

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE BIRTH
OF SIMON LANIEL COPELAND

HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 1999

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome a brand new constituent to the Second Congressional District of North Carolina, Master Simon Laniel Copeland. Simon was born on March 31, 1999 to proud parents Tony and Monique Copeland and to big brother Elliot Laniel Copeland. I would like to congratulate the Copelands on the wonderful new addition to their family.

As a father of three, I know the immeasurable joy and pride that children bring into your life. Their innocence keeps you young-at-heart. Through their inquiring minds and child's wide-eyed wonder, they show you the world in a fresh, new way and change your perspective on life. A little miracle, a new baby holds all the potential of what human beings can achieve. Through this new life God has blessed the Copeland family.

I have known Tony Copeland for many years, and I know that he will be as wonderful a father to Simon and Elliot as he has always been a friend to me. I wish Simon and his family much love, joy, and success in life.

BLOOMFIELD CITIZENS COUNCIL
AWARDS

HON. WILLIAM J. COYNE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 1999

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a member of Pittsburgh residents who will be honored on April 30th with Bloomfield Citizens Council Awards. Every year, the Bloomfield Citizens Council gives out these awards to recognize members of the community who have, in some way, improved the quality of life in the Bloomfield neighborhood of Pittsburgh. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the 1999 award winners for their efforts to make Bloomfield a better place to live.

Ruth and Vic Infante have been selected as the 1999 recipients of the Mary Cercone Outstanding Citizen Award. This award is given to individuals who demonstrate "an unselfish commitment to others and a deep love for the community of Bloomfield." Ruth and Vic Infante have been actively involved in volunteer activities and community organizations like the Bloomfield Senior Center and the Bloomfield Citizens Council for more than 40 years.

A Community Commitment Award will go to Barry Deems who has worked for the last 14 years as Vice President of the Western Pennsylvania Hospital to promote good relations between the hospital and the community. His efforts to make the hospital's new facilities fit harmoniously into the surrounding community have been greatly appreciated.

Gloria LeDonne will receive a Neighborhood Loyalty Award for her dedicated work as a member, secretary, and president of the Bloomfield Business Association. She is to be commended for her ability to successfully bal-

ance the competing demands of running a business, actively involving herself in civic affairs, and raising a family.

Bernice Bianco Palmiere will receive an Excellence in Education Award for her 37 years of involvement in education. A graduate of Carlow College with a Masters Degree in education, she taught at St. Joseph School in Bloomfield for 27 years and served as Assistant Principle for seven of those years. She was also actively involved in the consolidation of three local Catholic schools.

An Excellence in Education Award will also be given to Virginia Gualdaroni DiPucci for a career in education stretching over thirty years. Mrs. DiPucci earned degrees from four local universities—the University of Pittsburgh, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Duquesne University, and Carnegie Mellon University—and she used her education to serve local children, first as a teacher and later as a principal at local schools.

An Extra Mile Award will be presented to Bill Kovach for his efforts as a volunteer photographer for many local organizations. He has photographed countless community events for local papers like the Valley Mirror, the Allegheny Journal and the Daily Messenger. He provided a particularly important community service by documenting the 1987 train derailment. He has also volunteered this time to a number of local civic organizations.

Public Safety Awards will be given to C.O.P. Officer Kurt Kondrich and C.O.P. Officer W. Scot Green, who have worked diligently as Bike Patrol officers to prevent crime in Bloomfield and keep the community safe.

The Bloomfield Citizens Council will also present a number of awards for Christmas decorations this year. John Scanga will receive the Keeping Christ in Christmas Award for his Nativity scene display. Brian Scanlon will receive the Most Outstanding and Completely Decorated Home Award this year for putting Christmas lights on "anything that couldn't walk away." Phyllis Kutosky and Lucille Totorea—a mother-and-daughter team—will once again receive the Most Elaborate Property Decoration Award for decorating their long double lot. And finally, the Most Creative Design Award will be presented to Mark Wohlfarth for creating a 36-foot high outline of a white Christmas tree on a blank wall of his home and decorating it with large red bows. These five individuals all helped bring the joy of the holiday season to their neighbors.

In closing, let me just say that all of the individuals receiving 1999 Bloomfield Citizens Council awards have made important contributions to the quality of life in Bloomfield. On behalf of the residents of Bloomfield and the rest of the 14th Congressional District, I thank them for their efforts and congratulate them on their selection as recipients of 1999 Bloomfield Citizens Council awards.

COMPULSORY LICENSING IS NOT
AN ASSAULT ON INTELLECTUAL
PROPERTY RIGHTS

HON. MARION BERRY

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 1999

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, I am thankful that today, by an overwhelming majority of 422 to

1, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 1554, the Satellite Home Viewer Act of 1999, which I supported. This legislation ensures that many of my constituents will continue to receive television network programming. The bill extends for five years compulsory licenses, which require superstations and distant broadcast stations to allow their signal to be retransmitted by satellite carriers. In order to promote competition, the bill sets specific prices at which the intellectual property owners, or broadcasters, will be paid for having their signal rebroadcasted.

It is ironic that even as we vote to allow compulsory licensing today, we are interfering in another country's attempt to address a public health crisis through giving consumers access to international markets and through the use of compulsory licensing. It is estimated 3.2 million South Africans are HIV positive, including 45 percent of its military. One in five South African pregnant women test positive for HIV. Access to affordable medicine is also a critical issue for the elderly and others suffering from chronic diseases and medical conditions. Prescription drugs are not currently an option for many patients in South Africa, where the drugs often cost more than they do in the United States. The 1997 per capita income in South Africa was estimated to be only \$6,200 annually.

To address the problem, President Mandela and the South African Government enacted a law in 1997 to reform the country's prescription drug marketplace. The law amends the South African Medicines Act to allow prescription drugs to be purchased in the international marketplace where prices are lower. It would also allow compulsory licensing in some cases. Regulations implementing the law have not been implemented while the law is being constitutionally challenged in South African courts by drug makers in their country.

However, the pharmaceutical industry has persuaded the United States government to work to have the South African law repealed. In February, the United States Department of State released a report titled, U.S. Government Efforts to Negotiate the Repeal, Termination or Withdrawal of Article 15(c) of the South African Medicines and Related Substances Act of 1965.

While special interest groups have tried to convince members of Congress and the administration that implementation of the South African Medicines Act would cause violations of international intellectual property rights agreements, I have seen no evidence that such violations are likely to occur. Compulsory licensing is not an assault on intellectual property rights. Instead, it is part of the copyright and patent systems which enable the interest of the public to be served. Compulsory licensing is permitted under Article 31 of the WTO Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). In fact, French law authorizes compulsory licensing when medicines are "only available to the public in insufficient quantity or quality or at abnormally high prices."

Today, the House of Representatives wisely exercised its power to continue the use of compulsory licensing in the broadcast industry to allow consumers to have access to broadcast signals, that in many instances they would otherwise be unable to receive. Certainly, the United States government should recognize the need of a government to allow

its citizens to have access to needed medicine in order to address a public health crisis and should not interfere with the situation in South Africa.

RECOGNIZING THE EFFORTS OF
THE EMPLOYEES OF ROCKLAND
COUNTY SEWER DISTRICT NO. 1

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the efforts of the employees of Rockland County Sewer District No. 1 in collecting over 7 billion gallons of sewerage annually, treating it, and returning clean water to the environment and the community.

As the 106th Congress works to protect and provide clean water to the communities of our nation, we must not forget those who make our legislation a reality. Their dedication protects each one of us from the pollutants which threaten the health and welfare of our children and our families.

In this spirit, the employees of Rockland County Sewer District No. 1 will be celebrating "Water Week," from May 2nd through May 8th, 1999. This event will celebrate the way people are working to protect and improve our water. It will provide the citizens of Rockland County with tours and exhibits promoting clean water initiatives; and will recognize those individuals who have dedicated their lives to protecting their community water supply.

Once again, I would like to thank the employees of Rockland County Sewer District No. 1 for their hard work and continued dedication.

TRIBUTE TO VETERANS OF FOREIGN
WARS OF THE UNITED
STATES

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 1999

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW). The VFW is dedicated to protecting the rights and families of those who have served in the United States military. This year marks the 100-year anniversary of the VFW.

For over 200 years, the U.S. Armed Forces have fought for freedom and protected the natural born rights of every American citizen. Blood, sweat and tears of these men and women have built and solidified our great nation into a worldwide stronghold. In 1899, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States established itself a defender of the American veteran. To ensure their protection, the VFW continually echoes the soldier's voices through the halls of Congress and stands tall for widows whose spouses died across vast oceans and in the depths of foreign jungles. The VFW promotes veterans not only in times of war, but also when they return from battle, in times of peace.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise to honor the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. All Americans, past, present, and future, deeply appreciate their service and devotion.

CELEBRATING 300 YEARS OF THE
SIKH COMMUNITY

HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 1999

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, on April 10th, this city was treated to the sight of the thousands of Americans of the Sikh religion marching through Washington to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the Sikh's most sacred event, the founding of the "Khalsa" (Community of Sikh believers). For Sikhs in this country and around the world, it was a sacred and inspiring day.

However, both the reporting of the march and several subsequent comments placed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, made it appear as if the march was something it was not. For some reason, the comments in the newspaper and elsewhere made it appear as if the entire U.S. Sikh community was here to advocate separation from India, home of the world's largest Sikh community. This was simply not true. The Sikhs who came to Washington traveled here to show pride in their religion and their way of life. They came to celebrate the deep and abiding three-century heritage as found among the 22 million Sikhs worldwide.

It is a heritage that has enriched both this nation and the Sikhs home country, India. Sikhs have served at all levels of government in India, including the Presidency. They have played a key role in India's economic and military development. The vast majority of Sikhs are committed to India and its continued progress. The Sikh community is held in high regard by all Indians.

Sadly, a small number of Sikhs here seem to have been determined to pervert the purpose of the march. It was their intent to promote a narrow agenda—a partial dissolution of the world's most populous democracy, India. While this small minority is vocal and active, it is a very small minority of American and world Sikhs. But being active, it was their comments that got reported in the press and reprinted in the RECORD. What they espouse, a separate homeland for Sikhs has virtually no support in the Sikhs traditional homeland, the Punjab of India, and very little support here in the United States. And for good reason. Rupturing the territorial integrity of India invites greater instability in a region of the world where U.S. interests are best served by stability.

Mr. Speaker, the April 10 march showed the finest of America—freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech. The great numbers of Sikhs who visited our city recently came here to celebrate their religion and their way of life. Any suggestion that these Sikhs came here with a political agenda is incorrect and does a disservice to the community at large.

THE TAX EQUITY PRESERVATION
ACT OF 1999

HON. PHILIP M. CRANE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 1999

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I introduced the Tax Equity Preservation Act of 1999, H.R. 1561, to repeal the Alternative Minimum Tax, the AMT, on individuals.

The AMT must be one of the most perverse provisions found in the entire complex of the Internal Revenue Code. Like many of the taxes designed to make Americans pay their "fair share" to the government, the AMT is very inefficient and subjects taxpayers to a form of double jeopardy.

Over the last few months as Americans prepared their 1998 tax returns, they faced an array of tax deductions, exclusions and exemptions which, depending on their circumstances, they could use to legitimately reduce their tax burden. For example, the Code includes personal and dependent deductions. In addition, Congress recently provided parents with a tax credit for each of their children to help with the cost of raising the kids. There are yet other tax credits available to help offset the cost of education such as HOPE Scholarships and Lifetime Learning credits. Taxpayers may also deduct their medical expenses when they exceed 7.5 percent of their income.

More and more taxpayers are finding that, after they fill out their tax forms and take all their legitimate deductions and exclusions, Uncle Sam is telling them that they did not pay enough taxes. They must then start all over with a new stack of tax forms and compute their Alternative Minimum Tax. Unfortunately, many of the deductions, exemptions and credits available under the ordinary income tax are not available, or are reduced, under the AMT.

For example, taxpayers subject to the AMT may not take personal and dependent exemptions. State and local taxes are exempt under the ordinary income tax, but not under the AMT. Tax credits for children and education credits cannot be used to reduce the AMT burden. Even the deductibility of medical costs is more restrictive under the AMT, with only expenses exceeding 10 percent of income eligible for deductions.

Although designed to prevent "rich" taxpayers from avoiding taxes, because the AMT exemptions and deductions have not kept pace with inflation, more and more middle income taxpayers are falling victim to the AMT. The AMT exemption amounts are only \$33,750 for single filers and \$45,000 for married couples filing joint returns. Congress last updated these in 1993 and did not index them for inflation.

The Tax Equity Preservation Act will relieve taxpayers from the burden of filling out two separate stacks of tax forms and paying higher taxes. Although we could help middle-income Americans by increasing the AMT exemptions and indexing them for inflation, that would only add more complexity to the Code. The better way to preserve tax equity is to simply abolish the AMT.

I commend H.R. 1561, the Tax Equity Preservation Act of 1999, to the attention of my