

Kaessner, Jennifer (CO), Karam, Rebecca (FL), Kjos, Stephen (MN), Klassen, Jonathan (TX), Koby, Keith (MI), Koby, Penny (MI).

Lafaurie, Majorie (NY), Leigh, Daniel (MS), Leigh, Sarah Catherine (MS), Levendusky, Tim (OK), Liljenberg, Zachary (WA), Lindemann, Ingrid (WA), Linhardt, David (KS), Lipp, Christopher (CAN), Ludden, Naomi (IN), Lundmark, Samuel (PA), Lyons, Naomi (IL), Lyons, Rachel (IL).

Mancillas, Gonzalo (MEX), Mancillas, Yolando (MEX), Marsh, Jeremy (NC), Martens, Brooke (MI), Martens, Timothy (MI), Martin, Brooke (MT), Martin, Gabrielle (IL), Martin, Jonathan (PA), Martin, Samuel (IL), Martin, Stephen (IL), Matchak, Joel (CA), Mattix, George (IL), Mays, Isaiah (CA), McCloy, Mike (TX), McCray, Elizabeth (AR), McCray, Ellianna (AR), McCray, Emily (AR), McCray, James (AR), McCray, Jason (AR), McCray, Jo (AR), McCray, Kevin (AR), McCray, Melissa (AR), McCray, Mitchell (AR), McCray, Virginia (AR), McCurdy, Terry (MI), McDonald, Brandon (WI), McDonald, Jessica (WI), McEndarfer, Andrew (OK), McGregor, Benjamin (MI), McGregor, Megan (MI), McNab, Jill (CO), McOlin, Erin (TX), Means, Mary Ann (MI), Melvin, Bryce (FL), Melvin, David (FL), Messick, Rebekah (TX), Millard, Hannah (OR), Millard, Sarah (OR), Miller, Amber (TX), Miller, Debra (IL), Miller, Heidi (IL), Miller, Jeanne (PA), Miller, Katie (IL), Miller, Rachael (MT), Minner, Aaron (MO), Moody, Christina (IL), Moon, Bethany (MO), Morgan, Bert (IN), Morgan, Dorothy (IN), Morgera, John (CT), Murray, Kristin (PA)).

Neu, Daniel (KS), Neu, Michelle (WI), Nisly, Vincent (CAN), Noland, Margaret (MA), Norvell, Joseph (AR), Norvell, Robert (AR), Novotny, Dewey (TX), Novotny, Gina (TX), Nunez, Jeremy (MI).

Osbourne, Heather, Oathout, Floyd (IL), Ouatu, Andrew (CA), Ouatu, Cristian (CA), Ouatu, Gabriela (CA), Ouatu, Jonathan (CA), Ouatu, Joshua (CA), Ouatu, Katherine (CA), Owens, Charis (MO).

Pallock, Christina (IL), Pallock, Dawn (IL), Pallock, Vanessa (IL), Paul, Kristin (IL), Payne, Nikolai (IA), Payne, Tara (IA), Payne, Tosha (IA), Pellascio, Megan (IL), Pellascio, Mike (IL), Pellascio, Susan (IL), Pellascio, Veronica (IL), Perez, Beverly (TX), Perez, Kimberly (TX), Perez, John (TX), Perkins, Glory Lauren (GA), Peterson, Amber (WA), Pintilie, David (CO), Plaiasu, Alina (CA), Plaiasu, Ana-Maria (CA), Plaiasu, Simona (CA), Pleus, Ruthann (FL), Policastro, Lauren (WI), Pollett, Kelly (CA), Powell, Kelsie (OK), Prentice, Valerie (OK).

Randall, Erin (TX), Ralya, Lindsey (FL), Rawson, Ben (NM), Reed, Aimee (NJ), Reed, Charity (TX), Reed, Michelle (TX), Rees, Rebecca (IL), Reimer, Beth (CAN), Reimer, Brian (TX), Reimer, Kate (CAN), Reimer, John (CAN), Reimer, Randall (CAN), Reimer, Timothy (TX), Reitz, Amber (NY), Richmond, Kezia (OR), Richmond, Pricilla (OR), Riness, Jeanna (MI), Risma, Jordan (CO), Risner, James (OH), Robertson, Aaron (AL), Robertson, Adam (AL), Robertson, Alan (AL), Robertson, Amy (AL), Robertson, Andrew (AL), Robertson, Anthony (AL), Robertson, Ashley (AL), Robertson, Autumn (AL), Robertson, Avery (AL), Robertson, Linda (AL), Robertson, Michael (AL), Ross, Charles (IN), Ross, Mary (IN), Ross, Rebecca (IN), Roth, Hannah (NE), Roth, Janell (CA), Roth, Lydia (OK), Roth, Rebecca (OK).

Sanborn, Diane (FL), Schaus, David (BC), Schwartz, Kyle (FL), Sellers, Susanna (FL), Sellin, Dexter (KS), Shafer, Laura (AR), Sherwin, Todd (CO), Silverman, Nathaniel (FL), Skwarek, Gary (CO), Smillie, John (CO), Snyder, Thomas (CA), Sobie, Nathan (POH), Sondergaard, Ron (CA), Southards, Matt (IL), Spillers, Daniel (LA), Staddon III, Don (WV), Stallings, Brandon (CO), Stallings, Grayson (CO), Steed, Bethany (CO), Stein, Naomi (WI), Stewart, Samuel (OH), Stewart, Timothy (OH), Stutzman, Julie (OH), Sullivan, Andrei (NC), Sullivan, John (NC), Sullivan, Roslyn (NC), Sullivan, Sarah (NC), Sullivan, Tom (NC).

Tanner, Justin (TX), Thompson, Ginny (GA), Thomson, Grace (NM), Thomson, Margaret (NM), Thornton, Lauren (GA), Thornton, Paul (GA), Thornton, William (GA), Tiemann, David (MN), Tiemann, Ryan (MN), Tillotson, Vanessa (NE), Tranberg, Catherine (OK), Treahy, Rachelle (AZ), Truhlar, Timothy (IL), Tsui, Nathan (TX).

Vanderhorst, Amy (KS), Vanderhorst, Daniel (KS), Vincent, Ethan (MI), Vinson, Micaela (KS), Visser, Ronald (IN), Wagley, Amy (LA), Wagley, Elizabeth (LA), Waller, Adam (WI), Walklin, Elisa (TX), Walley, Jennifer (NC), Walley, Joanna (NC), Warfield, Charles (CA), Weis, David (OH), Weldon, Sandi (TX), Wenstrom, Angie (FL), Wenstrom, Brittany (FL), Wenstrom, Chris (FL), Wenstrom, Heather (FL), Wenstrom, Jim (FL), Wenstrom, Kimberly (FL), Wenstrom, Matthew (FL), Wenstrom, Michelle (FL), Weston, Jennifer (CA), Weston, Kevin (CA), Williams, Cheri (CA), Williams, Elizabeth (AUS), Williams, Jamie (IN), Williams, Nathaniel (TX), Williams, Randahl (PA), Williams, Richard (AUS), Wold, Amy (MD), Wolfley, Audra (OK), Wright, Charissa (AZ).

Ziesemer, Ben (IL), Ziesemer, Daniel (IL), Ziesemer, Penny (IL), Zrinski-Myers, Brenda (TX).

RECOGNITION OF PAT RICHTER

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 2004

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Pat Richter and his incredible career as Athletic Director for the University of Wisconsin. After over fourteen years in that position, he is retiring on April 1, 2004.

Pat Richter played basketball, football, and baseball during his college days at the University of Wisconsin, lettering three times in each. He also went on to a professional career in football, but it is his legacy as Athletic Director that will carry on for years to come. Badger fans will always be grateful for his successful efforts in turning around an athletic department that faced financial difficulties, out of date stadiums, and waning fan support. Today, the University of Wisconsin boasts an athletic program that has attained nationwide acclaim for success and innovation both in athletics and academics.

Under Pat Richter's watch, the University of Wisconsin has built modern athletic facilities, including the Kohl Center, University Ridge Golf Course, the Fetzer Academic Learning Center, and the Goodman Softball Diamond. The University has also renovated the

McClimon Track/Soccer Complex, and recently began renovation of Camp Randall Stadium. Badger fans will be able to enjoy these facilities for generations to come.

I am most proud of Pat Richter's efforts toward equality in the athletic department. In his fourteen year tenure, the University of Wisconsin has added three women's sports—softball, lightweight crew, and hockey. The University of Wisconsin now has a policy that strives to have a percentage of female athletes proportionate to the overall female population of students on campus.

The success of Wisconsin athletics under Pat Richter has been phenomenal. The Badgers have won three national championships—men's hockey in 1989–90, men's rowing in 1989–90 and men's soccer in 1995—and a remarkable 49 Big Ten Championships. The football team has won three Rose Bowl games. The women's basketball teams have played in six NCAA tournaments, while the men's basketball team recently played in their seventh NCAA tournament in eight years, a remarkable run that also includes a trip to the Final Four by the 2000 team.

Mr. Speaker, I join all of Wisconsin in recognizing Pat Richter's achievements as Athletic Director and we wish him much success.

THE UNITED STATES, ROMANIA, AND . . . MOLDOVA

HON. JIM GIBBONS

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 2004

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I respectfully request that the following document be entered into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. As you may know, many of my constituents and friends in the state of Nevada are of Romanian descent, and it is with those individuals in mind that I make this request.

The Romanian-American Community greeted with joy the fall of communist dictatorships and the dissolution of the former Soviet Union. They also greeted with optimism the declaration of independence of the newly created Republic of Moldova. Their paramount hope was that the people of this republic, of whom the majority are ethnic Romanians, would develop along democratic lines and would become part of the enlarged European family. Their joy was short-lived. Russia soon launched a new geopolitical policy aimed at bringing back to its fold Moldova and other parts of the former Soviet Union. As of March 2004, Belarus is well under Moscow's control, Ukraine is barely capable of claiming its independence, and Moldova has virtually collapsed as a result of new Russian political pressure and economic strangulation. The communist government of Moldova has recently withdrawn the parliamentary immunity of the last members of the democratic opposition and is ready to imprison them. Due to these humanitarian, political, and geopolitical reasons, the Romanian communities of the United States have changed their views and have suggested a new policy toward Moldova . . . Here is their new stand as prepared by Dr. Nicholas Dima.)

THE UNITED STATES, ROMANIA, AND . . . MOLDOVA

This essay represents the position of a large number of responsible and loyal American citizens of Romanian descent with regard to the current status of the Republic of Moldova. Heretofore, we present the facts.

Since times immemorial, the current Republic of Moldova (better known as Bessarabia) has been populated by Romanians. During medieval times, this land was the eastern half of the Principality of Moldova, one of the three principalities that made up modern Romania. Tsarist Russia occupied it for the first time in 1812 and used it to further expand into southeast Europe. Russian interference in the Danube and the Black Sea navigation caused the West to side with Turkey during the Crimean War of 1856. At the end of the war, Russia was forced to retreat from the Danube and southern Bessarabia. Nevertheless, the tsars occupied the whole province again following the new war of 1877. Then, after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the province voted to reunite once and for all with Romania. Unfortunately, the new Soviet Union did not accept the union and somewhat puzzling for us, the United States did not ratify the union of Bessarabia with Romania either.

Between WWI and WWII Moscow promoted a policy of territorial expansion and global communism. In this part of Europe, Moscow pursued the goal of re-annexing Bessarabia and further intruding in the Balkans. This policy was implemented after Nazi Germany and communist Soviet Union signed the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact to divide Eastern Europe. The Soviet republic of Moldova was thus set up in 1940 after the Red Army invaded the province. Actually, in anticipation of the annexation, as early as 1924 Moscow had set up an autonomous Moldavian republic on the left bank of the Dnestr in the Ukraine. Its sole purpose was to prepare the future annexation. When the occupation of the province was accomplished in June 1940, Moscow disbanded the autonomous republic and returned to Ukraine part of it together with the northern and southern parts of Bessarabia. The old name that recalled the Romanian origin of the province was banned from the Soviet vocabulary. To further complicate the issue, Moscow incorporated into the new Moldavian SSR a slice of land on the left bank of Dnestr with the city of Tiraspol as its center. Ever since, this highly Russified industrial area has remained a cauldron of communism and expansionism.

The ethnic Romanian majority of the occupied territory was never asked if they wanted to be part of the USSR. Neither were the other ethnic groups asked if they wanted to be annexed or arbitrarily divided between the newly created republic and the Ukraine. Furthermore, well-informed international circles as well as local survivors have revealed that during and after WWII up to a million inhabitants of Soviet Moldova, mostly Romanians, were arrested, deported or killed by the Soviet authorities. At the same time, Moscow sent hundreds of thousands of Russians to replace the local Romanians and to secure the allegiance of the new republic. Yet, to this day two thirds of the population of this land is still ethnic Romanian although they have been forced to call themselves Moldavan.

Perestroika of the 1980's brought new hopes of freedom to the peoples of the USSR, and by the early 1990's every Soviet republic including Moldova had declared its independence. However, to prevent Moldova's reunification with Romania, the Russians from Tiraspol declared the independence of their region and named it the Dnestr Moldavian republic. Soon after, a war between Moldovan authorities and this territorial entity erupted with disastrous consequences. Ever since the Trans Dnestr region has remained a communist stronghold and a hub of arms trafficking, smuggling, and other illegal activities. It should be stressed that most of the Tiraspol leaders are Russian citizens who were planted there by Moscow in

the 1980's. It should also be underlined that most of them are involved in illicit activities and many have been banned from traveling in West Europe.

After the dismemberment of the Soviet Union, Russia continued to keep military units and huge quantities of equipment and ammunitions in the Trans Dnestr region. As recently as December 7, 2003, for example, "The Washington Post" wrote that this enclave has been led by mafia-style leaders and has remained, an extremely dangerous place for black marketing in weapons. According to "The Washington Post", "this area has 50,000 tons of shells, mines and rockets, enough to fill 2,500 boxcars". The same paper also points out that the Trans Dnestr region has a sizeable quantity of dirty bomb warheads and possibly other weapons of mass destruction ready to be sold to whoever has the cash to acquire them. Nonetheless, the new Russian authorities under President Putin continue to back this separatist region and its leaders. It is obvious that Moscow has not relinquished its expansionist aspirations toward the Balkans and the Black Sea. Actually, several Russian political leaders have stated openly that Moldova, as well as Georgia in the Caucasian region, are areas of traditional Russian interests and that they should be kept under Moscow's control. While the population of the Russian Federation is ailing and suffers grave misfortunes, Moscow is wasting its resources pursuing 19th century geopolitics.

Ever since the overthrow of Ceausescu's dictatorship in 1989, the Romanians looked to the West for guidance and to the East hoping to reunite Bessarabia with the country. Romania, however, has been economically ruined and politically disoriented and does not have the means to resolve by itself this old geopolitical wound. At the same time, the Romanians expected some Western support to redress the situation, but they did not get any. No wonder some Romanians question whether there is a new agreement signed at Malta, similar to the Yalta accords, that leaves the eastern part of Moldova in a new Russian sphere?

At the beginning of the new millennium the European Union is looking toward unifying the old continent. Concomitantly, NATO and the United States are integrating new friends and allies in Eastern Europe. The Balkans, however, is still a dangerous place and is very close to the Middle East and south Asia. Romania has an important geopolitical and geo-strategic location and the Romanians are overwhelmingly pro-Western and pro-American. They have already welcomed American troops and military bases on their soil. Yet, they are questioning the soundness of the official U.S. policy with regard to Moldova.

Indeed, loyal American citizens of Romanian origin are surprised to see that the U.S. is still taking for granted this new state entity that has no merits, no adequate means of survival, and no *raison d'être*. While the world has condemned the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, Washington continues to accept its legacy. For the time being and given the drive to join NATO and the European Union, the Romanian officials are not willing to challenge the U.S. stand, but the time will come when the issue will be raised again, and the people are waiting. The United States should be proactive rather than reactive and be prepared to deal with this matter in a manner that would not offend the Romanians and would not hurt American interests.

The decade of the 1990's was extremely difficult for the Republic of Moldova. From an economic standpoint, Russia strangled the small republic. From a political point of view, Moscow spent huge amounts of money to

keep it in its sphere. From an ethnic point of view, the local Russians did everything to prevent the Romanian majority from cultivating their culture and pursuing their roots. At the same time, the democratic opposition of Moldova was almost annihilated and by 2000 the Communist Party was brought back to power. Once again in charge, the communists launched a policy of gradual return to the old system. The process of privatization began to be reversed, the free media began to be harassed, and the new authorities started to persecute the pro-Western democratic opposition.

It is worth noting that during the 1990's Moscow approached Romania alluding to the possibility of allowing the reunification of Moldova with Romania. But Moscow warned the government in Bucharest to avoid membership in the NATO and not to trust the Americans because they would betray Romania. Given their historic experience, few Romanians paid any attention. The country opted clearly and firmly for Euro-Atlantic integration. While joining NATO and siding with the United States in Afghanistan and Iraq, Romania has also tried to promote good relations with Russia. This policy has not pleased Moscow.

It appears that the disintegration of Moldova has been one of the Kremlin's responses to the enlargement of NATO. Thus, acting in collusion with the leaders of Tiraspol and in agreement with the new communist government in Chisinau, Moscow endorsed the idea of reorganizing Moldova as a federation. Allegedly, the purpose is to solve the Trans Dnestr conflict and to secure the territorial integrity of the republic. Consequently, the plan of federalization is being advanced in spite of violating the provisions of the very constitution of the state. Accordingly, the new federal organs are supposed to be in place by early 2005. Strangely, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) chaired in 2003 by an American ambassador, concurred initially with this dubious project. The project only advances the geopolitical goals of expansionist circles in Moscow and the murky interests of the leaders in Tiraspol. Moscow has not only tolerated those leaders, it is actually helping them to hold the area as a Russian bridgehead against the West.

A December 4, 2003 editorial of "The Washington Post" reveals that the United States has understood the true nature of Russia's policies in Moldova and Georgia. And for the first time an American administration has taken a firm stand. The editorial emphasizes that Moscow has never fully accepted the independence of Moldova, "a desperately poor country that for more than a decade has lived with a separatist splinter, Trans-Dnestr, that is controlled by an ethnic Russian criminal mafia backed by Russian troops and arms." What Mr. Putin wants, the editorial continues, is "to make Moldova a neutral state, to disband its armed forces, and to give Moscow a veto over its government." The editorial adds: "the American administration is taking steps to thwart Moscow's neo-imperialism."

The situation is somewhat similar in Georgia. The United States is firmly against the disintegration of the two republics. Nevertheless, while the Caucasian Republic of Georgia needs every form of support to strengthen its independence, we strongly believe that the only sound resolution for Moldova is to return it to Romania.

In summary:

The Republic of Moldova is a Romanian land transformed arbitrarily by Moscow into an artificial independent entity. It has never been a separate state throughout its entire history and its very existence is an open invitation to geopolitical instability. It only

promotes Russia's expansionism, even to the detriment of democracy and the welfare of the very Russian people. It is by design directed against the stability of Europe and it represents an insult to the Romanian nation. And, last but not least, in the future, its continuous existence will mar the good relations between the United States and Romania, thus hurting America's interests.

We, responsible and loyal American citizens of Romanian descent, are aware of the risky consequences of modifying borders. We are aware of America's limitations and of Russia's reluctance. But we also believe in America, we believe in justice, and we believe in redress. With good will, wisdom, and an open mind, the problem could be properly addressed. Thus, we recommend that the United States start considering the reunification of this land with Romania where it belongs. Such an approach would avoid further complications and undesirable consequences. To this end we are ready to lend our full and unconditional support.

Nicholas Dima, PhD
Retired professor
JF Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, Fort Bragg, NC
US Naval War College, Newport, RI

IN MEMORY OF FERN HOLLAND

HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 2004

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago, in a tragedy personified by the killing of a young woman from middle America, we were reminded of the unsung goodness and bravery of so many Americans serving their country overseas.

On March 9, 2004, Fern Holland, of Miami, Oklahoma, was the first American civilian killed in the Iraq war. Her death has sparked over 200 national news reports, and an outpouring of grief from around the globe. Fern's story has touched people like me who never knew her, but who can now never forget her.

It's rare these days to know someone who is willing to sacrifice the comforts America offers to serve others who are less fortunate. It is even more rare to know a person who is willing to sacrifice their own life in order to improve the lives of others around the world. Fern Holland was an American hero who sacrificed both the comforts of home, and indeed even her life, to make the world a better place. People who exemplify such compassion and courage should be honored, and by telling her story I hope that she will be remembered.

Fern was a successful attorney, first in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and later in Washington, DC. She walked away from a lucrative career to carry out human rights work in violence plagued Guinea, Liberia, and later Iraq.

In her first effort to help others overseas, Fern lived in a remote village in Namibia as a Peace Corps volunteer. She helped the villagers there learn English, and built a computer laboratory to access the internet. Later, Fern worked for the American Refugee Committee where she investigated sexual assaults in a violence-plagued refugee camp in Guinea. There, she established the first sex violence legal clinic that to date has processed more than 100 cases.

Last year, after major combat operations in Iraq concluded, Fern traveled to Iraq and

worked for the Coalition Provisional Authority as a women's rights specialist. She helped establish women's rights, she established service centers throughout Iraq, and she helped found an Iraqi women's political party. The day before her death, Iraqi leaders signed an interim constitution that includes a controversial provision Fern helped draft. It establishes a goal for 25 percent female membership in the national assembly. Knowing of the dangers in Iraq, especially in working to extend women's rights, Fern wrote to friends only weeks before her death, "I love the work and if I die, know that I'm doing precisely what I want to be doing—working to organize and educate human rights activists and women's groups".

These are but a few of Fern Holland's contributions to the world, a world which is a better place because of her. In this day and time, when the world seems dark and dreary, we look to people like Fern Holland who's bright light gives us hope. Fern displayed a compassion and commitment to people that Jesus spoke about when he said, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." Her sacrifice is an example and inspiration to all who strive for a better world, and she will be missed.

RECOGNITION OF TIARA PURIFOY

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 2004

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Tiara Purifoy of Beloit, WI, who recently appeared on the popular reality television show "American Idol." After being named a semifinalist with her powerful rendition of Whitney Houston's song "I Wanna Dance with Somebody," she was surprisingly eliminated before the singing even started on the wild card show on Tuesday, March 9, 2003. The show, which first aired in 2002, draws a nationwide audience in the millions, two nights a week. "American Idol" brings aspiring singers from across the nation to Hollywood, and awards the winner a recording contract and celebrity status. Tiara was selected at an audition in Hawaii.

While her dream of being the next "American Idol" has not yet come to pass, Tiara is still a star in the hearts of Wisconsinites. Tiara began singing as a small girl at age four in her church choir. She will continue to sing and perform with her traveling family group the Gospel Belles, where she sings lead. Her appearance on "American Idol" was not her first brush with fame, however. She describes her greatest accomplishment thus far as being named Miss Beloit in 1999 because she was able to be a positive example for young people.

Indeed, Purifoy proved to be a positive example to both young and old across the nation when she stood up to judge Simon Cowell, who is known for his hurtful and critical remarks to budding stars' performances. Despite praise from the other judges, celebrated performer Paula Abdul and Grammy Award winning producer Randy Jackson, Cowell told Purifoy she was capable of much more. With her absolute confidence and positive attitude, Purifoy retorted, saying she would let America decide. Indeed, America responded, and Purifoy moved on to the next round.

Even though Tiara is not the nation's new "American Idol," she will continue to share her sweet voice with her friends and family who continue to cheer for her back home in Beloit. Please share this opportunity with me, Mr. Speaker, to honor Beloit and Wisconsin's own American Idol.

BILL TO ALLOW A DEDUCTION FOR EXPENSES PAID IN CONNECTION WITH THE DONATION OF AN ORGAN

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 2004

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to introduce a bill to allow a tax deduction for expenses paid in connection with the donation of an organ.

Mr. Speaker, each year approximately 6,500 people die waiting to receive an organ transplant. However, 25,000 lives are saved due to the generosity of organ donors. While we have made significant strides to promote and encourage organ donation, we still fall short of our goal.

In response to this need, the legislation I now introduce will allow organ donors a tax deduction for up to \$15,000 per donation. Specifically, this bill amends the Internal Revenue Code to allow individuals to deduct qualified organ expenses such as travel and lost wages for donating all or part of a liver, lung, pancreas, kidney, intestine, or bone marrow for human organ transplantation.

Unlike previous bills that have been introduced in the House, this bill does not require donors to wait on what is often a long and tedious grant process to approve reimbursement. The donors will automatically be able to deduct up to \$15,000 in related expenses.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of this bill because I believe organ donors should not have to pay any price or expense for an act of kindness. I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass this important legislation.

DISABILITIES ADVOCATES FIGHT BUSH SECTION 8 PROPOSAL

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 2004

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, the Administration proposal for a drastic reduction in the ability of the Section 8 program to help people in need has caused a great deal of dismay, especially among those organizations that exist to provide services to the most vulnerable in our society. On March 22, a broad and inclusive coalition of people concerned with people with disabilities, people with low incomes, and others who have legitimate need for assistance sent a very thoughtful letter to the Chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, expressing their strong disagreement with this proposal. As the coalition notes, the funding level proposed by the Administration would mean that "approximately 250,000 low income families with children, senior citizens, and people with disabilities could lose their vouchers."