

and forty-five minutes in the depths of the Atlantic Ocean a mile north of Puerto Rico. Roberto lived 38 years, 4 months and 13 days. That's how long it took him to become a Hall of Famer, a better person and a legend.

IN HONOR OF SAINT WENDELIN
PARISH

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2003

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the parish community of Saint Wendelin Church, as they celebrate one hundred years of healing and hope in Cleveland's Ohio City neighborhood. Throughout the past century, Saint Wendelin's has served as a spiritual refuge, opening its doors to any soul in search of guidance and peace.

The ministry of Saint Wendelin's began in 1903, originally serving the Slovak community of Cleveland's near west side. On May 3rd of that same year, the community received permission to found Saint Wendelin Parish. A small church was soon constructed and on December 6, 1903, Father Koudelka celebrated Saint Wendelin's first mass. Not long after, the Sisters of Notre Dame established Saint Wendelin's School. The order would continue to provide quality Catholic education for the next seventy years.

In 1925, the current church and school complex was dedicated. Always reaching outward, Saint Wendelin's welcomes all believers to join in worship. It is a testament to the Saint Wendelin ministry that Catholics from all corners of the city heed the call to celebrate at the little church on Columbus Avenue.

Cleveland's vital tradition of Catholic education is reflected at Saint Wendelin's with their active participation in the Urban Community School. Saint Wendelin's facilities serve as a second home to over three hundred students of Urban Community School.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition of every member of Saint Wendelin Church, and its leaders—Pastor Jerome Lajack and Deacon James J. Armstrong, as they celebrate mass with Bishop Anthony Pilla in commemoration of one hundred years of service to God and community. Saint Wendelin parish continues its dedication to social justice and spiritual healing—within the neighborhoods of Ohio City, and the world community beyond.

PASSENGER VAN SAFETY ACT OF
2003

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2003

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the Passenger Van Safety Act of 2003, legislation to enhance the safety of large passenger vans, which are highly susceptible to rollovers and have been associated with more than 500 fatalities since 1990.

In the last Congress, I introduced the School Bus Safety Act which had been designed to prevent schools from taking advan-

tage of a loophole that allowed them to purchase used 15-passenger vans even though it was illegal for them to purchase new 15-passenger vans because of safety issues. The bill I am introducing today goes farther and addresses the safety of these vehicles.

I became alarmingly aware of the safety problems of these vehicles when a church group from Westminster, Colorado rolled the 15-passenger van they were driving 2½ times en route to a religious retreat. This tragedy resulted in four people dying. I found out later that these vans were notorious for getting out of the drivers control and were highly susceptible to rolling. These kinds of accidents seem to be symptomatic to these kinds of vehicles. Early last summer another one of these vans, full of firefighters, rolled over numerous times killing four of the passengers in western Colorado. Accidents will happen, but I believe if these people had been in different vehicles their deaths may have been avoided.

When these vans are fully loaded they become highly prone to rollovers. In 2001, the National Highway Traffic Administration (NHTSA) conducted a study that demonstrated the dramatic increase in rollovers when these vehicles carry increasingly larger loads. A fully loaded van has a rollover risk that is six times higher than if there are only five people in the van.

The bill I am introducing today would require NHTSA to include 15-passenger vans in their Dynamic Rollover Testing Program required by the Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability, and Documentation (TREAD) Act, which currently does not include these vehicles. It does not make a lot of sense to me to exempt them from the same safety standards that NHTSA will apply to other passenger cars and sport utility vehicles. This information will give drivers information they need in order to safely operate certain vehicles under different conditions.

This legislation would also require 15-passenger vans to be included in NHTSA's New Car Assessment Program (NCAP). NCAP provides consumers information on how different vehicles withstand crashes, and was recently expanded to include the risk of rollover. Currently, NCAP does not do rollover testing for vehicles that carry more than 10 people.

In addition, the bill requires NHTSA to work with van manufacturers to evaluate and test the potential of new technologies to help drivers maintain control of their vans. Specifically, NHTSA would look at Electronic Stability Control (ESC) systems that some SUVs are already equipped with and rear-view mirror-based rollover warning systems. These kinds of innovative technologies could significantly reduce rollovers and save lives.

"Fifteen-passenger" vans were initially designed to carry cargo, not people. But now these vans are widely used by airports, hotels, and other commercial interests to transport customers from one location to another. People using these vans may not realize that the Federal Motor Carrier Administration (FMCA) has not completed rulemaking on Federal motor carrier safety regulations for 15-passenger vans that are used for commercial purposes. This bill would require the FMCA to complete their rulemaking, which began in 1999, to ensure that commercial passengers get to their destinations safely.

This bill was built on the foundation of my School Bus Safety Act of 2001 and it still ad-

resses the van loophole created in 1974 when organizations were banned from purchasing new 15-passenger vans to transport school age children but were allowed to purchase the vans used.

This legislation removes this nearly 30-year-old loophole in the Federal regulations and extends the ban to include leasing, renting, and buying of these vans, thereby making the buyers accountable, as well as the seller. These changes will insure that the intent of the 1974 law is finally realized. The bill would also strengthen the penalties on those who violate this important safety provision.

The legislation raises the prescribed penalty for breaking this law from "not more than \$1000" to "not more than \$25,000," thereby giving the enforcement agencies something to make it worth their while to pursue. This provision is important because from 1974 until 1997, NHTSA, which had responsibility for administering the law, did not initiate a single enforcement proceeding in the entire country.

Safety transcends party lines. Senator SNOWE and I have had tragic events take place in our states that have unfortunately made us very aware of the dangers of 15-passenger vans. Last year there was a tragic accident in the State of Maine that cost the lives of 14 forestry workers who were killed when their 15-passenger van rolled off of a bridge, killing all but one. This was the single worst motor vehicle accident in Maine's history. So we are introducing identical bills in the House and the Senate. With bipartisan support we hope to end these kinds of needlessly tragic accidents.

Mr. Speaker, one of the government's roles is to ensure the safety of its citizens. This legislation gives consumers the information they need to know about the safety of these vans and it eliminates a loophole that allows people to get around a child safety law. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this common sense legislation.

TRIBUTE TO THE SAN FERNANDO
CATHEDRAL

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2003

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, last week the San Fernando Cathedral celebrated the completion of its renovation. Today I am introducing a resolution honoring the San Fernando Cathedral—the oldest cathedral in the United States and the oldest standing structure in my district of San Antonio, Texas. I and my fellow colleague from San Antonio, CÍRO RODRIGUEZ, want to pay tribute to this exquisite building, and the great history and culture that it embodies.

San Fernando Cathedral is both literally and figuratively the geographic centerpoint of San Antonio. This cathedral is not only revered by the people of San Antonio, but by all the people of this Nation, who remember the strength and sacrifice of those who built this country. As I mentioned before, just last week, the renovation of this magnificent building was completed. I stand here today to mark this achievement.

The San Fernando Cathedral is a grand structure, rich in its history and meaning. Like

many of America's greatest institutions, it was built by the worn hands of the very poor. Fifteen Spanish families, sent by the King of Spain to establish a mission in Texas, laid the cornerstone of the church in 1731. They called it "La Villa de San Fernando." Like most of us, they were immigrants, looking towards a new future, looking to build a new home. What they ultimately built was a nation. A nation of many people, of many backgrounds.

They united under the cathedral's roof. As a symbol of their unity, the congregation joined Old World and New World saints—Our Lady of Candlemas and Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe—as patrons in addition to the town's official patron, King Fernando III of Spain. San Fernando Cathedral is a place where all people still come together each week, by the thousands, to meet and pray. Like the generations before them, they also come to the cathedral to seek refuge from a world too often ravaged by hunger and violence, as soldiers did during the Battle of the Alamo.

I honor the San Fernando Cathedral today because I believe that, like the immigrants that built it, this building has an honored place in our history and most certainly has an honored place in our future.

HONORING THE LIFE OF
CORPORAL PATRICK NIXON

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2003

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Corporal Patrick Nixon, who gave the ultimate sacrifice to his country while serving in the United States Marine Corps. Patrick died in fighting near Nasiriyah, Iraq.

Patrick's parents, Debra and David Nixon, live in Gallatin, Tennessee, where I have the honor of representing them in this most esteemed body. My thoughts and prayers are with Debra and David and the rest of Patrick's family and friends. Full of hope and promise and sense of duty to his country, Patrick joined the Marine Corps after graduating high school in 2000.

Like his grandfather Joseph and his two brothers, Bill Hudson and Joe Nixon, before him, Patrick chose to serve his country by joining the Armed Forces. Patrick was a dedicated and courageous Marine. He understood the risks of serving in the military and did so with honor. This nation owes Patrick and all of the young men and women serving in our Armed Forces a huge debt of gratitude.

Our brave fighting men and women go in harm's way so the rest of us can enjoy the liberties of this great democracy. We should never take their service to this country for granted. Patrick was a young man who dreamed of teaching history one day. Our children will miss the opportunity to learn from such a courageous man.

I have deep admiration for Patrick, who has touched the lives of so many. His family, friends and community will never forget him and the sacrifice he made to protect the United States of America. God bless Patrick and all the men and women who sacrifice so much to protect this nation from harm.

INTRODUCTION OF THE UNITED
STATES INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP
ACT OF 2003

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2003

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a critical and comprehensive initiative—the United States International Leadership Act of 2003—aimed at strengthening American leadership at the United Nations and at other international organizations.

Mr. Speaker, let me first express my sincere gratitude to the bill's cosponsor, the distinguished Chairman of the Rules Committee, and a dear friend from my home state of California, Congressman DAVID DREIER.

Many of the ideas for our bill came from a Council on Foreign Relations report that Chairman DREIER co-authored last year with our former International Relations Committee Chairman, Lee Hamilton.

The report, "Enhancing U.S. Leadership at the United Nations," focused attention on a critical problem in American foreign policy—our inability consistently to promote our interests and values in multilateral fora such as the UN. It also offered concrete steps to rebuild our influence.

The United States International Leadership Act builds on the Dreier-Hamilton report and is designed to give our diplomats the tools they need to ensure that America once again punches at its weight in the UN.

Specifically the bill:

Creates a Democracy Caucus at the UN to encourage other democracies to join us in promoting positions at the UN that support freedom and oppose tyranny and hatred.

Requires the State Department to pay high level visits each year to key countries to make sure that their leaders understand that support for our positions at the UN is critical to their overall relationship with us.

Directs the President to use U.S. influence to reform the criteria for leadership and membership at the UN bodies to ensure that rogue regimes and authoritarian governments cannot continue to thwart the noble purposes that each body was created to advance.

Provides increased training to our Foreign Service Officers to help them develop the skills they need to conduct effective diplomacy at the UN and other multilateral organizations.

Affords Foreign Service Officers—for the first time ever—an opportunity to advance their careers by undertaking assignments to represent the U.S. to the UN and to other multilateral institutions.

Creates a new Office on Multilateral Negotiations to be headed by a Special Representative with the rank of ambassador who has the responsibility to make sure that we have the resources and the strategies needed to prevail in each critical negotiation and decision we face at the UN and in other multilateral negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, it is an undeniable fact of life that our participation in the UN and other international organizations is critical to achieving our foreign policy goals. Right now the UN is helping us to advance our war against terrorism by obligating all countries to freeze the assets of terrorist groups. UN treaties and inspectors are also an important part of our ef-

fort to prevent the proliferation of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. UN agencies are also critical in spearheading the fight to combat the ravages of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and now the terrifying new sickness, SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome).

Despite these and many other examples of critical benefits we obtain from our engagement at the UN, the U.S. has often been blocked in its attempts to take action in these institutions to advance its goals and objective. A recent example is the United Nations Human Rights Commission, where Libya—a gross human rights violator—was elected chairman, and the United States temporarily lost a seat. Another was the UN's World Conference Against Racism, where rogue regimes successfully hijacked a critical forum on race and turned it into an ugly anti-Israeli and anti-American circus.

A big part of the problem is that decisions at many international organizations, including membership and leadership, are made by regional groups where there is intensive cooperation by repressive regimes. The International Leadership Act, by building a Democracy Caucus and by developing expertise in the United States Government in the area of multilateral diplomacy, represents the beginning of what will be a long effort to rationalize and strengthen the UN, and other international organizations, by systematically reducing the leverage of repressive regimes and ensure that these organizations serve rather than thwart U.S. national interests.

Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere hope that this measure will be quickly enacted and signed by the President, so that we can begin this critical project.

HONORING MARINE CORPORAL
RANDAL ROSACKER

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I stand before you today to honor a young man tragically taken from us while in the service of his country. Last Monday, Marine Corporal Randal Rosacker, a native of Alamosa, Colorado, was killed while serving in the conflict in Iraq. I am truly humbled to honor him before this body of Congress and this Nation. The sacrifice of Randy and his fellow Marines will be long remembered by our grateful Nation.

Randy was the oldest of three children and was known as a born leader. In High School, his teammates voted him captain of the baseball team. Randy had always wanted to become a marine and joined when he turned 18, despite scholarship offers to play college football. By doing so, Randy was upholding the finest military traditions of both his family and this Nation and I know Randy's family and friends take pride in the uniform he wore and the ideals for which he fought. Our Nation will long endure due to the strength and character of men and women like Randy who serve our country.

Each generation must renew its commitment to defend our liberties. Today in Iraq, a new generation of young Americans is fighting