

Nearly two-thirds of released State prisoners are expected to be re-arrested for a felony or serious misdemeanor within 3 years of their release. Such high recidivism rates translate into thousands of new crimes each year and wasted taxpayer dollars, which can be averted through improved prisoner re-entry efforts.

The Second Chance Act of 2007 allocates funding towards a variety of re-entry programs. One of the main components of the bill is the funding of demonstration projects that would provide ex-offenders with a coordinated continuum of housing, education, health, employment, and mentoring services. This broad array of services would provide stability and make the transition for ex-offenders easier, in turn reducing recidivism.

Another reason why I strongly support this legislation is because it includes a provision contained in an amendment I offered during the Judiciary Committee markup of this bill in the 109th Congress. That amendment, incorporated in H.R. 1593 as section 243 of the bill, requires that the:

Attorney General shall collect data and develop best practices of State corrections departments and child protection agencies relating to the communication and coordination between such State departments and agencies to ensure the safety and support of children of incarcerated parents (including those in foster care and kinship care), and the support of parent-child relationships between incarcerated (and formerly incarcerated) parents and their children, as appropriate to the health and well-being of the children.

My amendment provides for a systematic means of ensuring the safety and support of children of incarcerated parents and the support of children of release for nonviolent offenders who have attained the age of at least 45 years of age, have never been convicted of a violent crime, have never escaped or attempted to escape from incarceration, and have not engaged in any violation, involving violent conduct, of institutional disciplinary regulations.

The Second Chance Act seeks to ensure that in affording offenders a second chance to turn around their lives and contribute to society, ex-offenders are not too old to take advantage of a second chance to redeem themselves. A second benefit of the legislation is that it would relieve some of the strain on Federal, State, and local government budgets by reducing considerably government expenditures on warehousing prisoners.

Madam Speaker, some of those who are incarcerated face extremely long sentences, and this language would help to address this problem. Releasing rehabilitated, middle-aged, nonviolent offenders from an already overcrowded prison population can be a win-win situation for society and the individual who, like the Jean Valjean made famous in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, is redeemed by the grace of a second chance. The reentry of such individuals into the society will enable them to repay the community through community service and obtain or regain a sense of self-worth and accomplishment. It promises a reduction in burdens to the taxpayer, and an affirmation of the American value that no non-violent offender is beyond redemption.

Madam Speaker, the number of Federal inmates has grown from just over 24,000 in 1980 to 173,739 in 2004. The cost to incarcerate these individuals has risen from \$330

million to \$4.6 billion since 2004. At a time when tight budgets have forced many States to consider the early release of hundreds of inmates to conserve tax revenue, early release is a commonsense option to raise capital.

The rate of incarceration and the length of sentence for first-time, nonviolent offenders have become extreme. Over the past two decades, no area of State government expenditures has increased as rapidly as prisons and jails. According to data collected by the Justice Department, the number of prisoners in America has more than tripled over the last two decades from 500,000 to 1.8 million, with States like California and Texas experiencing eightfold prison population increases during that time. Mr. Chairman, there are more people in the prisons of America than there are residents in States of Alaska, North Dakota, and Wyoming combined.

Over 1 million people have been warehoused for nonviolent, often petty crimes. The European Union, with a population of 370 million, has one-sixth the number of incarcerated persons as we do, and that includes violent and nonviolent offenders. This is one-third the number of prisoners which America, a country with 70 million fewer people, incarcerates for nonviolent offenses.

The 1.1 million nonviolent offenders we currently lock up represents five times the number of people held in India's entire prison system, even though its population is four times greater than the United States.

As the number of individuals incarcerated for nonviolent offenses has steadily risen, African-Americans and Latinos have comprised a growing percentage of the overall number incarcerated. In the 1930s, 75 percent of the people entering State and Federal prison were white, roughly reflecting the demographics of the nation. Today, minority communities represent 70 percent of all new admissions—and more than half of all Americans behind bars.

This is why for the last several years I have introduced the H.R. 261, the Federal Prison Bureau Nonviolent Offender Relief Act. H.R. 261 directs the Bureau of Prisons, pursuant to a good time policy, to release a prisoner who has served one-half or more of his or her term of imprisonment if that prisoner: (1) has attained age 45; (2) has never been convicted of a crime of violence; and (3) has not engaged in any violation, involving violent conduct, of institutional disciplinary regulations.

Over 2 million offenders are incarcerated in the Nation's prisons and jails. At midyear 2002, 665,475 inmates were held in the Nation's local jails, up from 631,240 at midyear 2001. Projections indicate that the inmate population will unfortunately continue to rise over the years to come.

To illustrate the impact that the Second Chance Act will potentially have on Texas, the Federal prison population for the years 2000, 2001, and 2002 reached 39,679, 36,138, and 36,635 persons respectively; the State prison population for the same years reached 20,200, 20,898, and 23,561 persons. These numbers have grown since 2002, so the impact is indeed significant and the State of Texas is an important stakeholder.

I am also concerned about the rehabilitation and treatment of juvenile offenders in my home State of Texas as it appears that the administrators of TYC have neglected their duties. The April 10, 2007 Dallas Morning News,

reported that "two former Texas Youth Commission administrators were indicted on charges that they sexually abused teenage inmates at the state juvenile prison in Pyote." The same article also cited the 2005 investigative report by Texas Rangers' Sgt. Burzynski which found that the two indicted TYC administrators, Brookins and Hernandez, had repeatedly molested inmates in the Pyote prison. The report is cited as saying that Mr. Brookins, who during some periods was the top official, had shown sex toys and pornography in his office, while Mr. Hernandez molested inmates in classrooms and closets.

I hope that all of my colleagues would join me in supporting the Second Chance Act. Passage of H.R. 1593 would be the start of a long overdue process to eliminate unnecessary costs that result from warehousing prisoners.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF CASIMIR LENARD

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 17, 2007

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Col. Casimir I. Lenard AUS (Ret.) who passed from this life on December 7, 2007. At exactly the same moment, the Polish-American Congress was holding a recognition ceremony during which he was awarded with the first-ever Polish-American Congress Medal of Freedom.

Casimir Lenard was born in Chicago, Illinois on March 10, 1918. Even though Chicago had an ever-expanding Polish population, at the age of 10 he journeyed to Poland, a country who regained its independence after more than a century of being ruled by its neighbors. He studied at the Jesuit Gimnazjum in Chyrow, Poland. Upon completion, he returned to the United States to attend Northwestern University where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Economic History.

In receipt of his degrees, he learned of the German-Nazi's invasion of Poland. Upon hearing this news, he immediately joined the Chicago Black Horse Troop, 106th Cavalry, Illinois National Guard. This commenced a meritorious and distinguished military career. When the United States was drawn into the conflict in Europe, in 1941, he became part of the first U.S. Army to go overseas as a commissioned 2nd Lieutenant, assigned to the 1st U.S. Infantry Division. As a member of the 1st Reconnaissance Troop, Lenard was engaged in overseas combat duty from 1942 to 1945. He participated in major operations in the European Theatre including the D-Day invasion. He also served as press and radio censor with the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Forces.

In 1945, he returned to the United States where he married Casimira (Myra) Lamot. He worked in the family restaurant business, known as "Lenard's Little Poland" in Chicago and "Lenard's Casino" Summer Resort in Beverly Shores, Indiana. However, when the United States engaged in the Korean War, he volunteered for active duty, serving from August 1951 to 1957, under special assignment with the Headquarters Berlin Command and later in Chicago.

In 1962, he was selected for a 5-year tour of active duty with the General Staff at the Pentagon, where he became Chief of the Army Intelligence Reserve Office. And as the United States engaged in another military conflict in Vietnam, he again heeded the call to service in 1967. After his tour, he was a military intelligence research analyst at the U.S. Army Institute of Land Combat. In 1970, Col. Lenard retired after 30 years of distinguished military service.

Col. Lenard gained numerous recognitions and awards during his extensive military career including: the Silver Star Medal with Cluster, the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Bronze Star Medal with "V" for Valor, the French Croix de Guerre with Palm, seven overseas campaign ribbons (Algeria-French Morocco, Tunisia, Sicily, Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes-Alsace and RhineLand) and numerous other, citations, the last being the Normandy Medal of the Jubilee of Liberty.

Upon retirement from the military, he became the first executive director of the Polish-American Congress, Washington D.C. Office. After leaving that office in 1974, he became Project Manager of the U.S. Bicentennial Ethnic Racial Council. He organized nationwide conferences and coordinated local and national U.S. Bicentennial activities, providing many opportunities for Polonia participation.

Together, with his wife Myra, Col. Lenard worked on many initiatives to support Polish independence, as the country once again suffered under the pervasive influence of its Soviet neighbor. He administered millions of dollars in grants at The National Endowment for Democracy through the Polish American Congress Charitable Foundation to support the budding Polish underground: Solidarity. He helped provide to Citizens' Committees with urgently needed technical resources and finances. Col. and Mrs. Lenard lead the march toward supporting Poland's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Col. Lenard served on the Board of Directors of the American Red Cross. Moreover, Col. Lenard was well-known for his advocacy of close relations between Poles and Jews, the two groups that suffered the most under German-Nazi rule.

For his work with the Polish-American Community, the Polish-American Congress and the embitterment of Poland's position in the world, Colonel Lenard and his wife Myra, either jointly or as individuals, received many awards. These included the following: the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland with Star, Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland, Polish Cavalry saber with inscription "For Your Freedom and Ours From The Grateful Nation of Poland," the Polish-National Alliance's "Gold Cross Legion of Honor," the Polish Apostolate "Pride of Polish American Community Award, the Founders Award and the Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland.

Myra Lenard passed from this life on May 1, 2000, later to be joined with her husband. They are survived by their three children: George, Antoinette and Elizabeth as well as their grandson Jeffrey Lenard.

The Polish-American Congress Medal of Freedom was awarded to Col. Lenard on December 7, 2007. Since he was unable to obtain his award and the gratitude of Polish-

Americans in person, it is a fitting to conclude this record of a remarkable man with the acceptance speech he wrote, but could not make upon receipt of this honor:

Merry Christmas to all of my dear friends.

This is the first time in many years that I will not be able to share with you the wonderful holiday celebration we all look forward to that is sponsored by the Washington office of the Polish-American Congress.

Nonetheless, I am with you in spirit. I cherish the memories of our long association together, our common struggles in favor of a free and democratic Poland and in favor of Polish-American culture and the values that we all share."

TRIBUTE TO U.S. AIR FORCE STAFF SERGEANT ALEJANDRO AYALA

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Mr. CALVERT. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a hero from my congressional district, U.S. Air Force SSgt Alejandro Ayala. Today, I ask that the House of Representatives honor and remember this incredible young man who died in service to his country.

Alejandro had a lifelong fascination with the military. He attended Arlington High School in Riverside, CA, and joined the Reserve Officers' Training Corps. Immediately after his graduation in 1999, Alejandro joined the United States Air Force. Alejandro Ayala attended basic training at Lackland Air Force Base and then was assigned to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina, where he met his wife Megan, whom he married in 2003. Alejandro was subsequently assigned to the 90th Logistics Readiness Squadron at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming. On Sunday, November 18, 2007, Alejandro died of injuries he received from a vehicle accident in Kuwait while serving with forces fighting in Iraq. He was 26 years old.

In reading about Alejandro's life, I was impressed by his devotion to family and the military. Alejandro's brother Cesar describes Alejandro as his inspiration for joining the U.S. Marine Corps. Alejandro is survived by his wife Megan; two young children, Alexandra and Matthew; parents Faustino and Ilda; twin sister Liset; sister Angelica; and brothers, Cesar and Francisco.

As we look at the incredibly rich military history of our country we realize that this history is comprised of men, just like Alejandro, who bravely fought for the ideals of freedom and democracy. Each story is unique and humbling for those of us who, far from the dangers they have faced, live our lives in relative comfort and ease. The day the Ayala family had to lay Alejandro to rest was probably the most difficult moment the family has ever faced and my thoughts, prayers and deepest gratitude for their sacrifice go out to them. There are no words that can relieve their pain and what words I offer only begin to convey my deep respect and highest appreciation.

Staff Sergeant Ayala's wife, children, mother, father, sisters, brothers and all his relatives have given a part of themselves in the loss of their loved one. I hope they know that the goodness Alejandro brought to the world and

the sacrifice he has made will always be remembered.

TRIBUTE TO 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SANDHILLS STOCK SHOW AND RODEO

HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Mr. CONAWAY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the SandHills Stock Show and Rodeo on its 75th anniversary. Since 1932, the SandHills Rodeo has had an invaluable impact on the economy and heritage of West Texas.

From its beginnings as the first "Pure Hereford" Show in Texas in 1932 to the present-day exposition—including the horse show, stock show, and rodeo—the SandHills Rodeo has generated millions of dollars in revenue for the Permian Basin and has attracted thousands of visitors from across the country. Like the City of Odessa itself, the SandHills Stock Show and Rodeo has grown and flourished over the past 75 years and has become as much a part of Texas as the cowboys themselves.

Growing up in Odessa, I attended the rodeo and marveled at the brave cowboys on their bucking broncos and the fine animals that compete in the Stock and Horse shows. From the crowning of Miss SandHills Rodeo to the always exciting (at least for the parents) Boot Scramble, the rodeo has something for everyone. I am pleased that West Texans of all generations continue to enjoy this unique and exciting event. Congratulations to all of those who have made the SandHills Stock Show and Rodeo such a fine Texas tradition!

TO HONOR THE MEMORY OF STAFF SERGEANT. SHANE BECKER

HON. MARILYN N. MUSGRAVE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of SSG Shane Becker.

Mr. Becker served in the United States Army as a staff Sergeant in the 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

Mr. Becker courageously died in combat on April 3, 2007, in Baghdad. I believe his service and commitment to our country most worthy of being recognized by this great legislative body.

Shane Becker was born October 12, 1971, and graduated from Greeley West High School in 1990. Becker joined the Army in 1993 and was stationed at Fort Hood, Texas. In 2006, Becker transferred from Fort Hood to Fort Richardson in Alaska.

Mr. Becker was a decorated war hero who received the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Army Achievement Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, the Joint Meritorious Unit Award, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, and the Overseas Service Medal.