Group for addressing over four decades of injustice and extending temporary membership in that regional bloc to the state of Israel.

Whereas Israel has played an active role in the international community and within the United Nations;

Whereas in order to be a fully participating member of the United Nations countries must serve in a regional group;

Whereas members of regional groups select member states on a rotating basis to serve on important United Nations bodies such as the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council;

Whereas Israel has been denied an opportunity to serve in the Asian States Group at the United Nations, even though it geographically belongs in that block;

Whereas the Western European And Others Group (WEOG) at the United Nations consists of Western European nations, the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Turkey, and Australia and is the only group at the United Nations that is not geographically based;

Whereas Israel was offered membership in the WEOG regional bloc at the United Nations on Friday, May 26, 2000, by the chairman of WEOG at the time, Ambassador Peter van Walsum of the Netherlands;

Whereas that offer was officially accepted by Israeli officials on Sunday, May 28, 2000, and

Whereas Israel is a democracy and an ally and friend of the United States; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) commends the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) members for extending temporary membership to Israel;

(2) congratulates Israel on its new-found role in the United Nations;

(3) reaffirms Israel’s right to be a full participating member and equal partner in the United Nations; and

(4) urges the members of WEOG to extend full and permanent membership to Israel, without conditions, until such time as Israel can serve as an effective member of the Asian States Group.

INTRODUCTION OF MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG ACT OF 2000

HON. ANNA G. ESRRHO
OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 2000

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, when Medicare was created in 1965, seniors were more likely to undergo surgery than to use prescription drugs. Today, prescription drugs are often the preferred, and sometimes the only method of treatment for many diseases. In fact, 77 percent of all seniors take a prescription drug on a regular basis.

And yet, nearly 15 million Medicare beneficiaries don’t have access to the lifesaving drugs you produce because Medicare doesn’t cover them. Countless others are forced to spend an enormous portion of their modest monthly incomes on prescription drugs with 18 percent of seniors spending over $100 a month on prescriptions.

Seniors want and need prescription drug coverage. Hence, the question before Congress is whether we should provide a Medicare drug benefit but how to do it?

There are some in Congress who think that the way to do this is to turn the problem over to the private insurance market, but the private insurance market is pulling out from under seniors in the Medigap and Medicare-Choice markets. Others believe that we should limit how much drug companies can charge. I disagree. I understand the investment required for R&D and I believe that price controls will ultimately limit access.

I’ve devised what I believe is a common-sense approach that incorporates a generous, defined benefit that’s easy for seniors to understand with provisions that reduce administrative inefficiencies and increase competition. The result will be a more affordable drug benefit for both beneficiaries and the Federal Government.

The bill is simple. Available to all Medicare beneficiaries, the Federal government will pay half of an individual’s drug costs up to $5,000 a year (when fully phased in). There are no deductibles and a modest premium of approximately $44 a year. For seniors who exceed $5,000 in drug expenditures or $2,500 in out-of-pocket costs—the Federal Government picks up the whole tab.

What about drug costs? By allowing multiple PBMs to participate, my bill will, for the first time, introduce open competition into Medicare and drive down prices. We know from the private marketplace that simply purchasing a large quantity of drugs does not drive down prices. Drug companies grant discounts when a PBM can show that it will increase its market share. By allowing multiple PBMs, my bill increases competition, lowers prices and provides greater consumer choice.

We also removed administration of the program from HCFA. The healthcare system has evolved rapidly, and regrettable HCFA has not kept pace. HCFA lacks the expertise to run a benefit that relies on private sector competition to control costs. Fortunately, there is another agency that has expertise interacting with private sector health plans, and has proven that it can administer benefits effectively and efficiently with a minimum of bureaucracy. It’s the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) which runs the widely acclaimed Federal Employee Health Benefit (FEHB) program. Under OPM’s leadership, I’m confident that an efficient and effective competitive benefit can be integrated successfully into the Medicare program.

Congress must enact a Medicare drug benefit this year. For our Nation’s seniors, prescription drugs are not a luxury. During these times of historic prosperity and strength, there is absolutely no reason that we should force seniors to make between buying prescription drugs or groceries. In introduction today I urge all of my colleagues to give careful consideration to my bill. It provides a real answer for seniors without price controls and without threatening innovation.

TRIBUTE TO FATHER STEPHEN PATRICK (PAT) WISNIESKE ON THE OCCASION OF THE GOLDEN JUBILEE OF HIS ORDINATION

HON. BART STUPAK
OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 2000

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, today I honor a most remarkable individual—a dear friend, a counselor, a shepherd, a man of the people and a man of God. I pay personal and heartfelt tribute to Father Stephen Patrick Wisneske, the pastor of Holy Spirit Church of Menominee, MI, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his ordination, his golden jubilee.

Father Pat came to Menominee 28 years ago. He came to town at a particularly difficult time for the local Catholic faithful, who were being reorganized from the five traditional congregations—including the old settlement alignments of the French church, the Polish church, and the German Church—to three new congregations, based on neighborhood and proximity. The restructuring made sense in terms of reducing the infrastructure that church members needed to support, but it presented real challenges in forging new congregational bonds and establishing new ministries. Father Pat became pastor of the newly structured Holy Spirit Church.

He brought years of service in other northern Michigan communities to his new task. Born in 1922, Father Pat was raised in a parish in the outskirts of Calgary, attended Catholic school for 12 years, served as an altar boy, and was interested in Church affairs even before he was called to his religious vocation. Father Pat was ordained on June 3, 1950 by Bishop Francis J. Hass at St. Andrew’s Cathedral in Grand Rapids, and within the month he was assigned as assistant at Holy Trinity in Ironwood. In 1951 he became an assistant at St. Thomas Catholic Church in Escanaba, and in 1953 became an assistant at St. Mary and St. Joseph in Iron Mountain, where he also served as chaplain to veterans in the hospital there.

Like his religious predecessor Bishop Baraga, Father Pat spent time in several small parishes in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan—Dollar Bay, Loretto, Quinnesec, White Pine, and Bergland, before his posting to Menominee.

Perhaps because of his own Catholic schooling, Father Pat has always shown that his commitment to his parish—to all local families—lies outside the walls of his beautiful and more than 100-year-old Gothic church. He regularly visits Menominee Central School, meeting and greeting parents, teachers and children in this more informal setting.

Father Pat has become well-known for his homily—his brief moment of addressing the congregation during each Mass. A quick sense of humor has always served him well in helping to drive home the important lesson he wished to teach each week.

I have always admired Father Pat for his positive outlook and his concern for his congregation. But it was when tragedy struck my own family that the depth of his wisdom, love, and advice to me, to my wife Laurie, and my son Ken was truly revealed. He counseled, sheltered, and guided us through our darkest hours, and his homily to my son BJ captured
Unfortunately, there continue to be unmet needs. The Department of Defense Comptroller has just done a study that shows that the military health care system for active-duty and retirees up to age 65 as currently structured is underfunded over the next 6 years by $9 billion.

In addition to taking care of its people, our military has an important role to play in taking care of the environment. Congress needs to make clear that cleaning up after itself is a cost of doing business for our military just as it is for any other polluter.

DOD is responsible for environmental clean-up at thousands of what are known as Formerly Used Defense Sites. At many of these properties, owned by private parties and state, local, and tribal governments, the public may come into contact with residual contamination. The cost of completing this cleanup is estimated at over $7 billion by the Army Corps of Engineers, yet funding in this bill is less than $200 million.

Another blunder to communities is unexploded ordnance, old bombs and shells that could kill or injure people who encounter them. The cost of clearing these bombs is estimated at $15 billion by the Defense Science Board. The consistent underfunding of this challenge could begin to be addressed if it had its own line item in the defense budget. I call upon the Administration to create this line item in the request it is preparing now for submission to Congress for FY02 funding.

More than a decade after the Soviet Union collapsed, our investment in national defense has returned to cold-war levels. During the cold war, the United States spent an average of $325 billion in current year dollars on the military. This year’s budget resolution gave the Pentagon $310 billion—95 percent of cold-war spending. The re-requirements for the F-16 were reduced from $30 billion to $15 billion by the Defense Science Board. The consistent underfunding of this challenge could begin to be addressed if it had its own line item in the defense budget. I call upon the Administration to create this line item in the request it is preparing now for submission to Congress for FY02 funding.

And now Monday’s Washington Post has a front-page story stating that, starting now, the Joint Chiefs of Staff plan to submit budget requests that call for additional spending of more than $300 billion a year through most of this decade.

There is no need to continue our reliance on a cold-war economy. Our massive investments in weapons and bases could be replaced with massive investments in education and health care and the other things that make for effective communities. While we are first in military expenditures among industrialized countries, we are 17th in low-birthweight rates, 21st in eighth-grade math scores and 22nd in infant mortality.

The defense budget is huge, certainly large enough to fund the programs that are needed for the people who serve and have served us and for the environment. Instead, it spends too much on duplicative weapons systems and questionable technologies at a time when we lead the world many times over in military might. We need to get our priorities right.

DEBATE ON THE FUTURE OF THE F-22

HON. PETER A. DEFAZIO OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 2000

Mr. DeFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, during the debate on the fiscal year 2001 Department of Defense appropriations bill, there was a rather rancorous debate about the future of the F-22. I submit for the record a devastating critique of the F-22 written by retired Colonel Everett Riccioni as well as a letter he wrote correcting misstatements made during the House floor debate.

Colonel Riccioni is not just any critic of the F-22. His credentials are impeccable. He was one of three legendary “Fighter Mafia” mavericks who forced the Pentagon to produce the F-16 to improve U.S. air superiority. He served in the Air Force for 30 years, flew 55 different types of military aircraft, and worked in the defense industry for 17 years managing aircraft programs, including the B-2 bomber.

We should heed his warning that the F-22 will not work as advertised.

Representative RANDY CUNNINGHAM, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE CUNNINGHAM: Your comments during yesterday’s floor debate require response. The comment about the F-15 not keeping up with the F-22 is not entirely true. It is not a speed, it is a number of miles that can be covered while at supersonic Mach. The F-22 is never forthcoming because few know the definition of supercruise or are unwilling to reveal it.

The fact that the F-16 flown by General Ryan could not keep up with the F-22 is again an irrelevant speed statement on the relative speed of the two aircraft. The requirements for the F-16 were that the F-16 did not have to establish the existence of supercruise, and reflects your lack of insight into supersonic cruise. Cruise means the ability to cover distance and “infinite” is not a speed. It is the number of miles that can be covered while at supersonic Mach. The F-22 is not forthcoming because few know the definition of supercruise or are unwilling to reveal it.

The true measure of the supercruise potential of the F-22 is that the penetration supercruise distance that can be flown at 1.6 Mach out and back, with the same 100 nautical mile legs and the same fuel reserved for combat and landing reserves. The supersonic penetration distance is the validation of supercruise. This number has not been established. The supercruise potential of the F-22 remains unknown.

If that number is 50 NM it is a fruitless achievement that the F-104 can easily fulfill with its afterburner. A 200 NM penetration is not a great achievement; 300 NM means the F-22 is a pragmatic supersonic fighter, 400 NM proof of supercruise. The distance number validates whether the F-22 has it, nothing else.

Retention of the wrong definition will forever retain confusion.

Sincerely,

COL. EVERETT RICCIONI,
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA.

THE F-22 PROGRAM—FACT VERSUS FICTION
(With Everett E. Riccioni, Col. USAF, Ret.)

THE DREAM

To provide the USAF Air Superiority for the period following 2005.

F-22 PROGRAM—FACT VERSUS FICTION
(With Everett E. Riccioni, Col. USAF, Ret.)