

his wife Susan, and children Jennifer, Sarah, and Kevin, "Fair Winds and Following Seas" as they begin their next voyage.

NEW ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROVISIONS IN THE UNITED STATES-PUERTO RICO POLITICAL STATUS ACT

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 1997

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I am an original cosponsor of United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act, chairman of the subcommittee which had original jurisdiction over this legislation, and an advocate of English as the official language of the United States. In this capacity I want to clarify statements which are being circulated outside of and within Congress based on incorrect and outdated information that contradicts the English language provisions of the legislation as recently amended.

This remarkable bill sponsored by Resources Committee Chairman BILL YOUNG, Speaker, NEWT GINGRICH, Resident Commissioner CARLOS ROMERO-BARCELÓ of Puerto Rico, and some 90 others, provides a three-stage self-determination process to resolve the United States century-old political status problem with Puerto Rico by the year 2010. The United States citizens of Puerto Rico and all U.S. taxpayers deserve no less.

Since the United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act was first introduced in the 104th Congress, extensive English language provisions and requirements have been added to build upon the 100-year tradition of English as an official language of Puerto Rico. The new and amended English language provisions are directed at the existing status of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico as a territory under United States sovereignty, and alternatively, the transition of Puerto Rico to a State, depending on the outcome of the legislation's congressionally authorized referendum.

Thus, the United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act, H.R. 856, provides an informed self-determination process for the United States citizens of Puerto Rico and clearly addresses the language issue from several vantage points, without violating constitutional limits affecting the people and State government. The language provisions of the bill as amended and approved with virtual unanimity by the Committee on Resources on May 21, 1997, follows:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROVISIONS IN H.R. 856, THE UNITED STATES-PUERTO RICO POLITICAL STATUS ACT

Language Policy [Section 3(b)]—

"English shall be the common language of mutual understanding in the United States, and shall apply in all of the States duly and freely admitted to the Union."

"The Congress recognizes that at the present time, Spanish and English are the joint official languages of Puerto Rico, and have been for nearly 100 years."

"English is the official language of Federal courts in Puerto Rico."

"The ability to speak English is a requirement for Federal jury service."

"Congress has the authority to expand existing English language requirements in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico."

"In the event that the referendum held under this Act result in approval of sovereignty leading to Statehood, English language requirements of the Federal Government shall apply in Puerto Rico to the same extent as Federal law requires throughout the United States."

Statehood Ballot Definition [Section 4(a)(C)(7)]—

"English is the official language of business and communication in Federal courts and Federal agencies as made applicable by Federal law to every other State, and

"Puerto Rico is enabled to expand and build upon existing law establishing English as an official language of the State government, courts, and agencies."

Transition Plan [Section 4(b)(C)(i)]—

"In the event of a vote in favor of Statehood, the president shall include in the transition plan proposals and incentives to:

"Increase the opportunities of the people of Puerto Rico to learn to speak, read, write, and understand English fully, including but not limited to, the teaching of English in public schools, fellowships, and scholarships."

"The transition plan should promote the usage of English by the United States citizens of Puerto Rico, in order to best allow for—

"The enhancement of the century old practice of English as an official language of Puerto Rico,

"The use of language skills necessary to contribute most effectively to the Nation in all aspects, including but not limited to Hemispheric trade,

"The promotion of efficiency and fairness to all people in the conduct of the Federal and State government's official business; and

"The ability of all citizens to take full advantage of the economical, educational, and occupational opportunities through full integration with the United States."

MAKING AIRLINE TAXES PALATABLE

HON. STEVE C. LATOURETTE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 1997

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I call to my colleagues' attention the attached editorial that appeared in the Cleveland Plain Dealer on Thursday, July 17, 1997. As the editorial accurately states, under H.R. 2014, "fees for using the tax-supported airways would be more evenly distributed among the airlines, whatever their size. And the airline's (Continental) numbers support this contention."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker for allowing me this opportunity to raise this important issue which will significantly impact consumers and our Nation's airline industry.

[From the Cleveland Plain Dealer, July 17, 1997]

MAKING AIRLINE TAXES PALATABLE

U.S. airline passengers can expect to be squeezed to help pay for a range of congressional tax cuts.

New taxes on air travel are inevitable, whether a Senate or House version of a revenue-raising measure is adopted. But the latter offers fliers a better and fairer deal.

The country's major airlines say they are not opposed to such taxes in principle. After all, they should be intended primarily to guarantee a reliable funding source for the Federal Aviation Administration, which operates the national air traffic control system and other support services.

But the big carriers have lobbied vigorously against the Senate's proposal to retain the existing 10 percent excise tax on most domestic tickets—reduced to 7.5 percent on some rural segments—and place a similar charge on the domestic portion of an international flight.

Instead, they have embraced a plan by House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Archer for a 7.5 percent domestic tax with an additional \$2 charge for each segment of a flight.

Both bills call for increased taxes on international travel. The House version is steeper, but is expected to be modified in conference.

Texas Republican Archer's bill is favored by Continental Airlines, the largest operator at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport, among comparable carriers that charge a variety of fares on most of their routes. But Southwest Airlines and other discount carriers prefer the Senate plan.

Continental rightly argues that under the Archer plan, fees for using the tax-supported airways would be more evenly distributed among the airlines, whatever their size. And the airline's numbers support this contention.

Continental also complains that imposing a tax on the domestic portion of a one-stop international flight, as in the Senate version, would put U.S. flag carriers at a disadvantage against foreign airlines that operate nonstop from U.S. gateway cities. Cleveland's case for adding a London flight could be damaged if such a tax is introduced, Continental says.

Airline excise taxes have been around since 1941, when a 5 percent levy was imposed on most means of travel. Before 1978, the government set ticket prices. But with deregulation's variations in ticket prices, different passengers on the same flight can pay different amounts in taxes for the same use of the air traffic control system.

Continental and the other major airlines argue that the Archer plan brings the tax system closer in concept to a user fee, which they believe the public would support. But its bigger appeal, for now, is that it would not make such a dent in the pocketbook.

CONSUMERS' NUTRITION AND HEALTH INFORMATION ACT

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 1997

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce H.R. 2208—the Consumers' Nutrition and Health Information Act. I am pleased that my colleagues Representatives ED TOWNS, MARTIN FROST, and BOBBY RUSH are joining me in supporting this legislation as original cosponsors.

The Consumers Nutrition and Health Information Act is designed to increase consumers' access to timely, accurate information about the health benefits of foods and nutrients. It is very similar to the language on health claims contained in the Food and Drug Administration [FDA] reform bill reported with bipartisan support by the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee last month.

The bill would permit manufacturers to make health claims on food labels without having to go through the long, complex FDA preapproval process when claims were based on authoritative statements published by the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for