

Whereas, Iran has announced its twenty-one member delegation, which includes eleven wrestlers that will compete at the 1998 World Cup of Freestyle Wrestling on the Campus of Oklahoma State University in Stillwater on April 4–5, 1998; and,

Whereas, this annual freestyle dual meet championships is behind only the World Championships and Olympics in importance; and,

Whereas, the Iranian lineup includes Gholam Reza Mohammadi, Bahman Tayebikermani, Ali Reza Dabier, Abbas Haji Kenari, Massoud jamshidi, Majied Khodae, P. Dorostkar, Ali Reza Heydari, Davoud Ghanbari, Abbas Jadidi, and Ali Reza Rezaie; and,

Whereas, the tournament marks Iran's first competition in the United States since the 1996 Olympic Games; and,

Whereas, in February, the United States participated in the Takhti Cup wrestling tournament in Iran, the first U.S. team of any sport to compete in Iran in almost twenty years; and,

Whereas, I join the citizens of Southeastern Ohio, with distinct please, in honoring the Iranian wrestling team for their participation in the 1998 World Cup of Freestyle Wrestling in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

REPEALING THE MARRIAGE
PENALTY

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, the reason I'm cosponsoring the Marriage Tax Elimination Act in Congress is because I believe marriage is an institution that should no longer be discouraged by federal tax laws.

At a time when various government chief executives, in Colorado and in Washington are exhibiting confusion about the importance of marriage and the meaning of fidelity, few people are aware that there are several of us in Congress actually making progress toward strengthening families and honoring the integrity of these sacred unions.

The current tax law punishes married couples who file income taxes jointly by pushing them into higher tax brackets. The marriage penalty taxes combined income at higher rates than if each salary were taxed individually.

For example, an individual with an income of \$24,000 would be taxed at 15 percent. But a working couple, each with an income of \$24,000 or a combined income of \$48,000, would be taxed at 28 percent on a portion of that income. They would pay \$600 more in taxes simply because they are married.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated over 21 million couples are affected by the marriage penalty, averaging \$1,400 in additional taxes. Indeed, I've heard from many of them, and I'm quite sympathetic since, for twelve years, I have been a victim of the penalty myself.

Rarely does the marriage penalty subject fail to come up as I listen to taxpayers. Every week I conduct a public town meeting here in Fort Collins, and I hold several more throughout the Fourth Congressional District. Last month during a local hearing held specifically to discuss education issues, a state Board of Education member cited the marriage penalty

as an example of anti-family policy that ultimately hurts schools and children.

More recently, I conducted an additional series of live electronic town-hall radio call-in programs. Callers demanded the marriage penalty be lifted. Also, my Web page has been inundated with support for the marriage tax repeal.

The marriage tax penalty is not new, nor are efforts to repeal it. But previous efforts ran into stiff opposition in Congress from those who believe the government needs the money more than the families who earn it.

Fortunately, with the current Congress, those placing the priorities of government above the needs of families have finally been outnumbered by those of us who are serious about tax reform, tax relief, and more robust family budgets.

Since Republicans earned the majority at the Capitol, We've delivered more tax relief to the middle class and working poor than any Congress of the last half-century. And in Colorado, the Republican state legislature has produced even more prosperity for us all.

In December, the Coloradoan reported a study by the Center on Budget Priorities revealing the average income of Colorado's poorest families increased faster than all other income categories over the last decade Colorado's low state tax rates, frugal spending habits, and favorable economic policies have provided that needed hand-up to those of formerly meager means.

On top of the pro-family tax relief bills passed last year, we're moving ahead in Congress on a second package of tax proposals, the cornerstone of which is marriage penalty elimination.

As a general goal, I believe the total tax bite for American families should be no more than 25 percent of income. Of course, the current burden is much higher than that and we have a long way to go.

But, while we tackle the more sweeping objectives of IRS reform and overhauling the tax code, Congress ought to move swiftly and reaffirm its commitment to American families by repealing the marriage tax penalty.

THE 105TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF
DOVER, MORRIS COUNTY, NEW
JERSEY

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 105th Anniversary of the First Baptist Church of Dover in Morris County, New Jersey.

The First Baptist Church has been serving the Dover community since 1893, when thirty-nine Dover residents, all members of the neighboring Netcong Baptist Church, came together to establish a church in their own town. While on the date of its establishment the church had no building of its own, by 1895 the cornerstone of a new building was set and, one year later, a dedication service for the church was held.

As the church continued to attract new parishioners over subsequent years, it soon became clear that there would not be enough space to house the entire parish. By 1966, the First Baptist Church purchased 12 acres of land on which to build a newer, larger building

for worship. Construction of this building was completed on Easter Sunday, 1975, and recent renovation of the church's interior has included a complete overhaul of the church's main auditorium.

Continuing its long tradition of social outreach, the First Baptist Church today supports close to sixty-seven missionaries, who extend the good works of the church throughout New Jersey and in countries overseas. The church has also been blessed with strong leadership over the years, and has seen thirteen pastors since its inception in 1893. It is led today by Reverend John L. Hackworth, Senior Pastor.

On Sunday, April 5, 1998, Reverend Hackworth, with the assistance of the church's parish and clergy, will lay the foundation for continued success into the next century. On this momentous occasion, I want to ask you, Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues to join with me in commemorating the First Baptist Church of Dover on this special anniversary year.

THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT
IS NOT "WAR ON THE WEST,
PART TWO"

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, recently, some of my colleagues on the Resources Committee have been trying to convince the public that the Administration is placing an unfair burden on western property owners by deliberately implementing the Endangered Species Act more harshly in the western U.S. The facts simply do not support the allegations. While no one can argue that California has far more endangered and threatened species than most states (Hawaii has the most), my colleagues have confused the simple logic of cause and effect.

The western and southern states are the most biologically diverse and unique regions in the nation. In California alone, we have an extraordinary range of coastal and upland forests, deserts, grasslands, and shrublands—all with large numbers of rare and endemic species which are vulnerable to the effects of our economic prosperity. While my colleagues would argue that environmental protection laws like the Endangered Species Act inhibit economic growth, the facts lead to a very different conclusion. In 1996, the average number of housing starts per month were 661,000 in the southern states. In the western states, they averaged 361,000 a month, while there were only 132,000 a month in the Northeast. Florida's growth rate is legendary; Texas is growing at a rate of about 6 million new people per decade; and California is expected to have 18 million more people by the year 2025. The reality is that the West, and California in particular, are at the forefront of the ongoing battle between development and open space.

What is really needed in the West is a means of addressing the loss of family farmland and open space while we address the needs of endangered species and their habitats. Any rewrite of the Endangered Species Act must contain incentives for small, private

landowners—not loopholes for large corporate landowners. We should require that all federal actions be consistent with the recovery of endangered species. Only then can we get landowners and farmers out from under regulatory control and back to the business of driving the economy.

H.R. 2351, the Endangered Species Recovery Act, which I authored and which currently has 102 cosponsors, seeks to address these concerns by establishing incentives for private landowners and local governments that will allow economic planning and development to move forward while recovering the imperiled species that are under federal protection. H.R. 2351 was not written with large corporate landowners in mind, but strives to provide something for everyone, whether they reside in the East or the West, and regardless of whether they own a small family farm or a suburban development.

I am inserting in the RECORD today two editorials from the Casper, Wyoming, Star-Tribune championing H.R. 2351—evidence that support for the Endangered Species Act is alive and well west of the Mississippi River.

SENATE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT BOWS TO INDUSTRY

(By Charles Levendosky)

When the Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt and Sen. Dirk Kempthorne, R-Idaho, work together on a piece of environmental legislation, warning sirens should pierce the air. Kempthorne is one of the Senate's top recipients of donations from the timber industry.

Last year, Kempthorne introduced the Endangered Species Recovery Act of 1997 (S. 1180)—a bill that would reauthorize but significantly change the original Endangered Species Act of 1973, one of the most important environmental and ecological laws our nation has enacted.

Kempthorne was first elected to the Senate in 1992. In the years from 1991 to 1996, he has received \$341,216 in campaign funds from forestry and forest products, oil and gas, and mining industries. He votes logging.

A glance at other co-sponsors of S. 1180 tells the same story: Sen. Paul Coverdell, R-Ga., who gathers in even greater amounts of timber PAC money than Kempthorne; Sen. Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska, who never saw a tree that wasn't timber and has the money to show for it; and Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, who took in more than \$200,000 in campaign funds from timber and mineral industries in the span from 1991 to 1996.

The Natural Resources Defense Council calls S. 1180 an industry bill: "It gives big developers and multinational mining, timber and oil corporations a . . . loophole . . . that lets them destroy endangered species habitat."

In an interview Friday, Babbitt wasn't shy about admitting his role in the creation of the Senate bill: "I don't think it's any secret that I participated pretty intensively in the drafting and the negotiations that led to 1180. It's obviously a consensus product designed to appeal across the center, as much as reasonably possible. I've indicated it's an excellent start. It's the only starting place."

"If we're going to re-authorize this act, we have to move this bill out for discussion on the floor of the Senate. . . . Is it perfect? No. But it's got a lot of good things in it. It incorporates most of the innovations that we spent so much time on, kind of inventing over the last five years.

"These are ideas that ought to be specifically laid out in legislation, because they're not there now. That would be Habitat Con-

servations Plans, the species conservation agreements, the safe harbor concept, no surprises, all important concepts. And they're all in this bill."

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, approximately 80 percent of endangered species live on private lands. In order to protect those endangered species, some incentives had to be offered to private landowners.

A Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) allows a landowner whose lawful activity might harm an endangered or threatened species to negotiate with the Department of the Interior to mitigate and minimize that impact.

The "no surprises rule" means that once a landowner has made a commitment to an HCP, there is assurance that the government won't make additional requests or restrictions. The Senate bill would lock in those agreements for 100 years.

Species conservation agreements protect rare species through a program of inventory, monitoring, research and public education.

"Safe harbor" allows land developers to set aside a portion of their property to provide habitat for threatened or endangered species in that area. In exchange, the government allows them to develop the rest of the land without legal restrictions.

These policy developments have been helpful in gaining the cooperation of private landowners. The Senate bill will put them into law.

Critics, like the National Center for Public Policy Research, contend that it will codify these policies and "extralegal arrangements large timber companies have negotiated with federal officials that are currently vulnerable to legal challenge."

Babbitt recognizes that the Senate bill currently has two major problems—the appropriation level is much too low to make the law effective in achieving its intent, and it "has a very complex set of procedural requirements for recovery plans—in some respects it's overly complex."

The positives, according to Babbitt, are "giving legislative sanction and predictability" to policy innovations.

Babbitt didn't mention a competing bill with the same name introduced in the U.S. House by Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., (H.R. 2351).

The bill has 101 bipartisan co-sponsors. Miller receives most of his campaign donations from unions and lawyers, nothing from the timber industry and only \$6,000 from the oil and gas industries in the 1995 to 1996 election cycle.

The House bill also codifies the on-the-ground policies that have helped protect endangered species on private lands—however, the bill's landowner incentives contain provisions to ensure wildlife protection.

Asked about H.R. 2351, Babbitt responded, "I haven't looked at it carefully. I really haven't . . . I guess I'm trying to do one thing at a time."

Environmentalists, conservationists and sportsmen like the House bill. Almost without exception, they consider the Senate bill a sell-out to industry.

Bill Snape, legal director of the Defenders of Wildlife, considers the differences between the House and Senate bills to be a part of a philosophical debate: "The Kempthorne bill is sort of the 'same old business as usual; let's just sort of keep species hanging on by a thread and that's OK. While the Miller bill actually tries to put in place some sort of recovery process to get species doing well and doing what we need to do to protect species.'"

Snape hit the Senate bill's jugular vein: "The biggest problem is the fact that they're going to authorize these 100-years no surprises permits and agreements. They are essentially locking in land management prac-

tices for huge chunks of time in a way that defies every scientific point of view there is. It just doesn't make any sense. They're doing it because that's what industry says they need to commit to any type of conservation."

Babbitt's work with Kempthorne may have been an attempt to keep the Senate bill from being too tilted toward industry and to gather industry support for Interior initiatives, but there aren't enough protections for endangered species in this bill.

It should die in committee.

CONGRESS PLAYS POLITICS WITH ENDANGERED SPECIES

(By Charles Levendosky)

Earlier this month, the Senate's proposed version of the Endangered Species Recovery Act (S. 1180) received a stinging critique from the non-partisan Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress. The House version (H.R. 2351) fared much better in the report.

CRS researchers are not paid by special interest groups to arrive at some predetermined outcome. They work for Congress and are paid to be as objective as humanly possible in order to help that body decide about legislation.

The CRS analysis should lay to rest any thought that the Senate bill balances environmental and industry concerns. The bill doesn't.

In an interview Friday, Heather Weiner of Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund said the CRS report pointed out some aspects of the Senate bill she had missed. "The worst points of S. 1180 are the way it removes both judicial and public review of government activities. What it says is 'trust the government.' And that's great when you have a friendly administration—we're talking about species protection—but that's not great for future administrations."

As if it weren't bad enough, Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., has demanded that two pro-industry amendments be attached to the bill.

Lott wants to remove the bill's requirement to implement recovery plans for threatened or endangered species. Lott's other amendment would allow a private landowner—once there has been an agreement with the federal government to minimize the impact on an endangered species found on the landowner's property—to ignore harm to any species that might be listed in the future as threatened or endangered.

From 1991 to 1996, Lott received \$293,355 in campaign funds from the oil and gas industry, forestry and forest products industries, and mining companies. That's a hefty piece of change. Call these amendments payback.

Lott's proposed amendments helped stall the bill. They would kill any pretense that the legislation helps the recovery of endangered species.

Inadequate funding for the Senate version of the ESA re-authorization also brought it to a halt. But last week, folks in the Senate Budget Committee put their shoulders to it. Something is moving.

Weiner said, "This bill is really starting to catch some momentum now as they're finding ways to deal with the budget issues in the bill. . . . There was an attempt to try to take the funding from the sale of BLM (Bureau of Land Management) lands. . . . They want to sell off our public lands, where we're asking federal agencies to do some good things for endangered species."

Now there's a forward-looking approach. Sell off public lands—to agri-interests, to timber conglomerates—in order to finance the protection of species that are endangered by development.

Sell the public lands from under our wildlife and soon nearly every species will be endangered.

Another irony was pointed out by Weiner. "The money that they would raise would not go toward the implementation of the ESA, it would go toward the landowner incentives," she said. "It would go right back to the corporate landowner. . . . It's not actually going to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to help them enforce the act or implement the act or come up with recovery plans. It's going straight to the private landowners."

If agreements between landowners and the federal government go away? The CRS report states succinctly that S. 1180 would "probably not make citizen (law) suits available to enforce conservation agreements." The House bill expressly allows such citizen lawsuits.

Bill Snape, legal director of Defenders of Wildlife, doesn't expect any real movement on the Senate bill until after Easter recess. "The huge, thousand pound gorilla on the back of this bill is that not one environmental group in the country supports it. Not one. . . . Until that occurs, it's unlikely that Republicans will want to reinforce their anti-environmental message, particularly the Senate Majority Leader (Trent Lott) as they head into the November elections."

The machinations of Congress—it may be that Lott is really attempting to kill the Senate bill with his amendments while looking cozy to his corporate donors.

The House version of the Endangered Species Recovery Act, introduced by Rep. George Miller, now has 102 co-sponsors. According to Snape, it won't move until the Senate bill passes or dies.

There are three major differences between the House and Senate ESA bills:

The Miller bill gives landowners assurances that conservation agreements will stand, but requires landowners to post performance bonds to make certain they live up to the requirements of minimizing the impact on threatened or endangered species. The Senate bill has no such bonding provisions.

The Miller bill would improve habitat protection on federal lands, while the Senate bill creates more loopholes to ignore impacts that put endangered and threatened species at risk.

The Miller bill focuses directly on the recovery of species by setting up definite standards and procedures. The Senate bill, according to Snape, "plays up service to recovery, but what they're really talking about is survival."

However, not everyone is happy with the Miller bill.

In February, a letter from the presidents of 11 professional scientific societies specializing in plant and animal biology was sent to Congress and the Clinton administration. The letter condemns both House and Senate bills for allowing habitat destruction under conservation agreements.

The Miller bill may not have the unified support of the environmental and conservation communities, but it clearly does more for the recovery of endangered species.

Don't expect either bill to pass during this session of Congress. Neither one will. These two bills, however, have defined the terms of discourse regarding endangered species.

And this critical environmental issue will undoubtedly be a part of the public debate during election campaigns. It will have an influence on the outcome of some congressional races in the West.

THE PREBLE'S MEADOW JUMPING MOUSE ON COLORADO'S FRONT RANGE

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of Interior, through the Fish and Wildlife Service, will soon make an important decision concerning whether to list the Preble's meadow jumping mouse as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. This decision comes at a troubling time for the people of the State of Colorado. A decision to list this species would have profound impacts on Colorado's thriving front range.

Colorado has taken steps to preserve our Western heritage and quality of life. Coloradans care about their environment. Those that depend upon the land and its resources have a vital link to their environment. If they do not manage their resources responsibly, they do not survive. Today, family-owned farms and ranches are at risk. According to some sporadic studies by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the habitat for the Preble's meadow jumping mouse is also at risk.

Colorado has aggressively dealt with the issues of growth and suburban sprawl along the front range. Land use planning, and growth issues are effectively being dealt with at the local and state levels. So too, is Colorado dealing with the issue of the Preble's meadow jumping mouse.

Colorado's General Assembly is considering a state law that would establish a trust fund to conserve species before their status becomes critical enough to justify listing under the Endangered Species Act. That bill has already passed the Agriculture Committee and is currently being considered for appropriations. In addition, Colorado has established a broad-based coalition of land owners, state and local government officials and conservationists to protect the mouse and its habitat. Colorado's approach to species preservation provides as much, if not more protection, than other successful programs applied across the country.

In light of existing and developing efforts to protect the species, the need to solicit additional data, and the profound impacts that listing would have on Colorado's front range, the Secretary of the Interior of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should allow the State to fully develop their state and local plans to preserve Colorado's quality of life, and the Preble's meadow jumping mouse.

HEALTH INSURANCE TAX DEDUCTIBILITY ACT OF 1998

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. GREEN. Mr. Speaker, today I introduced the Health Insurance Tax Deductibility Act of 1998. This bill is a simple, common sense solution to a very complex and destructive problem in our society.

Since I came to Congress in 1992, we have debated health care reform and considered a

wide range of proposals—all designed to insure a greater number of Americans. When President Clinton signed the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) into law in 1996, everyone said Congress had taken the first step towards ensuring access to health insurance to more individuals and families.

Unfortunately, a recent study by the General Accounting Office shows us this goal has not been achieved. Although HIPAA did expand access to health insurance, it did nothing to ensure that Americans can afford health insurance. And as the GAO study recognized, affordability has become the major hurdle for the American family to clear.

In the past, Congress has passed initiatives to encourage and assist people to get health insurance. We allow employers who sponsor health insurance for their employees to deduct the employer's share of the premium as a business expense. We allow self employed people to deduct a percentage of the health insurance premium they purchase. Yet we provide no assistance or incentive for individuals whose employers do not provide health insurance.

The Health Insurance Tax Deductibility Act of 1998 will do just this. Under this legislation, individuals will be able to deduct a portion—linked to the deduction for the self insured—they pay for health and long-term care insurance. This proposal will make health insurance more affordable for individuals and their families, which in turn, will give American families greater piece of mind.

IN MEMORY OF U.S. CAPITOL POLICE OFFICER THOMAS ROBINSON

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of the finest Capitol Police officers we have known, Officer T.O. "Tommy" Robinson, whose life was tragically taken by cancer on March 23.

While Officer Robinson was a dedicated law enforcement officer and public servant, his life was a testimony to others as well. He will be deeply missed by all who had the great privilege of knowing him.

Tommy Robinson served his country in the U.S. Army from 1965 to 1968, and served honorably as a member of the Capitol Police for 27 years. He leaves behind his wife of 20 years, Denise, as well as their 12-year-old son Christopher. He was a man of steadfast faith, which he lived out on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert into the RECORD a copy of the eulogy given by our Capitol Police Chief Gary Abrecht in memory of Tommy Robinson, which pays tribute to his life and testimony. Everyone who came in contact with Officer Tommy Robinson is a better person for having done so. I know that the entire House joins me in expressing our deepest sympathies and prayers for Denise and Christopher.

I submit the following article.

IN MEMORY, OFFICER T.O. "TOMMY" ROBINSON

As I consider all the men and women of the US Capitol Police, I'm struck by the particular strengths each individual brings to the