

HONORING CAL RIPKEN, JR.

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES T. WALSH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 2, 2001

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I also rise in support of H. Res. 247 sponsored by Representative EHRlich that recognizes the outstanding contributions Cal Ripken, Jr. has made both on and off the baseball field. He is an American icon symbolizing integrity, team spirit, and discipline, and has exemplified true leadership throughout his twenty-one season baseball career.

Since 1978, Mr. Ripken has been honored with several prestigious awards including Rookie of the Year, Most Valuable Player, Golden Glove, Lou Gehrig Award, and Most Valuable Oriole. Baseball's "Ironman" has broken several significant American and personal records such as ending a 2632 consecutive games-played winning streak in 1998, scoring his 400th home run in 1999, and hitting his 3000th career hit in 2000. These moments will never be forgotten.

His greatest contribution has been the ability to take this success off the diamond and outside the walls of Memorial Stadium and Camden Yards by contributing significant time and energy towards various charitable organizations within the greater Baltimore area. Along with his wife, Kelly, he established the Kelly and Cal Ripken, Jr. Foundation which supports adult and family literacy, youth recreational, and health-related programs. They have also been greatly involved in the Baltimore Reads Ripken Learning Center and other organizations within the area.

I was fortunate enough to be able to attend opening day in Baltimore this season, and saw firsthand the all star abilities of this great baseball player. Cal Ripken is a winner in every sense of the word and his contribution to our national pastime will live in the minds of fans forever. He deserves the nation's recognition today. He is truly a living legend.

IN HONOR OF MIKE BYRNE

HON. GREG WALDEN

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2001

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the selfless contributions of one of the Oregonians I am privileged to represent, Mike Byrne of Malin, Oregon. I am also pleased to observe his 50th birthday today and offer up my sincere hope that he is blessed with another half century among his friends and family.

Mike Byrne is a long-time rancher on the southern Oregon—northern California border. He is a devoted husband and father and a tireless servant of his fellow Oregonians. But Mr. Speaker, he is much, much more. He is a patient confidant, a visionary, and a man of uncompromising principle. Perhaps most importantly, to me and to the people of his community, he is simply a good friend.

Mr. Speaker, in April of this year the Bureau of Reclamation announced that, based on biological opinions rendered by the National Ma-

rine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the farmers and ranchers of the Klamath Basin would be denied irrigation water for agriculture from Upper Klamath Lake. This decision, coming on the heels of a severe drought, has subjected the local agriculture community to extreme financial hardship. The combination of drought and misguided decision-making by the federal government has literally put the future of their way of life in doubt, as farming as it has existed in the Basin for over 100 years has virtually ceased.

Before the ink on the government's decision was dry, Mike Byrne was hard at work raising awareness about the Klamath crisis and rallying the local community. He has been in the trenches everyday, Mr. Speaker—in town hall meetings, in negotiations with federal, state and local authorities, and around kitchen tables throughout the Basin—to lend what help he could in seeing the farmers and ranchers of the region through this difficult time. Mike was one of the principal organizers of the historic Bucket Brigade on May 7, 2001, which raised the visibility of the crisis and brought the plight of the Klamath Basin to living rooms across America.

Since the crisis first arose in the Klamath Basin, Mike has been at the forefront of the effort to bring diverse groups together to achieve a workable solution. Mike understood that the future of agriculture in the Klamath Basin—and throughout the United States—laid in finding a balanced, workable solution to the conflict between farming and species protection. When this problem is solved and a practical resolution is agreed to by the many parties involved, it will be because of the patience and dedication of people like Mike Byrne.

Mr. Speaker, I take enormous pride in Mike's ceaseless efforts on behalf of his fellow ranchers and farmers. The perseverance he and others like him have demonstrated during this crisis has literally made the difference between despair and hope for so many of the farmers in the Klamath Basin. Mike Byrne represents the best of what citizenship in America means. I offer him both my praise and my most sincere gratitude for working on behalf of the people of the Klamath Basin, who have faced such significant trials. Many hurdles remain in the path of Klamath farmers, and I am grateful that I'll have Mike Byrne by my side throughout the challenges that lie ahead. Happy 50th birthday, Mike.

Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to share with my colleagues the extraordinary service of this outstanding American.

INTRODUCING THE VISA INFORMATION SECURITY ACT OF 2001

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2001

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Visa Information Security Act of 2001 (VISA Act)—legislation that increase the security of the American people by closing some of the loopholes within our visa application system. This legislation requires that all non-immigrant visa applicants submit a biometric fingerprint as of the routine visa application process.

Specifically, it would amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to require that non-immigrant visa applicants provide a biometric identifier, such as a fingerprint, that is machine readable, to be contained the visa or other documentation required for admission at their port of entry into the United States.

The recent terrorist attacks have highlighted the need to review the visa application process and we call improve the screening process used by U.S. Consular offices abroad. Usually, visa applicant names are checked against the State Department database for admissibility. However, some individuals use false information from their country of origin when they apply for a visa or use stolen visas to enter the U.S. As the Washington Post reported today, in the last few years, one country lost approximately 60,000 visas.

While it is impossible to screen every single individual who enters our country, with advanced technology and better coordination with the intelligence community we can better secure our nations border. However, in order to effectively authenticate individuals, we need a method based on inherent characteristics of a person that cannot be lost, changed or duplicated. Through biometric fingerprints, we would have an accurate and clear idea of who is entering our country.

This process is quick and efficient and can be run through our national criminal database to see if the applicant should or should not be allowed into the country. Additionally, when the individual enters the country through the port of entry, his fingerprints will be scanned to verify authenticity. Adding this technology requirement would not add significant time to the visa application process. But it would certainly prevent known terrorists and criminals from entering the country, while at the same time decrease fraudulent visa requests.

In addition, this legislation authorizes the Attorney General to impose a new fee on all visa applicants to cover the costs of implementing this important program. I want to note that my legislation will not apply to NAFTA participating countries and actually allows the Attorney General maximum discretion to decide what methods to utilize for those types of border crossings.

Mr. Speaker, we need to collect more information about the individuals trying to enter this country, but we must do it in a way that does not overburden our consular offices and still allows for visitors to enter the United States. My legislation is an economical first step in increasing our national security and I intend to work tirelessly for its passage.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 3049, AFGHANISTAN FREEDOM ACT OF 2001

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2001

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have today introduced the "Afghanistan Freedom Act of 2001", H.R. 3049.

This legislation is intended to underscore to the American people and to the international community our unequivocal commitment to the war on terrorism that was thrust upon us by the barbaric September 11th terrorist attack on