

CAMBODIA'S RULING PARTY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, there are two recent developments in Cambodia deserving of the Senate's attention.

First, voter registration for parliamentary elections in July, which is ongoing throughout that country over the next month, is being undermined by the ruling Cambodian People's Party, CPP. In complete control of the national and local election machinery, the CPP is making it difficult for opposition activists and supporters to register to vote and is creating a climate of fear that only bolsters the status quo.

While I am pleased the opposition Sam Rainsy Party and the royalist FUNCINPEC party have publicly complained of CPP interference and manipulation, I am deeply troubled by the relative silence of the international community in condemning these pre-election abuses.

Unless the complacent donor community aggressively checks CPP's manipulation in the preparation of these polls, the outcome of the elections will be a foregone conclusion even before the first vote is cast.

Second, recent comments by CPP hardliner and Prime Minister Hun Sen should be of grave concern to all donor nations, and democracy activists throughout Cambodia. On January 14, 2003, Hun Sen said: "I would like to announce to all the political parties to be very careful. If you would like to break Hun Sen's party, or the CPP, you might miss the opportunity to work on your own internal affairs. And as usual, Hun Sen would beat up and destroy the head of the engine. Meaning, I never beat up unimportant person but completely destroy the main engine. If you would like to play this game, I would be more than happy to accompany you. And I will use my last resort if that is what it takes. . . ."

This public threat betrays Hun Sen's total commitment to harassment, intimidation, and violence as a means of maintaining his rule.

Hun Sen's dark character was further revealed when he continued: "I assure you that I have all the means to get the information from you [opposition political parties]. If you have the meeting in the morning, the information will come to me in the afternoon. Except if you kill all the people in your own party like Pol Pot, then the information will not reach Hun Sen. Everywhere there are Hun Sen's men. Don't forget that I am the head of an undercover agency. I would like my capabilities to be known to the world. The CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] is American, but we are the Cambodian Intelligence Agency (CIA)."

Through his own words, and by his own admission, Hun Sen has shown himself to be nothing less than a paranoid evil dictator. His tough talk is unimpressive and only underscores his complicity in the numerous corrupt and violent episodes of Cambodia's

more recent past, including illegal logging and the ongoing harassment of Global Witness, the killing of opposition activists, the banning of Voice of America rebroadcasts by the Beehive radio station, the March 1997 grenade attack against the Khmer Nation Party, and the July 1997 coup d'etat.

Let me be very clear to the State Department, the World Bank, and other international financial institutions: the failure to hold Prime Minister Hun Sen and the CPP accountable for their repressive actions and abuses, including in the ongoing harassment of Global Witness, will have funding ramifications in the fiscal year 2004 foreign operations bill.

I want to assure the people of Cambodia that many of us in the Congress will continue to follow political developments in Cambodia. We know that you want change, and the stability that comes from a nation rooted in the rule of law. And we know that the CPP cannot provide this.

EXTENSION OF THE RURAL ADD-ON PAYMENT FOR HOME HEALTH

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, on behalf of myself and Senator BOND, I want to thank the chairman of the Finance Committee and the chairman of the Appropriations Committee for agreeing to include a 6 month extension of the add-on payment for rural home health services in the omnibus appropriations bill. Extension of this add-on payment, which currently is scheduled to sunset on April 1 will help to ensure that Medicare patients in rural areas continue to have access to the home health services that they need.

Home health has become an increasingly important part of our health care system. The kinds of highly skilled, and often technically complex, services that our Nation's home health agencies provide have enabled millions of our most frail and vulnerable older persons to avoid hospitals and nursing homes and stay just where they want to be, in the comfort and security of their own homes.

Surveys have shown that the delivery of home health services in rural areas can be as much as 12 to 15 percent more costly because of the extra travel time required to cover long distances between patients, higher transportation expenses, and other factors.

Rural agencies also experience higher costs relative to productivity. Because of the longer travel times and distances between patients, rural caregivers are unable to perform as many visits in a day as their urban counterparts. Sandra Scott-Adams, the executive director of the Visiting Nurses of Aroostook in Aroostook County, ME, where I am from, tells me her agency covers 6,600 square miles with a population of only 72,000. Her costs are understandably much higher and her staff productivity much lower than the average due to the long distances her staff must cover to see patients.

Moreover, agencies in rural areas are frequently smaller than their urban counterparts, which means their relative costs are higher due to smaller scale operations. Smaller agencies with fewer patients and fewer visits means that fixed costs, particularly those associated with meeting regulatory requirements, are spread over a smaller number of patients and visits, increasing overall per-patient and per-visit costs.

If the rural add-on payment is eliminated on April 1, it will only put more pressure on rural home health agencies that are already struggling and could force more of these agencies to close. Many agencies operating in rural areas are the only home health providers in a vast geographic area. If any of these agencies are forced to close, the Medicare patients in that region will lose complete access to home health care.

The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, MedPAC, met earlier this week and voted unanimously to extend for 1 year the add-on payments for rural home health services at 5 percent. Our provision is consistent with the MedPAC's recommendation and will extend the expiring provision through September 30. This will give the Finance Committee time to consider whether this add-on payment should be extended further.

Once again, I thank my colleagues for their assistance, and I look forward to working with them on this and other issues of importance to the health of rural Americans.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING MISS DAISY ROSE BECK

• Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Miss Daisy Rose Beck who passed away on September 7, 2002, after losing a hard fought battle with leukemia. She retired from the U.S. Federal Service in 1995 after serving America for 54 consecutive years. She holds the record for length of employment as a female GS-level employee.

From the early 1960s through 1995, her duties included personal secretary for the four-star U.S. army generals who pulled tours of duty in the Republic of Korea, commanding the United Nations Command, ROK/U.S. Combined Forces Command, U.S. Forces Korea and the 8th U.S. Army. In addition, she was one of the workers at the German War Crimes Trial at Nuremberg.

Daisy Rose Beck was very quiet, friendly, efficient, respectful, and very much loved by all who met her. Daisy served for decades in places where most Americans only served a single year. She is a true American, hard working, efficient, intelligent, courteous, kind, and yet focused and dedicated to the success of a mission.

These days we face harsh enemies around the globe. We Americans have a proud tradition of doing what is right

with fairness, kindness, and courage. Daisy Beck epitomizes these qualities. She is a wonderful, positive role model for all Americans in times of adversity.●

TRIBUTE TO SCARLOTTE DEUPREE

● Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to an outstanding citizen of the great State of Alabama, Miss Scarlotte Deupree.

Scarlotte may be a young woman, but her accomplishments are numerous and exceptional. Her most recent achievement was receiving the very distinguished honor of being First Runner Up to Miss America for 2003. This honor bears important functions, including representing and advocating good American values, which is a fundamental part of the Miss America Pageant. These young women choose platforms, or issues, important to our society and use their stature to help raise awareness and bring positive changes to these areas. Before entering the Miss America Pageant, Scarlotte knew that her platform would be adult literacy, an issue she has worked with for many years.

Scarlotte has devoted a great amount of her time to helping others and raising the public's awareness of adult literacy. Included in Scarlotte's work are her efforts in forming the Sylacauga Adult Literacy Council, her coordination of the first Women in Literacy Summit, as well as her work with the Literacy Council of Central Alabama, ALERT, Habitat for Humanity, and the Ronald McDonald House. In addition, Ms. Deupree helped spearhead the Literacy Awareness Week for the cities of Homewood and Athens, AL.

For her great work, Ms. Deupree has been honored by the Daily Points of Light Foundation with the Daily Point of Light No. 660 Award. She also received the Distinguished Partner Award by the Literacy Council of Central Alabama, the Miss Alabama Community Service Award, 1999 and 2002, Miss America State Community Service Award, 2002, the U.S. Presidential Service Gold Award, 1999 and 2002, and she was voted "Most Ambitious" by her student peers at Samford University.

Scarlotte also has a great record of accomplishment in other areas, including education. She completed high school at the top of her class at Sylacauga High School, where she was a member of the National Honor Society, student council, Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society, Political Awareness Club, and the B.B. Comer Library Teen Advisory Board. She went on to study English and journalism at Samford University, one of the Nation's best liberal arts colleges. There she was a member of the Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Fraternity, Samford University Honor's Program, Freshman Forum, Alpha Delta Pi Social Sorority, and volunteered as a Step Sing Consultant. In addition, she

worked in my Senate office as an intern in the winter of 2000, a very busy time for our political system and country. She produced excellent work, received high marks from my staff, and contributed greatly to my office during her stay. I was very impressed with her.

She is an example of the great work our Nation's young people do. I am very proud of her and I know she will continue to give leadership to the critical area of adult literacy and that she will be a leader in whatever career she chooses. I applaud her tireless efforts on behalf of all Alabamians and would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all that she has contributed to her community, the State of Alabama and our Nation.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing Scarlotte Deupree for her outstanding achievements and wish her well as she continues to work to improve literacy.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a withdrawal which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE UNION—PM 1

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was ordered to lie on the table:

To the Congress of the United States:

Mr. Speaker, Vice President Cheney, Members of Congress, distinguished guests, fellow citizens:

Every year, by law and by custom, we meet here to consider the state of the union. This year, we gather in this chamber deeply aware of decisive days that lie ahead.

You and I serve our country in a time of great consequence. During this session of Congress, we have the duty to reform domestic programs vital to our country . . . and we have the opportunity to save millions of lives abroad from a terrible disease. We will work for a prosperity that is broadly shared . . . and we will answer every danger and every enemy that threatens the American people.

In all these days of promise and days of reckoning, we can be confident. In a

whirlwind of change, and hope, and peril, our faith is sure, our resolve is firm, and our union is strong.

This country has many challenges. We will not deny, we will not ignore, we will not pass along our problems to other Congresses, other Presidents, and other generations. We will confront them with focus, and clarity and courage.

During the last 2 years, we have seen what can be accomplished when we work together. To lift the standards of our public schools, we achieved historic education reform—which must now be carried out in every school, and every classroom, so that every child in America can read, and learn, and succeed in life. To protect our country, we reorganized our government and created the Department of Homeland Security—which is mobilizing against the threats of a new era. To bring our economy out of recession, we delivered the largest tax relief in a generation. To insist on integrity in American business, we passed tough reforms, and we are holding corporate criminals to account.

Some might call this a good record. I call it a good start. Tonight I ask the House and Senate to join me in the next bold steps to serve our fellow citizens.

Our first goal is clear: We must have an economy that grows fast enough to employ every man and woman who seeks a job.

After recession, terrorist attacks, corporate scandals, and stock market declines, our economy is recovering—yet it is not growing fast enough, or strongly enough. With unemployment rising, our Nation needs more small businesses to open, more companies to invest and expand, more employers to put up the sign that says, "Help Wanted."

Jobs are created when the economy grows; the economy grows when Americans have more money to spend and invest; and the best, fairest way to make sure Americans have that money is not to tax it away in the first place.

I am proposing that all the income tax reductions set for 2004 and 2006 be made permanent and effective this year. And under my plan, as soon as I have signed the bill, this extra money will start showing up in workers' paychecks. Instead of gradually reducing the marriage penalty, we should do it now. Instead of slowly raising the child credit to a thousand dollars, we should send the checks to American families now.

This tax relief is for everyone who pays income taxes—and it will help our economy immediately. Ninety-two million Americans will keep—this year—an average of almost \$1,100 more of their own money. A family of four with an income of \$40,000 would see their federal income taxes fall from \$1,178 to \$45 per year. And our plan will improve the bottom line for more than 23 million small businesses.

You, the Congress, have already passed all these reductions, and promised them for future years. If this tax