

over 3 years under the constant stress of this violent conflict will ever fully recover from the terrifying experience. Many experts warn that Kosovo could become the next major battleground in the former Yugoslavia, possibly drawing neighboring countries into a regional war, presenting a very real danger to regional stability. Mr. Speaker, we must do everything possible to prevent this tragedy from occurring.

This resolution aims to bring peace and stability to Kosovo by insisting that the situation in Kosovo must be resolved before the outer wall of sanctions against Serbia is lifted and that country is able to return to the international community. Furthermore, this resolution insists that the human rights of the people of Kosovo must be restored to levels guaranteed by international law.

Just this past month, we witnessed what I believe is a positive sign that peace and prosperity lie ahead for the people of Kosovo. After much urging, the United States Information Agency finally opened an office in Kosovo. This is a very encouraging step, and I hope that the State Department continues to make Kosovo a priority by appointing a special envoy to aid in negotiating a resolution to the crisis in Kosovo.

I thank my colleague Mr. ENGEL for bringing the situation in Kosovo to the attention of Congress, and I strongly urge my colleagues to support the passage of this resolution which will help to bring resolution of the crisis in Kosovo.

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE,
JUSTICE, AND STATE, THE JUDICIARY,
AND RELATED AGENCIES
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1997

SPEECH OF

HON. MATTHEW G. MARTINEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 24, 1996

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 3814) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997, and for other purposes,

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. Chairman, I would like to begin by commending my colleague, Congressman DEUTSCH, on the exemplary work he has done on behalf of public safety officers nationwide.

I understand that the impetus for the gentleman's efforts came about when two police officers in his district were critically injured in an attempt to defuse a highly volatile hostage situation. After being severely burned and prevented from returning to duty as a result of their injuries, Officers Alu and O'Hara were threatened with the termination of their health care policies.

I find it unconscionable that we would reward public safety officers for making our lives safer and more secure by terminating their insurance policies and leaving their families vulnerable to financial destitution. Apparently the State of Florida agrees. In response to the situation in which Officers Alu and O'Hara found themselves, the Florida State Legislature promptly passed legislation guaranteeing

health care coverage for public safety officers injured in the line of duty and unable to return to work.

However, while Florida responded swiftly and humanely to this egregious loophole in the law, public safety officers in many other States remain vulnerable to this blatantly unjust consequence of their jobs. For that reason, Congressman DEUTSCH introduced H.R. 2912, the Alu-O'Hara Public Safety Officers Health Benefits Act, of which I am proud to be a cosponsor. H.R. 2912, which is now being offered as an amendment to the Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations for fiscal year 1997, gives incentives to States to ensure that they provide security for their public safety officers. While this amendment would not require that public safety officers receive additional benefits, it would ensure that they, and their families, would continue to receive the benefits they would have received had they not been injured on the job.

Let Florida be an example to us all. Pass this amendment and provide protection for those who protect us.

CONFERRING JURISDICTION WITH
RESPECT TO LAND CLAIMS OF
ISLETA PUEBLO

SPEECH OF

HON. JOE SKEEN

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 29, 1996

Mr. SKEEN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity today to offer my thoughts and comments on H.R. 740, the Pueblo of Isleta Indian Land Claims Act, which would permit the Pueblo of Isleta to file claims for the taking of aboriginal lands under the Indian Claims Commission Act of 1951.

Identical legislation unanimously passed the House in the 102d Congress but was not acted on in the Senate. Interestingly then, in the 103d Congress, the Senate unanimously passed identical legislation but it was never acted on by the House. I am hopeful that we will finally see this legislation passed by both Chambers in the same session of Congress.

In 1978, another New Mexican Indian tribe sought passage of similar legislation. That year, the Congress granted the Zuni tribe an extension of the statute of limitations under the Indian Claims Commission Act so that they could file their claim in court. This is all I seek for the Pueblo of Isleta.

There is further substantial precedent for this legislation beyond the Zuni case mentioned. Also in 1978, legislation was passed into law that authorized the Wichita Indian tribe of Oklahoma to file with the Indian claims commission. In more recent times, Congress passed special legislation allowing the Cow Creek band in Oregon, the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, the Sioux tribes, and the Black-foot tribes to file claims with the Indian Claims Commission.

In the Zuni and Isleta cases, the pueblos failed to act under the Indian Claims Commission Act because of erroneous advice received from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Pueblo officials were not informed that a claim under the act could be made based on aboriginal use and occupancy.

The Isleta Pueblo has previously filed a very limited claim under this act. However, their

claim was not based on aboriginal use and occupancy. It has been the aboriginal use and occupancy issue which has been the basis for a majority of the Indian tribal claims under the Indian Claims Commission Act. None has been based on a claim founded on specific documentary evidence.

In addition, this legislation contains a provision for the payment of interest, consistent with previously passed legislation. However, it is not automatic; it provides that interest may be awarded at the court's discretion. It seems to me that the payment of interest is an equitable way to compensate the pueblo in lieu of the beneficial use of the land by the pueblo since the land was taken by the Government. If the United States acts as a supreme sovereign and confiscates land, it necessarily violates its fiduciary duty.

I would like to state that this bill does not support the merits of the pueblo's claim which it would lodge in the claims court; it merely grants the opportunity for the pueblo to present the merits of its case in the appropriate judicial forum.

Again, I urge your support of this legislation as we finally try to correct this longstanding injustice.

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING THE
FILIPINO WORLD WAR II VETERANS

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 29, 1996

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of several measures that will benefit veterans in my district and around the Nation. Today, the House considers veterans health care eligibility reform, the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act, and the honoring of Filipino veterans who served during World War II.

The Veterans Employment Opportunities Act will strengthen veterans' preference and increase employment opportunities for veterans with the Federal Government. I am pleased to have supported this bill when it came through the committee on which I sit, the Government Reform and Oversight Committee.

I believe in the importance of preventing Federal agencies from unfairly stripping veterans of their preference rights during a reduction in force. By ensuring that veterans have the right to take their cases to Federal court when their other legal avenues have been exhausted, this bill is a step forward for America's veterans.

Another bill that I am happy to see come to the House floor is a bill to reform veteran's health care eligibility. After veterans have put their lives on the line for America, we need to do everything we can to provide the health care veterans need.

The eligibility reform measure will change the way veterans health care is provided in the future. The new system will include a clinically appropriate "need for care" test to ensure that medical judgment is the fundamental criteria in determining the level and amount of care to be provided. However, although I agree that the eligibility rules must change to accommodate our veterans, we also need to