

married to the former Bess Stallings for 52 years. Together, they have raised four children: Kelly, Jr., William Keith, Eliza, and Susan.

Mr. Ritter is well-known in the Darlington area because of his many years of service from the dual perspectives of farmer and tobacco warehouse agent. He has supported his field and his community in numerous capacities with persistence and hard work. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Kelly Ritter, Sr., on the fiftieth anniversary of his involvement in the tobacco business in Darlington County, South Carolina.

**TROPICAL FOREST CONSERVATION
ACT OF 1998**

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN R. KASICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 15, 1998

Mr. KASICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2870, the Tropical Forest Conservation Act of 1998. First, let me commend the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) for his leadership on this bill. Because of the diligent efforts of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HAMILTON), and the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), we have a good bill to solve the problem of rainforest depletion at its source.

The preservation of tropical forests is essential for countries all over the world. Tropical forests provide a habitat for a diversity of plants used for life-saving medicines and the treatment of disease. Tropical forests also help to stabilize global rainfall, vital to the health of agricultural crops and coastal communities. This bill provides an economic incentive to stop the rapid deforestation and degradation of this important ecosystem.

Most tropical forests are located in developing countries. Burdened by debt and desperate for capital, many developing countries have sacrificed tropical forests to logging or agricultural development. Some of the countries where rainforests are located owe millions of dollars to the United States which are unlikely to be repaid. This bill establishes a system to rechannel developing nations' financial resources to tropical forest preservation and provide relief from crippling debts.

This bill expands the Bush administration's Enterprise for the Americas Initiative (EAI) which established debt-for-nature swaps with Latin American countries. H.R. 2870 offers debt relief to countries with important resources beyond the Americas. Through debt-for-nature swaps, the United States would forgive or restructure debt for qualifying developing countries with threatened tropical forests. In exchange, countries would make payments to an independently administered fund used to conserve and restore tropical forests. This bill also permits a debt buyback mechanism to allow third parties to purchase debt for a beneficiary country or permit the debtor country to repurchase its debt at a fair market value. Furthermore, this bill is fiscally sound. Any funds spent as a result of this bill are fully offset in the appropriations process.

Again, I would like to thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) for his hard work in bringing this to fruition. In conclusion, this is a

creative and pragmatic solution to benefit tropical forest conservation as well as the economic prosperity of developing nations. I ask my colleagues to support this bill.

**CELEBRATING THE 50TH WEDDING
ANNIVERSARY OF DR. BURL AND
REBA PFANDER**

HON. ROY BLUNT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 1998

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, the greatness of America, in large part, depends on the goodness of its families. The course of our nation is not steered so much by media personalities, or intellectuals, or politicians, as much as it is set by husbands and wives committed to each other, to their children, and to their communities. Dr. Burl and Reba Pfander, of Springfield, Missouri, are such a couple.

On September 5th, Burl and Reba will be celebrating their fiftieth wedding anniversary. When a young World War II veteran married his attractive bride in 1948, they made a life-long commitment to each other. In an age when many people have entered and exited marriages with startling rapidity, Burl and Reba Pfander have kept their promise. They have stood as an example of what marriage should be: a solemn commitment, a life-long partnership, and a relationship of love and honor. As a result, their marriage has enriched their own lives and the lives of their family beyond measure.

The commitment of Burl and Reba to family and to the future is reflected in their son, Michael. Michael has become a veterinarian, continuing his father's private practice of thirty-eight years. Michael has gone on to form his own family; he and his wife, Jeanne, are the parents of Burl and Reba's granddaughter, Meghan Michelle. Burl and Reba Pfander have raised a son that any family would be proud of, with the type of values every son should have. The most important obligation of each generation is to pass on a set of values to the next generation. The Pfanders have met that obligation.

Outside of their family, Burl and Reba's marriage has benefited an entire community. The Pfanders have been involved with local youth organization for many years. Reba has been named an honorary farmer of the Nixa, Missouri, chapter of the Future Farmers of America. Burl has supported the FFA, 4-H, and the Missouri Junior Polled Hereford Association. Both Pfanders are active members of their local church, and they serve as volunteers for community-wide events.

The Pfanders have also shown a strong commitment to giving young people opportunities to advance themselves through higher education. They have endowed an annual scholarship in memory of Reba's brother, Wallace Lanz, who was killed in World War II. The scholarship is given to support local high school seniors as they enter college. Burl and Reba also counsel aspiring veterinarians about their applications to veterinary colleges. Burl and Reba Pfander understand the importance of giving back to their community.

Fifty years ago, few people may have recognized the significance of the wedding of Burl Pfander to Reba Lanz, but today few people

in their community can escape it. The Pfanders have remained committed to each other; they have been good parents and passed on their values to a son who has followed in his parents' path; they have been model citizens; and they have given of themselves to those around them. I am glad to give my congratulations to Dr. Burl and Reba Pfander on their fiftieth wedding anniversary.

**PROTECTING IMMIGRANT
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS**

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 21, 1998

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, in 1994, we passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) with overwhelming support. VAWA contained provisions that were vital to the protection of abused immigrant women and children. We passed this legislation to ensure that abused spouses and children could flee violent homes, gain legal protections from ongoing violence, and cooperate in the criminal prosecution of their abusers.

Prior to VAWA the system ensured that abusive U.S. citizens and permanent residents maintained complete control over the immigration status of their spouses. Battered women could not file for lawful permanent residency without the assistance of their abusive spouses, and many abusive spouses maintained this control by refusing to participate in the petitioning process. Having no other options, these abused immigrant women and their children were forced to stay in violent homes enduring abuse and unable to appeal to law enforcement agencies, shelters, or courts for protection.

The immigration provisions of VAWA helped to solve these problems by giving battered immigrant women and their children some control over their own immigration status. VAWA created a self-petitioning procedure for battered immigrants that did not require the cooperation of their abusive spouses. Self-petitioners could acquire their green cards while remaining in the U.S. where our laws protected them. VAWA also allowed those abused immigrant women who had been placed in deportation proceedings to file for suspension of deportation, regardless of their marital status, so long as they had resided in the United States for three years.

However, subsequent legislation, including the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRAIRA) of 1996 and the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) of 1997, erased some of the protections we created for battered immigrant women and their children.

Expiration of Section 245(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) forces many battered immigrant women, with approved INS petitions, to leave the U.S. to obtain their green cards. Expiration of Section 245(i) is contradictory to the intent of VAWA. Those women who have approved VAWA self-petitions have already shown INS that they would face "extreme hardship" by being forced to leave the country. Traveling outside the United States deprives these women of the protections provided by legislation, court orders, custody decrees, and law enforcement agencies.