

apparently thought so; they protected it as the essential flame of democracy.

Try telling Robert E. Joiner one vote cannot make a difference. Less than twenty years ago he ran for the office of Southern District Highway Commissioner in Mississippi and won—by less than one ten-thousandth percent of the votes. Had his opponent garnered just six more votes, Joiner would have lost the election.

Just last April, Eugene Shoemaker won the seat of Orfordville, Illinois, village trustee by drawing from a hat. He and his opponent each earned one hundred popular votes. Had just one more villager voted, the election would have been decided by the people. As it was, the outcome was left completely to the fingers of chance.

The vote of each American counts toward the election of local, state, and national leaders. Its effectiveness is directly proportionate to the frequency of its use. My voice, and the voice of every American, does not, however, die in the ballot box.

Boycotts, like those instigated by the legendary Rosa Parks bus incident in Montgomery, Alabama, and citizens organizations, like those founded by the consumer advocate Ralph Nader, wield profound influence.

Demonstrations spotlight the views in the sight of the public. On generating social reform, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed this, "In order to clean house the one thing we need is a good broom. Initiatives and referendums are good brooms."

My voice, and the voice of every American, is carried on the wings of peaceable assembly and petition; it influences those around me and even trumpets itself through my everyday actions.

The worth of my voice, because of its power and effectiveness, is incalculable. To not exercise it is a foolish waste. Because our democracy provides many practical vehicles for my voice, and because our country's future truly depends on it, it is my duty to articulate it. Otherwise, I scorn the pragmatic provisions of our democracy; I become a parasite living off the nation's privileges without positive contribution to the nation; I toss aside my right to cry for change in society. Or as Edmund Burke put it, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." But when I vote, petition, write, speak, or act for the benefit of the nation I am, to the utmost, fulfilling my patriotic duty.

To the cynic, my voice may be merely the frail peeping of one person among two-hundred-sixty million, but to Robert E. Joiner, Eugene Shoemaker, Rosa Parks, Ralph Nader, and to me it is the soaring shout of freedom. My voice is the very essence of our democracy. Multiplied several million times, my voice is the throbbing heart of America.

OUR LADY OF LOURDES ACADEMY
IN MIAMI, FL

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 22, 1998

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to an outstanding group of girls from Our Lady of Lourdes Academy who won second place at this year's national We the People competition.

These dedicated, remarkable girls spent countless of hours studying diligently to win the local and state tournament. Proudly representing the state of Florida this year in our national competition, these devoted 17 girls

made evident their pride in our county's heritage and demonstrated their vast knowledge of U.S. history and of current events.

Great statesman Edward Everett mentioned that "Education is a better safeguard of liberty than a standing army." Mr. Speaker, education is indeed, a safeguard of liberty. Through education we are made free. These 17 girls have embodied the definition of liberty as they have edified on what our wondrous democratic nation has to offer. These students have learned to cherish the rights found in our constitution—the rights our founding fathers died for and for this I commend them today.

For winning second place this year, for the long nights and weekends spent in intense study and for the honor which they so greatly deserve, I ask my Congressional colleagues to join me today in congratulating the teacher Rosalee Heffernan and these high caliber students: Nina Bassil, Claudia Capriles, Alejandra Chamorro, Ana Del Cerro, Claudia Ferrer, Jennifer Garcia, Mariah Gidel, Miriann Guazzini, Annie Heffernan, Lauren Knickerbocker, Genevieve Koch, Monica Leal, Sabrina Munnings, Maria Ortega, Kristina Perez, Talia Romero, and Melissa Zurini.

A HISTORIC VOTE FOR PEACE

HON. KAREN MCCARTHY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 22, 1998

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, today the people throughout Ireland will make a historic vote for peace and progress. I would like to commend all of the leaders who have worked assiduously to reach this agreement to establish a political framework to reunite the people of Ireland.

For lasting peace to take hold in Northern Ireland, economic stability and growth must be achieved. The Republic of Ireland is often referred to as the "Celtic Tiger" because of the strides that its citizens have made in building their economy and in attracting foreign investment capital. The same pattern of growth and development as occurred in the Republic now needs to take hold in the North of Ireland.

Secretary of Commerce Richard Daley will lead a trade mission this June to promote economic development and private investment by U.S. firms. I support this initiative because long term stability is directly linked to economic prosperity. History has shown that the key to resolving longstanding tension is through economic expansion.

Mr. Speaker, today the people of Ireland are making a choice on whether they wish to move forward or return to the violence and the bloodshed of the past. This vote is an important step in the journey toward peace and trust. I commend the U.S. and foreign leaders who will make peace a reality by their work to encourage investment and growth in Northern Ireland.

JENNIFER'S LAW ACT OF 1997

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 22, 1998

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the brave efforts and profound hope

of my constituents JoAnn and Carl Rock in the search of their missing son, Robert, and to urge support for the Jennifer's Law Act of 1997. H.R. 2850, which was introduced by my distinguished colleagues, Congressman JAY JOHNSON, Congressman NICK LAMPSON, and myself.

I urge my colleagues to help all parents who may be seeking to locate a missing daughter or son. Jennifer's Law is necessary to bring relief to families that face endless nights of not knowing where a loved one may be and what has happened to them. This legislation is a simple way of closing a terrible loophole with painful and needless consequences.

Mr. Speaker, Jennifer's Law will bring peace and relief to thousands of American families whose sons and daughters have disappeared and remain missing. Each year, thousands of unidentified bodies are buried in the United States. While law enforcement officials are required to report unidentified bodies, they are not required to use the already established national repository for information that may have criminal investigation importance, the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) of the Federal Bureau of Investigations.

In New York City alone, Mr. Speaker, over 4,000 unidentified persons are buried each year in mass graves in Potter's Field without NCIC references. The circumstances of this oversight are stark and real; thousands of unidentified bodies may be identified and long-awaited closure brought to their families across the United States through the usage of the NCIC.

Many of these unidentified persons who are found dead or murdered were only children when they disappeared from their families. Those children may be alive or dead anywhere in this country. Federal legislation must be enacted swiftly in order to address the nature of this terrible situation.

Mr. Speaker, in my home state of California, for instance, law enforcement officials are required to report unidentified bodies to the NCIC, but that is not enough for parents like Carl and JoAnn Rock because their son could be alive or dead in another state, even as far away as New York City's Potter's Field. Their tragic story demonstrates the need for comprehensive action, not a piece-meal solution.

Last fall, JoAnn Rock and other families who have also lost their children came to ask the help of their Representatives as part of a group called Finding Our Children Under Stress (FOCUS). Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that they made their trip in vain.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support Jennifer's Law. It costs nothing but it gives in return the priceless gift of human compassion. This bill is a clear, obvious way to remedy a confusing and terrifying situation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to share with my colleagues the experience of the Rock family in their own words. It is my hope that this story will inspire each of you to act upon their behalf and the behalf of thousands of families still searching for their missing loved ones.

I cannot begin to put into words my feelings, profound sadness and sense of loss as a result of the disappearance of our son, Robert. Bob was our son, our daughter Kristin's brother, a grandson, nephew, cousin and friend. All the people who know and love Rob have had their lives changed forever. Almost three years have passed with not a single piece of information about Rob's whereabouts. As a Magna Cum Laude graduate of