

the shadow of manual labor. Pete went on to graduate from St. John's University where he earned a B.S. degree at the University of Notre Dame where he received an M.B.A. degree. His fiancée Anna Christine is a native Oregonian who received her B.S. and M.A. degrees from George Fox University and is currently a sales director.

I ask all my colleagues to join me in wishing this great couple many years of health and happiness.

TRIBUTE TO ALABAMA MISSIONARY DR. MARTHA C. MYERS

HON. TERRY EVERETT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 2003

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the service and memory of a great American and a remarkable citizen of my State of Alabama, Dr. Martha C. Myers.

On December 30, Dr. Myers and two others, William E. Koehn of Texas and Kathleen A. Gariety of Wisconsin, lost their lives in a terror attack aimed at them simply because they were American missionaries. All three were in Jibla, Yemen serving in a hospital for the poor run by the Southern Baptist Church.

Like her colleagues, Dr. Myers was thoroughly devoted to serving the Lord and believed that her life should be spent doing His work regardless of personal risk. She loved treating and caring for the poor and labored in Yemen for 24 years before she lost her life.

Americans and Christians are both a rarity in that remote Arab nation which has long been known for its lawlessness. Dr. Myers knew the danger that awaited her each day while serving in Yemen and yet she looked forward to her work as each day brought her closer to the Lord.

Last weekend, a large memorial service was held at her home church, Dalraida Baptist, in Montgomery in my congressional district. So many family, friends and fellow Alabamians turned out to honor the testimony of this remarkable Christian. Perhaps the most striking example of Dr. Myer's walk for Christ was the attendance of Yemenis at another memorial service held for her last week in Jibla, a place she loved so much that she chose to be buried there.

The Alabama Baptist newspaper reported that no less than 40,000 gathered at the missionary hospital and lined the street to pay their respects for Dr. Myers and her colleagues. "In a country where professing faith in Jesus Christ could result in death, mourners sang 'He is Lord' in Arabic and recited the Lord's Prayer," the paper wrote.

Our prayers go out to the families of Dr. Myers and her colleagues who died in service to their fellow man. They are a powerful example of true courage and sacrifice no matter what the cost to themselves.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

CENTENNIAL OF THE NATION'S OLDEST MULTI-PURPOSE RECLAMATION PROJECT: THE SALT RIVER PROJECT

HON. J.D. HAYWORTH

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 2003

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, a little more than halfway through our nation's history, when the West was still an untamed region full of untapped potential, central Arizona's early settlers embarked on what has become a hallmark of American vision, boldness and success. The story is that of the Salt River Project, the nation's third largest public power provider, the largest supplier of water to the greater Phoenix metropolitan area and the oldest multi-purpose reclamation project in the U.S.

Incorporated on February 7, 1903, the Salt River Project, more commonly known as SRP, deserves special commendation in its centennial year for the prominent role it has played in central Arizona's growth and development. Its place in Arizona's history prompted me and my colleague, Congressman JOHN SHADEGG, to nominate SRP for inclusion in the Library of Congress's Bicentennial Local Legacies Project.

Before SRP was formed, pioneers of the area that now encompasses large parts of my own Congressional District 5 saw opportunity in the desert region they had settled. Farming, commerce and trade were beginning to boom. But the region's main source of water, the Salt River, proved fickle and dangerous.

To preserve themselves, their families and their future, the pioneers banded together to secure a reliable water supply. They envisioned a great dam in the Salt River Canyon east of Phoenix and, though the idea may have seemed fanciful to some, it won the support of President Theodore Roosevelt.

With passage of the National Reclamation Act of 1902, the foundation was laid for formation in 1903 of the Salt River Valley Water Users Association, a non-profit entity that later became the Salt River Project. Local farms were offered as collateral to secure a federal loan for construction of a stone masonry dam on the Salt River. When the dam was completed in 1911, it was rightly named Roosevelt Dam after the president whose visionary reclamation concepts helped settlers of Arizona and other Western states forge progress and prosperity.

Today, SRP has more than 780,000 electric power customers, shares ownership of power plants in four states, participates actively in power transmission decisions across the West, and manages six dams on the Salt and Verde rivers and thousands of miles of canals and laterals that deliver more than 40 percent of the region's water supply.

Among utilities nationally, SRP is recognized for its customer service, employee-community involvement, corporate giving and environmental leadership.

There can be no doubt that SRP will continue to be a major force in meeting Arizona's water and power needs, and an invaluable partner to the communities it serves. With pride, Mr. Speaker, I salute the Salt River Project on its 100th anniversary.

A BILL TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE BENEFITS PROVIDED TO SMALL BUSINESSES UNDER INTERNAL REVENUE CODE SECTION 179

HON. WALLY HERGER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 2003

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join with President Bush in his call to assist our Nation's small businesses by introducing the "Small Business Expensing Improvement Act of 2003." This legislation will encourage new business investment and expansion, and I am pleased to be joined in this effort by several of my colleagues on the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee.

Small businesses truly are the backbone of our economy, representing more than half of all jobs and economic output. We should not take small business vitality for granted, however. Rather, our tax laws should support small businesses in their role as the engines of innovation, growth, and job creation.

Earlier today, President Bush unveiled his economic growth proposal. I applaud the President for his commitment to our Nation's small business owners and his dedication to ensure that our tax laws do not impede the growth and development of small businesses. The legislation we are introducing today will implement a key element of the President's plan, expansion of the benefits available to small businesses under Internal Revenue Code Section 179.

Our bill will improve our tax laws to make it easier for small businesses to make the crucial investments in new equipment necessary for continued prosperity. Under Code Section 179, a small business is allowed to expense the first \$25,000 in new business investment in a year. Following the President's lead, our legislation will permanently increase this amount to \$75,000. Furthermore, our bill will index this amount to ensure that the value of this provision is not eroded over time.

This legislation will also allow more small businesses to take advantage of expensing by increasing from \$200,000 to \$325,000 the total amount a business may invest in a year and qualify for Section 179. It is important to note that this amount has not been adjusted for inflation since the provision was enacted into law in 1986.

Mr. Speaker, in times of economic uncertainty, we must do all we can to encourage new investment and job creation. The "Small Business Expensing Improvement Act of 2003" will help accomplish this worthy goal. I applaud President Bush for his leadership on this issue, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to enact this much-needed legislation.

HONORING THE LIFE AND DEDICATED SERVICE OF FORMER CONGRESSMAN WAYNE OWENS OF UTAH

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 2003

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I join my distinguished colleague from Utah, Mr. MATHESON,

the other members of the Utah delegation, and all of my colleagues in this body in mourning the passing of our former colleague, Congressman Wayne Owens of Utah. I consider it an honor to have known him and to have served with him.

Wayne and I served on the International Relations Committee during his second term of service in this House from 1987 until 1993. I visited Wayne's congressional district in Salt Lake City at his request to assist with his reelection.

My relationship with Wayne, however, went back much further than our association here in this House. In the 1960s he served as a legislative aide to Senator Frank E. Moss of Utah, and later he was the Administrative Assistant to Senator EDWARD M. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. I also served on the staff of other members of the Senate while Wayne was working there.

Mr. Speaker, Wayne and I stood together on many issues before the International Relations Committee—from seeking to bring peace in the Middle East to dealing with the momentous changes taking place in Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. We also worked together on many other issues that were before the Congress—from protecting our nation's fragile environment to seeking the welfare of the working men and women of our country.

Mr. Speaker, Wayne Owens was a man of conviction, who took action that he thought was right despite the personal consequences. During his first term in the House of Representatives, he served on the Judiciary Committee and cast his vote for the impeachment of then-President Richard M. Nixon. Not long after that important vote, he ran for an open seat in the United States Senate but lost. He blamed his defeat on that Judiciary Committee vote because President Nixon remained popular in Utah. Wayne also worked on environmental legislation to protect the incomparable Utah wilderness and to reintroduce wolves to Yellowstone National Park—issues that many in his home state did not support. He voted against authorizing the use of military force against Iraq in 1991. I greatly admire Wayne for his determination to act as he thought right, despite the personal consequences.

Mr. Speaker, both before and after his congressional service, Wayne was committed to working for peace and reconciliation in the Middle East. In 1989 he joined my friend S. Daniel Abraham, the former Chairman of Slim Fast Foods, to establish the Center for Middle East Peace and Economic Cooperation. After his loss in the Utah Senate election in 1992, Wayne devoted a great deal of his time to the Center, and he was a frequent visitor to Arab States and Israel. On many occasions he traveled with Members of Congress to that region in an effort to increase understanding of regional problems and to seek solutions through economic cooperation.

Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in acknowledging the contributions of Wayne Owens to our nation, to this House, and to the cause of better understanding between peoples of the world. He was a remarkable and a dedicated man, and we all join in expressing our condolences to Marlene, his devoted wife of 41 years, and to his five children and 14 grandchildren.

INDIVIDUAL AND SMALL BUSINESS TAX SIMPLIFICATION ACT OF 2003

HON. AMO HOUGHTON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 7, 2003

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, today I am re-introducing a bill, the Individual and Small Business Tax Simplification Act, to address a problem that remains as relevant in the 108th Congress as it was in the 107th. In 1935, there were 34 lines on Form 1040 and instructions were two pages. Today, the tax code and regulations have grown to over 9 million words. According to the Tax Foundation, individual taxpayers spent 2.9 billion hours on federal tax compliance in 2002. This is 370 million more hours than in 2001. Businesses spent an additional 2.75 billion hours on tax compliance. The value of this 5.6 billion hours of lost time is incalculable. Our tax code is a growing thicket of complexity that frustrates ordinary taxpayers, is a haven for promoters of dubious schemes, and frequently generates unintended consequences.

To be sure, defining income in a manner that is fair and easy to administer is inherently complex, but, for a variety of reasons, the tax code has become far more complicated than necessary. Pamela Olson, the Treasury Department Assistant Secretary for Tax Policy, put it well recently when she said that our tax system "is surely not a tax system that anyone would set out to create * * * it is the system that has evolved over time." In many cases, there is a clear answer to the question of whether a rational person would design a tax provision the same way from a clean slate. The objective of the legislation I am introducing today is to roll back unneeded complexity for individuals and small business taxpayers. One or more of the bill's provisions would simplify annual filing for every individual taxpayer and nearly every business in America.

This legislation builds on a bill that I introduced in the 106th Congress, the Tax Simplification and Burden Reduction Act. The Ways and Means Subcommittee on Oversight has held numerous hearings on tax simplification, and the bill draws on the record built at those hearings. I plan to hold additional hearings on tax simplification during the 108th Congress to consider ways to refine this legislation and to consider additional simplification proposals. Several of the provisions of this legislation appeared first as recommendations in the Joint Committee on Taxation's April, 2001 report, and the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation has helped to refine the proposals contained in the bill. Other provisions originated with the work of the Tax Section of the American Bar Association and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. I have received many comments on last year's legislation, and I welcome comments from other individuals and organizations on the bill as we continue to work toward the goal of simplification.

Our future as a Nation depends on our ability to raise revenue in a manner that is fair and equitable. The Internal Revenue Code must be simplified to restore faith by all taxpayers in our tax system.

The proposal includes the following provisions:

I. INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX SIMPLIFICATION

Alternative Minimum Tax—Inflation has caused many middle-income taxpayers to be subject to AMT by eroding the value of the AMT exemption. Rising state and local taxes have added to the problem, because state taxes are not deductible in calculating taxable income for AMT purposes. The failure to allow a state and local tax deduction for AMT purposes is one of the most unfair aspects of the Internal Revenue Code. It results in double taxation of income, and it forces taxpayers who live in states with higher income taxes to bear a larger percentage of the federal tax burden than those who live in states with lower taxes or no tax. If we allow the AMT to remain unaddressed, this unfair and inequitable disparity will worsen over time.

As a result of inflation, the Joint Committee on Taxation predicts that more than 35 million will pay AMT within ten years. Currently, AMT affects less than 2 million taxpayers. A recent study by the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center confirms this finding and further notes that if left unattended the AMT will shift a substantial portion of the tax burden of this country to urban and suburban middle-class taxpayers. Congress would not design a system with these features deliberately, and we should not allow it to happen by default.

Under the proposal, the AMT exemption would be adjusted for inflation since the date it was enacted and indexed for inflation in future years. State and local taxes would become fully deductible under the new AMT. The effect of these changes will be to restore AMT to its intended purpose and stop its growth.

Replace Head of Household Filing Status with New Exemption—Head of Household filing status has long been a leading source of taxpayer confusion and mistakes during the filing season. In 2000, the IRS fielded over half a million taxpayer questions on filing status. An error on filing status can have consequences throughout the return, and it can lead to costly interest and penalty charges later on. To address this problem, the bill replaces Head of Household filing status with a \$3,700 "Single Parent Exemption." This amount will be indexed. The proposal, as a whole, is revenue neutral. The bill achieves further simplification by cross referencing the new uniform definition of a qualifying child.

Simplified Taxation of Social Security Benefits—Under present law, determining whether and how much social security benefits are subject to tax is a highly involved process that requires the completion of an 18 line worksheet. Many taxpayers are not eligible to use this worksheet, and they must refer to a 27 page publication.

The bill would simplify the calculation by repealing the 85 percent inclusion rule that was enacted in 1993. This alone would remove 6 lines from the Form 1040 worksheet. Going further, the proposal would index the 50 percent inclusion rule for future inflation, and greatly simplify the calculation of income for purposes of this rule. Tax exempt interest will no longer be required to be added in the calculation. Indexation will mean that fewer taxpayers will be required to complete the calculation and include benefits in income.

Simplify Capital Gains Tax—Under present law, there are seven different capital gains rates that apply to various kinds of dispositions of property. There are special rates for taxpayers in lower tax brackets, for property