

TELEWORK IMPROVEMENTS ACT
OF 2010

SPEECH OF

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 14, 2010

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Telework Improvements Act of 2010, and thank the gentleman for yielding.

I have been pleased to work with the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. SARBANES, in sponsoring this legislation and thank him for his tireless efforts. I also appreciate the persistent work of the gentleman from New York, Mr. TOWNS, on this matter.

There are several points I would like to make, especially to my side of the aisle.

H.R. 1722 does not authorize any new appropriations of taxpayer funds. The Congressional Budget Office in April scored this legislation as deficit-neutral.

CBO estimated that the implementation costs of \$30 million over 5 years, assuming the appropriations of necessary funds, will come from developing regulations to implement telework programs, reporting and training costs. As my colleagues know, however, such costs are routinely absorbed by current administrative budgets in each agency.

Let me repeat—this legislation is deficit-neutral and does not authorize any new appropriations.

I have been actively engaged in the telework issue for over 20 years and know for a fact that telework saves money.

The limited administrative costs will be more than offset when a robust telework program is fully integrated into the federal government's Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP).

During February's snow storm, when the government was shut down for four days, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) estimated that roughly 30 percent of eligible federal workers in the metropolitan D.C. area teleworked.

Rather than absorbing the almost \$30 million in salaries for those employees for each day that it was closed, the federal government reaped the rewards of telework because those employees were productive and continued the work of the federal government when they couldn't reach their regular workplaces.

The government must be able to function during an emergency or natural disaster. Currently, only 56 percent of government agencies have formally included telework in their COOP plans. H.R. 1722 would change that policy.

What if there is another terrorist attack? Telework was vital to ensuring that our government continued to function after 9/11.

Or what if the "big one" earthquake hits California? Some 700,000 of the one million workers displaced by the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake—the World Series earthquake—teleworked from their homes or nearby locations, including federal workers.

What happens when snowmageddon hits the nation's capital again? Those federal employees who were eligible to telework recognized that the government must continue to

function and that people in other parts of our nation were counting on them to do their jobs.

Snowstorms or hurricanes or tornados should not prevent the most powerful nation on earth from functioning. We must fully embrace new technologies to keep the government working and telework is the ideal way to keep employees on the job.

Telework also provides other obvious benefits, from reducing traffic congestion, air pollution, gasoline consumption and our dependency on foreign oil to allowing individuals and working parents the flexibility to meet everyday demands outside of work.

Employers with a strong telework option report fewer days used by employees for sick leave, better worker retention, higher productivity, and increased morale. They also report overhead savings in office space.

The private sector has long recognized the benefits of telework. Roughly 115,000 IBM employees telecommute each day with 40 percent operating without dedicated office space. In return, IBM saves \$450 million a year in infrastructure costs.

One government agency, the Patent and Trademark Office (PTO), has had a long track record on telework mirroring the success that IBM has had in the private sector. Some 83 percent of eligible PTO employees telework. These arrangements have enabled the agency to save \$11 million otherwise needed for new office space.

No other federal agency has the policies in place to enable more than 50 percent of eligible employees to telework at least one day a week.

Work is something you do, not someplace you go. There is no magic about strapping ourselves into a car, driving sometimes up to an hour and a half to our workplaces, and sitting in front of our computers all day. Information accessed at workplaces can just as easily be accessed from computers in our living rooms.

Telework is a win-win for employers and employees and the federal government should be the model for telework in the 21st Century workplace.

H.R. 1722 is good government legislation and I urge my colleagues to support its passage.

REMARKS IN HONOR OF BLUE-
FIELD WEST VIRGINIA'S 200TH
LEMONADE DAYS**HON. NICK J. RAHALL II**

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 15, 2010

Mr. RAHALL. Madam Speaker, last week, a great tradition in my native West Virginia, Lemonade Days, marked a sweet milestone—its 200th serving of free lemonade—and I am proud to offer this salute to it.

The historic Lemonade Days was born in Bluefield, West Virginia in 1939, when the late Edward H. Steel dreamed up the idea of serving free lemonade to the town residents whenever the temperature reached above the 90-degree mark. It wasn't until three years later, in 1941, when the first free cup of lemonade

was served, as the temperature didn't hit the required 90-degrees until then.

According to a recent editorial in the local newspaper, the Bluefield Daily Telegraph, it took a historic 71 years for the city to serve 200 servings of free lemonade, and there have been at least 35 summers on record, in which the temperature never reached 90-degrees. Bluefield, West Virginia, has since received the moniker "Nature's Air-Conditioned City," as the temperature in this beautiful town rarely reaches this old faithful temperature.

The free lemonade tradition in Bluefield is tried and true. It has endured challenges from cooler than normal summer months with no free lemonade servings, a lemon and sugar shortage during World War II, a strike by the lemonade lassies and several friendly controversies over the temperature reading and whether or not the town thermometer is or isn't accurate. Yet the tradition—200 cups later—is still flourishing—whenever the temperature hits of course.

And what better place than Bluefield, West Virginia, to carry on a celebrated tradition that's as sweet as the people who live there? Nestled deep in the Appalachian Mountains, the Bluefield area of southern West Virginia is home to a magnificent coal story. Most of the towns in Mercer County were built due to the thriving coal operations when Bluefield emerged as the corporate center of these coalfields. Many shops, businesses and activities flourished around the activity of the busy rail yard. The striking architecture of the city was built in the 1920's and reflects the optimism and confidence of that area.

Eight of the areas downtown buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic places and locals and tourists bask in the hunt for old treasures in the town's antique and specialty shops.

Mercer County is home to several cultural art centers, theatres and galleries and boasts of a Natural Gravity Switching Rail yard; the Eastern Regional Coal Archives; Chicory Square, which houses 25 uniquely painted trains; a Railroad Museum, home to over 100 railroad lanterns, exhibits, and railroad artifacts, photographs and artwork; the last remaining structure from the Civil War, the McNutt House; Mercer County War Museum; Historic Bramwell, home to coal barons' old mansions, a train depot and many unique shops; two minor league baseball teams, the Bluefield Orioles (farm team for the Baltimore Orioles) and the Princeton Rays (the farm team of Tampa Bay); and the Coal Heritage Trail Interpretive Center in Bramwell, which houses relics and exhibits of West Virginia's truly inspiring coal story.

Locals and visitors may also enjoy three of southern West Virginia's most beautiful state parks—Camp Creek, Pinnacle Rock and Pipestem—as well some of the country's best ATV trails, hiking and biking trails, fishing and boating. There truly is something for everyone in Bluefield and in Mercer County West Virginia.

On behalf of all the residents of Bluefield in my native Mountain State who enjoy this wonderful tradition, Lemonade Days, I salute this historic sweet milestone and encourage anyone who hasn't visited this community to plan their next summer vacation in our "Nature's Air-Conditioned City."

STORY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE
SURVIVOR: VERGINE DJIHANIAN
KALEBDJIAN

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 15, 2010

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to memorialize and record a courageous story of survival of the Armenian Genocide. The Armenian Genocide, perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923, resulted in the death of 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children. As the U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Henry Morgenthau documented at the time, it was a campaign of "race extermination."

The campaign to annihilate the Armenian people failed, as illustrated by the proud Armenian nation and prosperous diaspora. It is difficult if not impossible to find an Armenian family not touched by the genocide, and while there are some survivors still with us, it is imperative that we record their stories. Through the Armenian Genocide Congressional Record Project, I hope to document the harrowing stories of the survivors in an effort to preserve their accounts and to help educate the Members of Congress now and in the future of the necessity of recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

Below is one of those stories:

Nora Hovsepian, the granddaughter of Vergine Djihanian, a Genocide survivor, expressed a story on her grandmother's behalf: "Vergine Djihanian was an Armenian girl who lived with her parents and eight brothers and sisters in the city of Erzinga, Turkey.

"In the summer of 1915, Vergine witnessed her father and uncle being beaten and axed to death in front of her eyes by Turkish gendarmes. Her mother and aunt frantically gathered up all of their children, took them to the nearby banks of the Euphrates River, said their prayers, and holding hands together at the river's edge, threw themselves into the raging waters, choosing to die by their own hands rather than falling victim to the barbarity of the Turkish soldiers surrounding them.

"All of them drowned, except 9-year-old Vergine, who clung to the branch of a weeping willow tree overhanging the river, instinctively wanting to survive. Vergine was too young to understand why her family was dying around her. She was too young to understand the fear of being raped or enslaved by Turkish soldiers, but she was old enough to know that if she could just hold on a little longer to the hanging branch, then maybe she could be saved. She hung on for what seemed an eternity. However, she felt hopeful again when a compassionate Kurdish family came to the river's edge, saw her desperation, and rescued her. She was the only one who survived the ordeal, saving her from an agonizing death.

"She worked as a maid in the house of her rescuers for a few years. Then American missionaries had come to the region trying to find lost souls. Vergine was taken to an American orphanage, and at the age of 14, she was reunited with her two older brothers who had been in America for several years and who were frantically trying to find any surviving members of their large family.

"Vergine came to New York on a ship through Ellis Island in 1921 and built her life

there. She met and married Missak Kalebldjian, another survivor of the Armenian massacres, in Adana in 1909, and she never told her only son or anyone else about the unspeakable horrors she had witnessed.

"Vergine Djihanian Kalebldjian was my grandmother. She told me her story when I was 10 years old, sitting me down with a serious and sad look, preparing me for what I was about to hear. As I listened, I could not even fathom what she had gone through at the same age, and until now, and for the rest of my life, I will never forget her story.

"Nearly 60 years after her nightmare, the memory remained fresh within my grandmother's mind. She wept uncontrollably as she told me the story of her family's fate. I tried to comfort her, telling her I did not want her to cry, but she wanted to get it out, as it had been festering inside her for all those years. She could not bring herself to tell my father, her only son, about her childhood as he was growing up, because she wanted to spare him the pain she had endured. She wanted to give him a better life and happy memories.

"My grandmother said that she had to pass down the legacy of what happened to her and her family to my generation, so that we could tell the world and seek justice for the unspeakable crime against our people.

"I will forever cherish her words and her memory."

RESPONSIBLE ESTATE TAX ACT

HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 15, 2010

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the "Responsible Estate Tax Act." This bill would provide a progressive rate structure for the Estate Tax rising from a rate of 45 percent for individual estates worth \$3.5 million or more to a rate of 65 percent for estates over \$500 million.

This year for the first time since 1916, the heirs to multi-million and billion dollar fortunes are able to receive their entire inheritance free of federal taxes, costing at least \$14.8 billion, that's billion with a "B," in lost revenue in 2010 alone. If we do not act before the end of the year, the Estate Tax will return next year at a rate of 55 percent for individual estates worth more than \$1 million. Most members of this body agree that neither of those structures is ideal and this legislation is an effort to find common ground on an issue that has been a source of much controversy in recent decades.

The Estate Tax was originally instituted to ensure that the very wealthiest families, those who have benefited from the greatness of the American economy, contribute back to that system so that others have a chance to succeed as well. The Responsible Estate Tax Act fits this mission by exempting over 99.7 percent of Americans from paying any estate tax whatsoever, while ensuring that the wealthiest Americans in our country pay their fair share.

At a time when unemployment benefits, Medicaid assistance and small business incentives are being delayed in this body because of their cost, it is unconscionable to let \$15 billion go tax free to the wealthiest handful

of Americans. In this nation, we agree that everyone should earn his or her wealth, status, and privilege. We don't believe in an aristocracy which hoards wealth and leaves the rest of us to fight over crumbs. This proposal maintains our consensus and ensures America remains the land of opportunity.

This bill is a companion to Senate legislation authored by Senators SANDERS, HARKIN, and WHITEHOUSE and I want to commend them for their hard work and leadership on this issue.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT
OF COLUMBIA NATIONAL DIS-
ASTER INSURANCE PROTECTION
ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 15, 2010

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the District of Columbia National Disaster Insurance Protection Act. This bill amends federal law to exempt from federal income taxation catastrophic insurance reserves and the investment income derived from such reserves if held by insurance companies in the District of Columbia. Under current federal law, these funds are subject to federal income taxation, which has led property and casualty insurers to hold billions of dollars in reserves, either directly or indirectly through reinsurance, in foreign jurisdictions, such as the Cayman Islands and Bermuda, where they are not subject to U.S. income taxation.

This bill serves important national purposes. This bill will help protect individuals and businesses with property and casualty insurance across the country, as well as U.S. taxpayers. Today, if a catastrophe occurred in the U.S. but foreign insurance companies did not pay the claims, U.S. taxpayers likely would be on the hook for the claims. In fact, after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the U.S. Government had to establish a federal backstop for losses related to terrorist attacks, the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act, which is still in place today. As the recent financial crisis showed, the U.S. Government has a strong interest in preventing systemic financial risks. Transparency, for example, is a major feature of the pending Wall Street reform bill, but there is little transparency in the catastrophic insurance market, posing a risk to the U.S. economy and taxpayers. Instead, individuals and businesses must rely on small foreign jurisdictions to preserve and protect catastrophic insurance reserves.

I chair the subcommittee that has primary jurisdiction over disasters. Since 9/11, we have plugged all of the most obvious holes in U.S. security. There is no reason to leave the funds necessary to recover from disasters offshore. By locating these funds in the nation's capital, the most protected and secure city in the U.S., Congress would be shoring up an existing but overlooked security vulnerability.