

which, in turn, has improved our productivity and our efficiency.

We are all painfully aware of the economic crisis in Asia. We will likely have a spirited debate on what the United States should do to help out our troubled allies and trading partners in that region. Regardless of whether we vote to use more American money to replenish IMF accounts, we are already the largest contributor to the fund. As such, it is our obligation to speak up for what is right.

My bill does not focus on what role the United States should have in the Asian recovery. My bill is focused on what the Asians should do to help themselves by upholding their trade reform commitments and ensuring fair trade. Many of the so-called Asian tigers have enjoyed dramatic growth by focusing on exports.

They have insulated their markets from foreign competition and often subsidized their exports to undercut the world price. This lack of real competition has weakened their domestic economies to the breaking point.

As the world struggles to deal with the Asian crisis, we ought to take responsibility as the world leader in trade and democracy. The bill I have introduced would use our voice and vote as the IMF, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank to insist that promised marketing-opening reforms are carried out in Asia.

For too long we have been shut out of these growing markets. For too long we have faced Asian goods unfairly dumped into our markets, hurting our factories and our workers.

Now is the time to make the changes that will help. We can help our workers and businesses by requiring that the Asians allow fair trade, and fair markets, for U.S. goods.

I urge my colleagues to support the Asian Trade Reform Implementation Act. It will send a strong and firm message to Asia: Open up your doors to U.S. products.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GOSS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BARTON of Texas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HOMELESS VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, from the first bullet fired at Lexington to

the jungles of Vietnam and the sand dunes of the Persian Gulf, this Nation has asked its citizens to step forward and defend the ideals and principles upon which representative self-government is founded.

Those who responded honorably to this summons have earned the privilege to be considered veterans. Their courage is not only measured in battle, but by their willingness to leave their homes, families, and their dreams behind and fight in defense of these principles.

Many of our citizens have paid the ultimate price in Europe, Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf. For some, the battle continues as they try to deal physically, emotionally, and mentally with scars that will not heal. Many have turned to drugs and alcohol for solace while others still suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder.

To these veterans, our Nation owes gratitude and respect, but words are simply not enough to convey this message. Our actions must speak louder than our words. We must continue our commitment to our veterans.

One area where improvements are needed is the housing and shelter for homeless veterans. Last year, I introduced legislation to address the plight of homeless veterans. H.R. 1754, the Robert Stodola Homeless Veteran Assistance Act, will require a 20 percent set-aside for homeless veterans under the Stewart McKinney Act program. For far too long, our veterans have not received adequate funding and services to help them transition back into mainstream society.

Earlier this week, we passed H.R. 217, the Homeless Housing Programs Consolidation and Flexibility Act. This legislation will consolidate current homeless programs and create two new block grants. The goal of this legislation is to give local communities greater flexibility in developing a wholistic plan to assist our homeless population.

H.R. 217 also includes an amendment that I offered with the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY). This amendment will give veteran advocacy groups an opportunity to participate in the local advisory boards as they coordinate a community homeless plan. In addition, homeless veterans will be considered a special needs population, making them a targeted population for housing programs and services.

Lastly, the Department of Housing and Urban Development will begin reporting data on homeless veterans in both the pre-grant application process and the post-grant reporting process. All grantees will provide information on the number of homeless individuals, including veterans, and how they plan to help them. This is a small but significant step in an effort to help our veterans. I would like to thank the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAZIO) for supporting my amendment.

In conclusion, I want to share with my colleagues the life of Robert

Stodola, the veteran after whom the legislation is named. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army. He moved to Whatcom County in the early 1980s.

On February 1, 1992, he was living in his Pinto station wagon near Nugents Corner on the Nooksack River. Two 19-year-old men needed money and, as reported in the Bellingham Herald, planned to roll the old man.

Armed with a baseball bat and tire iron, the two assailants beat Robert Stodola and stole approximately \$4. They stole \$4. After he was stabbed several times in the back, he was dumped into the river where, according to an autopsy, he drowned.

This legislation is a reminder to all Americans of the plight faced by homeless veterans. The veteran provisions in H.R. 217 will help get homeless veterans off the streets and into recovery.

If we are willing to summon our young people to battle, let us also be willing to provide housing, health care, and security for those who return.

□ 1400

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTION DISAPPROVING PRESIDENT'S CERTIFICATION OF MEXICO AS COOPERATING FULLY IN WAR ON DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House this afternoon to ask for support and cosponsorship of House Joint Resolution 114. This is a resolution that has been introduced by myself and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) that would decertify Mexico.

Most people are not familiar with the certification process. The certification process is a good process that does certify through our State Department whether or not individual countries are making progress in ending drug production and illegal drug trafficking. That certification is made. Once it is made, a country becomes eligible for benefits of the United States Government, benefits such as foreign aid, financial assistance, trade benefits and military assistance. It is a simple law and it does work and it does put pressure on countries who want these benefits of the United States to take action to stop illegal drug trafficking and production.

We do not believe that Mexico has made progress in stopping the wave of illegal drugs coming into this country. Unfortunately, last week the Clinton administration certified Mexico that they are making progress.

I ask my colleagues, is this progress? Let me cite the facts about Mexico:

Seventy percent of the hard drugs entering the United States come in through Mexico. That was the statistic provided to my national security subcommittee a year ago and it is the statistic today. A wave of heroin, a wave

of cocaine, a wave of methamphetamines and illegal hard designer drugs are coming into this country and affecting our youth, our schools, our cities and our streets.

Mexico has failed to extradite a single drug kingpin trafficker to the United States to stand trial.

The facts are that Mexico has failed to adopt a maritime narcotics agreement with the United States.

The facts are that the United States drug enforcement chief, the chief of our DEA, Tom Constantine recommended against certification of Mexico according to the Washington Post. Let me quote what he said in a confidential assessment by the Drug Enforcement Administration. It says that the country has had a continued impunity to arrest or to detain the country's biggest drug traffickers.

Let me quote. During the past year, the analysis reads, the government of Mexico has not accomplished its counternarcotics goal or succeeded in cooperation with the United States Government. The level of drug corruption in Mexico continues unabated. This is from the director of our United States Drug Enforcement Agency.

The Mexican government is involved in corruption from the street level to its highest offices and ministries.

Mexico has refused to authorize United States law enforcement agents to carry weapons for their own protection.

The scope of Mexican drug trafficking has increased significantly. This is not just my opinion, this is also the opinion of our Drug Enforcement Agency.

Again heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine continue to enter the United States in unprecedented quantities.

Let me tell my colleagues what this tidal wave of drugs is doing. We have 2 million Americans in prison. I am told that nearly 80 percent of those who are incarcerated in the jails and prisons of the United States are there because of their relationship to drugs, drug abuse or a drug-related crime. Heroin, cocaine and methamphetamine use by our youth has skyrocketed. We must decertify Mexico. I ask for Members' cosponsorship of this joint resolution.

SALUTE TO ROCKY FORD, COLORADO AND THE BOETTCHER FOUNDATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BOB SCHAFFER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, Rocky Ford, Colorado is one of the greatest places on earth. Rarely do great families, prosperous entrepreneurs, genuine leaders and abundant agriculture coexist in such prodigious proportions as they do in Rocky Ford.

Rocky Ford was doubly blessed recently to receive an important private grant which promises to move a signifi-

cant community project closer to completion. The objective of my remarks is to highlight this event and the people of Rocky Ford and to further call the Nation's attention to this great city and to the foundation which has made the municipality even greater.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Colorado's Boettcher Foundation, which has consistently improved the lives of Colorado's residents through grants for community projects and scholarships for students. The State of Colorado has clearly benefited by the work of the fine men and women of the organization and we all owe them a great debt of thanks. Today along with my constituents in Rocky Ford, I applaud the foundation specifically for its generous gift to the city and its people of funds to expand the Rocky Ford community center.

The funds donated to the city have allowed for a very special addition to the center. In order to complete the project, the city submitted a proposal and now that it has been approved, the grant will be sufficient to complete the new center, joining the new and old centers via a construction passageway. I join the city of Rocky Ford in extending our warmest thanks to the Boettcher Foundation.

Furthermore, I would like to offer my thanks to the Boettcher Foundation as a whole. The grant awarded my constituents in Rocky Ford is one of many that have aided projects across the State. Thanks to the foundation, dozens of Colorado programs serving thousands of its citizens have received funding. These programs range from athletic opportunities for disabled youth to housing services to community buildings. Every corner of our great State has at some point been aided by the helping hand of the Boettcher Foundation. We are all the better for it.

As we recognize the Boettcher Foundation and its many contributions, let us remember that it is individuals and groups such as this one that cause America to thrive. Their generosity and good deeds are a credit to the State of Colorado and to the Nation.

Again, Mr. Speaker, congratulations to the good people of Rocky Ford and our friends at the Boettcher Foundation.

FEDERAL COMMITMENT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, today all over America our schools are inadequate, overcrowded and literally falling down. In Miami students learn to read and write in temporary trailers. Here in our Nation's capital, schools have been closed for violating the fire code. In New York City, students dodge falling plaster and attend class in hallways and cafeterias. It is really ex-

traordinary to me after having visited so many of the schools in the metropolitan region of New York that in the United States of America youngsters go to school with plastic actually holding up the ceiling. This, in the most prosperous and advanced Nation in the world. It just does not make any sense.

A 1996 GAO report confirmed the worst. Record numbers of school buildings across America are in disrepair. One-third of all schools serving 14 million students need extensive repairs. About 60 percent of schools need to have roofs, walls or floors fixed. With school enrollment skyrocketing, this problem will only get worse. It is time for the Federal Government to act. This is a local problem that demands a national response. Our school modernization bond proposal will allocate \$19.4 billion for zero interest bonds to fix old schools and build new ones all across the Nation. This is absolutely an essential idea that is creating a partnership between the Federal, State and local governments. The Federal Government should not assume the total responsibility, but we have an obligation to build that partnership. If the Federal Government can help States build prisons and roads, then certainly they should be able to help build schools.

Just look at some of the numbers. Due to the baby boom echo, the children of baby boomers filling the schools, particularly the high schools across the country are once again bulging with students. The demand for school facilities will continue to be high. School enrollment is projected to continue to climb over the next several years, growing from 52.2 million in the 1997-98 school year to 54.3 million by the year 2006-07. With school enrollments rising at the same time that the budgets for building new classrooms have been constrained, overcrowding has become a common problem.

I say to my partners on the other side of the aisle, if we really want to keep down property taxes, then in addition to building roads and highways and bridges and prisons, we have a responsibility to help with our schools. Because of this partnership, it will keep down the local property taxes. This is everywhere.

In California, a 35 percent increase in high school enrollment is projected. In North Carolina, 27 percent increase. In Arizona, 25 percent. In Nevada, 24 percent. In Massachusetts, 23 percent. In Rhode Island, 21 percent. In Georgia, 20 percent. In Virginia, 20 percent. In Texas, 19 percent. And on and on. The bottom line is we have to build schools. The Education Department estimates that 6,000 new schools will have to be built over the next 10 years in response to this rapid growth in school enrollment.

What do poor building conditions have to do with our students' achievement? According to all the studies that have been done, there is a direct connection. For example, a 1991 study of