

I have known and worked with Jerry Lynch for more than a dozen years, both during my time as a Michigan State Representative, and as a U.S. Representative. He has been a champion of veterans' causes for all of those years, and for many years before.

He is devoted to his community. It is no surprise to me that Jerry's first official act as Michigan State Commander after being elected by delegates at the American Legion State Convention in 2002 was to lead his home town Fourth of July parade in Daggett, Michigan.

Jerry knows that bringing the ideals of the American Legion and its goals and values back home to each community in Michigan is critically important to making sure that the contributions of our veterans and our active duty military men and women are honored in every day life. He is a shining example of those ideals.

When our fighting men and women have been performing so valiantly in Iraq and the welfare of all our veterans is on the minds of every American, it is particularly important to recognize the ideals of the American Legion as exemplified in Jerry Lynch.

State Commander Lynch, a Vietnam era veteran of U.S. Navy service, has been active at many levels of the American Legion. He has held positions at the state level, including Zone Commander, Membership Director and has served on the Americanism and New Posts Committees. Prior to that, he served as Commander of the Upper Peninsula Association, was a District Committeeman, and held several offices at Stephenson, Michigan Post 43, including that of Commander.

Jerry's lovely wife Judy is now the Legion's "First Lady" and will contribute her own special brand of activism and support to Legion causes. The Lynches have three children, Kim, Kelly and Donald.

Jerry's talents for leadership and service have been his great gift to the American Legion, and to Upper Peninsula veterans in particular. No task was too small—or too big—to get Jerry's attention, if it needed doing. He always comes through.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today asking that you and our House colleagues join me in relaying our respect and our appreciation to Jerry D. Lynch, who exemplifies the American Legion ideal, but more importantly, who is a perfect example of the human ideals of service to his fellow man and remembrance of those who have served before him.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN LAWLOR  
QUIGLEY

**HON. WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 10, 2003*

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a man who dedicated his life to ensuring that the veterans and working men and women of our country had access to the best quality health care available. He was an individual of the highest integrity and character. Sadly, he passed away on Thursday, January 23, 2003, after a long illness. Hailing from Mashpee, Massachusetts on Cape Cod, his was a life devoted to his fellow men.

John Lawlor Quigley was born on April 29, 1922. He was married to Jean Regan and

leaves three children—Jan, Kristen and John. He was also the proud grandfather of nine grandchildren.

He served his country honorably as a member of the United States Marine Corps during World War Two, and earned the Purple Heart for being wounded on Iwo Jima in 1945. After the war, he returned to Massachusetts, determined to become a positive force in his community. He graduated from Georgetown University and Boston College Law School with a law degree before making a run for Massachusetts House of Representatives. Though unsuccessful at his first run in politics, it may have been a blessing in disguise as his work then focused exclusively on veterans and health care issues.

John's commitment to America's veterans and to equal healthcare access for working families was instilled in him from an early age. His father, Lawrence F. Quigley, an 11 term mayor of Chelsea, Massachusetts, was the Commandant of the Chelsea Soldiers' Home, a state facility for homeless veterans as well as those with medical conditions necessitating long term care from 1934 to 1948. John succeeded his father and oversaw the Home for over 3 decades, from 1948 to 1980. The Quigley legacy over the last 7 decades is such that the Home's hospital has been renamed after John's father and in a sense it is fitting that John's final moments were spent in a place that he had nurtured and had truly become part of the fiber of his being.

He also was heavily involved in health care issues nationally. He served as President of the Massachusetts Hospital Association from 1961–62, Director of the American Hospital Association's Region 1 and President of the New England Healthcare Assembly. Membership in these organizations enabled John to tackle the many varied and constantly evolving issues in the healthcare industry. It was a platform he used to good effect. The loyalty of his peers, employees and fellow veterans is proof of that.

In addition to his many personal and professional responsibilities, John also made the time to be an active member of his community through involvement in a number of civic organizations. He lived his life with a concern for his fellow man and genuinely cared about the future of America. John Quigley is an example for all of us and as he looks down on us today, I want to add my voice to the chorus of accolades he has earned many times over for his devotion to veterans, love of country and dedication to family. I salute you and may God bless you.

HONORING PRIVATE FIRST CLASS  
DIEGO F. RINCON

**HON. DAVID SCOTT**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 10, 2003*

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to give some remarks about one of those noble heroes who gave his life, Private First Class Diego Fernando Rincon, who is from my 13th Congressional District in Georgia, whose funeral will be held today in just a few hours from now at 2 p.m. at the Seventh Day Adventist Church located in my district in Conyers, GA.

As we see on television the joyous faces of Iraq who have been liberated we must never forget the precious price that was paid by our brave and courageous soldiers who gave their lives so that Iraq could be free.

In his last letter to his mother, dated February 22 and received by his family on March 22, Private First Class Diego Rincon wrote:

Hola, Mother,

How are you doing? Good, I hope. I'm doing OK, I guess. I won't be able to write anymore starting the 28th of this month. We are moving out. We are already packed and ready to move to a tactical Alpha-Alpha (in Iraq). Once that happens, there will not be any mail sent out. We will only receive mail that is less than 12 ounces. At least that's what they said.

I'm not sure where exactly we're going [to] be yet, but it is said to be a 20-hour drive in the Bradleys [fighting vehicles].

So I guess the time has finally come for us to see what we are made of, who will crack when the stress level rises and who will be calm all the way through it. Only time will tell. We are at the peak of our training and it's time to put it to the test.

I just want to tell everybody how much you all mean to me and how much I love you all. Mother, I love you so much! I'm not going to give up! I'm living my life one day at a time, sitting here picturing home with a small tear in my eyes, spending time with my brothers, who will hold my life in their hands.

I try not to think of what may happen in the future, but I can't stand seeing it in my eyes. There's going to be murders, funerals and tears rolling down everybody's eyes. But the only thing I can say is, keep my head up and try to keep the faith and pray for better days. All this will pass. I believe God has a path for me. Whether I make it or not, it's all part of the plan. It can't be changed, only completed.

"Mother" will be the last word I'll say. Your face will be the last picture that goes through my eyes. I'm not trying to scare you, but it's reality. The time is here to see the plan laid out. And, hopefully, I'll be at home in it. I don't know what I'm talking about or why I'm writing it down. Maybe I just want someone to know what goes through my head. It's probably good not keeping it all inside.

I just hope that you're proud of what I'm doing and have faith in my decisions. I will try hard and not give up. I just want to say [I'm] sorry for anything I have ever done wrong. And I'm doing it all for you, Mom. I love you.

Tuesday, I talked with Diego's father, George, on the telephone and I expressed all of our feelings as a grateful Nation when I assured him that his son's contribution will forever be remembered. In addition, we would present him with the RECORD of this tribute to his son along with a U.S. flag that is flying over the Capitol today—the day of his son's funeral. This father of this genuine American hero was touched and moved and we both were in tears and he said, "Thank you, Congressman SCOTT." I said, "No, thank you, Mr. Rincon, we thank you. The Nation and the world thank you and your son because your son gave us the greatest gift of all, which is this: The gift that someone would lay down his life for his friend and those friends we see joyously celebrating their freedom on television today; friends who are thankful and grateful to 19-year-old Private First Class Diego Rincon."

Rincon fought the good fight, he finished his course, he kept the faith, and most assuredly

for Private First Class Diego Rincon there is waiting for him an extraordinary crown of righteousness. Rincon has been awarded posthumous U.S. citizenship and I am proud to cosponsor pending legislation that will grant automatic citizenship for all foreign-born soldiers killed fighting for the United States.

God Bless Diego Rincon and God Bless America.

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PROTECTION OF LAWFUL  
COMMERCE IN ARMS ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. BRAD CARSON**

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 9, 2003*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1036) to prohibit civil liability actions from being brought or continued against manufacturers, distributors, dealers, or importers of firearms or ammunition for damages resulting from the misuse of their products by others:

Mr. CARSON of Oklahoma. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to revise and extend my remarks. I yield myself such time as I may consume. I rise in support of H.R. 1036, the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act.

As my esteemed colleagues have discussed, H.R. 1036 would prohibit civil lawsuits from being brought against gun manufacturers by parties that have been injured by the unlawful use of firearms.

Mr. Chairman, I am a great believer in personal responsibility. It is one of the key principles upon which America was founded. The Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act would strengthen this great notion.

Imposing liability on an entire industry for harm caused solely by the unlawful actions of others is an abuse of the United States legal system—it undermines public confidence in our judicial system and threatens the viability of law-abiding companies.

Frivolous lawsuits against the firearm industry are nothing more than an attack on the Second Amendment. It seems a logical anti-gun tactic to me, if you can't lawfully prevent the sale of guns, then you go after the people who sell guns and make them afraid to sell their lawful products for fear of incurring substantial financial liability. Thus far, these frivolous and merit-less lawsuits have had little success in court. Their only success is in placing an enormous financial burden on gun manufacturers. However, these litigation costs are then passed onto consumers and makes it more difficult law-abiding citizens to own guns. In the end, the ones who suffer the most are law-abiding consumers.

H.R. 1036 would help protect our second amendment rights by protecting legitimate businesses that comply with Federal, State and local gun laws. It is time to stop these frivolous lawsuits that threaten to bankrupt a responsible American industry by blaming the firearm industry for the actions of criminals. I urge my colleagues to support the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CRIME  
VICTIMS RIGHTS AMENDMENT

**HON. STEVE CHABOT**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 10, 2003*

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be here today during National Crime Victims' Rights Week with this outstanding coalition to support what I consider to be one of the most important legislative efforts in the 108th Congress—the Crime Victim's Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution.

I'd like to start off by thanking the original cosponsors, some of whom are here. I'd also like to thank Senators KYL and FEINSTEIN for their leadership in the Senate and Attorney General Ashcroft for his continued support of this much needed amendment. And most importantly, I would like to thank the representatives of the victims groups who will speak shortly. Thank you all for coming today to show your support for the Victims Rights Amendment.

Many of the people here today know all too well that violent criminals damage or destroy the lives of innocent victims. According to the Department of Justice, in the year 2001, there were almost 1.5 million violent crimes committed in the United States. On any day, on any street corner, a mother, father, son or daughter can become the next victim of a rapist or murderer. For too many years these victims' voices have been silenced in a criminal justice system that recognizes only the rights of the accused. Thankfully, that is all beginning to change.

Currently, 32 States, including my home state of Ohio, have passed victims rights amendments to their constitutions. We have also enacted Federal victims rights statutes. Unfortunately, these laws have not been consistently applied, and many victims still are not treated with dignity and respect.

A constitutional amendment is absolutely needed to help facilitate a balance between the rights of victims and those of defendants. Only through an amendment to the Constitution can victims receive the justice they deserve.

This amendment would empower crime victims by allowing them to confront their assailants in court and at sentence or parole hearings. It would protect victims by requiring that they be notified about the release or escape of the perpetrator from custody and by requiring that the victim's safety be considered in determining a release from custody. Finally, the amendment would restore victims by guaranteeing them the right to seek restitution from their attackers.

These rights, like others guaranteed in our Constitution, would become fundamental, and citizens of every state would be protected.

I want to stress that nothing—I repeat, nothing—in this amendment will undermine or weaken the long-established rights of defendants under our Constitution.

For far too long, victims of crime in this country have had to stand on the courtroom steps with meaningful justice right beyond their reach. Not allowed to view proceedings in person. Not permitted to speak out on behalf of a murdered loved one. Not even notified when a violent abuser is turned loose.

Crime victims deserve to be treated better. They deserve to be treated with dignity in our criminal justice system. In the last Congress, I introduced this amendment in the House. And working with Senators KYL and FEINSTEIN and Attorney General Ashcroft, I think we made great progress in raising awareness of this critical issue. This year, I believe we can do even better. With the strong support we have received from President Bush, I am hopeful that we can pass this amendment and fortify an important truth: that victims must have their own inalienable rights under our Constitution.

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FREEDOM'S OBLIGATION

**HON. SHERWOOD L. BOEHLERT**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 10, 2003*

Mr. BOEHLERT. Mr. Speaker, I respectfully submit the words of my constituent, Jessica Mattiace of Moravia, NY, for submission into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Jessica was chosen as the winner of the Veterans of Foreign Wars broadcast scriptwriting contest for 2003.

Each year, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, VFW, of the United States and the Ladies Auxiliary conduct a Voice of Democracy audio/essay competition designed to give high school students the opportunity to voice their opinion on their responsibility to our country. This year, more than 80,000 secondary school students participated in this contest competing for the 59 national scholarships. The contest theme for this year was "Freedom's Obligation."

I applaud the VFW for continually providing this outlet for young people to share their personal views and coordinating this worthy competition each year. I also congratulate Ms. Mattiace on her achievement and wish her best of luck in her future educational ventures.

FREEDOM'S OBLIGATION

(By New York Winner—Jessica Mattiace)

It echoes through our courtrooms, sings in our churches, whispers in our hearts—freedom, the very lifeblood of America, the very marrow of our homeland. For this right our fathers fought, and for it they died. So that you and I might say we truly are free, a life was yielded, a heart ceased to beat, a soul, enflamed with the ardent desire to be loosed from the bounds of oppression and persecution, was severed from its mortal frame. How often is such a blessing taken for granted! How often is it abused! How often is it reduced to a right to do whatever one pleases. But this is not what so many men and women gave their lives for. They sought to create a land where all would be granted equal rights, but not where liberty would be considered license for immorality. In our quest to protect and preserve the freedom that has been endowed to us by God, and guaranteed to us by the blood of our fathers, we have created another sort of enslavement, the enslavement to such false ideas of freedom. Freedom has not been granted to us for nothing, and it is our duty to defend it at every moment.