Louise Fréchette has had a distinguished diplomatic career in her native country of Canada. Prior to her appointment as Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mme. Fréchette served as the Deputy Defense Minister of Canada and played a particularly important role in Canada’s participation in a number of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that Mme. Fréchette’s speech be included in the RECORD, and I urge my colleagues to give it careful and thoughtful attention.

DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL STRESSES UNITED NATIONS DUTY TO TRANSLATE INTO PRACTICE ORGANIZATION’S COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS

I would like, at the outset, to extend the appreciation of all of us in the United Nations Judiciary. Special rapporteurs are investigating allegations of those rights around the world.

In the first year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that focus has never been more important. The world is changing: modern technology, communications and open borders have led to a movement and exchange of ideas on a scale never seen before. Those nations which fail to uphold basic principles of acceptable behavior can no longer hide behind their borders.

For the United Nations, that makes all the more compelling our duty to translate into practice our commitment to human rights. For decades, the primary focus in human rights was on establishing international norms and standards. That work was largely successful.

In the 1990s, the emphasis has shifted to implementation. Human rights monitors are often attached to peacekeeping operations. We run advisory services to strengthen the judiciaries of new countries which have become independent.

Fréchette served as the Deputy Defense Minister of Canada. Prior to her appointment as Deputy Secretary-General, Mme. Fréchette served as the Deputy Defense Minister of Canada and played a particularly important role in Canada’s participation in a number of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The first article of the Declaration is quite simple. Let me quote it to you: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

Nobody personified that spirit of brotherhood better than Raoul Wallenberg. That fact was acknowledged here in Washington 17 years ago and yesterday. Wallenberg became the third foreigner to be given honorary citizenship of this country—thanks to legislation written by you, Congressman TOM LANTOS.

Wallenberg’s life and achievements highlighted the vital difference an individual can make amidst conflict and suffering. His interventions gave hope to victims, encouraged them to fight and resist, to hang on and bear witness.

Remembering his life should be an inspiration for others to act; for future generations to act; for all of us to act.

Congressman LANTOS, I know that you owe much to Raoul Wallenberg. But I also know we owe much to you, to your indefatigable work in the cause of human rights and in keeping his legacy alive. You, like him, provide an example to us all.

And the work of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus shows that the example of what can be achieved when we join forces to achieve common goals. Such partnerships strengthen immeasurably the work of governments and the United Nations. For although the United Nations is an association of sovereign states, the rights it exists to uphold and defend belong to people.

It follows that people everywhere have a responsibility to speak up for those rights, whenever they see them threatened, wherever they know them to be violated. For your work in that regard, I thank you all.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ
OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 9, 1998

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation that will restore the dream of homeownership to middle- and lower-income families.

Mr. Speaker, the sight is all too familiar in urban and rural America: boarded-up homes, abandoned lots, blighted communities. These sights demonstrate that the dream of homeownership is fleeting for some and that these dreams can become nightmares when financial hardship occurs. But what often goes unspoken in discussing this issue is the fact that some of these abandoned properties were purchased under federal mortgage programs intended to help middle- and low-income Americans. This leads us to ask: what improvement can we make to federal mortgage assistance programs so that people can keep their homes and live the American dream?

This is the goal of my legislation, the Homeowners Emergency Mortgage Assistance Act.

The Declaration of Human Rights is not a legally binding document. Yet, it has been a fundamental source of inspiration for national and international efforts to protect and promote human rights and freedoms.

The main principles of the Declaration have inspired the constitutions of many countries which have been independent since it was written. Conceived as a “common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations” the Declaration has become a yardstick we measure the respect for, and compliance with, international human rights standards.

The first article of the Declaration is quite simple. Let me quote it to you: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

Nobody personified that spirit of brotherhood better than Raoul Wallenberg. That fact was acknowledged here in Washington 17 years ago and yesterday. Wallenberg became the third foreigner to be given honorary citizenship of this country—thanks to legislation written by you, Congressman TOM LANTOS.

Wallenberg’s life and achievements highlighted the vital difference an individual can make amidst conflict and suffering. His interventions gave hope to victims, encouraged them to fight and resist, to hang on and bear witness.

Remembering his life should be an inspiration for others to act; for future generations to act; for all of us to act.

Congressman LANTOS, I know that you owe much to Raoul Wallenberg. But I also know we owe much to you, to your indefatigable work in the cause of human rights and in keeping his legacy alive. You, like him, provide an example to us all.

And the work of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus shows that the example of what can be achieved when we join forces to achieve common goals. Such partnerships strengthen immeasurably the work of governments and the United Nations. For although the United Nations is an association of sovereign states, the rights it exists to uphold and defend belong to people.

It follows that people everywhere have a responsibility to speak up for those rights, whenever they see them threatened, wherever they know them to be violated. For your work in that regard, I thank you all.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ
OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 9, 1998

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation that will restore the dream of homeownership to middle- and low-income families.

Mr. Speaker, the sight is all too familiar in urban and rural America: boarded-up homes, abandoned lots, blighted communities. These sights demonstrate that the dream of homeownership is fleeting for some and that these dreams can become nightmares when financial hardship occurs. But what often goes unspoken in discussing this issue is the fact that some of these abandoned properties were purchased under federal mortgage programs intended to help middle- and low-income Americans. This leads us to ask: what improvement can we make to federal mortgage assistance programs so that people can keep their homes and live the American dream?

This is the goal of my legislation, the Homeowners Emergency Mortgage Assistance Act.

The Declaration of Human Rights is not a legally binding document. Yet, it has been a fundamental source of inspiration for national and international efforts to protect and promote human rights and freedoms.

The main principles of the Declaration have inspired the constitutions of many countries which have been independent since it was written. Conceived as a “common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations” the Declaration has become a yardstick we measure the respect for, and compliance with, international human rights standards.
Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation that targets a trade and investment initiative toward Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Irish Republic. My view is that using existing trade and investment tools to stimulate economic hope and opportunity in the Irish region is the best chance we have for ensuring the Good Friday Peace Agreement is fully implemented. Over the past few months, my thoughts, hopes, and concerns have fixed upon the Irish region. From the peaks of the Good Friday Peace Agreement and election of the first local government in Northern Ireland in over twenty five years, to the valleys of Drumcree, the arson deaths of three young brothers in also ensures that the Overseas Private Invest- bomb, my hopes for that troubled land have twisted and turned with events seemingly beyond our ability to impact or entirely under- stand.

Northern Ireland needs our nation’s support and assistance at most critical stages along the path to lasting peace and consensual self government. On the very edge of undertaking their governmental duties and offices as set forth in the Good Friday Peace Agreement, the political leaders face one final fence—the decommissioning issue—that stands between them and the promise of a democratic and prosperous government for both communities. Time is short and a clear sign of support from Congress could help lift the parties over the last hurdle.

As you know, Irish free trade legislation has been slowed by resistance from the European Union, which considers a free trade agree- ment between the U.S. and Northern Ireland and the Border counties as a threat to their customs union. As member states of the EU, both Ireland and Britain have viewed free trade legislation with caution. Faced with continued resistance to the Irish free trade legislation, I concluded that a fresh attempt to fashion legislation that could address European reluctance while quickly deliv- ering meaningful trade and investment assistance to Northern Ireland was in order.

I have developed legislation that targets ex- isting trade and investment tools such as the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) to assist Northern Ireland’s exporters to grow their economy and job base. The legislation authorizes the Overseas Private Invest- ment Corporation (OPIC) to grant an acceptable policing force in Northern Ireland with the highest level of professionalism.

- The Omagh bombing is a clear example of a small town that desperately needs im- proved policing and assistance for reconstruc- tion. The pace and scale of aid and invest- ment in Omagh and other towns recently bombed—Banbridge, Markethill, and Newtownhamilton—could determine whether the Agreement holds.

The U.S. can continue its crucial role in the peace process by creating and promoting economic growth through trade and invest- ment in the region’s severely economically deprived areas. In addition to promoting trade and investment in NI and IR, the U.S. should consider granting aid communities suffering terrorist attacks.

e. Fair employment practices in Northern Ireland are an essential element for an expanding full employment economy. Congress notes with approval the constant efforts un- dertaken by the Northern Ireland Fair Em- ployment Commission and Employment Tri- bunal to achieve this end. Congress is also aware that the Good Friday Peace Agree- ment established an Anti-discrimination Committee to augment the work done by the Commission. The United States believes their continuing efforts constitute persua- sive evidence that economic justice prin- ciples contained herein are being effectively safeguarded, secured and promoted for all communities. (Assistance in legislation is contingent on MacBride principles as agreed to in H.R. 1757 conference report).

The strengthening of a police force ac- ceptable to both communities in Northern Ireland is essential for the formation and success of a peaceful and prosperous civil so- ciety. The Congress notes the Independent Commission on Police is to report on the policing problems in Northern Ireland. The Congress, taking into account the recommenda- tions of the Commission, shall report to Congress on a bi-annual basis how the United States can assist in the establish- ment of an acceptable policing force in Northern Ireland with the highest level of professionalism.

(2) OPIC directive: OPIC shall establish $340 million in equity funds as a channel to increase funding for projects that will create a rapid job growth in the private sector. Finally, I have targeted five projects for funding and support that will provide both immediate and mid-term job generating growth.