

Our landmark legislation shines a bright light on one of the most underreported and unrecognized areas of egregious human rights violations, the international persecution of individuals based on their real or perceived sexual or gender identity.

Supported by 44 of our colleagues, we believe very strongly that we must send a clear message that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people must be treated with the same dignity and respect as every human being, and not with hatred and violence that they face in all too many places in the world.

Ongoing persecutions against the LGBT community include arbitrary arrests, rape, torture, imprisonment, extortion, and even extra judicial executions.

The scope of these human rights violations is staggering, and for the victims, there are few avenues for relief. Some countries create an atmosphere of impunity for rapists and murderers of gays and lesbians by failing to prosecute or even to investigate violence targeted at these individuals because of their sexual orientation. Not only do some countries refuse to sanction these abuses, but often, agents of the State perpetrate them. And believe it or not, at the outset of the 21st Century there are still countries that advocate the death penalty for people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered.

We simply cannot ignore the number and frequency of such grievous crimes any longer. As our legislation makes clear, the international community has long established a legal framework for the protection of international human rights, based on the individual human being. The world community voluntarily agreed upon these legal instruments, and we have to demand vigorously that the parties to those treaties fulfill their obligations. We must demand that all countries obey international norms, particularly those countries that have become a party to international human rights treaties. None of these instruments, which are the foundation for a peaceful and civilized world community, exempt anybody from the protection of their human rights because of gender, race, origin or age, and most certainly there are no exceptions from full protection on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Our legislation urges the Administration to develop a new strategy in our foreign policy to directly combat these outrageous violations, and tear away the veil of silence or ignorance on those tragic developments all over the world, which have a devastating impact on the lives of each individual affected.

Our Resolution details just a few examples of violence against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered individuals in countries as wide ranging as Mexico, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Nepal, among others.

My colleagues and I are committed to protecting human rights wherever they come under attack. I will work hard to create a broad bipartisan coalition to support this legislation in this Congress and beyond.

Our legislation has the wide support of the human rights community, and I would particularly like to thank Amnesty International, the Human Rights Campaign, Human Rights Watch and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, as well as National Latina/o Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Organization (LLEGO), for their input and support.

TRIBUTE TO MAYOR JAMES RAINWATER

HON. JACK KINGSTON

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 25, 2003

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, it is with a solemn heart that I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the life of James Rainwater, mayor of Valdosta, GA, who passed away recently at the age of 62. James is survived by his two daughters, a son-in-law and two grandchildren: Jamie Rainwater, Michael and Robin Woodruff, Blake and Jarred Woodruff.

Jimmy Rainwater began his political career as a councilman in 1986 before he took the Mayor's seat two years later. With nearly 16 years in office, Jimmy Rainwater served as Valdosta's Mayor longer than anyone in the city's past. When he entered the office of Mayor, he addressed and solved many problems that were plaguing the city, from poor quality drinking water to slow growth of industry to the low morale of the city employees and departments. From 1988 to 2003, Mayor Rainwater saw Valdosta grow to become home of Valdosta State University and achieve metropolitan status. He helped save Moody Air Force Base from closing and saw the accreditation of the police and fire departments.

Jimmy Rainwater wasn't just a mayor in the traditional sense of an official who presides over City Council and attends to the business of the city. He was devoted to these tasks. He rarely missed a council meeting. He often worked the phones and personally visited people to get things done. But there was more to his tenure as mayor than just attending to the business of the city.

Jimmy Rainwater seemed to attend almost everything. Wearing a pair of his many cowboy boots, he was a familiar figure at business grand openings and ground breakings, in the newspaper and on local television, in neighborhoods and community events, at banquets, dinners and suppers, charity balls and organizational fundraisers. He presented awards and proclamations, attended funerals and retirements, church services and military changes of command.

Mr. Speaker, Jimmy Rainwater was a fine American leader who will be sorely missed. It is my honor to rise and pay tribute to Jimmy Rainwater.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF JACK AND ELEANOR BUELL

HON. C. L. "BUTCH" OTTER

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 25, 2003

Mr. OTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the contributions of Jack and Eleanor Buell of St. Maries, Idaho, to the 2003 Capitol Holiday Tree. For the first time in history, Idaho has the distinct honor of supplying the nation's Christmas tree. The magnificent Engelmann spruce was harvested from the Boise National Forest, visited 53 Idaho communities, and now is on its way to the Capitol. This historic journey was made possible by the tremendous generosity of Jack and Elea-

nor Buell. Owners of Buell Trucking, they donated the truck, custom-made trailer and driver for the Capitol Holiday Tree and the 70 companion trees that will be displayed throughout Washington, DC. This has been a wonderful gesture of volunteerism by Jack and Eleanor, and it is indicative of the way they live. Jack is a long-time Commissioner in Benewah County, where he and Eleanor have given to their community and the State of Idaho time and again. The citizens of St. Maries, Benewah County, and the State of Idaho have for years owed a debt of gratitude to Jack and Eleanor Buell. Mr. Speaker, for their efforts to make the Capitol Holiday Tree possible, the nation owes them our thanks as well.

INCREASING THE WAIVER RE- QUIREMENT FOR CERTAIN LOCAL MATCHING REQUIRE- MENTS TO AMERICAN SAMOA, GUAM, THE VIRGIN ISLANDS, OR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

SPEECH OF

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for this legislation. As has been stated, this legislation would provide needed relief to Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands by increasing the matching waiver requirement for federal grants. The House's passage of this bill today would be timely given the fact that our territorial governments continue to face declining revenues.

The difficult economic conditions in the territories make it particularly challenging for us to access federal grants, given the matching requirements and the current inflexibility in waiving these requirements.

I am pleased this legislation not only increases the waiver requirement from the current threshold of two hundred thousand dollars to five hundred thousand dollars, but it also clarifies that this waiver requirement applies across the board—to all federal agencies and departments—and not just for grants administered by the Department of the Interior.

While this legislation seeks to correct this inconsistency in the application of law, I remain concerned about another inconsistency. I am aware of conflicting and varying application of the waiver requirement among federal agencies and departments with respect to the grant recipient. The non-profit organizations in the territories fulfill a significant role in our communities. Nonprofits help meet the needs of the homeless, the disadvantaged, and those whose lives are buffeted by tough economic times. Their work is often supported by federal grants. Without such federal assistance, the non-profit organizations in the territories would struggle to meet their missions and most would not be able to maintain the current level of assistance to our communities.

On Guam alone, we have a sizable non-profit community. Organizations like Guma Mami, Erica's House, Catholic Social Services, and Sanctuary all work for example to help the

needy, shelter and clothe the homeless, and provide services to at-risk youth. Others like the Manenngon Foundation and Pa'a Taotao Tano work to preserve our Chamorro culture. Given their limited resources and the matching fund requirements, their access to federal funding is critical to their success.

Therefore, I remain hopeful that federal agencies will apply the waiver not just to grants awarded to the territorial governments, but also to non-profit organizations and other eligible nongovernmental entities in the territories.

Furthermore, while I recognize that current law, for good reason, allows any federal agency or department to consolidate grants to the territories, I would hope that this authority would not be used to reduce the number of grants that would otherwise be subject to the matching waiver requirement. Federal agencies should not consolidate grants to escape the full application of the matching waiver requirement, or to reduce the waiver's impact on what would otherwise be separate grant awards. This is the intent of the authors of this bill. This has specific application to Guam, where disaster public assistance grants to separate Government of Guam agencies should each receive the waiver of the local matching funds that are required for their individual disaster assistance, rather than one waiver for the whole Government of Guam for all public assistance grants.

This legislation will also require the Secretary of the Interior to study and report on its implementation. I trust that, if enacted, the Secretary will pay particular attention to these concerns and that the report will address the application of the waiver with respect to non-profit organizations and the consolidation authority.

This legislation is important for the economic development of the territories because it will make access to federal grants easier for cash-strapped governments.

I want to recognize the hard work and valuable contributions that my predecessor, Robert Underwood, made on this issue. Mr. Underwood worked alongside our colleague from American Samoa, Mr. FALEOMAVEGA, in crafting this legislation in the 107th Congress. Although the bill was reported out of the Committee on Resources last year, it unfortunately did not make it to the floor.

I am grateful we have reached that point in the process today and I look forward to timely consideration in the other body. I want to commend my colleague from American Samoa, ENI FALEOMAVEGA, for his persistence in promoting the interests of the territories and in particular for his introduction of this legislation. I also want to recognize the contributions of Congresswoman DONNA CHRISTENSEN from the U.S. Virgin Islands on this bill. This has been a unified effort by the Delegates from the insular areas. Finally, I want to thank Chairman RICHARD POMBO and Ranking Member NICK RAHALL for their help in moving this legislation. The territories have benefited from their leadership in the Resources Committee.

INTEREST GROUPS RALLY TO SUPPORT H. CON. RES. 330

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 25, 2003

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, my friend and distinguished colleague from Connecticut, Rep. CHRISTOPHER SHAYS, and I recently introduced H. Con. Res. 330. On the occasion of the introduction of our bill, we were joined by several important representatives from the NGO community, who eloquently expressed the wide support our legislation has already received. I would like to include their outstanding statements at this point in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, with my deepest gratitude for their support and advice.

STATEMENT BY MICHAEL HEFLIN, DIRECTOR, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA OUTFRONT PROGRAM

On behalf of Amnesty International I would like to commend Congressmen Tom Lantos and Christopher Shays for their strong leadership on this issue as well as the more than forty other members of Congress who have agreed to be original co-sponsors of this historic resolution. Amnesty International and other human rights organizations have documented the widespread abuse of the fundamental human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people throughout the world. These abuses include the imprisonment, torture and in some cases killing of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people by their own governments. Some 70 countries still criminalize homosexuality. Sentences for conviction under these statutes vary, but often include lengthy jail sentences and in some cases include torture or even imposition of the death penalty as a legally sanctioned punishment. As we sit here this morning, there are many who sit in jail cells and face the prospect of torture simply because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. In Egypt, for example, over the past two years, Amnesty International and other human rights groups have documented the arrest of over 100 men simply on the basis of their alleged sexual orientation. Ironically, Egypt is one of the few countries in the Middle East that does not explicitly outlaw homosexuality but has charged the men under a vaguely worded law prohibiting "habitual debauchery." Many of these men report having been brutally tortured while imprisoned. We also believe this number is only the tip of the iceberg and there are probably many cases that we have not yet documented. Of those arrested, some have now been freed but the arrests continue. At this moment, Amnesty considers at least 15 men in Egyptian prisons to be "prisoners of conscience" in jail solely on the basis of their alleged sexual orientation. Egypt is not alone and similar arrests have also been made in many other countries in recent years including Malaysia, Uganda, Uzbekistan, and Saudi Arabia, just to name a few. Even when not criminalized, discrimination and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people by both governmental authorities and civilians remains widespread throughout much of the world. Too often states fail to hold the perpetrators of such violence accountable, creating a climate of impunity—in violation of international human rights standards that require states to protect the human rights of all of their citizens. In recent years, Amnesty International has documented patterns of violence including murder and physical assault, particularly targeted against

transgender people and gay men in a number of countries, including for example, Honduras, Guatemala, and Ecuador. In many of these cases the police were complicit or did nothing to investigate these crimes or hold those responsible accountable. Lesbians often face a double layer of discrimination and abuse resulting from both their gender and their sexual orientation. These violations are often particularly difficult to document because they most often occur in the community and the family, but include forced marriage and sometimes even rape employed as a method to cure lesbians of their deviant sexuality. The United States has not been a leader either at home or abroad in advancing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender human rights. While this resolution recognizes the need to continue to make progress in this country toward the full recognition of the basic human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, it also spells out the U.S. government's obligation to combat human rights violations against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people around the world. Despite the U.S. government's overall lack of leadership on these issues, some progress is being made. Over the last few years the State Department has begun to document some of these abuses in its annual reports. We hope that this resolution will encourage the State Department to continue to make improvements in its documentation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights abuses around the world. We also believe much more can and must be done by the U.S. government if it is to play a leadership role in protecting global lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender human rights. Through this resolution, we are calling for the U.S. government to develop a comprehensive strategy for combating these abuses. This strategy must include the U.S. government's taking a positive and proactive position in favor of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender human rights when these issues are discussed and debated in international forums. It is only through adoption of the recommendations of this resolution, including development of such a comprehensive strategy, that the U.S. government can begin to fulfill its obligations under international human rights standards to advance the human rights of all people.

STATEMENT BY CHRISTOPHER LABONTE, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR LEGISLATION, HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

Good Morning. It has often been said that with great power comes great responsibility. As one of the most fortunate and powerful countries on the planet, the United States has a tremendous responsibility to speak out and protect those who may not be able to protect themselves. It's sad to say that there are currently 80 countries within our global village that have enforceable laws against GLBT people, many resulting in inhumane punishment including imprisonment, torture and even execution. In many of those countries—Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Mauritania and Iran—GLBT people face possible execution simply because of who they are, and who they love. Today, the Human Rights Campaign is proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with our friends Representative Tom Lantos and Representative Christopher Shays, who have introduced a resolution condemning all violations of internationally recognized human rights norms based on the real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity of an individual. The resolution also recognizes that the protection of sexual orientation and gender identity is not a special category of human rights, but is fully embedded in the overall human rights norms set forth