

Taras Shevchenko continues to serve as a source of inspiration to Ukrainians almost 200 years after his untimely demise. Born into serfdom, as a child, Shevchenko excelled in painting even though he received no formal training. His talent eventually attracted the attention of the best artists, who bought Shevchenko's freedom. A brilliant artist, Shevchenko turned out to be an even more talented poet, who through his works gave strength and hope to millions of freedom fighters. The intensity of his words have resonated in the hearts of many, igniting the fire of freedom and inspiring a continued struggle for liberation. He led not just by his word, but by personal example as well. Throughout his life, Shevchenko organized and participated in societies promoting the liberation of Ukraine from the Russian Empire, which cost him his freedom on several occasions and ultimately cost him his life. Still his legacy endures and on this day we celebrate Shevchenko's great spirit of love for Ukraine, freedom and equality.

As a longtime supporter of the Ukrainian American community, I welcome the community's efforts to unite and stand strong on the issues that concern it in the United States and Ukraine. More than ever Ukraine needs a strong, unified voice in the United States to highlight Ukraine's achievements and evaluate its current policies. I am glad to see that Ukrainian Americans remain active in political and civic life in the United States and continue to cooperate with the governments of the United States and Ukraine.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 4658,
SERVICEMEMBERS LEGAL PROTECTION ACT OF 2004

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce H.R. 4658, the Servicemembers Legal Protection Act of 2004, legislation to further strengthen the legal and financial rights of military servicemembers, particularly those called up to active duty in Iraq, Afghanistan and other duty stations around the world. This legislation would amend a prior law I sponsored, that President Bush signed last year, the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, Public Law 108-189.

Mr. Speaker, this morning I chaired a hearing of the Veterans' Affairs Committee to examine how well the federal statutes protecting our servicemembers rights were being enforced. Testifying before the Committee were several servicemembers and family members with personal experiences in which their rights were not properly protected under existing laws.

One witness, Ms. Tammy Kimmel whose husband served in the Army at Fort Hood in Texas, told the Committee that when her husband was ordered to a new duty location, her landlord refused to release her from their joint housing lease as required by law. The landlord claimed that the law required the servicemember to be released, but not the spouse.

The legislation I am introducing today would help prevent such misinterpretations as well as strengthen and expand several existing legal and financial protections.

Mr. Speaker, with more than 150,000 Guard and reserve members activated in the continuing war on terrorism, we must ensure that the laws protecting their rights are fully and faithfully executed and enforced. Congress approved the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act last year precisely because of perceived ambiguities and weaknesses in longstanding federal statutes covering military personnel called to active duty or redeployed to new duty locations.

Regrettably, despite sixty years of federal case law, culminating with the passage last year of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, there are still some individuals, businesses, and organizations who cynically refuse to provide all the reliefs required by statute.

We will neither tolerate outright violations nor attempts to distort the clear purposes of the laws Congress has enacted. The evidence from today's hearing is overwhelming and the intention of the law is clear. Those men and women who put their lives on hold and on the line must not suffer economic or legal harm that results from their military service. This Committee and this Congress will continue to do all that can be done to protect the legal and financial rights of all of our servicemembers, whether they are active duty, reserve or Guard.

As introduced, H.R. 4658, the Servicemembers Legal Protection Act, would:

Strengthen the lease termination protections for dependants of servicemembers relocating per military orders;

Expand the definition of court and administrative judgments and rulings covered by the law;

Require that waivers of their rights by servicemembers must be duly executed in separate, clearly written documents;

Extend to plaintiffs the same relief granted to defendants in civil court proceedings;

Extend the housing and automobile lease termination relief to servicemembers relocated from states or territories outside the contiguous United States (e.g., Hawaii, Alaska);

Strengthen the leases termination provisions for servicemembers affected by individual deployments;

Prevent double taxation of servicemembers due to differences in state and local excise, use, or other similar taxes.

Mr. Speaker, the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act that passed last year both restated and expanded the Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act first approved in 1940. This federal statute is designed to help ensure that U.S. military personnel are not disadvantaged when they have been called to active duty and are therefore unable to be present at legal proceedings.

Among the most important protections added by the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act last year were automatic 90-day stays for civil and administrative proceedings, protections for servicemembers and their families from housing evictions, the right of servicemembers and their spouses to terminate housing and automobile leases, and protection from repossession of automobiles.

Enactment of the legislation I am introducing today, H.R. 4658, the Servicemembers Legal Protection Act, would provide an additional level of support for all of the brave men and women defending our nation and our freedom around the world. I urge my colleagues to look at this important legislation and lend their support to protecting the legal and financial rights of all of our servicemen and women.

A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO THE CITY OF WAUSEON, OHIO ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR SESQUICENTENNIAL

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to pay tribute to a special in Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. This year, the community of Wauseon, Ohio will celebrate the sesquicentennial of its founding.

Mr. Speaker, the City of Wauseon was officially recorded as a town in 1854 upon the arrival of the New York Central Railroad. The City earns its name from the long heritage of the Maumee Indian tribe. The last council of the Maumee tribe was held with the United States government 16 years before the founding of the City. It was at this council that Chief Wauseon conveyed all Maumee tribe lands in the Northwest Territory to the United States Government.

From its very beginning, Wauseon had a strong connection with the railroad. Its very creation came as a result of the railroad moving to Northwest Ohio. The first settlement in Wauseon came in anticipation of the arrival of the New York Central Railroad. Wauseon contributed to the prosperity of our young nation, the strength of our economy and the birth of our industrial might. Wauseon has a deep understanding and appreciation of their vibrant culture and long history.

Today, we honor the June 26th Heritage Days event in Wauseon, Ohio. This event will mark the 150th anniversary of the founding of the City of Wauseon. The festival will include a Civil War encampment, Native American pow-wow, and music and food from the 1850's. Pioneer life will be on display throughout the celebration.

As the county seat of Fulton County and its largest city, Wauseon embraces their long and significant heritage and will continue to share this with visitors and members of their community. Building a community mindful of the past and ready for the future speaks to the wisdom and dedication of Wauseon's citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying special tribute to the diligent effort and unwavering spirit of the citizens of Wauseon. I am confident that Wauseon's sesquicentennial will serve as an essential reminder to the past and promise of our great land.

COMMENDING THE PASCO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the Pasco County Sheriff's Office for earning national commendations for its efforts to control crime, make the community safer, and improve the lives of Pasco County residents, many of whom live in my congressional district.

The office, led by Sheriff Bob White, recently became one of the first law enforcement agencies in the country to receive accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), an honor which only about one of every four law enforcement agencies ever earn.

The Sheriff's Office received this accreditation after an exhaustive review of its policies and procedures. The Office began preparing for its assessment in early 2003 by reviewing its readiness for such a formal and comprehensive review. The men and women in its employ scrutinized hundreds of policies and procedures and revised and rewrote those which needed altering to comply with CALEA standards.

The formal assessment for CALEA accreditation then began last summer. CALEA assessors descended on the Sheriff's office to conduct an inspection which lasted four days. They reviewed files, toured the agency, inspected personnel, tested equipment, listened to presentations, and rode-along on patrols. They then recommended the Office, which met or exceeded nearly all of CALEA's standards, receive full accreditation late last year. The Sheriff's Office must continue to comply with these standards and will undergo the same scrutiny every three years to maintain its accreditation.

The CALEA accreditation means that the Pasco County Sheriff's Office has met accepted law enforcement standards in preventing and controlling crime, increased agency effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of law enforcement services, improved coordination with other law enforcement agencies, and bolstered employee and community confidence in its goals, objectives, policies, and practices.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Pasco County Sheriff's Office is one of the most dedicated and professional law enforcement agencies in the state of Florida and around the country. I am both proud and thankful that Sheriff Bob White and his charges are on the job protecting me and my constituents and representing the law enforcement community so ably and honorably. I hope that our colleagues are as fortunate as my constituents are to have such dedicated men and women protecting them.

HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR NATIVE AMERICANS ACT OF 2004

HON. JIM MATHESON

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for H.R. 4471, the Home Ownership Opportunities for Native Americans Act. I was pleased to introduce this bill with my friend and colleague on the Financial Services Committee, Mr. RENZI.

Many Native Americans continue to live in appalling housing conditions even as those in much of the nation have improved. American Indian and Alaska Native populations live in housing that is often and justifiably compared to third world nations. One out of every five Indian homes lacks complete plumbing facilities. Over 90,000, American Indians and Alaska Natives are homeless or underhoused.

On May 3, the Housing Subcommittee of the Financial Services Committee conducted a field hearing on the Navajo Reservation in an effort to better understand the challenges facing Native Americans in obtaining housing and to find ways to improve housing opportunities for Native Americans.

The Home Ownership Opportunities for Native Americans Act is the first of many needed legislative efforts to address the issues raised during our field hearing. This bill makes a simple and necessary correction—it will statutorily confirm a 95% loan guarantee under Title VI of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA).

While this vital Native American housing program at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has operated at a 95% loan guarantee level since its implementation, a recent determination by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has indicated that only an 80% loan guarantee level is authorized without further action from Congress. H.R. 4471 makes this needed change and ensures that this important housing program will continue to be used to help Native Americans obtain housing.

I appreciate the strong leadership of my colleague from Arizona, Mr. RENZI, Ranking Member WATERS, and Chairman NEY on this issue. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to address the many difficult challenges facing Native Americans in achieving home ownership.

RECOGNIZING THE SACRIFICE OF AN AMERICAN HERO: SPE- CIALIST ERIC MCKINLEY

HON. DARLENE HOOLEY

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the very special life of Eric MCKINLEY.

Eric, like most young men, loved his family, enjoyed his job, and dreamed of doing something important with the time given him.

But Specialist Eric McKinley was different from most. Simply put, Eric did more in his brief twenty-four years than many ever will. This local hero volunteered to serve his community, his State, and his Nation for a six year enlistment with the Oregon Army National Guard.

He proudly did his duty, and then he did more. You see, Eric was due to come home and be discharged in early April. His family, his friends, and his coworkers at the bakery shop in Corvallis where he worked longed for his laugh, his smile—his gentle presence.

But it was not to be.

Like a lot of young soldiers, Eric McKinley's service was extended in Iraq because his special skills were needed to rebuild a broken state, protect a delicate peace, and foster a climate within which a vulnerable but growing seed of democracy might take root.

Eric took his duty seriously, he knew the risks, and yet this self-sacrificing man chose to serve. He accepted his charge without complaint, he understood the need of the extension and quietly soldiered on as he always had.

Eric is the face of the Guard—but he is also the face of our community.

His desire was simple: lift young people up; provide them with new and viable alternatives for a healthy life, and provide a place for safe and meaningful fun.

Eric McKinley will not have the opportunity to build his own business as he had dreamed and watch the young people of Benton County enjoy the fun of a safe haven.

We are all now indebted to Eric's spirit and sacrifice. We are all now accountable to seek out the opportunities of tomorrow to help the young people that he cared so much about. We must stretch ourselves to make Eric's vision a new reality. All of us must join together to take up Eric's personal commitment in seeking to provide opportunities for the young people in our lives.

As the seasons come and the time passes, the pain of our loss will slowly subside. But the sacrifice of Eric McKinley will be as significant then as it is today: he gave his all so that others could have life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Eric's sacrifice must always be remembered.

It is now, and will be forever, our turn to repay the debt.

TRIBUTE TO COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR BILLY TENTION

HON. JOHN M. SPRATT, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the career of an extraordinary South Carolinian, United States Army Command Sergeant Major (CSM) Billy Tention. Following 30 years of distinguished service and after reaching the Army's highest enlisted rank, CSM Tention will retire from active duty on July 9, 2004. The significance of this milestone is matched only by his devoted service.

General George C. Marshall once said, "There is no limit to the good you can do if you don't care who gets the credit." This defines the military career of CSM Tention.

Born in September 1953, in Camden, South Carolina, he entered the Army in September 1974, after graduating from Ashwood Central High School. He underwent basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina and received his Advanced Training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. CSM Tention then excelled at every rung up the leadership ladder. From his early days as non-commissioned officer in charge of the Services Branch at Eisenhower Army Medical Center to Hospital Command Sergeant Major at Fort Leonard Wood, CSM Tention has demonstrated the Army's core values: selfless service, loyalty, honor, and integrity.

His dedicated 30-year commitment to the Army speaks of his loyalty, loyalty to his country, the Army, and most importantly, his fellow soldiers. "Do your duty in all things," General Robert E. Lee once said. "You can never do more. You should never wish to do less." CSM Tention did his duty through service in numerous assignments including war-fighting during the first Persian Gulf War and other overseas duty in Europe and Asia. There's an old Army saying: "Take care of your people,