

consumers who have been harmed by illegal practices.

I do not view optional federal chartering as a means to escape vigorous state regulation of the insurance industry. The last thing I want is to encourage a "race to the bottom," as state and federal regulators compete for the participation of insurance companies by progressively weakening the quality and effectiveness of their oversight. I have indicated to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners that this bill should not be used as an excuse to weaken existing state consumer protections, or to scuttle attempts to improve these protections.

Establishment of an optional federal charter is intended to provide for a strong, efficient, and effective insurance regulatory system. Providing for Federal oversight of the insurance industry will lead to a healthy regulatory competition that can enhance efficiency, spur innovation and expand consumer protection in a way that will benefit both the insurance industry and its customers.

Mr. Speaker, the current, state-based system of insurance regulation is inadequate—and it is in the best interests of insurers and their consumers that it be augmented. Failure to enhance insurance regulation will keep in place a system that could threaten the viability of the insurance industry in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. I urge my colleagues to join with me in taking this important step toward facilitating the modernization of the insurance industry. It is decades long overdue.

PRESIDENT BUSH'S VISIT TO
CHINA

HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2002

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that President Bush will be making a state visit to the People's Republic of China in late February.

As Secretary of State Colin Powell has said, the United States and China have many common interests. Among several large and continuing disagreements are religious freedom and the issue of Taiwan. I hope that President Bush will urgently raise the issues of freedom of religion and also stand firm on the issue of Taiwan in his discussions with the Chinese.

According to a report in yesterday's Washington Post, Chinese government documents show detailed efforts on the part of the Communist leadership to target religions including the use of secret agents to infiltrate Protestant religious groups, crushing underground Catholic churches, and the use of force against the banned Fulan Gong spiritual movement.

It is nothing less than a nationwide campaign to stamp out religion so that all the Chinese people can worship in the state. When Secretary Powell appeared before the Foreign Operations Subcommittee yesterday, he stated that when the United States and China have disagreements over religious freedom, "we do not hold back our criticism." It is therefore imperative for President Bush to speak out loudly and strongly against this denial of this basic human right—freedom of religion—when he is in China next week.

Regarding Taiwan, the United States and the Republic of China on Taiwan have been maintaining strong relations for decades. In recent years, despite the lack of formal diplomatic relations between the United States and Taiwan, Taiwan has been unwavering in its support of the United States. In the wake of September 11, Taiwan shared our mourning and its government ordered all flags lowered at half staff for two days. Taiwan stands with the United States on nearly all issues including safeguarding human rights and fighting terrorism around the globe.

Mr. Speaker, Taiwan is not an issue that divides the United States from China. As long as we stand firm on our principles of providing what Taiwan needs militarily, there will be stability in the Taiwan Strait and that is in everyone's best interests.

I wish President Bush best of luck in his journey to China.

RECOGNITION OF MS. ROSEANNE
LUTH

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2002

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Roseanne Luth of San Diego, California. I would like to join with the Muscular Dystrophy Association in honoring her as the recipient of the inaugural Joseph L. Hertel Memorial Award. This award was inspired by Joseph Hertel and is a tribute to his exceptional life and his courageous battle against Lou Gehrig's Disease.

Roseanne Luth is a successful business owner in San Diego. Roseanne was the first elected president of the 70-year-old Executive Association and the San Diego Book of Lists ranks her custom research company, Luth Research, among the top 25 San Diego Women-Owned Businesses. She also served a five-year term as a board member of the San Diego Better Business Bureau and served as the Bureau's first woman chairman in 1998. In addition, to being an extraordinarily successful entrepreneur she is also an asset to the community.

I would like to wish Ms. Luth continued success as she continues to team with the Muscular Dystrophy Association and her brother, Bob Baker, to work towards the elimination of Lou Gehrig's Disease.

WRITING OF ASHLEY HECKER

HON. JAMES H. MALONEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2002

Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, it is truly an honor for me today to bring to the attention of my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives the writings of Ms. Ashley Hecker. Ashley is a fifth grade student at Doolittle Elementary School in Cheshire, Connecticut. She composed this poignant poem just moments after the terrorist attack on September 11th.

WE STAND STRONG

As the cry of American reaches my ears

I must try to hold back my tears.

The plane crashed along with the crew

You may have lost someone too.

Under the rubble some survived

Sadly, many died.

Your heart may hurt but do not blame

Don't give into this twisted game.

New York will never be the same,

The terrorists will live with a life of shame.

Please don't give up on the Red, White and

Blue

We'll keep on fighting through and through.

Ashley's poem came to my attention shortly after Veterans Affairs Commissioner Eugene A. Migliaro Jr. awarded her a citation for her "dedication, expression and patriotic views."

Mr. Speaker, it is both a personal pleasure and privilege to honor Ashley Hecker, a young lady who's writings exemplify the American spirit.

IN RECOGNITION OF OPERATION
COOKIE BAKE

HON. DOUG OSE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 14, 2002

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the hard work and thoughtful consideration of many of my constituents for their involvement in organizing and carrying out a mass donation of baked goods, "Operation Cookie Bake", for the active duty, reserves and civilian employees at Travis Air Force Base in Vacaville, California.

Operation Cookie Bake, originally sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 165 of Vacaville, was created as one way in which the local community could show support for the hardworking men and women who defend our freedom around the world and at home. On October 22, 2001, the community hosted the first phase of Operation Cookie Bake, resulting in the donation of twenty-one large and medium sized boxes or approximately 5,000 cookies and another 1,500 brownies, fudge and other treats. The second phase of Operation Cookie Bake on December 11, 2001, produced over 10,000 cookies and 3,000 brownies, fudge and breads, or approximately 800 individual bags of goodies.

I would like to recognize the hard work of so many of my constituents who have truly made me proud: the ladies of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 165 who sponsored the first phase of the project and supported it; as well as the ladies of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary Unit 84 and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary Unit 7244; the employees, students and members of Sutter Health, Central Billing Office, Meek's Lumber, St. Mary's Parish, Rainbow Girls, Vacaville Bible Church, Boy Scout Troop 195, Girl Scout Troops 80 and 93, Vanden High School Interact Club, Will C. Wood Culinary Club, Faith Academy, Xi Tau Delta of Beta Sigma Phi, American Legion Auxiliary 550 of Vallejo, American Legion Post 165, Brotherhood of Vietnam Veterans, Disabled American Veterans Chapter 84, United Veterans Memorial Association, and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7244.

I would also like to recognize the Veteran Liaison for the 60th Air Wing, Airman first Class Brooke Gardner, for her efforts in facilitating the smooth operation and delivery of the