

CONGRATULATING "WE THE
PEOPLE" FINALISTS

HON. TOM BLILEY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2000

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Speaker, on May 6–8, 2000 more than 1200 students from across the United States will be in Washington, D.C. to compete in the national finals of the We the People . . . The Citizen and the Constitution program. I am proud to announce that the class from The Governor's School for Government & International Studies from Richmond will represent the state of Virginia in this national event. Through dedication and hard work, these young scholars have earned the right to compete in the national finals where they will demonstrate their through understanding of the fundamental principles and values of our constitutional democracy.

The name of the students are: Loren Bushkar, Zachary Carwile, Joshua Chiancone, John Cluverius, Madeleine de Blois, Charles Dixon, Meredith Gaglio Matthew Gayle, Mathew George, Allen Hatzis, Emily Hulburt, Maryann James, Jason Karmes, Frankie Keller, Sarah Kiesler, Lindsey Lane, Kerin Lanyi, Theresa McCulla, Andi Monson, Daniel Myers, Benjamin Neale, George Nuckolls, Jonathan Phillips, Susannah Powell, John Sells, Kelly Stover, Alex Walthall, Milo Wical

I would also like to recognize their teacher, Phillip Sorrentino, who motivated his students to strive for excellence.

The We the People . . . The Citizen and the Constitution program is designed to ensure that young people understand the history and philosophy of the Constitution and Bill of Rights. The program provides students with a working knowledge of our Constitution, Bill of Rights, and the principles of democratic government by challenging them to apply their constitutional knowledge to everyday situations. Studying these historically significant documents has undoubtedly given the students at the Governor's School in Richmond a greater appreciation for the freedoms enjoyed by the citizens of this great nation. I applaud their diligence in exploring the meaning and significance of the very documents which serve as the foundation of our government.

I also share in their goal of fostering a greater awareness and understanding of our rights and responsibilities as Americans. I am the proud holder of the seat first held by James Madison, commonly referred to as the Father of our Constitution. Inspired by both the honor of holding this seat, as well as the enthusiasm of young students as the Liberty Middle School in Ashland, Virginia, I introduced the Liberty Dollar Bill Act, H.R. 903. This legislation, if enacted, will redesign the one dollar bill to incorporate the preamble to the Constitution of the United States, a list describing the Articles of the Constitution, and a list describing the Articles of Amendment. I feel certain that passage of the Liberty Dollar Bill Act will make more Americans familiar with their constitutionally protected rights while also rekindling the patriotic spirit of our Founding Fathers.

The class from The Governor's School for Government & International Studies is currently conducting research and preparing for the upcoming national competition in Wash-

ington, D.C. I wish these budding constitutional experts the best of luck at the We the People . . . national finals!

THE CONSUMER FINANCIAL
PRIVACY ACT—H.R. 4380

HON. JOHN J. LaFALCE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2000

Mr. LaFALCE. Mr. Speaker, I am today introducing legislation to enhance the financial privacy rights of all Americans. This legislation, the "Consumer Financial Privacy Act," implements the privacy protections that were announced by President Clinton earlier this week. I am pleased to be joined in sponsoring this legislation by Mr. DINGELL, ranking member of the Committee on Commerce, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. FRANK, Mr. KANJORSKI, and many other of my House colleagues.

Individual privacy is one of the most important issues before the Congress and an issue of urgent concern for the American people. Clearly everyone should have the right to be left alone if they choose, or to be confident that their financial, medical and other personal information will not be disclosed, sold, or used without their consent.

We live in a world of electronic communications in which intimate details of every individual's financial and private life can be instantaneously transmitted anywhere around the world. This imposes a far greater responsibility on government to protect individual privacy more than ever before. And it is a responsibility that I believe government must fully exercise.

Last year the House enacted significant financial privacy protections as part of broader financial modernization legislation. While these privacy proposals were given little chance for passage a year earlier when I first introduced them, they were adopted by the House with an overwhelming 427-to-1 vote. These financial privacy protections were significant, going well beyond the limited protections in existing law for financial transactions, and well beyond the protections available for most other consumer transactions.

But we never intended last year's legislation to be the ultimate solution on financial privacy, it was only a first step. While it provided important notice and opt-out protections to prevent the selling or sharing of private information among unaffiliated companies, it failed to extend the same protection for information shared between a financial institution and its affiliates. While it prohibited the selling of credit card and account information for marketing, it did not provide a higher level of protection for other sensitive information such as medical or health records or information about payments and transactions. Democrats were united in attempting to add these additional protections to the legislation on the House floor and again in conference. Unfortunately, we were not successful.

The legislation outlined by President Clinton on April 30, 2000, which we are introducing today, completes the promise of that previous effort, and takes another gigantic step toward achieving an absolute right of financial privacy for all Americans. It extends the principles of notice and opt-out for all information shared

between a financial institution and all affiliated companies. It provides a higher level of protection, an "opt in" requirement, for sensitive medical and health-related information that could affect financial decisions, as well as for individualized information describing spending habits or transactions.

The bill creates new rights for consumers to find out what information is being collected about them by their financial institution and to correct or delete inaccurate or outdated information. It requires timely disclosure of an institution's privacy policies to permit consumers to comparison shop among financial service providers that offer the best protections. And it makes these private protections fully enforceable by augmenting the enforcement authority of the Federal Trade Commission and by permitting State Attorneys General to bring legal actions on behalf of state residents to prevent violations.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this is balanced and reasonable legislation that is the product of months of careful consideration. It is legislation that the American people clearly want and deserve. I invite my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who believe that every American has a right to their personal privacy to join with me in supporting this important and much needed legislation.

TRIBUTE TO THE FREE THAI

HON. PORTER J. GOSS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 4, 2000

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, on May 8, 2000, the Director of Central Intelligence will present Agency Medallions to five members of the Free Thai Movement at the George Bush Center for Intelligence. In addition Agency Medallions will be awarded to thirty-eight Free Thai members or their survivors.

In December, 1941, following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Tokyo turned its attention to Southeast Asia. After a token resistance, Thailand's leader, Field Marshal Phibun Songkhram, signed an alliance with Japan which sanctioned a Japanese military presence throughout the country. In January, 1942, under pressure from Japan, Bangkok sent a diplomatic note to the Thai minister in Washington, M.R. Seni Pramoj, directing him formally to declare war on the United States.

Instead, Seni pocketed Bangkok's diplomatic instructions and launched a bold plan to aid the Allies in the liberation of Thailand. Under his guiding hand, and the leadership of General William Donovan's fledgling intelligence and clandestine warfare organization (the Organization of Strategic Services—OSS) the Free Thai movement was born. Seni brought young Thai student volunteers from universities across the United States together into a "Free Thai" command which was to serve under Donovan's OSS.

The Free Thai were among Thailand's best and brightest. They risked their lives in abandoning scholars' robes at Cornell, Caltech and MIT in favor of jungle fatigues and rifles. Trained by the OSS, they were dispatched into Thailand by submarine, seaplane and air-drop. Some walked overland from China to make contact with a nascent resistance and prepare the way for Thailand's liberation. The