

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.

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.

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.

Although as humans "Endowed by our Creator," as we are told by the Declaration of Independence, "with certain inalienable rights," these have not been given to us without responsibilities. There exists in this country especially, a legacy of liberty which has been passed on from generation to generation, safeguarded and sustained by its citizens. But this freedom is not immutable. We, as Americans, must rise to the responsibilities that face us. When not backed by people, by Americans motivated with the same passion and fervor as the founders of this land, our freedom is but a feeble idea quickly whisked away.

Has it become this today within our very borders? Although it must still be protected from outside threats, the real threat, the real danger is right here. It is threatened every single time a human life is disregarded or disrespected. With every unborn child prevented from ever taking its first breath, freedom is stifled and its very heart violated. With every hateful word or deed against a person's race, consent is given to forfeit the liberation of an entire country. It truly is a dreadful form of poverty when such crimes against life are committed. How can a man stand upon his feet and proclaim his freedom, when he holds the stolen liberty of another in his hands? How can he defend the very thing that he has denied to others? No, it is not possible to secure for oneself what has been usurped from others. When the value of freedom is overlooked in a single human form, it is overlooked for all of humanity. Without compromise, this freedom must be defended and all obstacles and impediments standing before it must be defeated.

Our obligation to protect freedom begins within our homes, in our day-to-day life choices which affect others. What we value shows in our daily lives, and is reflected in our government. We are under a government put in place by ourselves and for ourselves. What is allowable, what is just, what is humane is before us to decide. We make the decision not merely by how we vote, but by how we speak, how we act, how we live.

In our refusal to forfeit human rights and dignity through our every action, we become a powerful testament to true freedom and liberty for all. To act in this way is our obligation; this is what we have been called to do by those who first ensured for us our freedom. We must live as free people, people valuing the liberty of all. Only then shall we truly be free. Only then shall this freedom be our possession, and only then will we be able to defend it from those who might attempt to snatch it from us.

RECOGNIZING THE PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMIC DECATHLON TEAM

HON. PHIL ENGLISH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2003

Mr. ENGLISH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the state of Pennsylvania's Collegiate Academy High School Academic Decathlon team as they prepare to conquer the championship title for the 2003 United States Academic Decathlon (USAD) National Competition.

Pennsylvania's Academic Decathlon team is comprised of students and coaches from the Collegiate Academy High School, located in the 3rd Congressional District. The Collegiate Academy team has already found victory in the local, regional and state USAD competitions and is anxiously awaiting the final national competition scheduled to be held at the end of April in the school's hometown of Erie, Pa.

I'd like to take the time today and recognize these talented students and their coaches, who have mentored and inspired the students throughout the entire school year.

The 2003 members of Pennsylvania's Academic Decathlon Team include: Joshua Cohick, Mara DiTullio, Jarrod Fedor, Noelle Lucas, Brian McNair, Andrew Narusewicz, Eden Roseborough, David Tran and Gregory Stachelek. The team's coaches are Carolyn Huzinec and Paula Lucas.

For more than 20 years, the USAD National competition has brought high school students together to challenge their intellects on various levels and provide an advanced educational opportunity. In the pursuance of academic excellence, academic decathlon teams must vigorously prepare to compete in ten different categories. The winning team will be recognized as the most prestigious high school in the nation.

I believe this scholastic competition to be a grand endeavor for high school students across America. Its continuous success is a prime example of our nation's enthusiasm for education. I am proud that Pennsylvania's 3rd Congressional District's own Collegiate Academy High School will represent the state this year in the national competition and I wish them the best of luck.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in honoring Pennsylvania's Academic Decathlon team and their coaches as they compete to become America's most prestigious high school.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2003

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, During Rollcall vote No. 122 on the Meehen Amendment to H.R. 1036, the Gun Manufacturer's Liability Act, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

TRIBUTE TO WAYNE W. HINDS

HON. MARION BERRY

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2003

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great Arkansan and a leading citizen of Trumann, Arkansas. I am proud to recognize Wayne W. Hinds in the United States Congress for his invaluable contributions to his community, his state and his Nation.

Wayne was born and raised in Trumann, Arkansas, and even starred on the football team at Trumann High School. During his senior season in 1955, he set an Arkansas state high school football record for the most touchdowns scored in a single game. After graduation in 1956, Wayne decided to remain close to home and attended Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, where he majored in business administration.

On November 14, 1959, Wayne married Glenda Moye. He and Glenda had two daughters, Tamara Taylor and Misti Sims and are the proud grandparents of Raven Dawn Taylor, Brett Taylor, Mackenzie Sims and Bailee Sims.

In August 1967, Wayne began the job that has become the symbol of his commitment to his community. That year, Wayne was appointed Superintendent, Drainage District Number Seven. This jurisdiction covers 190,000 acres, 300 miles of channels and 65 miles of levees along the St. Francis River and Right Hand Chute of Little River. In February 1978, Wayne was elected General Manager and Executive Secretary of Drainage District Number Seven and since then has led the effort to protect the valuable waterways of Poinsett County.

In addition to his remarkable service in his professional career, Wayne has also been an important leader in his community. Wayne is a member and past president of the Trumann Booster's Club. He also served for many years on the Board of Directors of the Trumann Lions Club.

As children, we all learn the importance of "remembering where you came from". Wayne not only remembers . . . he serves. He embodies the old fashion values of service, leadership and commitment to his community that have made our State and our Nation great. On behalf of Congress, I pay tribute to Wayne Hinds for his tireless service and unwavering commitment to the people of Poinsett County, the people of Arkansas and the people of the United States.

THE STOP TAKING OUR HEALTH PRIVACY ACT OF 2003

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2003

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, in a few days, the Bush Administration's modifications to the Federal medical privacy rule will be in effect. Federal medical privacy protections are important for protecting the integrity of our health care system. Many Americans have been taking counterproductive steps, such as giving inaccurate information to their physicians or