

addition to showing us the importance of family, friendship, happiness and history. Buck taught us about baseball. But more importantly, Buck taught us about life. He is a wonderful role model, and I thank him for his contributions to the Kansas City metropolitan region and to our United States of America.

THE SELF-EMPLOYED H.E.A.L.T.H.
ACT

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 9, 2005

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Self-Employed H.E.A.L.T.H. Act, a bill that repeals Section 162(l) paragraph 4 of the Internal Revenue Code, and allows self-employed individuals to deduct the cost of health insurance in computing net earnings from self-employment for tax purposes.

Under current law, self-employed individuals do not share the same tax advantages for health insurance as other wage earners who work for large companies and government agencies. These wage earners can participate in plans that allow them to pay for their health insurance with pre-tax dollars. This legislation will provide self-employed workers the same benefits afforded to wage earners who work for large companies, which, in turn, will help them purchase health insurance. The National Federation of Independent Business has stated that allowing the self-employed to purchase health care pre-tax dollars will help to reduce the number of uninsured Americans.

There are over 16 million sole proprietorships in the United States. Self-employed workers represent 7 percent of the U.S. workforce. In the United States, employers play the leading role in making health insurance coverage available to workers, retirees, and their families. Two-thirds of Americans get their health insurance through an employer. For sole proprietors and other Americans, health care coverage poses a significant challenge.

Americans have always admired those who strike out on their own. They are the innovators and the entrepreneurs. We should encourage this activity by providing self-employed workers the opportunity to purchase health care as affordably as those who work for others.

A BILL TO RECOGNIZE THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF ARCHBISHOP PATRICK FLORES

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 9, 2005

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced a House resolution recognizing the long career of public service of Archbishop Patrick Flores of the Archdiocese of San Antonio. Archbishop Flores, the first Mexican American Bishop in the United States, will be retiring on Tuesday, February 15, 2005, after 34 years of service as a bishop.

Patrick Fernandez Flores, was born on July 26, 1929 to Patricio Flores and Trinidad

Fernandez de Flores in Ganado, Texas. He was the seventh of nine children. After graduating from Kirwin High School in Galveston, Texas, Patrick Flores entered the St. Mary's Seminary in La Porte, Texas. On May 26, 1956 he was ordained to the Catholic Priesthood and served the Diocese of Galveston-Houston for the next 14 years.

On Cinco de Mayo—May 5, 1970 in San Antonio, Texas, Patrick Fernandez Flores was consecrated a bishop in the Archdiocese of San Antonio. His appointment was an event of great significance in the history of South Texas and the United States. While the Mexican-American community was one of the largest Catholic communities in the United States, until that day in 1970 there had never been a Mexican-American bishop. In that regard, like other civil rights leaders of the time, Archbishop Flores broke a barrier in a major national institution—the Catholic Church, and in doing so, he helped to lay the groundwork for a more equal society. Less than a decade later, in 1979, Bishop Flores was consecrated Archbishop for his Archdiocese.

Archbishop Flores has committed his life not only to the service to his Church but to the wider community. He has been a leader on countless public policy issues that improved the lives of his parishioners and created new opportunities for many Americans to participate in the American Dream. He has long been an advocate for public housing, for the rights of immigrants, for health care for the poor, for economic development, for education, and for multi-cultural understanding.

Among his many accomplishments were the creation of the Mexican American Cultural Center, a unique program dedicated to developing Catholic leadership that is responsive to the needs of increasing diverse society, and contributing to the establishment of the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, a national program that has provided over 68,000 college scholarships to economically disadvantaged Hispanics. At the heart of both these programs is the heart of the Archbishop's social vision of giving hope to the disadvantaged and constructing a society that respects diversity and truly values equality.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge the House to pass this resolution in the coming weeks. Archbishop Patrick Flores has been a national leader not only for the cause of Hispanic rights but for the rights of all Americans.

COMMENDATION OF CORMAC O'CONNOR

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 9, 2005

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a young student from the Third District of Kansas who has achieved national recognition for exemplary volunteer service in his community. Cormac O'Connor of Prairie Village has just been named one of the top honorees in the state of Kansas by the 2005 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program, an annual honor conferred on the most impressive student volunteers in each state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. This is truly an extraordinary honor, as more than 20,000 young people across the

country were considered for recognition this year.

Cormac is being recognized for implementing an intergenerational arts program that brought senior citizens and at-risk children together for classes in visual arts, movement, theater, and jazz.

In light of statistics that indicate Americans today are less involved in their communities than they once were, it's vital that we encourage and support the kind of selfless contribution this young citizen has made. People of all ages need to think more about how we can work together at the local level to ensure the health and vitality of our towns and neighborhoods. Young volunteers like Cormac are inspiring examples to all of us, and are among our brightest hopes for a better tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, the program that brought this young role model to our attention—The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards—was created by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals in 1995 to impress upon all youth volunteers that their contributions are critically important and highly valued, and to inspire other young people to follow their example. Over the past eight years, the program has become the Nation's largest youth recognition effort based solely on community service, with more than 170,000 youngsters participating since its inception.

Cormac should be extremely proud to have been singled out from such a large group of dedicated volunteers. I applaud Cormac for his initiative in seeking to make his community a better place to live, and for the positive impact he has had on the lives of others. His actions show that young Americans can—and do—play important roles in our communities, and that America's community spirit continues to hold tremendous promise for the future.

THE ERRONEOUS TAX REFUND FAIRNESS ACT

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 9, 2005

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Erroneous Tax Refund Fairness Act, a bill to ensure the fair treatment of tax payers who return overpaid tax refunds and are penalized for it.

The deadline for filing tax returns will be here before you know it. Most Americans receive a refund, and our constituents enjoy getting back the money they earned from the IRS. However, even the IRS can make mistakes and occasionally people receive more money than they should. Those who have filed misleading information on their tax returns should be punished for their actions. But did you know that if a person is mistakenly overpaid and attempts to return the excess payment to the IRS, they must pay accrued interest on the amount of the erroneous refund?

The legislation I am introducing today would abate the interest on erroneous tax refunds if the person receiving the refund made a good-faith effort in a timely manner to return the money to the IRS. The bill also includes language that gives the Secretary of the Treasury discretion over whether or not to abate the interest. If the Secretary establishes that the

taxpayer received notice of the erroneous notice before the date of demand and did not attempt to resolve the issue with the Internal Revenue Service within 30 days, the Secretary can determine what amount of the interest, if any, will be abated.

This bill language was included in H.R. 1528 last year, which passed both the House and Senate, but was not signed into law. I hope that Congress will remedy the situation this year. We should punish those who cheat on their taxes, not those who make an effort to return money they mistakenly received.

TRIBUTE TO "JESSE" JAMES LEIJA

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 9, 2005

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a San Antonio hometown hero.

The "sweet science," as the sport of boxing has been called, has provided an arena for epic battles that have produced larger than life prize-fight champions who have, throughout the sport's history, captivated the national attention.

Marciano, Ali, Leonard, De La Hoya—all of them are synonymous with boxing and all are well-known champions. However, for every prize-fighter who captured a title and the national spotlight, there is one whose career has not received the attention and accolades it truly deserves.

"Jesse" James Leija of San Antonio is one of those champions, and his career and commitment to succeeding deserves to be commemorated.

Best known to fans of the sport. "Jesse" James' intense talent in the ring resulted in some of the best boxing matches in recent history. And in a sport that has seen its share of controversial personas, "Jesse" James always maintained a dignity and respect for his opponent, the sport and the fans.

While many boxing careers last only a few years, "Jesse" James' recently announced that he is retiring after an astonishing seventeen years in the ring.

The sport will undoubtedly miss him.

"Jesse" James had a truly impressive career. Having faced and overcome seemingly insurmountable odds on his way to achieving great success, the story of "Jesse" James Leija is one that can inspire anyone, in or out of the ring.

Born and raised on the South Side of San Antonio, James is a proud graduate of Harlandale High School where being told he was too small to play football drove him in the direction of an even more challenging sport—boxing.

His parents, including his former pro-fighter father, would not allow him to box until he graduated from high school. So compared to most aspiring boxers, James got a late start first entering the ring at the age of 22. He quickly won his first fifteen fights and ultimately compiled an impressive 23 win and 5 loss amateur record. He won a San Antonio Golden Gloves title, won the 1988 Western Olympic Trials and competed in the 1988 Olympic Trials.

In 1994, Leija became only the third San Antonio boxer to win a world title when he de-

fated the legendary Ghana warrior and Hall of Famer, Azumah Nelson, for the WBC World Super Featherweight Championship.

"Jesse" James ultimately fought in nine world championship fights winning the IBA World Lightweight Championship, the NABF Featherweight Championship, and on two separate occasions, the NABF Lightweight Championship.

After 17 years, Leija ended his professional career of 57 matches with a record of 47 wins, including 19 by knock-out, 7 losses, 2 draws, and 1 no-contest.

All this despite having been told early on that he was too small and not strong enough to be a success in the ring.

As impressive and admirable as his career was, James' dedication to his community is even more so. He founded the "Jesse" James Leija Youth Foundation, and has long supported the Boys' and Girls' Club of San Antonio and the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Boxing Program. He has also supported numerous education programs, including a child daycare center to allow teenage mothers to complete their education.

Beyond being a great boxer, "Jesse" James Leija has been a truly great citizen, and we in San Antonio are lucky to have him.

To the people of San Antonio "Jesse" James Leija is always a winner and he will forever be their Champion.

TRIBUTE TO ANDREW KEENAN

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 9, 2005

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a young man whose life was cut tragically short. Andrew Keenan, a resident of Ness City, Kansas, a former intern in my congressional office and a law student at the University of Kansas, passed away on January 31, at the age of 26, following a protracted battle with brain cancer. I would like to express my profound sorrow at the death of Andrew Keenan and offer my deepest sympathies to his fiancee, Erica Brown, his family, and friends.

Andy was a man of exemplary character, a character demonstrated by his religious faith, his determination to succeed, and his uncommon courage in the face of hardship and illness. He was also a man of great industriousness, ambition, and amiability, qualities which made him respected and well-liked by everyone who knew him. While interning in my Washington, DC, office, he assisted my legislative director with issues involving financial services, taxation and telecommunications.

Andy was also possessed a great sense of empathy and the heart of a true humanitarian. His efforts to aid the unfortunate took many forms, including the creation of a Web site dedicated to raising money for cancer research, providing food and clothing to a young girl in the Philippines through an adoption program, and, recently, donating money to victims of the tsunami. The fact that he always felt compassion for people who were suffering, even while suffering himself, is a testament to the kind of benevolent and caring of person he was.

As University of Kansas law professor Mike Hoeflich wrote recently in the Lawrence Jour-

nal-World, "For almost two years now, Andy has fought and fought and fought. He has refused to give up. In spite of his illness, his pain, his constant treatments, he has maintained his courage and his determination." I believe that this quotation exemplifies how the enduring strength and bravery of Andrew Keenan serves as an inspiration to all of us who were touched by his life, and encourages us all to lead a more thoughtful, more courageous existence.

MILITARY SEXUAL ASSAULT CRIMES REVISION ACT OF 2005

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 9, 2005

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I introduced H.R. 664, the Military Sexual Assault Crimes Revision Act of 2005. This bill would repeal Article 120 of the Uniformed Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and replace it with an improved sexual abuse statute patterned on 18 U.S.C. § 2241–2247. I introduced an identical bill last year, H.R. 4709, which was offered during mark-up of the defense authorization bill.

Although the legislation was not included in the final authorizing bill last year, a provision was included requiring the Secretary of Defense to provide the House and Senate Armed Services Committee, by March 1, 2005, a proposal for changes regarding sexual offenses in the UCMJ and the rationale for the changes. The language also "strongly encourages DoD to closely align the UCMJ's language on sexual assault law with the appropriate section of the federal criminal code." I am reintroducing this legislation to send a strong message to the DoD that Congress is serious about updating the military's sexual assault statute, and that the changes are expected to incorporate the U.S. federal code.

This legislation would help prosecutors, protect victims, and promote good order and discipline in the Armed Forces. It offers a graduated array of offenses that more precisely define nonconsensual sex crimes. The proposed provisions expand the scope of sex acts that can constitute sexual abuse. They afford increased protection for victims by emphasizing acts of the perpetrator rather than the reaction of the victim during an assault. This legislation expressly provides for cases involving voluntary and involuntary intoxication of the victim, which are common fact patterns in military sexual assault cases. Finally, it criminalizes sexual extortion and other forms of coercing sex from subordinates and fellow service men and women in a way that will help commanders to maintain good order and discipline in the armed forces.

By undertaking this critical revision to the UCMJ, we will demonstrate that the Department of Defense and Congress are committed to reducing the incidence of sexual assault within the Armed Forces, and bringing justice to the victims.