

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to thank my colleagues for the unanimous support they have given for the Wei Jingsheng Freedom of Conscience Act. This bill will grant lawful permanent residence to writer and philosopher Wei Jingsheng, one of the most heroic individuals the international human rights community has known. I particularly want to mention Senators HATCH, DEWINE, HUTCHINSON, BROWNBACK, HELMS, ROTH, and WELLSTONE, all of whom cosponsored the bill.

Mr. President, Wei has spent literally decades struggling against an oppressive Chinese government. He has called for freedom and democracy through speeches, writings, and as a prominent participant in the Democracy Wall movement. His dedication to the principles we hold dear, and on which our Nation was founded, brought him 15 years of torture and imprisonment at the hands of the Chinese communist regime. Seriously ill, Wei was released only after great international public outcry. Now essentially exiled, he lives in the United States on a temporary visa and cannot return to China without facing further imprisonment.

By granting Wei permanent residence, Mr. President, we will show that America stands by those who are willing to stand up for the principles we cherish. We also will help Wei in his continuing fight for freedom and democracy in China.

I commend my colleagues for sending a strong signal about America's commitment to human rights, human freedom, and the dignity of the individual. I yield the floor.

The committee substitute was agreed to.

The bill (S. 2476), as amended, was considered, read the third time, and passed.

The title was amended so as to read: "For the relief of Wei Jingsheng."

PRIVATE RELIEF LEGISLATION

The bill (S. 1926) for the relief of Regine Beatie Edwards, was considered, read the third time, and passed; as follows:

S. 1926

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CLASSIFICATION AS A CHILD UNDER THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In the administration of the Immigration and Nationality Act, Regine Beatie Edwards shall be classified as a child within the meaning of section 101(b)(1)(E) of such Act, upon approval of a petition filed on her behalf by Stan Edwards, a citizen of the United States, pursuant to section 204 of such Act.

(b) LIMITATION.—No natural parent, brother, or sister, if any, of Regine Beatie Edwards shall, by virtue of such relationship, be accorded any right, privilege, or status under the Immigration and Nationality Act.

PRIVATE RELIEF LEGISLATION

The bill (S. 1916) for the relief of Marin Turcinovic, and his fiancée,

Corina Dechalup, was considered, read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1916

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PERMANENT RESIDENCE.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, for purposes of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.), Marin Turcinovic and his fiancée, Corina Dechalup, shall be held and considered to have been lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence as of the date of the enactment of this Act upon payment of the required visa fees.

SEC. 2. REDUCTION OF NUMBER OF AVAILABLE VISAS.

Upon the granting of permanent residence to Marin Turcinovic and his fiancée, Corina Dechalup, as provided in this Act, the Secretary of State shall instruct the proper officer to reduce by the appropriate number during the current fiscal year the total number of immigrant visas available to natives of the country of the aliens' birth under section 203(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1153(a)).

FOR THE RELIEF OF LLOYD B. GAMBLE

The resolution (S. Res. 283) to refer H.R. 998 entitled "A bill for the relief of Lloyd B. Gamble" to the chief judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a report thereon, was considered and agreed to.

The resolution is as follows:

S. RES. 283

Resolved, That (a) H.R. 998 entitled "A bill for the relief of Lloyd B. Gamble" now pending in the Senate, together with all the accompanying papers, is referred to the chief judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims.

(b) The chief judge shall—

(1) proceed according to the provisions of sections 1492 and 2509 of title 28, United States Code; and

(2) report back to the Senate, at the earliest practicable date, providing—

(A) such findings of fact and conclusions that are sufficient to inform the Congress of the nature, extent, and character of the claim for compensation referred to in such bill as a legal or equitable claim against the United States or a gratuity; and

(B) the amount, if any, legally or equitably due from the United States to Mr. Lloyd B. Gamble.

(c) It is the sense of the Senate that if any judgment is entered in favor of Lloyd B. Gamble against the United States, any damages arising from injuries sustained by Lloyd B. Gamble should not exceed \$253,488.

PRIVATE RELIEF BILL

The bill (S. 2637) providing for the relief for Belinda McGregor was considered, read the third time, and passes, as follows:

S. 2637

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PERMANENT RESIDENCE

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, for purposes of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.), Belinda McGregor shall be held and considered to have been selected for a diversity immigrant

visa for fiscal year 1999 as of the date of the enactment of this Act upon payment of the required visa fee.

(b) ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS.—If Belinda McGregor, or any child (as defined in section 101(b)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act) of Belinda McGregor, enters the United States before the date of the enactment of this Act, he or she shall be considered to have entered and remained lawfully and shall, if otherwise eligible, be eligible for adjustment of status under section 245 of the Immigration and Nationality Act as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 2. REDUCTION OF NUMBER OF AVAILABLE VISAS.

Upon the granting of permanent residence to Belinda McGregor as provided in this Act, the Secretary of State shall instruct the proper officer to reduce by one number during the current fiscal year the total number of immigrant visas available to natives of the country of the alien's birth under section 203(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1153(c)).

STRATEGY TO COMBAT MONEY LAUNDERING AND RELATED FINANCIAL CRIMES

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 1756, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1756) to amend chapter 53 of title 31, United States Code, to require the development and implementation by the Secretary of the Treasury of a national money laundering and related financial crimes strategy to combat money laundering and related financial crimes, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 3828

(Purpose: To amend the definition of "money laundering and related financial crimes")

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, Senators GRASSLEY and D'AMATO have an amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAIG), for Mr. GRASSLEY, for himself and Mr. D'AMATO, proposes an amendment numbered 3828.

On page 2, strike line 21 and all that follows through page 3, line 3 and insert the following:

"(2) MONEY LAUNDERING AND RELATED FINANCIAL CRIME.—The term 'money laundering and related financial crime'—

"(A) means the movement of illicit cash or cash equivalent proceeds into, out of, or through the United States, or into, out of, or through United States financial institutions, as defined in section 5312 of title 31, United States Code; or

"(B) has the meaning given that term (or the term used for an equivalent offense) under State and local criminal statutes pertaining to the movement of illicit cash or cash equivalent proceeds."

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am pleased today to see this historic piece

of legislation will pass the Senate. After much careful work with Senator D'AMATO, the Treasury Department, and the Justice Department, as well as our colleagues in the other body, we have crafted a bill that I believe will lead to much improved coordination in fighting money laundering. I want to thank everyone involved for their hard work on this legislation.

The bill will hit the criminals where they feel it the most—in their pocket-books. By implementing a strategy on a national level, hundreds of communities across our country will no longer be held hostage by these criminal enterprises. As you know, money laundering involves disguising financial assets so they can be used without detection of the illegal activity that produced them. Through money laundering, the criminal transforms the monetary proceeds derived from the criminal activity into funds with an apparently legal source. Money laundering provides the resources from drug dealers, terrorists, arms dealers, and other criminals to operate and expand their criminal enterprises. Today, experts estimate that money laundering has grown into a \$500 billion problem worldwide.

The Money Laundering and Related Financial Crimes Strategy Act of 1998 will authorize the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Attorney General and other relevant agencies, to coordinate and implement a national strategy to address the exploitation of our Nation's payment systems to facilitate money laundering and related financial crimes. I look forward to the delivery of this first strategy next February, and believe it will be a valuable document not only for law enforcement agencies, but also for Congress as we look to react to the increasingly inventive ways criminals take advantage of our financial system. I hope this legislation will be the beginning of a serious effort by Congress to impact the growing threat of money laundering not only to our Nation, but worldwide.

Mr. D'AMATO. Today, Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to support the passage of H.R. 1756, the Money Laundering and Financial Crimes Strategy Act of 1997. I am glad that we have been able to reach this point. The House has sent over H.R. 1756, a strong antimoney laundering tool for law enforcement, and after some negotiation, we have amended the language slightly. The House has agreed to accept the compromise and I have a letter from James E. Johnson, Under Secretary for Enforcement at the Treasury Department supporting the goals of this legislation. I ask unanimous consent that the letter be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. D'AMATO. I believe we are now ready to proceed to passage of the bill providing sufficient time for the House to act.

Mr. President, this is an important tool for the counternarcotics effort. Drug traffickers and dealers are destroying our families, communities and the future of our children, and we must fight them with Every weapon at our disposal. This bill will attack drug traffickers by making it harder for these criminals to profit from their illegal windfalls.

Mr. President, through money laundering, drug traffickers are able to take their blood money and launder it clean. Their ill gotten gains are then filtered throughout our economy. Money laundering sustains drug traffickers and arms dealers, as well as terrorists and other criminals searching for a way to prolong their illegal enterprises.

That is why I joined with Senator GRASSLEY and Congresswoman VELÁZQUEZ to develop the Money Laundering and Financial Crimes Strategy Act which the House passed on October 5, 1998. The bill will provide the means for federal, state and local crime fighters to pursue and prosecute the drug traffickers and those that finance their criminal trade.

This bill will allow the Secretary of the Treasury and the Attorney General to create a national money laundering strategy and designate high risk zones. State and local officials within these zones will be encouraged to form a task force and become eligible for enforcement and technical assistance and, most importantly, anti-money laundering grants.

Mr. President, let me explain why this is especially important for New York, where money launderers have benefited from the financial, trade and transportation systems in the metropolitan area. New York is the largest financial center in this country—and one of the top three international money centers in the world. Unfortunately, money launderers have used this infrastructure to pursue their own criminal activities.

Assistance by state and local officers in New York has been invaluable in stopping drug traffickers from sending money back to the cartels. In 1997, in the New York area, law enforcement officials determined that organized narcotics traffickers were using the services of unscrupulous money remitters and their agents to send the proceeds of drug sales back to the drug source countries.

Utilizing a temporary Geographical Targeting Order (GTO) for the New York metropolitan area, remitters and agents were required to report detailed information about the remittances of cash to Colombia of more than \$750.

Within a week of the GTO's issuance, the local, state and federal agencies that made up the El Dorado Task Force found that money laundering activity in that area, Jackson Heights, dropped dramatically. The number of remittances to Colombia dropped 95 percent and the dollar amount dropped 97 percent (from \$67 million to \$2 mil-

lion). The New York GTO resulted in the seizure of millions in currency that was diverted to bulk shipments through the air and seaports and most importantly, disrupted the profit back to the drug cartels.

Mr. President, this operation was a huge success—thanks to the cooperative efforts of federal, state and local law enforcement. We should build on that cooperation with this legislation.

Law enforcement efforts must follow the financial schemes and cash flows of the drug traffickers. As the drug cartels change their method of laundering their proceeds, law enforcement must respond. This bill provides law enforcement and prosecutors with the resources and flexibility to do just that. This monumental effort will cripple the drug traffickers where it hurts—in their pockets—and take an important step forward in our war on drugs.

I am proud to have cosponsored the Senate measure with Senator GRASSLEY and to have worked with Representative VELÁZQUEZ to enact this important tool in antidrug efforts.

I urge my colleagues to support this important anticrime bill.

EXHIBIT 1

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY,
Washington, DC, October 8, 1998.

Hon. ALFONSE D'AMATO,
Chairman, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: During the course of this year we have been following a bill introduced by Congresswoman Velazquez, the "Money Laundering and Related Financial Crimes Strategy Act" (H.R. 1756). On June 16, the Treasury Department provided testimony on H.R. 1756 indicating support for the bill's overall goals and objectives.

We continue to support these goals. We appreciate that Congresswoman Velazquez's bill recognizes the scope of the money laundering problem, and attempts to develop a mechanism to address these challenges. Developing an anti-money laundering strategy could prove useful in setting priorities and communicating them to Congress and the public. Moreover, money laundering enforcement is complex and resource-intensive. Enforcement of money laundering laws could benefit from proper coordination among federal, state, and local law enforcement.

We also appreciate the bill's goal of providing additional resources for state and local antimoney laundering activities. Financial crime investigations are complex and require specialized expertise, as well as resource commitments to follow leads that often take time to develop. Cases themselves may span years and are information-intensive. Because of this, state and local law enforcement could benefit from additional resources and expertise to fully join the fight against money laundering.

We look forward to continuing to work with you and your Committee in combating money laundering and other financial crimes.

Sincerely,

JAMES E. JOHNSON,
Under Secretary (Enforcement).

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that amendment be agreed to, the bill considered read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 3828) was agreed to.

The bill (H.R. 1756), as amended, was passed.

GOVERNMENT PAPERWORK ELIMINATION ACT

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 581, S. 2107.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2107) to enhance electronic commerce by promoting the reliability and integrity of commercial transactions through establishing authentication standards for electronic communication and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Government Paperwork Elimination Act".

SEC. 2. STUDIES ON USE OF ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES TO ENHANCE ELECTRONIC COMMERCE.

The Secretary shall conduct an ongoing study of the enhancement of electronic commerce and the impact on individual privacy due to the use of electronic signatures pursuant to this Act, and shall report findings to the Commerce Committee of the House and to the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee of the Senate not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. ELECTRONIC AVAILABILITY OF FORMS.

(a) NEW FORMS, QUESTIONNAIRES, AND SURVEYS.—The head of an agency or operating unit shall provide for the availability to the affected public in electronic form for downloading or printing through the Internet or other suitable medium of any agency form, questionnaire, or survey created after the date of enactment of this Act that is to be submitted to the agency by more than 1,000 non-government persons or entities per year, except where the head of the agency or operating unit determines by a finding that providing for such availability would be impracticable or otherwise unreasonable.

(b) ALL FORMS, QUESTIONNAIRES, AND SURVEYS.—As soon as practicable, but not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, each Federal agency shall make all of its forms, questionnaires, and surveys that are expected to be submitted to such agency by more than 1,000 non-government persons or entities per year available to the affected public for downloading or printing through the Internet or other suitable electronic medium. This requirement shall not apply where the head of an agency or operating unit determines that providing such availability for particular form, questionnaire or survey documents would be impracticable or otherwise unreasonable.

(c) APPLICABILITY OF SECTION.—The requirements of this section shall not apply to surveys that are both distributed and collected one-time only or that are provided directly to respondents by the agency.

(d) AVAILABILITY.—Forms subject to this section shall be available for electronic submission (with an electronic signature when necessary) under the provisions of section 8, and shall be available for electronic storage by employers as described in section 7.

(e) PAPER FORMS TO BE AVAILABLE.—Each agency and operating unit shall continue to make forms, questionnaires, and surveys available in paper form.

SEC. 4. PAYMENTS.

In conjunction with the process required by section 8—

(1) where they deem such action appropriate and practicable, and subject to standards or guidance of the Department of the Treasury concerning Federal payments or collections, agencies shall seek to develop or otherwise provide means whereby persons submitting documents electronically are accorded the option of making any payments associated therewith by electronic means.

(2) payments associated with forms, applications, or similar documents submitted electronically, other than amounts relating to additional costs associated with the electronic submission such as charges imposed by merchants in connection with credit card transactions, shall be no greater than the payments associated with the corresponding printed version of such documents.

SEC. 5. USE OF ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES BY FEDERAL AGENCIES.

(a) AGENCY EMPLOYEES TO RECEIVE ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES.—The head of each agency shall issue guidelines for determining how and which employees in each respective agency shall be permitted to use electronic signatures within the scope of their employment.

(b) AVAILABILITY OF ELECTRONIC NOTICE.—An agency may provide a person entitled to receive written notice of a particular matter with the opportunity to receive electronic notice instead.

(c) PROCEDURES FOR ACCEPTANCE OF ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES.—The Director, in consultation with the Secretary, shall coordinate agency actions to comply with the provisions of this Act and shall develop guidelines concerning agency use and acceptance of electronic signatures, and such use and acceptance shall be supported by the issuance of such guidelines as may be necessary or appropriate by the Secretary.

(1) The procedures shall be compatible with standards and technology for electronic signatures as may be generally used in commerce and industry and by State governments, based upon consultation with appropriate private sector and State government standard setting bodies.

(2) Such procedures shall not inappropriately favor one industry or technology.

(3) Under the procedures referred to in subsection (a), an electronic signature shall be as reliable as is appropriate for the purpose, and efforts shall be made to keep the information submitted intact.

(4) Successful submission of an electronic form shall be electronically acknowledged.

(5) In accordance with all other sections of the Act, to the extent feasible and appropriate, and described in a written finding, an agency, when it receives electronically 50,000 submittals of a particular form, shall take all steps necessary to ensure that multiple formats of electronic signatures are made available for submitting such forms.

SEC. 6. ENFORCEABILITY AND LEGAL EFFECT OF ELECTRONIC RECORDS.

Electronic records submitted or maintained in accordance with agency procedures and guidelines established pursuant to the Act, or electronic signatures or other forms of electronic authentication used in accordance with such procedures and guidelines, shall not be denied legal effect, validity or enforceability because they are in electronic form.

SEC. 7. EMPLOYER ELECTRONIC STORAGE OF FORMS.

If an employer is required by any Federal law or regulation to collect or store, or to file with a Federal agency forms containing information pertaining to employees, such employer may, after 18 months after enactment of this Act, store such forms electronically unless the rel-

evant agency determines by regulation that storage of a particular form in an electronic format is inconsistent with the efficient secure or proper administration of an agency program. Such forms shall also be accepted in electronic form by agencies as provided by section 8.

SEC. 8. IMPLEMENTATION BY AGENCIES.

(a) IMPLEMENTATION.—Consistent with the Privacy Protection Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 2000aa) and after consultation with the Attorney General, and subject to applicable laws and regulations pertaining to the Department of the Treasury concerning Federal payments and collections and the National Archives and Records Administration concerning the proper maintenance and preservation of agency records, Federal agencies shall, not later than 18 months after the enactment of this Act, establish and implement policies and procedures under which they will use and authorize the use of electronic technologies in the transmittal of forms, applications, and similar documents or records, and where appropriate, for the creation and transmission of such documents or records and their storage for their required retention period.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF A TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION.—Within 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, Federal agencies shall establish timelines for the implementation of the requirements of subsection (a).

(c) GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE REPORT.—The Comptroller General shall report to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the House of Representatives Committee on Commerce 21 months after the date of enactment of this Act on the proposed implementation policies and timelines described in subsections (a) and (b).

(d) IMPLEMENTATION DEADLINE.—Except where an agency makes a written finding that electronic filing of a form is either technically infeasible, economically unreasonable, or may compromise national security, all Federal forms must be made available for electronic submission within 60 months after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 9. SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.

Because there is no meaningful difference between contracts executed in the electronic world and contracts executed in the analog world, it is the sense of the Congress that such contracts should be treated similarly under Federal law. It is further the sense of the congress that such contracts should be treated similarly under State law.

SEC. 10. APPLICATION WITH OTHER LAWS.

Nothing in this Act shall apply to the Department of the Treasury or the Internal Revenue Service, to the extent that—

(1) it involves the administration of the internal revenue laws; and

(2) it conflicts with any provision of the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998 or the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

SEC. 11. DEFINITIONS.

For purposes of this Act:

(1) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Commerce.

(2) AGENCY.—The term "agency" means executive agency, as that term is defined in section 105 of title 5, United States Code.

(3) ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE.—The term "electronic signature" means a method of signing an electronic message that—

(A) identifies a particular person as the source of such electronic message; and

(B) indicates such person's approval of the information contained in such electronic message.

(4) DIRECTOR.—The term "Director" means the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

(5) FORM, QUESTIONNAIRE, OR SURVEY.—The terms "form", "questionnaire", and "survey" include documents produced by an agency to facilitate interaction between an agency and non-government persons.