

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE TO ROMANIAN PRESIDENT EMIL CONSTANTINESCU

HON. MIKE PARKER

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 15, 1998

Mr. PARKER. Mr. Speaker, for the RECORD I would like to submit a statement of tribute by my former House colleague David Funderburk to Romania's President who is visiting Washington this week.

A TRIBUTE TO ROMANIAN PRESIDENT EMIL CONSTANTINESCU ON THE OCCASION OF HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON IN JULY 1998

(By David Funderburk)

Emil Constantinescu has been described as Romania's "Vaclav Havel." There are many reasons why Constantinescu should be classed together with Vaclav Havel the Czech dissident hero of the communist era.

Admittedly as a friend of Constantinescu I am not a completely unbiased observer. And after spending two years living in Romania during the 1970's and four years during the 1980's in Ceausescu's time, I never thought I would see a democratic President of Romania. For a few years following the end of the Ceausescu I looked with skepticism on some of the transitional figures of the country. Also I wondered how many of those new voices who seemed to be jumping on the democratic reform and free market bandwagon were for real. Emil Constantinescu has proven that he is for real.

Emil Constantinescu is the first truly democratic President of Romania after 42 years of harsh communism and 7 years of stagnation following the demise of Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu.

Constantinescu is enlightened, well educated, pro-American, and a man of integrity with a historical sense of purpose for his people and their future.

The leading interwar political party—the National Peasant & Christian Democrats—emerged from the ashes of communism under the leadership of Corneliu Coposu, a giant figure who had been imprisoned under Ceausescu. Coposu, who was a national symbol of integrity and sacrifice for freedom, designated as the party's standard-bearer in both 1992 and 1996 the little known Geology professor and Rector of the University of Bucharest, Dr. Emil Constantinescu. During the transition period in Romania under Ilescu, Constantinescu gained political experience in his role as a leader of the opposition.

Romania's "Havel" Emil Constantinescu has in fact accomplished the following:

Led Romania to its first real democratic election victory in 1996 and peaceful transition with a platform incorporating the core values of Western civilization. And Constantinescu initiated the coalition Democratic Convention program called the "Contract with Romania."

Presided as a populist President living a spartan existence and working long hours in the midst of hardship for many workers in the country. He receives only a token salary and drives a small inconspicuous car without the motorcade fanfare of his predecessors;

Led an activist campaign to permanently tie Romania to the West, NATO and the U.S. (whose support Romania needs for its NATO aspirations). He has helped ensure that ro-

mania takes a leadership role in the Partnership for Peace collaboration. He helped lead the Romanians in giving U.S. President Bill Clinton in 1997 his biggest reception anywhere up to that time. And the same Romanians have indicated the highest level of support for NATO and partnership with America of any of the peoples of Eastern Europe;

Met with regional and other world leaders to demonstrate his determination to make Romania a peaceful island of stability in the volatile region. His outreach to the Hungarian minority and to neighboring Hungary as well as to neighboring Ukraine have been models of cooperation in the region;

Helped guide Romania through its most difficult economic crisis in the post-communist period by calmly accentuating the positive, and focusing on the big picture of Romania's goals of Western partnership and peace. His leadership has helped produce political stability and project optimism in the face of a not-always-supportive coalition government.

There is no doubt that Romania has some distance to travel before it's on a par with the West in terms of economic reform and even political stability. More needs to be done to make the investment climate attractive to U.S. companies and to complete the implementation of the economic reforms.

But change has been coming—gradually, steadily, inexorably. And most remarkably Romania has come a very long way since Ceausescu. Romania was left in about the worst possible position to reform with a Stalinist command economy, central planning and virtually no private sector.

The steady hand of Constantinescu's leadership has helped guide Romania as it goes through the toughest transition in Eastern Europe, without bloodshed, revolt or diversion from the NATO-integration course. Constantinescu is a visionary leader who focuses on the big picture of Romania's place in the world, and strives to help fulfill the dreams of ordinary Romanians to be given recognition, acceptance and respect by the West particularly by the U.S. Since we have the benefit of such a leader in Bucharest, we should move quickly during this visit to assist Constantinescu and Romania.

Washington—from the White House to Capitol Hill to the business community and media—has a special moment in history to do the right thing by this new Romania. Let's show our appreciation to President Emil Constantinescu and Romania and show our recognition for their historic longings, their geopolitical and strategic value to peace, and political stability in the region.

Let's take advantage of this special opportunity and welcome the new democratic President Emil Constantinescu—"Romania's Havel"—to Congress, the White House and America. It's something we will not regret.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 15, 1998

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Wednesday, July 15, 1998 into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

MANAGED CARE REFORM

The most important political issue today, and for the past decade, is health care. Sev-

eral prominent publications have identified health care as the defining issue of the 1990s. I agree. In meeting after meeting in southern Indiana I have noticed how persistently the question of health care comes forward in discussions. It is the issue that bubbles and seethes beneath the surface at all times simply because it is the most personal and real issue that touches the hopes and fears of every American.

POPULAR VIEWS ON HEALTH CARE

I find Hoosiers overwhelmingly want everyone to have access to health care services but they split on how to pay for that access. Hoosiers are usually skeptical of government action but I do not find them objecting to a prominent role for government to play in health care. They do not want a comprehensive plan like the one President Clinton proposed in 1994, but they do want to see the government assuring access to affordable health care, vigorously policing the providers of health care such as insurance companies, demanding more generous coverage from employers, and ensuring that their existing benefits are not cut back. Furthermore, they do not want to see any interference with the doctor-patient relationship.

When it comes to the issue of managed care, most people recognize that managed care plans have helped to hold down costs and provide preventive health care. But they also worry that managed care can sometimes interfere with the doctor-patient relationship and impede access to medical treatment. They want government to hold managed care plans accountable. The general view seems to be that Hoosiers will support tougher government oversight of managed care plans but they do not want the government to come in and take over health care.

MIXED SUCCESS

In light of widespread support for changes in the health care system, I am struck by the number of Hoosiers who say to me that they are quite satisfied with their own health care. Their personal experiences have largely been positive. They recognize the successes of the American health care system. Vaccination rates are up, premature births are down, more women are getting mammograms, and the move to managed care has saved billions of dollars in health care spending. They and their families are probably as healthy today as they ever were and for the most part they have affordable health coverage.

Nonetheless, underlying these successes is the fear that the system will not continue to work for them and be there in times of crisis. Hoosiers really worry about how they would handle a major illness, and they tell me again and again of acquaintances who were simply wiped out financially by a major medical problem. Many feel overwhelmed by the red tape and bureaucracy in today's health care system. They are uncomfortable that power has shifted in the health care system from the physicians to the insurance companies and managed care plan administrators.

CONGRESSIONAL OUTLOOK

President Clinton made health care a central theme of his first term in office when he

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

put forward his sweeping health care proposal which featured universal coverage and a mandate on employers to provide health insurance for their employees. But his plan was decisively rejected and led, in large part, to the change of control in Congress in 1994. The Clinton health care proposal was rejected because people felt it was too massive, too complex, and its consequences too uncertain. The bill was about 1300 pages in length.

Although the rejection of Clinton's proposal made both the Congress and the President wary of comprehensive health care reform, the issue did not die. Today, members of Congress are keenly aware of the intensity of their constituents feelings on health care. The public is demanding better care for less money. They do not like the high cost of health care or the restrictions on its availability. They know the shortcomings in today's system: too many Americans, especially children, do not have adequate health care coverage; long-term care for older persons is unaffordable to most Americans; and many feel that managed care plans focus more on holding costs down than providing quality care.

INCREMENTAL REFORM

On health care, as on many issues, Americans are more comfortable with incremental steps and skeptical of massive changes in one swoop. For the next few years, my guess is that the Congress will proceed with improvements in health care on a step-by-step basis. That's what it tried to do two years ago with the Kennedy-Kassenbaum legislation which mandated portability in most insurance plans, enabling workers to change jobs and not be dropped for preexisting conditions, and last year when it expanded coverage for children.

In the Congress, both parties are proposing plans to patch up managed care with such measures as expanding a patient's ability to choose a doctor and to receive emergency care and to appeal plan decisions to a neutral third party.

It is quite possible that the Congress will approve this year a sensible, but modest, health care reform package which I would expect to support. The elements of the package would likely include new opportunities for patients to appeal to a neutral third party when their health plans deny them care, give more information to help them select doctors and health plans, provide women the right to see a gynecologist, guarantee emergency room access without prior approval from managed care plans, protect personal medical information, and allow doctors to discuss with their patients a full range of medical options.

CONCLUSION

We are in the midst of major changes in health care coverage. A decade ago, the majority of Americans received health care through traditional fee-for-service plans. Today most Americans receive their health care through managed care, usually through HMOs. Lower costs and a wider array of benefits, including prescription drug benefits, are often seen as advantages of managed care plans. As the reform debate goes forward it is important to build on the success of what is developing into a more efficient health care system, while improving both the quality of care and patient satisfaction with their health care services. My guess is that health care reform will be on the agenda of the Congress for many years to come.

TRIBUTE TO LISA MENDOSA

HON. GEORGE P. RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 15, 1998

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Lisa Mendosa. Lisa Mendosa, an accomplished woman of the '90s, has added the title of Community Relations Coordinator of Borders Books to her credit. Having worked in numerous fields, Lisa Mendosa is in many respects, considered a renaissance woman.

Lisa Mendosa has had an impressive career, yet still has much of her life ahead of her. In 1987, she was named one of America's top 100 women in Communications/Hispanic USA. In the same year she also won an award in the Associated Press television-radio competition. In 1989, she was named one of America's top 100 junior college graduates. In 1995, Lisa Mendosa received an Emmy Award for her coverage of the Leer Jet crash in Fresno.

Lisa Mendosa has also published a number of books on animals and children. She has a great love for animals and has raised two dogs from the age of eight weeks and studied their development for more than 8 years. Lisa Mendosa spent 17 years working in TV news researching, writing, producing and presenting thousands of news stories. At Channel 24, Lisa went from management to producer. After winning her Emmy, Lisa was offered a position by Channel 30, which she took. Currently, she is a Community Relations Coordinator for Borders Books. Today, she works harder than ever to establish a close community relationship with the Borders Book's staff.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I pay tribute to Lisa Mendosa. Already being an accomplished woman of the '90's and considered a renaissance woman, Lisa Mendosa continues to be dedicated to her work. Her dedication and exemplary efforts should serve as an inspiration to all. I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing Lisa Mendosa continued success for the future.

CONGRATULATING THE PARK RIDGE ROTARY CLUB

HON. MARGE ROUKEMA

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 15, 1998

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Park Ridge (New Jersey) Rotary Club on its 70th anniversary. This group of business men and women is a cornerstone of public service in our community. Their dedication and hard work have helped groups ranging from the Boy Scouts to the handicapped. They help keep alive the old-fashioned value of neighbor helping neighbor—the type of value that makes a community a community.

The Park Ridge Rotary Club was chartered November 19, 1928, and held its first meeting December 14, 1928, at the Masonic Hall in Park Ridge. Of the 25 charter members present at that meeting, one—Charlie Grey—is still active at age 96. There are 63 members in today's club, which serves the Tri-Boro area of Park Ridge, Montvale and Woodcliff Lake.

The Rotary had its beginnings in February 1905, when Chicago attorney Paul P. Harris called three businessmen friends to a meeting. He proposed a club that would kindle fellowship among members of the business community and by the end of the year, the club had 30 members. The name Rotary was adopted because meetings were rotated among the members' place of business. Rotary Clubs were formed in San Francisco, Seattle, Washington, Los Angeles and New York in the next few years. By 1921, the organization was represented on every continent and the name Rotary International was adopted in 1922. Today, there are more than 24,000 Rotary Clubs with a membership of 1.1 million in 167 countries.

At the international level, Rotary is involved in many humanitarian projects, including educational grants for overseas study, a \$200 million program to eradicate polio worldwide, youth and group exchanges between nations to foster international understanding, hunger and health programs in developing countries, and financial aid to disaster relief programs.

At the local level, the Park Ridge Rotary is involved in a wide variety of community service programs. The Rotary distributes annual holiday food baskets to the handicapped, sponsors a holiday party for the handicapped, sponsors the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards and an exchange student program. It supports the Tri-Boro Ambulance, Meals on Wheels, the Park Ridge High School and Pascack Valley High School Interact Clubs, the Park Ridge and Montvale Eagle Scout Awards, the Park Ridge Public Library and many other organizations, events and programs.

The Park Ridge Rotary Club has helped make Park Ridge—along with Montvale and Woodcliff Lake—a better place to live, work and raise a family for 70 years. I join with my colleagues in the House of Representatives to wish the Club and its members many more years of continued success.

PROMPT COMPENSATION ACT OF 1998

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 15, 1998

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss an issue that is extremely important, private property rights. All of us have heard from constituents in our districts who are frustrated with the process by which the government provides compensation to landowners for the private property it acquires. As you know, the federal government obtains private property for all types of reasons, from community and infrastructure development to environmental concerns. Unfortunately, it is common for this process to take several years, during which, the property owner is discouraged from conducting any type of development or improvement activity upon their land. It is for this reason that I will soon be introducing The Prompt Compensation Act of 1998.

Currently, the federal government has two alternatives available in acquiring private property. The first is termed as a "straight condemnation" procedure where a landowner receives notification that a federal agency has requested the Justice Department to file a complaint in condemnation in an attempt to