

western nations. All of us can take a full measure of satisfaction in Poland's many accomplishments. I look forward to the continuing close work between the United States and Poland on behalf of our many shared interests. Together we can further peace and prosperity in Europe.

I urge adoption of the resolution.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate with the Polish people the 205th anniversary of the adoption of Poland's first Constitution. As the first liberal Constitution in Europe in 1791, it was preceded only by our own Constitution in 1787. This Polish document established a constitutional monarch and recognized the peasants for the first time as members of the nation. Mirroring our constitution, it too established three independent branches of government. It also carries the honor of being the first constitution established through a peaceful revolution.

Unfortunately, this expression of liberty to all, by rule by majority, and religious freedom survived for less than 2 years as it became a moral threat to the neighboring absolute monarchies. Poland lost its independence that year when it was partitioned by Imperial Russia and Prussia. Only in the last 5 years has Poland again emerged as an independent nation through the fall of communism.

Currently, free Poland enjoys open elections and economic success. The return of democratic principles to this nation has elevated its hopes for inclusion in the North American Treaty Organization [NATO] and full incorporation into the European Union.

With Chicago the largest Polish city next to Warsaw, and with many of her immigrants residing in my district, I am pleased to support this resolution which honors the advancement of democracy in a country close to my heart and the hearts of my constituents.

Mr. BORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 165, which congratulates the Polish people around the world as they commemorate the 205th anniversary of Poland's first Constitution. I am proud to join Representatives QUINN, KLECZKA, FLANAGAN, and HOKE as an original cosponsor of this resolution.

Inspired by our landmark Constitution, the people of Poland in 1791 adopted a constitution with guarantees of individual and religious freedoms, and the creation of distinct legislative, executive, and judicial powers. The concepts of constitutional democracy that were embodied in the Polish Constitution were introduced to Poland by American Revolutionary War hero Thaddeus Kosciuszko. Designed to create a progressive constitutional monarchy, the 1791 Constitution was the first liberal constitution in Europe and represented Central Europe's first attempt to end feudal government.

Unfortunately, this historic and ground breaking Constitution survived for less than 2 years. In 1793, Russia and Prussia partitioned Poland, and Poland's Constitution was abolished. This loss, however, did not diminish the Polish people's will for achieving the freedoms embodied in the Constitution. For two centuries, the principles of the 1791 Constitution endured and inspired a powerful new national consciousness. Poland suffered greatly under imperial and communist rule, but its people never lost sight of the freedoms and rights embodied in the Constitution.

Today, Poland is enjoying its new-found freedoms, pursuing the principles first drafted

in the 1791 Constitution. Poland has emerged from an oppressive Communist state to a vigorous, free-market democracy. Poland is pursuing complete inclusion in the institutions of the western community, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The United States Congress must continue to express its support of Poland as it takes these bold steps into the 21st century.

This month marks the 205th anniversary of the historic Polish Constitution. House Concurrent Resolution 165 demonstrates to the people of Poland, and Polish people around the world, that the United States recognizes Poland's rebirth as a free and independent nation, and will continue its commitment to foster democracy throughout central Europe. This resolution salutes Poland for its patience in realizing the long-awaited principles of the 1791 Constitution, and expresses support for Poland's challenges in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important resolution. The Polish people will be grateful to know that the United States House of Representatives stands shoulder-to-shoulder with them as they enjoy the freedoms that were so eloquently declared in the 1791 Polish Constitution.

Mrs. KENNELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 165 commemorating the 205th anniversary of the Polish Constitution.

In the two centuries that have passed since this Constitution was adopted, Poland and its people have endured great tragedy and turmoil. But through these years—from the partition of Poland at the end of the 18th century, to the Napoleonic Wars, which resulted in the disappearance of the country until the end of World War I, the tragedies of World War II, and over 40 years of Communist rule, the love of the Polish people for freedom and democracy has never diminished.

It is fitting that the nation with the first liberal constitution in Europe, and the first modern constitution established through a peaceful revolution, was also the first nation to break free from the Soviet empire and establish the first of the new democracies in Europe.

As Poland was a leader more than 200 years ago, so it is a leader now. Its example of a successful transition to democracy in 1989 is a beacon of hope not only for other nations of Eastern Europe but for nations around the world. I congratulate the Polish people on the 205th anniversary of their Constitution and share their confidence that its successful democracy will continue to flourish into the 21st century.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WICKER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 165.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Concurrent Resolution 165, concurrent resolution just agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF
CHORNOBYL NUCLEAR DISASTER

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 167) recognizing the 10th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, and supporting the closing of the Chernobyl nuclear powerplant.

The clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 167

Whereas April 26, 1996, marks the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster;

Whereas United Nations General Assembly resolution 50/134 declares April 26, 1996, as the International Day Commemorating the Tenth Anniversary of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant Accident and encourages member states to commemorate this tragic event;

Whereas serious radiological, health, and socioeconomic consequences for the populations of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia, as well as for the populations of other affected areas, have been identified since the disaster;

Whereas over 3,500,000 inhabitants of the affected areas, including over 1,000,000 children, were exposed to dangerously high levels of radiation;

Whereas the populations of the affected areas, especially children, have experienced significant increases in thyroid cancer, immune deficiency diseases, birth defects, and other conditions, and these trends have accelerated over the 10 years since the disaster;

Whereas the lives and health of people in the affected areas continue to be heavily burdened by the ongoing effects of the Chernobyl accident;

Whereas numerous charitable, humanitarian, and environmental organizations from the United States and the international community have committed to overcome the extensive consequences of the Chernobyl disaster;

Whereas the United States has sought to help the people of Ukraine through various forms of assistance;

Whereas humanitarian assistance and public health research into Chernobyl's consequences will be needed in the coming decades when the greatest number of latent health effects is expected to emerge;

Whereas on December 20, 1995, the Ukrainian Government, the governments of the G-7 countries, and the Commission of the European Communities signed a memorandum of understanding to support the decision of Ukraine to close the Chernobyl nuclear power plant by the year 2000 with adequate support from the G-7 countries and international financial institutions;

Whereas the United States strongly supports the closing of the Chernobyl nuclear