

Whereas democracy and stability in Cambodia are threatened by the continued use of violence to resolve political differences;

Whereas the administration has suspended assistance to Cambodia for 1 month in response to the deteriorating situation in Cambodia; and

Whereas the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has decided to delay indefinitely Cambodian membership: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

(1) the forcible assault upon the democratically elected Government of Cambodia is illegal and unacceptable;

(2) the recent events in Cambodia constitute a military coup against the duly elected democratic Government of Cambodia;

(3) the authorities in Cambodia should take immediate steps to halt all extralegal violence and to restore fully civil, political, and personal liberties to the Cambodian people, including freedom of the press, speech, and assembly, as well as the right to a democratically elected government;

(4) the United States should release the report by the Federal Bureau of Investigation concerning the March 30, 1997, grenade attack in Phnom Penh;

(5) the United States should press the authorities in Cambodia to investigate fully and impartially all abuses and extralegal actions that have occurred in Cambodia since July 4, 1997, and to bring to justice all those responsible for such abuses and extra-legal actions;

(6) the administration should immediately invoke section 508 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1997 (Public Law 104-208), as it is required to do;

(7) the United States should urgently request an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council to consider all options to restore peace in Cambodia;

(8) the United States should encourage the Secretary General of the United Nations to expand the monitoring operations of the United Nations Special Representative on Human Rights in Cambodia;

(9) the United States and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) should coordinate efforts to restore democracy, stability, and the rule of law in Cambodia;

(10) direct United States assistance to the Government of Cambodia should continue to be suspended until violence ends, a democratically elected government is reconstituted, necessary steps have been taken to ensure that the election scheduled for 1998 takes place in a free and fair manner, the military is depoliticized, and the judiciary is made independent; and

(11) the United States should call for an emergency meeting of the Donors' Consultative Group for Cambodia to encourage the suspension of assistance as part of a multilateral effort to encourage respect for democratic processes, constitutionalism, and the rule of law.

EQUAL PARENTS WEEK

HON. JAY KIM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 1997

Mr. KIM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind my colleagues that this coming Sunday signals the beginning of Equal Parents Week. Unfortunately, because of our busy legislative schedule, I will not be able to attend Equal

Parents Week ceremonies in my district this weekend.

Equal Parents Week brings to the attention of our Nation the importance of both parents in the raising of a child, especially in cases of a divorce. Unfortunately, in many cases a divorce results in a custody battle that, in addition to severely hurting the child, renders one parent with fewer parental rights than the other.

As a result, the noncustodial parent loses a great deal of his or her parental rights, and is thus relegated to a position as a "second class" parent. I believe that, as long as it is in the best interest and safety of the child, parents should work together to make certain that both parents have an equal opportunity to play an active role in that child's upbringing.

Mr. Speaker, the positive influence that both parents can play in the upbringing of a child is of the utmost importance. I am pleased we take the time to celebrate this occasion each year, and I salute groups like the Coalition of Parent Support, for hosting events to bring this important issue to our attention.

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS AND THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE GUN BAN

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 1997

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, the domestic violence gun ban amendment, included in last year's omnibus appropriations bill, was intended to protect victims of domestic abuse by prohibiting anyone convicted of a domestic violence misdemeanor from purchasing or possessing a handgun. Supporters of this provision wanted to ensure that if one spouse was convicted of this kind of offense, he or she could not then have access to a gun, which could increase the likelihood of deadly violence against the abused spouse in the future. However, I do not believe that this amendment also intended another consequence: taking away the livelihood of some Americans.

The domestic violence gun ban amendment would make it illegal for law enforcement officials to do their job, because it would prohibit them from carrying a gun during normal work hours.

There is a simple answer to this problem. My legislation would allow law enforcement officials with past domestic violence misdemeanor convictions to carry a handgun on duty while engaged in official police business. A police officer with a prior domestic violence conviction would pick up his or her gun when beginning a shift at work, and then turn in the weapon when they leave to go home. I believe that my legislation is a practical solution to allow law enforcement officers to continue to do their jobs, while also protecting victims of spousal abuse. I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

THE VETERANS SEXUAL TRAUMA TREATMENT ACT

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 24, 1997

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of the Veterans Sexual Trauma Treatment Act, which I have introduced today with the support of 33 of my colleagues.

I want to begin by thanking four outstanding Veterans Service Organizations; the American Legion, Amvets, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Vietnam Veterans of America for their leadership on this issue. Their input on this legislation has been invaluable. I am very proud that they all strongly support this legislation and thank them for their work.

The Veterans Sexual Trauma Treatment Act provides very real help to veterans who experience the very real problem of sexual abuse or harassment while serving in our nation's military. The numbers are alarming. In 1996, approximately 190,000 women served in our armed services.

A Department of Defense survey of active duty women found that 5 percent of women had been the victim of a sexual assault. That is almost 10,000 women. These statistics—and news reports of incidents like those at Aberdeen—have made clear the existence of very serious problem in our Armed Forces and the need to move aggressively to end the tragedy of sexual abuse.

However, we must also take aggressive steps to help our veterans after this abuse or harassment has occurred. The pain and suffering that sexual abuse causes does not end when a person leaves the military. The physical, psychological and emotional effects are often just beginning.

That is why I believe the Veterans' Sexual Trauma Treatment Act is so important. This legislation strengthens existing Veterans Administration programs for aiding victims of sexual assault. Sadly, the current law is inadequate. It states that the VA may provide counseling and care to victims of sexual assault, and that the program must be reauthorized each and every year.

It excludes members of the reserves and National Guard—thereby denying care to some soldiers called to duty during the Gulf War. It also excludes any military personnel who separate before 2 years of duty with our armed forces. Finally, the VA has done a woeeful job of notifying veterans of what services are available to them and how to access these services.

I don't believe these half-hearted provisions are acceptable for veterans who have made whole-hearted commitments to serving our Nation.

We know that problems exist. We should pass legislation that guarantees care.

Our bill assures a national commitment to our veterans. Our bill makes the provision of care to victims of sexual assault or harassment mandatory—and permanently authorize this care. It allows veterans who separate before they have completed 2 years of service to be eligible for care and counseling. This is vital, because often sexual assault is the very reason these people leave the military. It is illogical and unfair to deny them care.