

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN RECOGNITION OF BOWIE HIGH SCHOOL

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2001

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give recognition to the football team of Bowie High School for winning the Maryland State Football Championship. An estimated ten thousand fans were in attendance at Byrd Stadium on the Campus of the University of Maryland to witness Bowie High School's first ever division 4A football championship.

On December 1st, Bowie completed their season with a 23–6 victory over rival and previously unbeaten Eleanor Roosevelt High School. The game was the first All-Prince George's County title game since 1983, and the first time Bowie High School has played for the championship since 1987. The victory capped an outstanding season for Coach Scott Chadwick and his Bulldogs.

The championship culminated an incredible revival of the football program. When athletic director Bob Estes was hired two years ago, the football program had not had a winning record since 1988. The team had a 38–61 record from 1989 to 1997, including six years with less than four wins. Since Head Coach Chadwick took over the team four years ago, they have increased their win total each year, and now have a championship trophy.

Bowie High School's first championship is especially gratifying for the fans that have been vocally and passionately supporting the team throughout the year. Many parents of the team have been actively involved in the school's pep rallies and have stuck with the team throughout some tough years.

I applaud the efforts of the team members, their coaching staff, their fans, the school system and the Bowie Community for a winning season and for being the Maryland State Football Champions.

Mr. Speaker, and colleagues, please join with me in wishing the Bowie High School football team continued success and congratulations on their outstanding achievement.

STUDENT VISAS

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2001

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the International Student Responsibility Act, which I am introducing today.

Each year, over 500,000 international students enter the United States to study at our colleges, universities, and trade schools. The vast majority of these students contributes to the intellectual achievements of our universities, promotes understanding across cul-

tures, and acquires an appreciation for the American values of freedom and democracy.

I am troubled, however, that the poor administration of the student visa program has become a threat to national security. At least one of the September 11th hijackers entered the country on a student visas, as did one of the 1993 World Trade Center bombers. Last year, a congressional commission on terrorism concluded that national security requires tighter monitoring of the status of foreign students.

On October 31, 2001, two subcommittees of the Committee on Education and the Workforce held a hearing on the student visa program. We discovered some gaping loopholes.

For example, all the information in student visa applications is reported by the international student. There is no due diligence requirement from home countries to ensure that this information is accurate and that the student is trustworthy.

Second, the State Department does not notify the college when a visa is granted, nor does the Immigration and Naturalization Service promptly notify the college when the student enters the country. The last contact the college had with the student may have been granting admission. If the student enters the country but doesn't show up on campus, neither the college nor the INS may know anything went wrong for a year or longer.

Third, the INS is lagging behind schedule implementing the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, which requires data collection on international students' enrollment status and current address. Without that database, the INS does not know when an international student graduates or drops out. Nor has the INS established a database to track foreign visitors' entry and exit from the country, so the INS does not know how many students stay in the country after completing their studies.

I would like to include for the record a recent editorial from the Contra Costa Times, which draws sound, sensible conclusions on this issue. As the editorial notes, "One of the easiest, albeit illegal, ways to get into the United States and stay here indefinitely is through student visas. . . . With America's heightened awareness of the need for secure borders and internal security, we no longer can afford to ignore student visa requirements."

Like many Americans, I value the attendance of international students at our colleges and universities, but we should make sure they follow the rules. The databases mandated by the 1996 law, but not yet implemented, are a good place to start. The International Student Responsibility Act gives the INS additional resources to implement them as quickly as possible. It also authorizes to funding to ensure that the databases are not a paper exercise, but are used aggressively as the basis for investigations and, if appropriate, deportations.

The Act also adds new procedures to address current law's shortcomings. It requires the INS to notify colleges with 10 days when

their students enter the country, and requires colleges to promptly notify the INS if any of their students fail to enroll. It creates an incentive for international students to comply with the law by withholding their transcripts and diplomas until they return home or extend their stay in the U.S. legally.

Finally, the best protection against potential terrorists is to prevent them from entering the U.S. at all. The Act requires the Department of State to ask international students' home countries whether the students are known criminals or terrorists before granting the visas. It also requires heightened scrutiny of students from countries that are state sponsors of terrorism.

We must strive to keep America as open as possible to foreign students, but also to ensure that we have closed the gaping loopholes in the student visa program that make our country more vulnerable to terrorism. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

[From the Contra Costa Times, Nov. 23, 2001]

CONTROL STUDENT VISAS

One of the easiest ways, albeit illegal, to get into the United States and stay here in definitely is through student visas. The visas are issued for full-time students for a specified time. Yet students often stay in the country well past the visas' expiration dates with impunity. This situation must not continue for students or anyone else who received a visa to come to the United States.

That does not mean this country has to close its doors to foreign students or other wishing to work in or visit the United States. It certainly does not mean the United States should place a six-month moratorium on all student visas, as Sen. Dianne Feinstein has proposed. It does mean the Immigration and Naturalization Service is going to have to do a far better job of controlling visas and keeping track of everyone with a visa who enters this country.

Those who are here past the expiration dates on their visas should be deported. However, it also should not be such an onerous burden for visa holders, particularly students, to get their visas properly renewed before they expire as long as the person continues full-time studies in this country and is law-abiding.

With America's heightened awareness of the need for secure borders and internal security, we no longer can afford to ignore student visa requirements. Nor can we grant visas to anyone without closer scrutiny of his or her background.

Of particular concern are students from countries with a record of harboring terrorists who are seeking visas. The list of such countries is short, but includes several nations in the Middle East, where much of the world's international terrorism is bred.

It is critical that those seeking visas from such nations receive extensive background checks before they enter the United States. Some may see this as racial profiling. It is actually nation profiling, and it is necessary for public security. Thorough background checks need not prevent the United States from accepting large numbers of foreign students, even from countries where terrorism is a problem.

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