

people across the globe that it has served. By immersing themselves in local cultures and working side by side with the communities they serve, Peace Corps volunteers have made a positive impact in a very personal way. They work with teachers and parents to improve access to education, with community groups to reach out to at-risk youth, with farmers to develop better farming methods, and with communities and local governments to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.

The Peace Corps' work has made a critical contribution to America's national security. Born during the height of the cold war as a means of preventing the false promise of communism from taking hold in the developing world, it has adapted its mission for the 21st century to embrace all people struggling to survive and take advantage of the new opportunities of our times. Peace Corps is critical in our effort to promote sustainable development, human rights and rule of law, and encourage free markets. Through Peace Corps, people of foreign nations learn that America is a force for peace, justice and prosperity in the world.

The Peace Corps is celebrating its 46th anniversary this week to raise awareness of its good work. I would like to recognize the 13 volunteers from my district who have met President Kennedy's call and are serving valiantly in countries across the globe. I ask my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to join me in celebrating the Peace Corps' success and wishing it well into the future.

SWORN-IN VOLUNTEERS IN THE 12TH DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA, REPRESENTATIVE TOM LANTOS

Volunteer name	Country of service	Start of SVC date	Projected COS date
Beasley, Rachel E .....	Niger .....	29-Sep-2006	28-Sep-2008
Beitiks, Mikelis V .....	Ghana .....	02-Dec-2005	02-Dec-2007
Brownlee, Thomas E .....	South Africa .....	13-Oct-2005	06-Oct-2007
Capp, Anna J .....	Burkina Faso .....	21-Oct-2005	18-Oct-2007
De Vries, Thomas B .....	Cape Verde .....	09-Sep-2005	03-Sep-2007
Farrell, Rachel L .....	Peru .....	02-Dec-2005	02-Dec-2007
Finlev, Tessa M .....	Kenya .....	05-Aug-2005	03-Aug-2007
Kent, Ashley M .....	Malawi .....	15-Dec-2005	11-Dec-2007
Levine, Pamela B .....	Tanzania .....	16-Aug-2006	16-May-2008
Meyer, Andrea R .....	Zambia .....	14-Aug-2006	09-Aug-2008
Moutsos, Thomas S .....	Philippines .....	01-Jun-2006	06-Jun-2008
Tang, Natalie M .....	Madagascar .....	06-Dec-2005	11-Dec-2007
Wandro, Joshua D .....	Azerbaijan .....	05-Aug-2005	04-Aug-2007
Total volunteers: 13 .....			

SPIRIT OF SOUTH CAROLINA LAUNCHES HOPE FOR STUDENTS

HON. HENRY E. BROWN, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2007

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, on Sunday, March 4, 2007, an important event will take place in Charleston, SC. The South Carolina Maritime Heritage Foundation will be launching its tall ship, the *Spirit of South Carolina*.

The *Spirit of South Carolina* a few years ago was nothing more than a footnote in the South Carolina history books. "The residents of Charleston and South Carolina are reconnecting with a bygone era, and in so doing, they intend to address crucial issues in education. In a city known for historic preservation, this initiative isn't about buildings; this time it involves a ship—the *Spirit of South Carolina*. When the newly built, 140-foot traditional sailing vessel finally splashes down on

Sunday, March 4, it will offer a unique portal into the region's history, but it will also present a window of opportunity for tackling some vexing problems facing the State's school systems.

Almost 6 years in the making, this elegant, robust vessel—envisioned originally as a means of rekindling interest in the region's rich maritime heritage—will become the first genuine wooden sailing ship to be built here in more than 100 years. Where once there were hundreds of such ships, and many shipyards, now there is just one to call this region home, but it's a ship worth the wait.

The 150-ton *Spirit of South Carolina* has been designed and built along the lines of the traditional pilot schooners that served as a vital component of the region's busy mercantile scene in the 18th and 19th centuries. Like its forerunners, this ship has been built with traditional methods, including lumber grown in South Carolina, and this ship will also have a crucial function—serving to deepen and enhance the education of young students from around the State.

The *Spirit of South Carolina* will serve as an ambassador for our community and for the State of South Carolina. She is a beautiful, fast, world-class schooner, which will represent the history and culture of the Palmetto State in port cities around the world. Wherever she sails, the *Spirit of South Carolina* and her crew will serve as South Carolina's goodwill ambassadors.

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of folks like Chairman John "Hank" Hofford, Mayor Joe Riley, Pierre Manigault, R.E. "Teddy" Turner, Jr., Brad and Meaghan Van Liew, Captain Anthony Arrow and many more, the *Spirit of South Carolina* is now a reality.

RECOGNIZING CHRISTOPHER BLAKE FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Christopher Blake, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 395, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Christopher has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years Christopher has been involved with Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community,

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Christopher Blake for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

RECOGNIZING THE FAIRFAX COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2007 VALOR AWARD RECIPIENTS

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2007

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding group of men and women in Northern Virginia. The Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce annually recognizes individuals who have demonstrated superior dedication to public safety with the prestigious Valor Award. Several members of the Fairfax County Police Department have earned this highest honor that Fairfax County bestows upon its public safety officials.

There are several types of Valor Awards that can be awarded to a public safety officer: the Lifesaving Award, the Certificate of Valor, or the Gold, Silver, or Bronze Medal of Valor.

It is with great pride that I enter into the record the names of the recipients of the 2007 Valor Awards in the Fairfax County Police Department. Receiving the Lifesaving Award: Mr. Khalid S. Sheikh; the Certificate of Valor: Sergeant Michael O. Barbazette, Detective Anthony D. Erway, Police Officer First Class Brian A. Gaydos, Detective John P. Keating, Second Lieutenant Christopher C. Cochrane, Police Officer First Class John S. Turner Jr., Police Officer First Class Eric M. Hillebrand, Police Officer First Class Darrell D. Estess; the Gold Medal: Master Police Officer Michael E. Garbarino, Detective Vicky O. Armel, Officer Richard A. Lehr Jr.; the Silver Medal: Master Police Officer Mark P. Dale, Detective Jeffrey W. Andrea, Master Police Officer William C. Horn, Second Lieutenant Boyd F. Thompson Jr.; the Bronze Medal: Police Officer First Class Westley S. Bevan, Lieutenant Stephen J. Thompson, Second Lieutenant Craig C. Copeland, Detective Steven L. Carroll, Police Officer First Class Daniel L. Horton, Master Police Officer Jeffrey K. Rockenbaugh, Master Police Officer Robert D. Patterson, Police Officer First Class James H. Urie, Police Officer First Class Ivan J. Roeske, Public Safety Communicator III Lisa A. Smith, Lieutenant Joseph R. Hill, Police Officer First Class Christopher R. Keaveny, Police Officer First Class David M. Popik, Sergeant Mark J. Smith, Sergeant John G. Sterling, Police Officer First Class Michael A. Wheeler.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the men and women who serve in the Fairfax County Police Department. Their efforts, made on behalf of the citizens of Fairfax County, are selfless acts of heroism and truly merit our highest praise. I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding this group of remarkable citizens.

SIKH EDITOR WRITES TO PRESIDENT BUSH, URGES SUPPORT FOR SIKH FREEDOM

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2007

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, recently, Dr. Awatar Singh Sekhon, Managing Editor of the

International Journal of Sikh Affairs, wrote to President Bush about the dangerous situation in India, where democratic rights for minorities are under continuing threat. He also published the letter in his magazine.

Dr. Sekhon noted that the interests of the United States and its allies, such as Canada, are likely to be damaged by continuing close cooperation with India. As he observed, although India proudly portrays itself as “the world’s largest democracy,” it is a country where, as he writes, “democracy has been used to deny freedom, national and human rights, and basic human dignity to the majority.” That majority includes Christians, Sikhs, Muslims, Dalits, and other minorities.

He notes that in India, the Brahmin class, which is 15 percent of the population, uses the most brutal oppression to suppress and rule the minorities. The caste system is still rigorously enforced, despite being made illegal in 1950. It is used to keep the people down, backed by violent repression. He notes that in 1948, the Indian government promised the people of Kashmir a plebiscite on their status. Punjab was promised sovereignty at the time of Indian independence. Those promises have not been kept and any effort to claim what was promised has been met with brutality that has resulted in the murders of over 250,000 Sikhs, over 300,000 Christian Nagas, over 90,000 Kashmiri Muslims, Muslims and Christians elsewhere in the country, and tens of thousands of other minorities. Yet our policy-makers insist on treating India both as a democratic country and as an ally, despite its longstanding and still current friendship with Russia, as well as its coziness with the mullahs of Iran, to whom it has sold heavy water and other components.

Dr. Sekhon cites the attack on the Golden Temple as another example of India’s effort to eliminate the minorities and subsume them into a Hindu state.

Madam Speaker, I call on all my colleagues, especially those who are promoters of India, to read this devastating letter. It is quite damaging to India and it is right on target. It will give you essential information on the lack of basic liberties in that country.

We can make a difference, Madam Speaker. Instead of cozying up to India and trying to cut deals with them in the name of stability, it is time to stop our aid and our trade to pressure India to allow all its people to enjoy basic human rights. And it is time to put the U.S. Congress on record in support of self-determination for all the peoples and nations of the subcontinent through a free and fair plebiscite on their status. Isn’t that the fair and responsible way to handle questions like this? Isn’t that the way democracies do it? Why is India afraid of real democracy?

Madam Speaker, I would like to insert Dr. Sekhon’s excellent letter into the RECORD. Again, I urge everyone to read it. It will prove very informative.

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF  
SIKH AFFAIRS,  
January 24, 2007.

Hon. GEORGE W. BUSH,  
President, United States of America,  
The White House, Washington, DC.

SOUTH ASIA: INTERESTS, PERMANENT ALLIES,  
WORLD PEACE AND THE ROLE OF THE UNITED  
STATES IN THE REGION

I am a citizen of Canada and a member of the Canadian Sikh community. I retired from service in public health as a micro-

biologist, research scientist, administrator and academic a few years ago. I am now active in work for human rights. These rights are not peculiar to a people or country; they protect the entire human race. I am expressing below my concerns over the likelihood of damage to long-term interests of the United States of America, its allies, the NATO forces, Canada in particular. The pain of sufferings families of North America, in Europe, the Middle East and South Asia is hard to ignore. The irony is that the more the U.S. tried to ameliorate conditions, the worse they have become.

The people of North America know very well the objectives of the United States (U.S.) and the hurdles faced in leading the world during much of the 20th and in the current 21st centuries. The people of the U.S. and their elected leaders have devoted a lot of time, money and precious resources in manpower and management for the good of the mankind to make the world better and safer. Despite all the good intentions of the democratic world it has been struggling to find a basis for lasting world peace. I believe that the long-term interests of the United States and the world at large are complementary. The U.S. leadership is good for the world. Yet, increasingly fewer people believe that to be true. Is there anything amiss?

I firmly believe that the United States and its allies eagerly want to prevent the sufferings of friendly peoples whose governments they have influence over. While we find the stern hand of the U.S. military operating against enemies, there is little effort to impose the same principles of human freedom and dignity on “friends”. Much of South Asia is democratic; India boasts of being the largest democracy in the world. Yet it is in India—more than anywhere else—where democracy has been used to deny freedom, national and human rights, and basic human dignity to the majority. As the Hon. Dana Rohrabacher, (R-Cal) had said as far as the minorities (the Sikhs, Muslims in general, Muslims of the Internationally Disputed Areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Christians, Dalits, Adivasis or the indigenous native people, and other non-Hindu, non-Brahmin) are concerned, India is a Nazi Germany for them (Tim Phares 2006 Int J Sikh Affairs 16(1), 40–42 ISSN 1481-5435).

Congressman ROHRABACHER’S assessment is accurate and well justified; it can be the focal point of a new beginning with India. The question is: how could a country, which is the world’s largest democracy, sustain caste apartheid and pogroms against minorities without facing recrimination? It is done by mis-definition and misrepresentation the world is too busy to try and unravel. India is not a nation and has not even tried to become a nation during the 60 years that it has been “free”. It has relied entirely on brute military force to crush any people that demanded its rights. The fact is the Muslims are a majority in Jammu and Kashmir, the Sikhs are a majority in the Punjab and Hill tribes of Assam are mostly Christian. The People of Jammu and Kashmir were promised a plebiscite that was endorsed by the United Nations. The Sikhs were promised their separate state Khalistan by the Congress leaders in exchange for rejecting Pakistan’s offer of the same. The Tribal peoples of Assam were also promised “freedom” if they sided with the Congress Party against the British. Now that these peoples demand what was promised, India has unleashed the most diabolical genocide and an international campaign to demonize their struggle. The British Raj lasted as long as it did because it was founded on recognition of India as multiple nations. How can a country call itself a democracy when it discards its

very foundation—the right of national self-determination?

India aspires for its leaders—M.K. Ghandi and J.L. Nehru—to be recognized with other great leaders of the democratic world like George Washington, Franklin D Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln, J.F. Kennedy, Jimmy Carter, and William Jefferson Clinton. But it cannot even begin to secure that position until it can show that they stood up for the oppressed within the country and without. India has invaded each one its neighbours, overtly or covertly; if it gave in to any demand, it sought to hurt twice as much elsewhere. The Untouchables or Dalits—who are a majority in several states of India and constitute 65 % of its population—were promised “reservation” of seats in the parliament, in education and jobs. Even after 60 years, it is still denied to backward castes and to Muslims. India uses “democracy” as means to fudge issues and deny rights by never ending arguments in circles. That is the experience of the people in the country and neighbours who live in dread of roads being closed or rivers being diverted.

The devious policies and broken promises is the hallmark of India today. The Sikhs have been the worst victims. They founded the first secular and sovereign state in South Asia by Sikh monarch Ranjit Singh in 1799 that was “annexed” by treaty to the British Empire on 14th March, 1849. In June 1984, the Darbar Sahib Complex which includes the Supreme Seat of Sikh Polity, The Akal Takht Sahib, Amritsar (mistakenly known as Golden Temple of Amritsar), which is the Vatican of the Sikh faith, was assaulted by the Indian Army killing 20,000 devotees who were inside the temple and their leader Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale was martyred. When the Sikh guards of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi avenged the assault assassinating her, the worst pogrom was unleashed upon the Sikhs all over India that resulted in 250,000 Sikhs—mostly young men and their families—who were mercilessly killed, Indian diplomats talk about the tradition of non-violence in India of which Mahatma Gandhi is considered to be a universal symbol. But the truth is that India is violent but only to the weak; when confronted with strong and powerful the Brahmin response is obsequious folding of hands. This manner of greeting appears to be show of humililty. But it is actually a statement that the person being greeted is of low birth and is untouchable.

On 15th of August 1947, the British handed over political power to the “unelected” Hindu leadership. But the Hindus/Brahmins (neither a religion nor a culture) were only 15 % of the population; how could they be the successors of the British Empire in India. Once installed in power, they have relied on a combination of hate (for people of foreign faiths or of low birth), guile and stratagem far more complex than any Machiavelli. The record of their rule over India speaks eloquently how Hindus/Brahmins have been master-mind in persecution of faith minorities and the low caste majority of native peoples who are deemed to be inferior by birth in their unique faith. Through Article 25 of the Indian Constitution 1950, the Sikh, the Buddhists and Jains and all the Untouchables, all of who are victims of oppression and apartheid, are denied their separate identity and deemed to be Hindus. The Sikh faith founded by Guru Nanak Sahib was a rebellion to reject the caste “apartheid” enforced by the Hindus of Brahmin caste. The irony is that when freedom came, the Sikhs were declared to be Hindus (long haired Hindus) albeit of the renegade variety, against the teachings of its founder, Guru Nanak Sahib, and the Sikhs’ Holy Scripture, Adi Guru Granth Sahib. It is difficult to portray

the anger, revulsion and frustration felt by the Sikhs in this unwelcome embrace of Hinduism (which is neither a religion nor a culture according to the verdict of Punjab and Haryana High Court, 1984). Brahmin rule in post-15th August, 1947, India has interest only in maintaining the apartheid system; its objective is the prosperity of urban dwelling upper castes—the so called 200 million middle class.

Suave Indian diplomats routinely underlines that the USA and India are natural allies. Even American politicians and diplomats have started to harp on the same theme. It is time, this was questioned. What makes them natural allies? During the years of the Cold War, India was the friend of The Soviet Union, not of America. Why? It is because both were internally and internationally imperialist. Now, India needs an imperial patron to underpin its own imperious. It needs the U.S. Is that the role the USA sees for itself in the world? As supporter of local imperialists? Surely the power and prestige of the USA is such that it must aim higher: obtain lasting universal peace and harmony; amity between faiths; unfettered democracy; free trade. Tied to apron strings of India, the USA is bound to drift into petty machinations to deny freedom to some and equality to all. India's imperialism is founded on delaying tactics and betrayal. All the problems in the South Asian region are product of Brahmin spin or stratagem. The media makes wild forecasts of India of the future. It is supposed to be a huge market for consumer goods. Whose? Peoples' Republic of China?

Some people have become very rich in India. Diaspora Indians are clever and are also becoming rich. But for the majority, India is a hellhole and will always remain so. Caste based India has structural, infrastructural and social problems that it cannot overcome until it abandons its "poverty imperialism". However, India is country of 1.1 billion people who deserve better. If India allowed the right of self-determination to the Sikhs, to the peoples of Jammu and Kashmir and Assam, it would still be the second largest country with population more than all of Europe. However, it would no longer need to maintain hostility with neighbouring states and would be in a position to remove strife, tension and hate from its social scene. India must give the native peoples their national rights and create autonomous states of India that would facilitate a compact of states within each the interplay of diverse ethnic and caste interests would create grass root harmony.

For the United States to articulate its interests in far off lands and develop mechanisms to secure those interests, its diplomats and politicians have to be conversant with the history and customs of those lands. Historically, the Sikhs of Punjab and the people of Afghanistan have never been "subservient" to any foreign ruler. That was true in the 19th Century as it is today. There are nearly 20 nations within the "Indian union", which are struggling to regain their lost sovereignty and independence ever since the British Indian Empire was hurriedly partitioned in 1947. The end of the British Empire marked the end of the imperial era in the whole world. India's efforts to build and expand its empire are the biggest threat to peace and stability of Asia. Consider Mr. President, if 20 or so nations, including the Sikhs of Punjab, Christians of Nagaland, the tribal people of Assam and Manipur, the south Indian states most notably Tamil Nadu, were to become "sovereign" states, what a huge change for the better it would be for the region and the world. That is the only way to replace the polity of hate and oppression with polities of peace and har-

mony underpinned by secure undefended borders. Large is not fashionable; not just for women.

I hope I have given some points to ponder. The USA can lead the world with a global vision. There are not many regions where so much is old and archaic ready to crumble and hit dust. Many Americans are fond of India but they do not know why? The present rulers of India would like your help in building their empire. But that is not the best interest of the people of India. India is one country that needs benign intervention to dismantle the social and political structures to be replaced by structures founded on national self-determination. That would be good for business; that would be good for world peace; that is the calling of greatness. Best wishes and warmest regards.

Sincerely,

AWATAR SINGH SEKHON,  
Ph.D, FIBA, RM (CCM), Associate Professor  
(Retired), Medical Microbiology and  
Immunology; Director (Former), National  
Centre for Human Mycotic Diseases Canada;  
Managing Editor and Acting Editor in Chief.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT L. PITTS

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2007

Mr. DOYLE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Robert L. Pitts, a champion of civil rights, integration, respectful dialogue, and nonviolence in southwestern Pennsylvania, Tomorrow night, the Allegheny County/City of Pittsburgh League of Minority Voters will honor Mr. Pitts for his many contributions to our community.

Like the rest of our country, Pittsburgh and southwestern Pennsylvania have struggled long and hard with what has been aptly described as our country's original sin—slavery, and all of the racism, discrimination, segregation, and violence that have stemmed from it.

I'm pleased to say that a great deal of much-needed progress has been made in the last 50 years—and much of the credit for that progress belongs to civil rights leaders like Robert Pitts. Our region is truly fortunate that this great civic leader has chosen to make Pittsburgh his home for the last 30-odd years.

Despite family misfortune and a difficult childhood, Mr. Pitts has made many contributions to southwestern Pennsylvania, and our Nation, in his many different occupations and activities over the last 60 years. He served his Nation in the Air Force and its predecessor, the Army Air Corps, for 20 years. He worked to end racism in the Catholic Church for the Diocese of Pittsburgh for nearly 10 years. He worked to promote equal employment opportunities in Pittsburgh as Administrator of the Agency of Western Pennsylvania and as Chair of the Pittsburgh NAACP's Labor and Industry Committee. He served as an elected public official—and notably as the first African-American mayor in western Pennsylvania. He ran his own business and worked as a private sector consultant for a number of years. He has given generously of his time as a volunteer on a number of local boards and organizations. And, finally, he has been a friend, mentor, and advisor to countless men, women, and children throughout his life. In short, he's been a dynamic force for good and an influential community leader for his entire, blessedly long and productive life.

On behalf of the people of Pennsylvania's 14th Congressional District, I want to commend Mr. Pitts and thank his family for sharing him with us.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DISTRICT ATTORNEY ESTABLISHMENT ACT OF 2007

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 1, 2007

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today I introduce the District of Columbia District Attorney Establishment Act of 2007, continuing a series of bills that I will introduce this session to ensure a continuation of the process of transition to full democracy and self-government for the residents of the District of Columbia. This bill is the ninth in our "Free and Equal DC" series of bills to eliminate anti-Home Rule legislation and to remedy obsolete or inappropriate congressional intervention into the local affairs of the District of Columbia or denials of federal benefits or recognition routinely granted to other jurisdictions.

This bill will establish an Office of District Attorney for the District of Columbia, to be headed by a District Attorney elected by DC residents. This bill effectuates a November 2002 referendum where DC voters overwhelmingly (82 percent) approved a locally elected D.A.

This important legislation is designed to put the District of Columbia on par with every other local jurisdiction in the country by allowing DC residents to elect an independent District Attorney to prosecute local criminal and civil matters now handled by the U.S. Attorney, a federal official. Instead the new District Attorney would become the city's chief legal officer. As presently constituted, the U.S. Attorney's office in the District is the largest in the country only because it serves mainly as the local city prosecutor. That office needs to be freed up to do security and other federal work particularly in the post 9-11 Nation's capital.

There is no issue of greater importance to our citizens and no issue on which residents have less say here than the prosecution of local crimes. A U.S. Attorney has no business in the local criminal affairs of local jurisdictions. No other citizens in the United States are treated so unfairly on an issue of such major importance. This bill would simply make the D.A. accountable to the people who elect him or her as elsewhere in the country.

In addition to issues of democracy and self government, such as congressional voting rights and legislative and budget autonomy that District residents are entitled to as American citizens, residents are determined to achieve each and every other element of home rule. Amending the Home Rule Act with a local D.A. provision would be an important development toward our goal of achieving true self-government. I urge my colleagues to support this important measure.