

his legacy for future generations so that they may also choose to expose the crimes of tyrants and fight for the freedom of all people.

Thank you, Dr. Conte-Aguero.

TARP REFORM AND
ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 15, 2009

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 384) to reform the Troubled Assets Relief Program of the Secretary of the Treasury and ensure accountability under such Program, and for other purposes:

Mr. STARK. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of H.R. 384, the TARP Reform and Accountability Act.

I am one of the few members on my side of the aisle to vote against the TARP bill both times it came before this House. I did so because I believed that it rewarded the very entities that built the financial house of cards that has come crashing down. The Bush Administration pressed this body to act with all haste based on faulty information about the problems we faced and with scant explanation for how the resources requested would be used. The bill left too much discretion to the Secretary, and provided too little oversight of the historic outlay of taxpayer funds. I compared the Bush Administration's rush to bail out Wall Street to their rush to invade Iraq. I take no pleasure in being right on this score—but the management of the first outlay of TARP funds has been erratic and inefficient. In fact, the execution of this bailout provides the perfect thumbnail of the eight years of the Bush Administration: they didn't have a plan, they didn't do what they said they were going to do, they didn't take care of struggling homeowners, but made sure to look after the interests of big business. The mission was not accomplished.

I do not support the release of additional TARP funds and will vote to withhold those funds if such a bill comes before the House. Today, however, we have a chance to make a bad law better and that deserves our support. The reforms in this bill are the conditions that should have been included in the original package. This bill requires reporting by institutions that receive taxpayer money and requires Treasury to reach an agreement with institutions that take taxpayer funds on exactly how those funds will be used. This bill also limits the ability for those institutions to use taxpayer funds to pay their executives big bonuses that encourage short-term risk taking.

Most importantly, this bill mandates that the Treasury Department commit significant funds—up to \$100 billion—to foreclosure mitigation and keeping people in the homes they own or rent.

Our Nation is in a deep recession and people at all economic levels are feeling the pain. People struggling to make ends meet are having a tough time understanding why our government is using tax money to bail out the

bank that is foreclosing on their home. The first \$350 billion is gone with very little to show for it. I would prefer that Congress go back to the drawing board and develop a comprehensive program to save people's houses without rewarding the institutions that made bad loans. In the absence of such action, I support H.R. 384, because we must ensure that at least some of the second \$350 billion of taxpayer dollars goes to help people stay in their homes and weather this recession.

AMERICA MUST STAND WITH
HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 21, 2009

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I would like to share with our colleagues an editorial in the New York Times highlighting the case of Iranian human rights activist, and Nobel Prize laureate, Shirin Ebadi, who faces harassment and intimidation at the hands of the Iranian government.

She is not alone.

According to the most recent State Department Human Rights Report, “[Iran’s] poor human rights record worsened, and it continued to commit numerous, serious abuses . . . Security forces arbitrarily arrested and detained individuals and held political prisoners and women’s rights activists. There was a lack of judicial independence and of fair public trials. The government severely restricted civil liberties, including freedoms of speech, press, assembly, association, movement, and privacy. The government placed severe restrictions on freedom of religion. Official corruption and a lack of government transparency persisted.”

We must continue to stand with human rights defenders like Shirin Ebadi, who is bravely confronting her own government’s injustices.

[From the New York Times, January 2, 2009]

THE WOMAN THE MULLAHS FEAR

(Editorial)

Men hold all of the meaningful levers of political power in Iran, but it is a woman they fear. If not, why is the mullah-led government trying to shut down the operations of Shirin Ebadi?

Ms. Ebadi, a lawyer and her country’s leading human rights activist, is the first Muslim woman to win a Nobel Peace Prize. On Monday, the authorities stormed her private office, seizing her computers and her clients’ documents. A week earlier, they closed her Center for Defenders of Human Rights, a coalition of human rights groups and other activists whose members had planned to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

When she was awarded the peace prize in 2003, the Nobel committee called Ms. Ebadi “a courageous person” for standing up against Iran’s bullying government. In the years since, she has endured repeated death threats from radical groups and regular government intimidation. That courage has never faltered.

With presidential elections scheduled for June, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and

his allies apparently decided they could not risk letting Ms. Ebadi continue the work she has done with distinction (and without pay) for the past 15 years—exposing government violations of human rights and defending human rights and democracy activists.

No doubt the authorities were unhappy with a report produced by her center that was cited recently by the United Nations’ secretary general, Ban Ki-moon, when the General Assembly approved a nonbinding resolution condemning Iran’s human rights record. But we suspect their ambitions go far beyond trying to suppress one report. They are clearly hoping to intimidate Ms. Ebadi and all other independent voices in Iran. That must not be allowed to happen.

We condemn Tehran’s mistreatment of this woman of extraordinary honor and courage. We urge the United States, Europe and other major powers to keep pressure on Iran to ensure that no further harm comes to Ms. Ebadi and that she remains free to do her essential work.

If Tehran wants relief from international criticism about its human rights record, it must start by adhering to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and respecting the rights of all of its citizens.

JACK HAMILTON AND THE COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY OF SOMERVILLE

HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 21, 2009

Mr. CAPUANO. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to my friend and constituent, Jack Hamilton, who is retiring after almost three decades as Executive Director of CAAS, the Community Action Agency of Somerville. Jack is the man who made both “community” and “action” a reality in the day to day work of the agency. He fought poverty and discrimination every day of his adult life. He communicated a sense of urgency to his staff and inspired both colleagues and clients with his deep commitment to the dignity and well-being of every person.

Under his leadership an anti-poverty agency grew to offer services ranging from early childhood education and parenting support, to help for tenants, access to health care, and advocacy for the disabled. He was an active citizen, far beyond what would have been expected of him as CAAS Executive Director, and he encouraged others to become involved. He never shied away from personal involvement in electoral politics, for and against those candidates whom he saw as worthy, or unworthy, of support, but he never let petty political differences limit his effectiveness.

Jack worked with elected officials and with me when I served as Mayor, collegially and constructively, but he never withheld his criticism when he felt a rebuke was necessary. Above all, he was determined to work with anyone and everyone engaged in an important issue, to cooperate and to understand such honest differences as might arise. He is a man of compassion and integrity, capable of righteous indignation and generous anger. I am proud to be his friend and I am grateful for his service to the city we both love.

ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO DEFEND
HERSELF FROM ATTACK

HON. JEB HENSARLING

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 21, 2009

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, as a Member of Congress it is a high honor to cast my vote in the people's House. In my career, I have exercised that privilege over 4,200 times. While my record is not perfect, I am proud that last year I participated in 99 percent of all votes.

That is all the more reason why I am filled with regret that I unintentionally missed my opportunity to cast a vote last Friday on Rollcall No. 10, the resolution recognizing Israel's right to defend herself against attacks from Gaza. As a longtime supporter of Israel and her right to exist, I want to inform the House that were I present for the vote, I would have voted in favor of this important resolution.

Madam Speaker, I offer my strong support of Israel and H. Res. 34. Since the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza in 2005, Hamas has continually launched thousands of rockets into southern Israel, killing innocent civilians, destroying vital infrastructure and private property, and holding hostage virtually all southern Israel's residents.

Though the Egyptian-brokered ceasefire of June 2008 reduced the number of rocket attacks from Gaza, the attacks never fully ended. Instead, Hamas and its foreign allies used this opportunity to smuggle more weapons into the region. Once the ceasefire expired on December 19, 2008, Hamas resumed its daily attacks on Israel with increased ferocity using its new and improved longer range Iranian-made rockets smuggled in during the ceasefire. Israel was left with little choice but to retaliate against these attacks by targeting Hamas' military forces and weapons stockpiles.

While any loss of life is deplorable, the fact remains that it was Hamas who forced Israel to resort to a military solution. Thus, I offer Israel my full support in the efforts to protect her citizens. If America fell under the same daily barrage of rocket attacks, we would not hesitate to strike back with military force, nor would we seek permission to take the necessary steps to protect our citizens.

Madam Speaker, Israel has a legal, moral, and historical right to exist in peace with secure and defensible borders. While it is my earnest prayer that this current conflict may be resolved shortly through a durable and sustainable ceasefire, Israel cannot put at risk the security of her people by allowing Hamas to continue to export violence from Gaza.

The loss of innocent civilian life is tragic and it is deplorable that Hamas complicates Israel's attempts to avoid civilian casualties by stockpiling weapons in homes and in mosques and using public places like schools to launch their sinister attacks on Israel. The Palestinian people deserve better.

Peace can never be achieved so long as terrorist groups like Hamas continue to operate. Israel has been our staunchest ally in the Middle East and a full partner in the global war against radical jihadists—individuals who would destroy our Nation, our children, our values, and the very existence of Western civilization. We must continue to support Israel's

right to defend herself against those who seek to destroy her and continue to support efforts to bring a lasting peace between Israel and her neighbors.

Madam Speaker, I support H. Res. 34 and Israel's right to defend herself from attack.

AFFIRMATION OF SUPPORT
TOWARDS THE STATE OF ISRAEL

HON. TRAVIS W. CHILDERS

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 21, 2009

Mr. CHILDERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to affirm that Hamas's continued and violent attacks against Israel have again undermined the potential for peace under already tenuous conditions, harming both Palestinians and Israeli civilians in an unprovoked assault. I join many of my fellow Americans in calling for Hamas to end its attacks, recognize Israel's right to exist, dismantle its terrorist infrastructure, and accept previous agreements between Israel and the Palestinians. I was proud to vote last week with a bipartisan majority of my colleagues in support of H. Res. 34, expressing our continued commitment to the welfare and survival of Israel, and recognizing its right to act in self-defense.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE
PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION
ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2, the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009. This bill represents a strong bipartisan first step to reform our broken health care system by guaranteeing that millions of uninsured children will have the health care that they need. Its passage will bring a symbolic end to the broken promises of the Bush Administration, which twice chose to deny coverage to 4 million children in desperate need of health care.

Over the past decade the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) has helped reduce the number of uninsured children by one-third and has made significant progress in improving the health of low-income children. H.R. 2 will reauthorize this critical program until 2013, ensuring that 7 million children currently covered by SCHIP continue to receive health coverage. Equally as important, this bill will extend health coverage to an additional 4 million low-income children who are currently uninsured.

The Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 strengthens SCHIP by including incentives for states to develop effective outreach and enroll more eligible children. In addition, the bill improves access to both mental health services and dental health care, and offers states the option to cover targeted low-income pregnant women as a way to provide the essential prenatal care that can help reduce birth defects.

I am particularly grateful that our leadership has chosen to include the provisions of the Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act in this SCHIP reauthorization. This provision will restore the states' option to provide coverage to legal immigrant children who meet all other eligibility criteria, thereby seizing the opportunity to address health disparities in communities of color that historically have had very poor access to health care.

Madam Speaker, I believe this bill takes a giant step forward in honoring our moral imperative to ensure that age, race and income do not determine the health status of our children. I am proud to vote for its passage today, to protect our commitment to our children, and to offer them the promise of a healthier tomorrow.

HONORING MARY ANN RIOJAS

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 21, 2009

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today, along with my colleagues, Representative JIM COSTA and Representative DEVIN NUNES, to commend and congratulate Mary Ann Riojas upon being selected by ABC's reality television show, "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition." Ms. Riojas and her family were surprised by Ty Pennington and his crew on January 8, 2009 at their home in Fresno, CA.

Mary Ann Riojas was born without legs and with only one fully developed arm. As a child, Ms. Riojas was placed into the foster care system, and was faced with an unstable home life. She began to gain her independence when she was introduced into the Easter Seals program and they provided her with her first wheelchair. With this wheelchair she was able to attend Easter Seals Camp Harmon in the Santa Cruz Mountains. At Camp Harmon she learned how to swim and was able to participate in camp activities. The summer camp program provided her an opportunity to meet new people, try new things and continue to gain her independence.

As a young adult, Ms. Riojas decided to stay at home and raise her four children. For a short time she was receiving public assistance to keep her family afloat. In spite of her disabilities, and financial struggle, she was determined to become the first in her family to earn a college degree; she graduated in 2002 from San Joaquin Valley College with an Associate of Arts degree in business administration. To further her independence, she obtained her drivers license, and with the assistance of Easter Seals, she purchased her first fully-equipped, hand-controlled vehicle.

When she was unable to find a job because of her disabilities, Ms. Riojas became an employee of Easter Seals. Her first job was as the office manager at the Child Development Center at Children's Hospital Central California. In 2005, she became the National Ambassador for Easter Seals and travelled all over the country spreading her joy and enthusiasm for life. Ms. Riojas eventually changed jobs, and in 2006, she began working for the Fresno Housing Authority as a counselor. This position has allowed her to assist families in her community that are facing housing and financial problems.