

world. As Eddie says, "you don't have to be Polish-American, Slovenian-American, Ukrainian-American, or German-American. All you've gotta do is have ears!"

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 1870—
YOUNG AMERICAN WORKERS
BILL OF RIGHTS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 26, 1997

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, several days ago our colleagues in this House rose in support of the Flag Burning Amendment. We voted to protect our flag and all that it stands for in America's past as well as its future. Today, I rise to urge my colleagues in this Congress to consider and adopt legislation that will protect the children who live under that flag.

I welcome the fact that a number of our colleagues have begun to look at the problems American children are facing. Our colleague from Texas, NICK LAMPSON, and our colleague from Alabama, ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER, JR., should be recognized for their efforts in establishing the Caucus on Missing and Exploited Children. We also owe particular gratitude for the bipartisan efforts of our colleague from Florida, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, and our colleague from Texas, SHEILA JACKSON-LEE, who have begun to set the agenda for the newly formed Children's Caucus. These two caucuses reflect the concern of Members of Congress and the concern of the American people for our children.

Mr. Speaker, it is within this framework that I am delighted to inform my colleagues that I have introduced H.R. 1870, The Young American Workers' Bill of Rights. I am pleased that our distinguished colleague and my neighbor in California, TOM CAMPBELL, has joined me as the principal cosponsor along with another 30 of our colleagues have joined us in introducing this legislation. This bipartisan bill is an example of the way all of us must work together to make our children's lives safer and more secure as they enter the work force. No bill introduced in the 105th Congress will have greater potential for protecting and helping our nation's young people.

As the former chairman of the House Government Operations Subcommittee on Employment and Housing for several years in previous Congresses, I learned first hand about how exploitation, injuries and death have taken their toll on America's young workers. In hearings on child labor, I heard horror stories about young people losing their lives to deliver pizza within a 30-minute time limit. I heard of others who lost their lives or suffered permanent and crippling injuries because they were using equipment which they were not sufficiently trained or sufficiently experienced to use. Unfortunately, the exploitation of child labor in America, which I found during those hearings of the Employment and Housing Subcommittee, is not a thing of the past. It remains a serious problem, it is a growing problem, and it continues to threaten the welfare and education of American teenagers.

At the same time, however, we recognize the importance of work and the value of the work experience. The Speaker of the House,

Mr. GINGRICH, has spoken about the need to encourage the development of a positive work ethic in this country. I concur. We must do all we can to help our children prepare for their future in the Nation's work force. At the same time, however, we must be certain that our children have safe and secure places to work when they do work as teenagers, and we must be certain that the work experience does not interfere with the education of our young people. Mr. Speaker, it is to address these concerns that we have introduced H.R. 1870.

Mr. Speaker, the first matter that our legislation addresses is the concern for our children's safety. A study covering the period 1992-95 by the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that during that four year period, 720 young people suffered work-related fatalities. Other studies have concluded that an additional 200,000 young people suffer serious work-related injuries each year.

Several provisions of our legislation are crafted to deal with this serious matter of workplace safety. Our bill specifies that young people may not use or clean certain types of particularly hazardous equipment and many not work in certain hazardous occupations. The bill also specifies that children are not to work late hours, the times when the most serious injuries and fatalities take place. It also establishes new criminal sanctions for willful violations of child labor laws that result in the death or serious injury of a child. Civil penalties would be established for willful and repeated violators of our child labor laws.

The second concern that our legislation addresses is the problem of work interfering with our children's education. It is essential that we send a message to these young workers that education must be their number one priority. Our legislation makes it clear that excessive work in unsafe environments will no longer be tolerated. The Young American Worker's Bill of Rights will address the needs of children under the age of 18 or those who are eighteen and still a full-time high school student. Students need to spend much of their day in classrooms, libraries and involved in their school's activities. They need to experience young adulthood, not make the quick leap from childhood to adulthood. By entering the world of adults before they are ready, many of these young people become vulnerable to alcohol and drug abuse. They frequently fail to hand in school assignments, if they bother attending school at all.

Today many of our teenagers are working more than many adults who are employed full time. Many are working more than 40 hours per week in addition to attempting to attend school. It is no wonder one of the most common phrases heard by teachers from their students today is, "I am so stressed." Testimony of many experts on education have alerted us to the dangers of too much work. In addition to the substance abuse studies, other studies have been done on the effect too many hours have on the grades our children are getting. A study of students in New Hampshire concludes that there is a direct correlation between grades in English and the number of hours worked. The more hours a student works, the slower the student's grade. Teachers often comment that a job is the reason some students drop out.

In order to assure that education is given proper priority, the legislation establishes limits on the number of hours that children can work

when school is in session, and limits late hours on school days. Teenagers attending school would not be employed more than 4 hours per day while school is in session and they would not be permitted to work after 10 p.m. on school nights. The law also has provisions to insure that schools are informed if students are working.

Mr. Speaker, as we enter the next century, we must modernize our Nation's child labor laws. Our legislation amends the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to reflect conditions in today's world. We must remind ourselves that the romantic notion of an after school job of the 50's and 60's is a thing of the past. Some employers have for too long been able to write off the death of a child as merely the cost of doing business as they pay a modest fine. The Young American Worker's Bill of Rights will impose stricter civil as well as criminal penalties for employers who willingly violate the law to assure protection for our young men and women.

Mr. Speaker, I never again want to stand next to parents and listen as they tell of the senseless death of their children. I never again want to listen to the testimony of young workers as they sit before me missing arms or legs because they were asked to operate unsafe equipment or machinery which they were not trained to use. I never want to see the frustration on the faces of teachers who tell me about their students falling asleep in class, failing to hand in assignments, or who just drop out because they cannot keep up both work and school.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to announce the support of the National PTA for H.R. 1870, The Young American Workers Bill of Rights. The PTA is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. It is interesting to note that in their first year of existence they asked the Congress to do something to protect our nation's children in the workplace. It is a sad commentary that today they are still asking us to protect our teenagers. Some 50 other organizations which focus on youth and education have indicated their support for this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we took that action. I invite my colleagues to join me and my colleagues to cosponsor this important legislation.

HONORING RUBY MOY, DIRECTOR
OF U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

HON. EARL F. HILLIARD

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 26, 1997

Mr. HILLIARD. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to congratulate the President for his wise choice of Ms. Ruby Moy as the new staff director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. I am confident she will do a wonderful job in her new position.

Before Ruby Moy was nominated for this position, she was well known for the expertise and acumen of her position as the executive assistant to the Director of the White House Office of Public Liaison, now the Secretary of Labor, the Honorable Alexis Herman. Ruby Moy held this position for 4 years, and was intricately involved in constituency outreach programs and official White House events.

Prior to working for the President, she served as the chief of staff to Congressman