opinions on why Mr. Denktash did what he did, but one thing is for certain. Cypriots have begun talking to Cypriots again. An artificial line has been eliminated and I don't think there's any turning back.

One of my constituents, Theo Hadjitheodosiou from Holmdale, New Jersey, was born in Cyprus. He is Greek Cypriot and recently returned to Cyprus to cross the Green Line to see one of the homes where some of his family used to live before the 1974 invasion. He said it was nice to go, but that he remained saddened by the continued occupation by Turkish forces.

Can you imagine having to show your passport to go from Trenton to Pennsylvania? That's what it's like. The division has been particularly hard on the Turkish Cypriots, he said. Like many other Cypriots, Theo sees the opening of the border as only a first step on the road toward a settlement.

I am hopeful that the renewed human contact between Greek and Turkish Cypriots will accelerate the political process. Eventually, trust will be rebuilt among people. And then the enemies of peace will have no choice but to let go of their stubborn, outdated positions to make way for a new generation that will embrace a peaceful future—a future of one Cyprus, made up of Turkish and Greek Cypriots—in which all citizens are not only Cypriot, but more importantly, European.

I will continue to do what I can in Congress to support a Cyprus solution based on the Annan plan. I will continue to urge the Bush administration to convince the Turks in Ankara that a solution in Cyprus will provide the gateway to Turkey's own goals of a European future. As elections approach in the Turkish-occupied area, I will ask the administration to make it clear to Ankara not to interfere. Polls recently conducted on Cyprus indicate that if free and fair elections were held in the North, the Turkish Cypriots would elect a new, pro-settlement leadership. A new Turkish Cypriot leadership that represents the aspirations of a majority of Turkish Cypriots would be a welcome development and would probably lead to the renewal of settlement negotiations.

Mr. Chairman, I rise today on Cyprus Independence Day to celebrate the progress that Cyprus continues to make as an incoming member state of the European Union, as a vibrant democracy with a robust market economy, and as an increasingly important partner of the United States. And I hope, as I do each year, that the people of Cyprus will soon enjoy the benefits of a peaceful settlement.

HURRICANE ISABEL

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 1, 2003

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, last month, our region was subjected to nature's unbridled wrath. And, despite the advances in technology that gave us fair warning that a storm of this magnitude was approaching, there was little anyone could do to escape the destruction Isabel left in her wake. The five counties I represent all suffered enormous damage, families were displaced and without power for days, homes and businesses were demolished, and our natural resources were destroyed by the strength of the winds and rain that accompanied this vicious hurricane.

Our region responded quickly and directed the full force of its resources to assist residents and business owners with their recovery efforts. I am extremely grateful to our first responders, local and state officials, and disaster assistance teams from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), the Army Corps of Engineers, law enforcement officials and community volunteers who I saw throughout our communities when I visited parts of St. Mary's, Anne Arundel, and Calvert counties in the week following the storm.

On Thursday, September 25 I joined Senators SARBANES and MIKULSKI, as well as my colleagues in the Maryland Congressional Delegation, to hear from representatives from several federal and State of Maryland agencies on relief efforts underway to help the citizens of Maryland and small businesses throughout the State. We were informed that the counties were completing their Preliminary Damage Assessments which would be submitted to MEMA and FEMA so that funds could be designated to assist with the clean-up and recovery.

Thus far, Maryland has qualified for federal assistance with debris removal and emergency protective services. If the damage in other areas meets the threshold for disasters, Maryland could become eligible for more categories of federal assistance, including repair of roads and bridges, water control facilities, buildings and equipment, utilities and parks.

Recovering from this storm will be a long process, and we all will face challenges along the way. I will continue to work with elected officials and residents throughout the 5th District of Maryland to provide any resources I can to help in this recovery process.

GROUPS RALLY TO SUPPORT YOUTH WORKER PROTECTION ACT

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 1, 2003

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on September 23, 2003 I introduced H.R. 3139, the Youth Worker Protection Act, (YWPA). This bill will make necessary common sense changes to America's child labor laws, which have not been significantly amended since their creation nearly 70 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) an average of 230,000 teenagers are injured on the job each year and even more shocking is the fact that an average of 67 teen workers die each year from injuries sustained while on the job. That means a teen worker dies from work related injuries in this country every five days.

The YWPA, addresses two major aspects of child labor: the deaths and serious injuries suffered by our young workers and the negative impact which working excessive hours during school can have on a child's education. I am honored to have the support of numerous organizations, including; the National Consumers League, the National Education Association (NEA), United Methodist Women, the International Initiative to End Child Labor, and Youth Advocate Program International. Mr. Speaker, these extraordinary organizations have dedicated themselves to advocating an end to exploitive child labor and I request that their letters be placed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

YOUTH ADVOCATE
PROGRAM INTERNATIONAL,
Washington, DC, September 3, 2003.

Hon. TOM LANTOS,
House of Representatives, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE LANTOS: Youth Advocate Program International would like to voice its strong support for the Youth Worker Protection Act and urge you to present this act to Congress at your earliest convenience.

YAP International believes that everyone, including children, can contribute to society through work. We believe job-skill training should be provided to young people and that youth should experience the pride that comes from work well done. We understand that in some situations children must work to meet their own survival needs and those of their family. However, gaining an education should be a youth's primary job and we support the Youth Worker Protection Act for formally recognizing and promoting this principle.

We support monitoring of child labor practices to ensure that work does not compromise the child's overall health, well-being, and access to free, compulsory and meaningful education. We strongly urge that monitoring efforts not only include the formal sector—work in a factory or business setting—but also work in the informal sector, including domestic workers, agricultural workers, street vendors, and heads of households/caregivers.

Youth Advocate Program International commends your leadership to update and strengthen child labor laws in the United States, and we urge you to continue supporting the Youth Worker Protection Act. Feel free to contact our office if we can provide any assistance to you in further promoting the rights of children. Thank you for your time and continued advocacy on behalf of youth worldwide.

In Service to Youth,

PATRICK J. SCHOOF,
Director.

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION,
Washington, DC.

Representative TOM LANTOS,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE LANTOS: On behalf of the National Education Association's (NEA) 2.7 million members, we would like to express our support for the Youth Worker Protection Act.

NEA believes that young people should focus on education as their primary job and that excessive and unusual working hours are detrimental to students' attention span and academic achievement. Unfortunately, many minors are employed for as many as 15 hours during the school week, with some youth working more than 25 hours a week. In addition, too many very young children—some as young as age five—are employed as migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Such work clearly interferes with and undermines the educational process.

By strengthening the Fair Labor Standards Act's child labor provisions, the Youth Worker Protection Act will ensure that minors can enjoy the benefits of workforce experience, while maintaining their focus on education. We thank you for your leadership on this important issue and look forward to working with you to protect our nation's children.

Sincerely,

DIANE SHUST,
*Director of Govern-
ment Relations.*
Randall Moody,
*Manager of Federal
Policy and Politics.*

NATIONAL CONSUMERS LEAGUE,
Washington, DC, September 10, 2003.

Hon. TOM LANTOS,
*House of Representatives, Rayburn House Office
Bldg., Washington, DC.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE LANTOS: The National Consumers League (NCL) commends you for addressing critical child labor problems in your Youth Worker Protection Act. These problems can be corrected. The status quo cannot remain.

In the first two weeks of August, four young workers, all of them 16 years old, died on the job—one in roofing, one in a wrecking yard, and two in commercial agriculture.

Every 30 seconds, a young worker under the age of 18 is injured on the job. One teen dies due to workplace injury on average every five days. These statistics are not from a developing country. They reflect the reality of youth employment in the United States, based on statistics from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Yet, the Hazardous Orders (HOs) found in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) have not been comprehensively reviewed and updated since they were enacted in 1938. These HOs are our first line of defense in protecting youth from dangerous oc-

cupations, industries, and machinery that threaten their health and safety.

Research shows that students who work more than 20 hours a week demonstrate higher incidence of academic distress, alcohol and drug abuse, and autonomy from parents. Yet, in the United States, a student who is 16 years old and older can work unlimited hours per day or week, at any time of day or night during a school week. More U.S. teens are employed and work for longer hours during the school week than in any other affluent country—especially in those countries that are outperforming this country in academic scores.

In commercial agriculture, as many as 800,000 youth under the age of 18 are hired farmworkers, harvesting our nation's fruits and vegetables. Children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers are routinely exposed to dangerous pesticides and insecticides, hazardous equipment and tools, and work that stresses their developing bodies. These children may legally work as young as ten years old under the FLSA. Youth working in agriculture are less protected than youth working in non-agricultural occupations. They may perform hazardous work at 16 and may legally work at younger ages, for more hours, at any hour of the day or night (outside of school hours).

No one questions that employment offers youth many benefits. NCL supports appropriate and safe youth employment. But, too much of youth work today is neither. The FLSA's child labor provisions are inadequate. It is critical that they be updated to reflect the realities of youth employment today, new technologies and hazards, and the educational competitiveness our youth and country need to maintain to succeed.

Founded in 1899, NCL is America's oldest national consumer advocacy organization. Its mission is to represent consumers in the marketplace and the workplace through investigation, education and advocacy. One of our first and continuing concerns is protecting working minors and ending child labor exploitation in the United States and abroad.

NCL is pleased to endorse this bill and is committed to employing our resources to promote the bill's passage at the earliest time. Again, thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

LINDA F. GOLODNER,
President.

GENERAL BOARD OF GLOBAL MIN-
ISTRIES, THE UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH,

Washington, DC, August 26, 2003.

Representative TOM LANTOS,
*House of Representatives, Rayburn House Office
Building, Washington, DC.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE LANTOS: I am a part of the Child Labor Coalition (CLC) as a representative of my organization, the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. As part of the CLC, we have been shown a summary of the Youth Worker Protection Act, your new and improved comprehensive child labor bill. I am impressed with how you have updated and strengthened the federal child labor laws in this.

My organization has always been concerned for the needs of women and children. In recent years, we have participated as part of the Child Labor Coalition and supported organizations like RUGMARK, anti-sweatshop efforts, and shared concerns for children in the fields, specifically migrant children. We join with the whole United Methodist Church as stated in their BOOK OF RESOLUTIONS 2000, #58 "to work toward the reform of United States labor laws to provide better protection of farm workers' rights and to bring child labor restrictions into conformity with international standards." These standards include the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Labor Organization's Convention 138 for Minimum Age for Admission to Work.

The Youth Worker Protection Act places a priority on education by restricting the hours a youth may work. This is of special concern to United Methodist Women since taking on a Children's Campaign to advocate for free, quality public education in our country. Given that the overall well-being of a child affects his/her ability to learn in school, it is easy to recognize that before/after school and weekend jobs can be a major factor in how the child will learn.

I support this effort you are making to bring a 1938 Act with revisions over the years up-to-date and will encourage United Methodist Women to be informed about this new legislation in order to express support to their legislators.

Thank you for protecting young workers in our country,

JULIE A. TAYLOR,
Children, Youth and Family Advocacy.