PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF THE WOMEN AND GIRLS OF AFGHANISTAN

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 24, 2002

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, as our operations continue and we begin to help rebuild Afghanistan, it is important to stress the needs and rights of women and young girls in that nation. Women and young girls in Afghanistan have been suffering incredible abuses ever since the extremist Taliban regime seized control of the country. Although the Taliban have now been removed from control in Afghanistan, it is deeply disturbing to me that women and girls continue to be abducted, raped, and abused within the country. The denial of employment and education rights for most women and girls is equally troubling and we must improve these conditions if equality is to exist between men and women in Afghanistan.

H.R. 3994, the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act, provides the kind of assistance and aid that Afghanistan needs to develop into an economically stable and democratic nation. Equally important is the fact that it seeks to reestablish the participation of women and girls in government, education, and the workplace, as well as provides support for the Ministry of Women's Affairs. This is a very important step in ensuring that the women and young girls of Afghanistan are full, active participants in the building of a new Afghani government. A true democratic government represents all the people of its nation, regardless of race, religion, or gender. The Taliban treated women and girls like second class citizens who were forced to live their lives through the oppressive ideals of others, and this must never happen again.

The persecution of women and girls in Afghanistan must come to an end. Afghanistan will improve its conditions quickly by allowing women and girls to receive an education, to be granted opportunities to gain employment, and to play a role in the governing process of the nation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support of H.R. 3994, not only to help rebuild a nation but also to help protect the rights of women and girls of Afghanistan because it is time for their suffering to stop.

IN RECOGNITION OF JOANN DITMER

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 24, 2002

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Joanne Ditmer on being awarded the prestigious Dana Crawford Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation. The award is named after Dana Crawford who has been a pioneer in historic preservation since the 1960s. I join all Coloradans today in thanking Ms. Ditmer for her many invaluable contributions to historic preservation in our state.

Joanne Ditmer is a salient example of the power of the written word. Since her colunm, ''Raising the Roof'' began appearing in The Denver Post in 1962, Joanne Ditmer has used that forum to highlight the importance of preserving Colorado's history for future generations. Without question, she has been an integral part in raising awareness about conservation and preservation-related causes. For over 40 years, the general public and elected officials alike have turned to Ms. Ditmer's column as a gauge for Colorado's conservation climate.

She is a respected columnist and a tireless advocate for preserving our unique Colorado history. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Ms. Ditmer on receiving the Dana Crawford Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation. Her accomplishments in preserving Colorado heritage are invaluable, and I wish her good health and happiness in the future. Provided here is an example of her passion and prose on preservation, from the Denver Post.

BRINGING LIFE TO OLD STRUCTURES

(By Joanne Ditmer)

Sunday, May 19, 2002.—Historic preservation was born in the Battle of the Bulldozer. The wrecking ball was a demolition derby against buildings of Colorado's past, as horrified citizens struggled to keep the historic structures that define a community's soul and spirit.

Three decades later, it's Brains over Brawn. Savvy people craft increasingly ingenious new ways to save and give new life to distinctive old buildings.

These memories particularly surface in May, National Historic Preservation Month. In Denver and other communities, the sense of place and unique character is shown in historic structures.

The impact of preservation goes far beyond saving old buildings. It's the immediacy and liveliness of the efforts. In Colorado, the Historic Gaming Fund, with money from proceeds in the three gambling towns, is inspiring imaginative solutions.

And Colorado Preservation Inc.'s annual list of Endangered Places brings new attention to significant structures that are endangered.

Among the continuing efforts:

When Historic Denver undertook saving the Paramount Theatre in 1978 and formed a separate foundation to continue the work, it saved the last of Denver's opulent downtown movie palaces.

Years later, when a bank called a loan, HD couldn't immediately repay. Ownership went to a private individual and another non-profit foundation was formed. Now there are two petitions on the street: One would prohibit any new theater of more than 5,000 seats—presumably aimed at the tent theater by the Pepsi Center—and another, possibly retaliatory petition demanding that the Paramount owner put in $600,000 of improvements. A pox on both.

Handsome church buildings are the most memorable landmarks of a neighborhood, but when older areas change and church members move to the suburbs, the support dries up.

Faith Action was formed by Historic Denver and others to help find funds and uses for 30 of the most threatened churches, the majority of them more than 100 years old. Look down the 16th Street Mall toward Highlands, and you'll see the beautiful 1890 Asbury Church. A new congregation numbers only a couple dozen, and can't afford upkeep. Some practical help came from Ron Judish, who moved his contemporary art gallery to the lower floor.

The Masons have given Denver some marvelous buildings, but these, too, face problems. The wonderful El Jebel at 1770 Sherman St., with its absolutely amazing interior spaces, has been endangered in recent years. Current hopes lie with the new owners, who are working to support the building through special events—parties, weddings, etc.—and through a high-rise condominium building to be constructed next door on the parking lot.

Preservation efforts of schools are among the most optimistic. Historic Denver and Denver Public Schools formed a partnership program, with a community committee finding 56 school buildings eligible for landmark designation.

The City Council has designated 23 schools so far. In each school, students in second to 12th grades do the research on the history and architecture, and present the nomination. Some 500 kids have been involved, making scrapbooks, videos and school models. That's certainly bringing new life to old buildings.

2002 SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR FURTHER RECOVERY FROM AND RESPONSE TO TERRORIST ATTACKS ON THE UNITED STATES

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 2002

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4775) making supplemental appropriations for further recovery from and response to terrorist attacks on the United States for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes:

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Chairman, as Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I rise to commend the Appropriations Committee, Chairman BILL YOUNG, and particularly Subcommittee Chairman JIM WALSH, for including $417 million in urgently needed funding for veterans medical care.

As most of my colleagues know from listening to their constituents, the demand for VA health care services has risen significantly in the past several years. The Department of Veterans Affairs has had to make mid-year changes to their projections of VA health care usage because of the dramatic increase in veterans seeking to enroll. In fact, the VA's latest budget submission projects that almost 700,000 more veterans will receive VA care in 2003 than they had projected just one year ago.

The dramatic upsurge in demand facing the VA is real and substantial. With hundreds of new VA community outpatient clinics opened in recent years, veterans are now finding that VA health care is available much closer to home.

Prescription drug costs have risen dramatically in the past several years, while seniors' incomes levels have remained level. This has created a great demand for VA-provided prescription drugs.

Mr. Chairman, the response to increased demand for VA health care services should not be to curtail services or limit access for veterans in any way, but rather to provide sufficient resources to pay for veterans' health care. America has a special obligation to care