

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 360.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

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CALLING UPON THE PRESIDENT
TO ISSUE A PROCLAMATION
RECOGNIZING THE 30TH ANNI-
VERSARY OF THE HELSINKI
FINAL ACT

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate joint resolution (S.J. Res. 19) calling upon the President to issue a proclamation recognizing the 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

S.J. RES. 19

Whereas August 1, 2005, is the 30th anniversary of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), renamed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in January 1995 (hereafter in this resolution referred to as the "Helsinki Final Act");

Whereas the Helsinki Final Act established a new framework for relations among countries in Europe and the North Atlantic region that recognized that respect for human rights is a fundamental principle in regulating international relations;

Whereas, during the Communist era, members of nongovernmental organizations, such as the Helsinki Monitoring Groups in Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Georgia, and Armenia and similar groups in Czechoslovakia and Poland, sacrificed their personal freedom and even their lives in their courageous and vocal support for the principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act;

Whereas Congress contributed to advancing the aims of the Helsinki Final Act by creating the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe to monitor and encourage compliance with provisions of the Helsinki Final Act;

Whereas, in the 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe, the participating States in the OSCE (hereafter in this resolution referred to as the "participating States") declared that "[h]uman rights and fundamental freedoms are the birthright of all human beings, are inalienable and are guaranteed by law" and that "[t]heir protection and promotion is the first responsibility of government";

Whereas, in the 1991 Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE, the participating States "categorically and irrevocably declare[d] that the commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension of the

CSCE are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned";

Whereas, in the 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe, the participating States committed themselves "to build, consolidate and strengthen democracy as the only system of government of our nations";

Whereas the pro-democracy revolution in Serbia in 2000, the Rose Revolution in Georgia in 2003, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004, and the popular revolution in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 demonstrate the primacy of popular sovereignty and the importance of OSCE commitments on free and fair elections;

Whereas the OSCE and the participating States have undertaken a series of measures aimed at combating anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia, and discrimination and should report on related progress during the OSCE Conference on anti-Semitism and on Other Forms of Intolerance in Cordoba, Spain, in June 2005;

Whereas the 1999 Istanbul OSCE Charter for European Security and the November 19, 1999, Istanbul Summit Declaration note the particular challenges of ending violence against women and children as well as sexual exploitation and all forms of trafficking in human beings, and commit the participating States to strengthen efforts to combat corruption, eradicate torture, and end discrimination against Roma;

Whereas the main challenge facing the participating States remains the implementation of the principles and commitments contained in the Helsinki Final Act and other OSCE documents adopted on the basis of consensus;

Whereas the participating States have recognized that economic liberty, social justice, and environmental responsibility are indispensable to prosperity;

Whereas the participating States have committed themselves to promoting economic reforms through enhanced transparency for economic activity, with the aim of advancing the principles of market economies;

Whereas the participating States have stressed the importance of respect for the rule of law and vigorous efforts to fight organized crime and corruption, which constitute a great threat to economic reform and prosperity;

Whereas OSCE has expanded the scope and substance of its efforts, undertaking a variety of preventive diplomacy initiatives designed to prevent, manage, and resolve conflict within and among the participating States;

Whereas the politico-military aspects of security remain vital to the interests of the participating States and constitute a core element of OSCE's concept of comprehensive security;

Whereas the OSCE has played an increasingly active role in civilian police-related activities, including training, as an integral part of OSCE's efforts in conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation; and

Whereas the participating States bear primary responsibility for raising awareness of violations of commitments contained in the Helsinki Final Act and other OSCE documents: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress calls upon the President—

(1) to issue a proclamation—

(A) recognizing the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe;

(B) reasserting the commitment of the United States to full implementation of the Helsinki Final Act;

(C) urging all participating States to abide by their obligations under the Helsinki Final Act; and

(D) encouraging the people of the United States to join the President and Congress in observance of this anniversary with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities; and

(2) to convey to all signatories of the Helsinki Final Act that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democratic principles, economic liberty, and the implementation of related commitments continue to be vital elements in promoting a new era of democracy, peace, and unity in the region covered by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. CHANDLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S.J. Res. 19.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in very strong support of Senate Joint Resolution 19, as amended, calling on the President to issue a proclamation in recognition of the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act.

The resolution urges the 55 states of North America, Europe and Eurasia which comprise the Organization For Security and Cooperation in Europe to abide by their obligations under the Helsinki Final Act. The Congress further calls on the President to reiterate the United States' agreement that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democratic principles and economic liberty are vital elements in promoting a new era of democracy, peace and unity in this region of the world.

For all of the history that we make here, Mr. Speaker, it is not too often that we in this body have the opportunity to celebrate and honor an event that has so conspicuously marked such a turning point in human affairs. Too often the history of international relations is one of false starts and missed opportunities. The victories, when they do happen, are more often ones of prevention, disasters averted or crises ended. Or if not that, then the results are realized too far into the future to be judged with any clarity. This is not the case with the Helsinki Final Act signed on August 1, 1975.

With that historic event, what we saw was a recognition not just by the United States or even the West, but

even in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, that human rights are the pivot, the linchpin of true security and peace in the world. What the Helsinki Final Act asserted and what subsequent history has taught beyond any reasonable doubt is this: The way governments treat their people is the concern not just of those governments but of all the nations and peoples of the world. In essence, security and human dignity and human rights are one and indivisible.

Indeed, it is in the fall of the Communist regimes in Europe that we have seen the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, and the process that the act inaugurated, unleashed forces of good and of hope. The document spoke truth to power and empowered millions to rise up and demand democracy and fundamental freedoms, especially religious freedom. Many became Helsinki monitors in dictatorships, in places like Czechoslovakia where members of Charter 77 risked their lives and often went to prison in demanding that their dictatorship allow them fundamental freedoms.

We saw it in places like Perm 35, a horrible gulag that the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) and I visited back in the 1980s, where men were actively clamoring for their rights. For instance Mikhail Kazachkov, a physicist by training imprisoned for his dissident activities, took the Helsinki Final Act and, even at risk of cruel retribution, would speak up and demand his freedoms and those of his fellow inmates.

Recently, the United States Helsinki Commission of which I am the Co-chair hosted an event commemorating the 30th anniversary. We had Dr. Henry Kissinger as our principal speaker. Dr. Kissinger, as many will know and recall, was Secretary of State in that period, and he pointed out how rough the world was at the time, how close we were to superpower conflict between ourselves and the Soviet Union. The arsenals were brimming over with nuclear weapons that unfortunately seemed to be at the ready.

Dr. Kissinger pointed out that the Helsinki Final Act was not popular at the time. Many thought it was a concession to the Soviet Union, that somehow they would make propaganda, and they would reap tremendous benefits from it. People had serious misgivings about what the Helsinki Final Act would actually do. The United States signed onto the Final Act and, of the three baskets, we emphasized the human rights dimension and promoted it and promoted it and promoted it, much to the chagrin of leaders in the Kremlin, as well as those who were part of the Warsaw Pact.

In reality, Dr. Kissinger noted the Helsinki process served as a catalyst to "promote change in the political situation and also to change the human rights situation." He said, "I can think of nothing that the Soviet Union got out of this, except that their position in Eastern Europe and their position

along the dividing line in Germany was undermined."

Whenever we met with Soviet authorities or Polish leaders or any leaders of those occupied countries, we always had lists of political prisoners and of religious prisoners. We always based our inquiries on the fact that all of these nations were voluntary signatories to the Helsinki Final Act. This was a matter of international concern. These were not simply American values, these were universally recognized and agreed to values.

Mr. Speaker, let me also say that the Helsinki process continues. We need to continue fighting. We are now fighting to try to stem the rise of anti-Semitism, that ugly specter of hate toward Jews throughout the countries that make up the OSCE, including the United States. We are working to combat racism and xenophobic behavior. We are now working very hard, and have been since the 1990s, to combat this hideous form of slavery known as human trafficking, especially for prostitution where women are turned into chattel and into commodities and their lives destroyed.

We are also working on a number of other human rights issues within the Helsinki process, trying to get the Central Asian countries to realize that they have commitments that need to be abided by. Mr. Speaker, this is not a document that we only look back on. This is a living document that we work to implement as we go forward.

Mr. Speaker, one of the hallmarks of the Helsinki Final Act is our ability to use it to promote democracy and elections. No organization does a better job than the OSCE monitors when it comes to elections. When the commitments have been implemented, political parties have had the opportunity for free and fair elections. When emphasis is given to the conduct of free elections, we have witnessed some amazing changes, including Kyrgyzstan's Tulip Revolution, Ukraine's Orange Revolution, Georgia's Rose Revolution and Serbia's Democratic Revolution. These events in the last 5 years alone testify to the power of the principles inscribed in the Helsinki Final Act and the other OSCE documents that followed on.

Some participating States, however, most notably Belarus, Russia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, seem determined to not live up to their commitments. These remain some of the areas of concern that our Helsinki Commission works on on a daily basis.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, having served as a member of the Helsinki Commission since my second term in 1983, I believe the U.S. must hold vigorously to the values that have inspired fundamental and democratic change in much of the OSCE region. As I said a moment ago, our work is not done. Much needs to be done going forward. I know we will do it. We will use this now famous document, the Helsinki Final Act, as our inspiration going forward.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CHANDLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this Senate Joint Resolution 19, as amended, and Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in 1975, in an effort to reduce the risks of war between the North Atlantic Alliance and the Warsaw Pact, the countries of the North Atlantic community and Eastern and Central Europe could agree on a common set of principles on peaceful relations and decent treatment of their citizens.

As the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) so passionately and so eloquently said, it was a true watershed in human history. At the time, I am sure that the leaders of the Soviet Union thought that they had achieved much, such as the de facto recognition of a divided Germany, and given little. What, after all, they thought, is the danger of a few words about freedom on a piece of paper? Thirty years later, it is clear what was wrought by these words.

The principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms empowered the dissidents of Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States, Czechoslovakia, Poland and others to establish Helsinki monitoring or similar groups to try to push their governments to live up to the commitments of the Helsinki Final Act.

Indeed, many of those dissidents lost their personal freedom and sometimes even their lives in their courageous and vocal support for these principles. And the Helsinki Final Act is not merely an artifact of history, not merely an artifact of history. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the successor to the conference that drafted the act, continues to promote freedom and human rights throughout Europe, including the newly independent States of the former Soviet Union.

Just in the last year, the OSCE through its Offices for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights has supported civil society in Belarus; sent election observers to Kyrgyzstan as it makes efforts to transition to an authoritarian regime; provided training on human rights monitoring to groups in the Caucasus; and assisted countries throughout the region in stopping the scourge of modern day slavery, the trafficking in persons.

Later this year, OSCE will make efforts to have a successful free and fair parliamentary election in Azerbaijan, a critical country to our efforts in Afghanistan and a country that is seeking to throw off the communist bonds of its past.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe does not stop in Europe.

□ 1500

It is helping the countries of Africa and other regions in their efforts at democratization.

Indeed, many have talked about a Helsinki Final Act for the Middle East to bring the value of the accords to the

people of those countries. Some have argued for a democracy charter for the countries of the Arab League, similar to the charter adopted by the Organization of American States.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the administration is seriously taking the lessons of the Helsinki process to heart as it moves forward with its efforts to promote democracy and pluralism through the broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative.

I strongly support this legislation, and may we strike more blows for basic human rights in the world.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of S.J. Res. 19, which recognizes the 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. The President issued a proclamation on August 1, 2005 which celebrated this important anniversary.

I am privileged to serve as the Ranking Member of the Helsinki Commission, formally known as the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The Commission encourages compliance with the Helsinki Final Act by the 55 nations of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which is the largest regional security organization in the world.

The United States has actively participated in the Helsinki process since its inception 30 years ago. Today we acknowledge and celebrate that participation. This resolution recalls the importance of the Helsinki process in promoting human rights, democracy, and the rule of law within the OSCE. The Helsinki process consists of three "baskets" of rights which are essential to security: political, economic, and human rights.

Our Commission is unusual in that it is an independent Federal agency which has both the legislative and executive branches working together side by side. I have greatly appreciated this opportunity to work as equal partners in the Helsinki process, which I think has frankly increased our effectiveness on a number of issues within the OSCE region.

I have enjoyed working with our colleagues on the International Relations Committee, Mr. HYDE and Mr. LANTOS, as well as with my Helsinki Commission Co-Chairman CHRIS SMITH and Chairman SAM BROWNBACK from the Senate.

Our work on the Helsinki Commission is bipartisan, and I do not think I can ever recall a moment in my entire service on this Commission where we have had a partisan difference. Our bipartisan record has led to numerous accomplishments on critical issues in the OSCE. The OSCE is perhaps best known for leading election monitoring missions to insure free and fair elections in emerging democracies in Europe and Eurasia.

The Helsinki process allowed many Jews to leave the former Soviet Union. Today the Helsinki process has taken the lead in fighting the growing scourge of anti-Semitism in Europe, culminating in an unprecedented conference on anti-Semitism and the issuance of the Berlin Declaration, which adopts a number of concrete commitments for States to fight anti-Semitism.

I am also privileged to serve as the Chairman of the economic committee of the Parliamentary Assembly (PA) of the OSCE, which has focused on anti-corruption measures and the promotion of small businesses, particularly

those owned by women and minorities. I commend the gentleman from Florida, Mr. HASTINGS, for his excellent leadership of the OSCE PA as the first American to serve as President of this organization.

Earlier this year Chairman SMITH and I visited Ukraine to meet with the new democratic government. Many of the former Soviet republics are still struggling today with their transition to a democratic form of government, and the OSCE plays an integral role in assisting these governments in establishing the rule of law.

Many challenges remain for the Helsinki process, but today we celebrate its rich legacy and record of accomplishments. I look forward to using the Helsinki process as we confront the new political, economic, and human rights challenges of the 21st century.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S.J. Res. 19, a joint resolution calling upon the President to issue a proclamation recognizing the 30th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. As a Commissioner of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), I am pleased to continue to work with my fellow commissioners in Congress, the Administration and our counterparts in the other 54 member nations.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) had its origin in the early 1950s when the Soviet Union first proposed the creation of an all-European security conference. However it wasn't until November 1972 when representatives from the original 35 nations met for nearly three years to work out the arrangements. On August 1, 1975, the leaders of the original 35 participating States gathered in Helsinki and signed the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Also known as the Helsinki Accords, the Final Act is a binding agreement consisting of three main sections, known as Baskets, regarding political, economic and human rights.

Since 1975, the number of countries signing the Helsinki Accords has expanded to 55, reflecting changes such as the breakup of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Institutionalization of the Conference in the early 1990s led to its transformation to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, effective January 1995.

The Helsinki Final Act and the process it began provided an important backdrop against which President Ronald Reagan, standing in front of Berlin's Brandenburg Gate, could boldly declare, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." This began the process of systemic change, eventually leading to the release of hundreds of cases of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience as well as the reunification of tens of thousands of families.

In a step designed to preserve the unity of the Helsinki process, each country that joined the OSCE after 1975 submitted a letter in which they accepted in their entirety all commitments and responsibilities contained in the Helsinki Final Act, and all subsequent documents adopted prior to their membership. To underscore this continuity, the leaders of each of these countries signed the actual original 1975 Final Act document.

I have been particularly interested in working with former Chairman SMITH and now with Chairman BROWNBACK on human rights and religious freedom. There remains a great deal of work to do on these matters throughout the

OSCE member countries. I look forward to continuing to work with the OSCE members and their outstanding staff.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this Joint Resolution calling on President Bush to issue a proclamation recognizing the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, commonly known as the Helsinki Agreement.

The Helsinki Final Act—which was signed on August 1, 1975—was the first international agreement to accord human rights the status of a fundamental principle in regulating international relations, and has been widely credited with helping to expose human rights violations in the former Soviet bloc.

In fact, I firmly believe that the political process set in motion by the signing of the Helsinki Final Act laid the groundwork for the forces that consumed the former Soviet empire.

In 1975, many of the Final Act signatory states viewed the language of the act dealing with human rights and the obligation that each state had toward its own citizens, as well as those of other states, as essentially meaningless window dressing. Their objective was to secure a framework in which their international political position and the then-existing map of Europe would be adjudged a fait accompli.

They were proved wrong. The Helsinki process, which provided a forum and international backing for Refuseniks and others fighting behind the Iron Curtain for fundamental freedoms and human rights—led inevitably to the collapse of Soviet communism.

Today, we celebrate the freedom yielded by our steadfast commitment to the Helsinki process and by our demand that the former Soviet bloc countries adhere to and implement the human rights standards enshrined by the accords.

The fall of the Berlin Wall transformed the world and demonstrated without reservation that respect for the dignity of all individuals is fundamental to democracy.

As we reflect on this 30th anniversary, we understand that the countries and peoples of the region are still in transition and will be for decades to come. Great strides have been made by many former communist countries in building democratic societies and market economies.

But in my view, Mr. Speaker, it is critical that the United States remain engaged with the peoples and governments of Europe and the countries that emerged from the former Soviet Union, especially Russia.

We must remain committed to a Europe whole, free, democratic and at peace. It is in our strategic and national interest to do so. And by doing so, we honor the memory of all those who sacrificed so much to hold high the banner of freedom.

Finally, let me note that this Joint Resolution reasserts the commitment of the United States to fully implement of the Helsinki Act; urges all participating states to abide by their obligations under the Act; and encourages Americans to join the President and Congress in observing this 30th anniversary.

I urge my colleagues to support this important Resolution.

Mr. CHANDLER. Mr. Speaker, I have no other requests for speaking time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, we have no further requests

for time, and I yield back the balance of our time as well.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate joint resolution, S.J. Res. 19, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 2 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m.

□ 1834

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order at 6 o'clock and 34 minutes p.m.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a concurrent resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 52. Concurrent resolution providing for the use of the catafalque situated in the crypt beneath the Rotunda of the Capitol in connection with memorial services to be conducted in the Supreme Court Building for the late honorable William H. Rehnquist, Chief Justice of the United States.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Washington, DC August 30, 2005.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT
The Speaker, House of Representatives
Washington, DC.

Dear Mr. SPEAKER: I have the honor to transmit herewith a Certificate of Election received from the Honorable J. Kenneth Blackwell, Secretary of State, State of Ohio, indicating that, at the election held on August 2, 2005, the Honorable Jean Schmidt was duly elected Representative in Congress for the Second Congressional District, State of Ohio.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

JEFF TRANDAHL,
Clerk.

Attachment.

SWEARING IN OF THE HONORABLE JEAN SCHMIDT, OF OHIO, AS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER. Will the Representative-elect and the members of the Ohio delegation please present themselves in the well.

Mrs. SCHMIDT appeared at the bar of the House and took the oath of office, as follows:

Do you solemnly swear that you will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that you will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that you take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that you will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which you are about to enter. So help you God.

The SPEAKER. Congratulations, you are now a Member of the 109th Congress.

WELCOMING THE HONORABLE JEAN SCHMIDT TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

(Mr. REGULA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues from Ohio, and particularly our Senator, Senator VOINOVICH, and my other colleagues. And as dean of the Ohio delegation, it is a great pleasure that I rise this afternoon to introduce the Honorable JEAN SCHMIDT of the Second District of Ohio.

She has been a lifelong resident of Clermont County, the first woman ever elected to represent southern Ohio in Congress. The diverse Second Congressional District includes seven counties, a lot of Lincoln Day dinners, stretches from downtown Cincinnati to the riverside town of Portsmouth in Scioto County.

Throughout her career, Congresswoman SCHMIDT has held various roles in public office and has been actively involved in civic and community groups. That is a great background for serving here. She served for two terms in the Ohio statehouse, and according to the Cincinnati Enquirer, she "... proved effective in passing legislation to address her district's concerns." While serving in the State legislature, SCHMIDT enacted legislation to create jobs, protect Ohio's children, and ensure access to quality health care.

Prior to her election to Ohio's statehouse, Mrs. SCHMIDT served 10 years as a Miami Township trustee. In this leadership role, she helped Miami Township to become a world-class community by initiating a variety of projects and improvements, including creating a 300-

acre first-class park system, securing funds for critical road repairs, and attracting 2,000 high-paying jobs for the township. My township could use some of her advice. She also established a 5K run and located a branch of the Clermont County Library in Miami Township.

Congresswoman SCHMIDT resides in Miami Township with her husband, Peter, and their daughter Emily. She holds degrees in political science and secondary education from the University of Cincinnati. Her interests include auto racing and long-distance running. She has completed 56 marathons and still counting.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say she is tonight embarking on the greatest marathon of her career.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to welcome Congresswoman SCHMIDT to the House.

MAIDEN SPEECH BY THE HONORABLE JEAN SCHMIDT

(Mrs. SCHMIDT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today in the same shoes, though with a slightly higher heel, as thousands of Members who have taken the same oath before me. I am mindful of what is expected of me both by this hallowed institution and the hundreds of thousands of Americans I am blessed to represent. I am the lowest-ranking Member of this body, the very bottom rung of the ladder; and I am privileged to hold that title.

This House has much work to do. On that we can all agree. We will not always agree on the details of that work. Honorable people can certainly agree to disagree. However, here today I accept a second oath. I pledge to walk in the shoes of my colleagues and refrain from name-calling or the questioning of character. It is easy to quickly sink to the lowest form of political debate. Harsh words often lead to headlines, but walking this path is not a victimless crime. This great House pays the price.

So at this moment, I begin my tenure in this Chamber, uncertain of what history will say of my tenure here. I come here green with only a desire to make our great country even greater. We have much work to do. In that spirit, I pledge to each of you that any disagreements we may have are just that and no more. Walking in each other's shoes takes effort and pause; however, it is my sincere hope that I never lose the patience to view each of you as human beings first, God's creatures, and foremost. I deeply appreciate this opportunity to serve with each of you. I very much look forward to getting to know you better, and I humbly thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to address this humble body.