

continually raised the idea of a new U.S. transitional visa program designed to support the implementation of the peace agreement.

The Northern Ireland Visa for Peace and Reconciliation creates a non-immigrant, temporary working visa category targeted at individuals from disadvantaged areas in Northern Ireland and Border Counties of the Republic. It would allow young unskilled people from disadvantaged areas a brief period of time to learn a craft, get a temporary job and experience the diversity of the United States. After their visit, they would return home ready to share the benefits derived from working in the world's greatest economy.

In the past several years, we have seen 800 years of Irish history take a dramatic shift toward peace. We believe this Visa program will further cement that progress. I hope all Members will join us in supporting this low-risk, low-cost, high-return investment in support of peace in Northern Ireland.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. HOWARD COBLE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 1998

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, on July 20, the House considered several measures under suspension of the rules. On rollcall votes 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, and 308 had I been present I would have voted "yea."

On this date, I was representing the Subcommittee on Courts and Intellectual Property at a meeting of the National Music Publishers Association. I had committed to participating in this event prior to the scheduling of votes.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 1998

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was unavoidably detained and missed four rollcall votes (297, 298, 299 and 300). If I had been present, I would have voted "aye" on all four votes.

PRESENTATION TO THE CONSTITUTION SUBCOMMITTEE, COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HON. JOSEPH R. PITTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 1998

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following for the RECORD.

STATEMENT BY CONGRESSMAN JOSEPH R. PITTS ON LETHAL DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION ACT, (H.R. 4006), JULY 14, 1998

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of H.R. 4006, the

Lethal Drug Abuse Prevention Act of 1998. This bill will prohibit the dispensing or distribution of a controlled substance in order to cause or assist suicide or euthanasia.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly believe that we can and must do better for our disabled and ill citizens than kill them. You cannot solve problems by getting rid of the people to whom the problems happen. When a teenager says her life is not worth living because she has lost her boyfriend, we don't say, "Well, that's her choice." We recognize it as a cry for help, as a view that can and will be changed.

Statistics show that of those who attempt suicide and are stopped, less than 5% have gone on to kill themselves five years later. What a tragedy it would be for the more than 95% who survived if we had turned our backs and not tried to stop them from taking their lives. Sadly, that is exactly what opponents of H.R. 4006 seek to do.

I know that it will be said it is different for those who are terminally ill. But a study published in the American Journal of Psychiatry found that of the 24% who are terminally ill who said they wanted to die, all were suffering from clinically diagnosable depression. Depression is an illness, and it distorts judgment. We should treat it in terminally ill individuals as much as in others.

Let no one suppose, however, that this is an issue that applies only to the terminally ill. Authorizing assisted suicide for those with terminal illness is only the tip of the iceberg. We can see what happened in the Netherlands. In 1981, a Dutch court said that under certain conditions, a doctor could assist a terminally ill person's suicide. In 1982, another court extended that to elderly people who were not terminally ill, but in chronic bad health, a decision upheld by the Dutch Supreme Court in 1984. In 1986, the Dutch Supreme Court said that people with disabilities could be killed.

In 1989 Holland moved from voluntary assisted suicide to nonvoluntary euthanasia when the Supreme Court said that doctors could give lethal injections to children born with Down syndrome. In 1991 a Dutch court legitimized killing a 25 year old woman with mental illness, and in 1994 the Supreme Court said that a woman, with no physical illness or disability, but who was depressed because of the death of her last remaining child, could be killed.

Once you accept the view that death is a solution to human problems, it becomes very hard to draw lines. Gradually, it will be seen as an answer to more and more problems, for less and less weighty reasons. We in America must not start down that road.

My colleagues from Oregon argue that Congress has no business in this area, that it should be left entirely up to the state of Oregon. They miss the point that we are talking about federally controlled drugs. Under existing federal law, it is generally illegal to dispense or distribute these drugs unless you have a special license or "registration" from the federal government. If you are a medical practitioner or pharmacist, you are granted that federal registration to prescribe certain of these federally controlled substances for a legitimate medical purpose.

Congress passed the Controlled Substances Act in the first place because drug abuse is a national problem. A state cannot nullify the federal law if it chooses, as a matter of state law, to legalize the use of heroin or LSD. The same Attorney General who overturned the ruling of the professionals at the federal Drug Enforcement Administration on this matter has successfully gotten injunctions to close cannabis clubs in California

that were selling marijuana for supposed medicinal purposes as authorized by a California referendum.

Mr. Chairman, you can't have it both ways. If my distinguished colleagues from Oregon really want to assert states' rights, they should be pushing for the complete repeal of the federal Controlled Substances Act. But while it is in effect, for the federal government to permit the dispensing of otherwise prohibited federally controlled drugs to kill patients means the federal government is affirmatively facilitating assisted suicide.

The American people don't want this to happen, by a margin of more than 2 to 1. A Wirthlin Worldwide poll in March found that 65% oppose allowing the use of "federally controlled drugs for the purpose of assisted suicide and euthanasia."

Mr. Chairman, the Declaration of Independence describes life as something that is "inalienable"—a right so fundamental that it cannot be given away even voluntarily. The principal author of the Declaration, Thomas Jefferson, wrote in 1809 that "The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only legitimate object of good government."

Our country stands at a crossroads between the way of death and the way of life. I urge that this subcommittee lead us in the life-affirming direction by reporting out the Lethal Drug Abuse Prevention Act of 1998.

TRIBUTE TO KELLY RITTER

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 1998

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Kelly Ritter of Darlington, South Carolina, on the fiftieth anniversary of his involvement in the tobacco business. Mr. Ritter is a well-known figure in the South Carolina tobacco community, and the State has greatly benefitted from his commitment to improving both the quality of our fields and the well-being of the persons whose lives revolve around tobacco crops.

Originally from North Carolina, Mr. Ritter attended North Carolina State University. He entered the United States Army Corps following college, and joined the troops headed to fight in World War II. Just as he was finishing his last bombing missions in Germany, Mr. Ritter was shot down in his plane. He was captured by the Germans and held as a Prisoner of War for 485 days.

After the war, Mr. Ritter moved from Lumberton, North Carolina, to Darlington, South Carolina. He became very involved in the local community, serving as an elder in the Presbyterian Church in Darlington, where he is still a Member. President of the South Carolina Tobacco Warehouse Association, Mr. Ritter acted as a liaison between tobacco companies and farmers, and he worked diligently to improve the tobacco industry and help those involved in it. He has also served on a number of other federal and state tobacco committees.

In addition to his demonstrated commitment to the tobacco industry, Mr. Ritter is also a dedicated husband and father. He has been