

promote human rights. As a student activist, he helped found Medical Students for Social Responsibility and spearheaded campaigns advocating for the health needs of the vulnerable and disadvantaged. When Ernest graduated, he became a volunteer doctor in Mindanao with the Medical Action Group, providing care to victims of human rights violations. One month after September 11th, Ernest was asked to join a fact-finding mission to Basilan, an area with a number of Muslim rebel groups. Government forces were aggressively arresting hundreds of Muslim suspects, and it was alleged that many of them were being tortured.

As Ernest was examining the prisoners, an armed guard threatened him with an M-16 rifle and locked him up with the detainees. Undaunted, Ernest continued his examinations and demanded that the prisoners receive proper treatment. When he was finally released, Ernest and the team pressed on into the perilous region controlled by separatist rebels to provide humanitarian assistance to a community under siege.

They soon found themselves hostages. "After hours of talking and offering sacks of rice and dried fish, we were able to negotiate a safe passage home," Ernest said. "I was happy to come out of that situation alive, but sad that people there continue to confront harsher forms of violence and abuse. And, unlike us, they do not have the option to leave."

Despite the personal risk, Ernest chose to remain in Mindanao. Several days ago, the Philippine military invaded the region where Ernest is working in search of a rebel group. Thousands of villagers have been forced to leave the area. As the only doctor in the region, Ernest is responding to the crisis, providing an emergency health response system to over 40,000 refugees.

PEDRO ANAYA (UNITED STATES)

In his early teenage years, Pedro Anaya (age 24) was more interested in gangs than he was in human rights. But some influential mentors and a school assignment helped steer him in a different direction. When asked to write about an American hero, Pedro chose Mexican American activist Cesar Chavez. Dismayed when his teacher rebuked him for writing about a "Mexican" rather than an American hero, Pedro vowed to raise awareness about Chavez. Since then, he has used Chavez's life and values as a model to inspire young people.

Pedro fights human rights abuses against Latinos of Mexican origin, the frequent target of discrimination and prejudice in the San Diego area. While still in high school, he organized a campaign to rescind the California proposition that would prevent undocumented immigrants from receiving benefits or public services. In college, Pedro brought campus groups and inner-city organizations together to support the United Farm Workers. He proved to local farm workers that by organizing, they could gain a voice, regardless of legal status or language. And he marshaled support to force growers to address health and safety problems and to replace deplorable worker encampments with proper housing.

As continuing education director for the National Conference for Community and Justice, Pedro now pursues his personal campaign to empower Latinos. He has already worked with more than a thousand young people, fostering leadership and mobilizing them to learn to combat social injustices and prejudice.

OONA CHATTERJEE (UNITED STATES)

Community organizer Oona Chatterjee (age 29) took inspiration from poet Antonio Machado who wrote, "Searcher, there is no road. We make the road by walking." Oona became an activist for social change in Bushwick, a poor and largely immigrant neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York. In 1997, she and a colleague founded Make the Road by Walking (MRBW), a unique community-based organization built on the belief that the center of leadership must be within the community itself. Since then, the organization has grown dramatically and now includes over 600 members, a member-elected board composed of low-income community residents, and a staff of twelve.

Over the past 5 years, MRBW has achieved many improvements to the lives of Bushwick residents. Members recently forced New York City to conform to federal law and provide translation services to non-English speakers in all of its food stamp, welfare, and Medicaid offices. They also forced dozens of neighborhood employers to pay more than \$100,000 in illegally withheld wages to garment workers. They have educated residents on how to prevent, detect, and treat lead poisoning. They launched GLOBE (Gays and Lesbians of Bushwick Empowered) to fight homophobia and to provide the community's first safe space for gay men and women. And, with Oona as the driving force, their Youth Power Project recently helped redirect \$53 million of New York City's budget away from the expansion of juvenile jail facilities and toward youth development projects.

MOHAMED PA-MOMO FOFANAH (SIERRA LEONE)

Mohamed Pa-Momo Fofanah (age 30) is an attorney in Sierra Leone dedicated to defending the rights of children caught in a web of poverty and unspeakable atrocities.

Sierra Leone recently emerged from a ruthless, decade-long civil war, in which tens of thousands of civilians were killed, over 100,000 were mutilated, tortured and raped, and millions were driven from their homes. Many were compelled to work as slave laborers, and children were forced to become soldiers and commit violent acts against family and neighbors. This decade of destruction has left 75% of Sierra Leone's population under the age of 25, and has decimated the country's economy and infrastructure. Extreme poverty is rampant, and an adequate juvenile justice system is nearly non-existent. As a result, children have become both victims of abuse as well as offenders—often resorting to crime just to survive.

Since receiving his law degree in 1998, Pa-Momo has worked tirelessly to defend the rights of children and to improve the treatment of juveniles in the justice system. He has worked with the Sierra Leone office of Defense for Children International, where he provides free legal advice on children's rights, represents juveniles arbitrarily arrested and detained, and takes up cases of child abuse and rape. To further strengthen his fight for the protection of children, Pa-Momo also helped create the Lawyers Centre for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA), the only organization in Sierra Leone to offer free legal services to indigent victims of human rights abuses.

CHRISTIAN MUKOSA (DEM. REP. OF CONGO)

Christian Mukosa (age 28), also an attorney, fights to expose human rights violations in the Kivu provinces of the Democratic Republic of

Congo, in one of the world's most dangerous and turbulent settings. Since 1998, the Kivu provinces have been the battleground between Congolese forces and a host of armed rebel groups. The broader war has fueled interethnic strife, resulting in civilian deaths and the punishment of groups for suspected loyalty to rival forces. Human rights defenders who try to report on the abuses are repeatedly threatened and arrested.

As a field investigator and lawyer for *Horitiers de la Justice*, Christian gathered information on abuses by meeting with victims and visiting detention centers. He also represented indigent victims at no cost, pressured local authorities to respect the law, and trained local activists to monitor human rights violations.

Christian and his colleagues responded to reports of human rights violations by confronting authorities directly with evidence. Each week, they released one-page appeals on particular cases and distributed them to local and international human rights organizations and the United Nations. They also published an annual report on human rights violations.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to join these outstanding human rights defenders at a reception in their honor on Tuesday, April 8, at 6:00 p.m. in the Rayburn Foyer.

NORTHERN IRELAND PEACE AND RECONCILIATION SUPPORT ACT OF 2003, H.R. 1208

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 31, 2003

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my support for H.R. 1208, the Northern Ireland Peace and Reconciliation Act of 2003. The International Fund for Ireland was established in 1985 to help bolster economic development and support programs that would foster peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the affected border areas of the Republic of Ireland. The United States has contributed more than \$386 million to the fund to help improve relations between Catholic and Protestants in Northern Ireland through the creation of jobs and cross-community business development. Over 80 percent of the fund's investment has been in disadvantaged areas offering work experiences and job training programs for disadvantaged and unemployed youth.

Since 1969, over 3200 people have died as a result of political violence in Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom. The conflict, which has its origins in the 1921 division of Ireland, has reflected a struggle between different nationalities, cultures, and religious identities. The Protestant majority in Northern Ireland defines itself as British and largely supports continued incorporation in the United Kingdom, and are called unionists. The Catholic minority considers itself Irish and many Catholics desire a united Ireland, and are referred to as nationalists.

In 1998, former U.S. Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, helped broker the "Good Friday Agreement" between and among the government of Ireland, the government of the

United Kingdom, and political party leaders representing Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland.

The requested \$25 million over the next five years will go a long way to carry out the accords of the Good Friday agreement. A large part of this effort is for programs that enhance relations between communities and between the police and the communities they serve, promote human rights training for police, and promote training programs to enhance the new district partnership police boards recommended by the Patten Commission.

Successive U.S. Administrations and the U.S. Congress have seen economic development as key to fostering peace in Northern Ireland. Support for the paramilitaries has been strongest in the communities suffering the highest level of unemployment and economic deprivation; thus, many see the creation of jobs and economic opportunity as on par with working out a political solution to the conflict in Northern Ireland. Critics of U.S. assistance to the region argue that the European Union, not the United States, is the appropriate source of aid and further that private investment, rather than aid, is central to job creation. Supporters of the aid program, including many Members of Congress, see aid and investment as complementary, with aid often serving as a good catalyst for investment. Mr. Speaker, I am a strong supporter of the aid program.

Mr. Speaker, all major social and economic indicators show that Catholics in Northern Ireland are disadvantaged relative to Protestants. The most persistent area of inequality has been employment. Catholics experience rates of unemployment over twice as high as Protestants, and Catholics are more likely than Protestants to experience long-term unemployment.

The British government sees inward investment and the creation of employment opportunities, linked to its fair employment legislation, as the best antidote to Catholic unemployment. Others believe implementation of the Mac Bride Principles would provide an important remedy. Introduced in 1984, the Mac Bride Principles are nine equal opportunity/affirmative action principles, intended to promote employment options for members of underrepresented religious groups in Northern Ireland. Among other things, the Principles call for provocative religious or political emblems to be banned from the workplace; for all job openings to be publicly advertised with special recruitment efforts to attract applicants from underrepresented groups; and for adequate security at the workplace.

For years, the British and Irish governments sought a formula that would facilitate a peaceful settlement. After many ups and downs, the British and Irish governments and the eight parties participating in peace talks announced agreement on a political settlement on April 10, 1998. The agreement recognizes the consent principle, namely, change in the status of Northern Ireland can only come about with the consent of the majority of its people. Voters in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland approved the accords in referendums held on May 22. Elections to the new Assembly took place on June 25.

Mr. Speaker, the implementation of the peace agreement has been difficult. I applaud the efforts of leaders in the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Northern Ireland for their efforts in

furthering peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE
REFORM ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. RICHARD H. BAKER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 2, 2003

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 522) to reform the Federal deposit insurance system, and for other purposes:

Mr. BAKER. Mr. Chairman, after considerable work by Chairman OXLEY and Mr. BACHUS, the House of Representatives is once again considering legislation to reform Federal deposit insurance. This is important legislation that will have an impact on our constituents and our economy.

As I stated last year, I am concerned about the potential effects of possible FDIC actions to develop and implement risk-based assessment standards under sections 4 and 7 of the legislation. My concern is that the FDIC may give excessive weight to Federal Home Loan Bank advances in the assessment process so that insured institutions with certain amounts or percentages of such advances would be classified as more risky and, therefore, pay higher deposit insurance premiums.

My concern arises from the FDIC's report on deposit insurance reform, issued in April 2001, which indicated that, under a risk-based assessment system, the FDIC could use a sample risk "scorecard" that would result in institutions with increased amounts of FHLB advances paying higher risk-based insurance assessments.

In my opinion, the use by the FDIC of risk-based assessment authority in this way would be contrary to Congress's clear intent to broaden access to FHLB advances in the Gramm-Leach-Bliley act of 1999. In the Gramm-Leach-Bliley act, we wanted to ensure that community institutions and housing lenders would be able to obtain adequate, reasonably priced FHLB advances as a source of funds to serve the borrowing needs of their customers. Providing this source of liquidity may actually reduce risk. I would anticipate, should the FDIC place undue weight on FHLB advances for its risk-based assessment system, the agency will likewise account for the risks associated with depository institutions holding U.S. agency debt and securities.

As the principal House sponsor of the FHLB provisions in the Gramm-Leach-Bliley act, I will follow very closely the FDIC's implementation of any new risk-based assessment standards to ensure such standards do not adversely affect the prudent use or cost of advances.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 7, 2003

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, April 3, I had surgery to correct an injury I sus-

tained during a bicycle accident in November 2002.

As a result of this surgery, I was unable to cast my vote on the supplemental appropriations bill that the House considered on that day. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 103; I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 104; I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 105; I would have voted "aye" on rollcall vote 106; I would have voted "nay" on rollcall vote 107; and I would have voted "aye" on rollcall vote 108.

H. RES. 137 AND THE IMPORTANCE
OF TITLE IX

HON. MICHAEL R. McNULTY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 7, 2003

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, one of our nation's most vital and successful programs for equal opportunity for women has been under review. Rod Paige, Secretary of Education, recently assembled a commission to investigate the effectiveness of title IX in the Civil Rights Act. The mandate of the "Commission on opportunity in Athletics" is to investigate ways to enforce title IX efficiently.

The Commission has concluded its investigation and issued its findings. Secretary Paige said that all of the recommendations to which the Commissioners initially agreed would be treated as "consensus" recommendations. The minority report, filed by commissioners and former Olympians Donna de Varona and Julie Foudy, strongly disagree with two specific Commission recommendations, and express serious concerns about the others.

The dissenting Commissioners strongly believe that many of the Commission's "consensus" recommendations are worded so ambiguously that they could be interpreted in such a way as to undermine equal participation opportunities and scholarship dollars for women, as well as other title IX protections. Without clarification, say these distinguished athletes, there is no true "consensus" with in the Commission.

I find it troubling, Mr. Speaker, that the minority report is not included in the Commission's report, thus excluding the serious objections raised by some during deliberation of the Commission. Secretary Paige submitted the majority report alone—without first discussing his decision with the Commission. Not surprisingly, a number of those on the panel have expressed their unease about the lack of a final meeting. They are concerned that areas of genuine consensus in the report have not been identified, and I certainly share their concerns.

I am a long time supporter of title IX and the opportunities it creates for women. I am a co-sponsor of H. Res. 137, a bipartisan resolution to maintain the integrity of title IX of the Civil Rights Act. This resolution sends the message that we are committed to protecting title IX, and that the fight to save title IX is not over.

Over 70 percent of the country supports title IX in its current form. With such overwhelming support, we must recommit to enforcing the current standards. While gender equality in athletics still does not truly exist, we have taken great strides over the first 30 years