April 3, 2003

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — Extensions of Remarks E675

That's how long it took him to become a
Atlantic Ocean a mile north of Puerto Rico.
and forty-five minutes in the depths of the
United States.
ceptible to rollovers and have been associated
of large passenger vans, which are highly sus-
pose. This bill would require the FMCA to
ple using these vans may not realize that the
NHTSA would look at Electronic Stability Con-
these vans are widely used by airports, hotels,
sity building, and the great history and culture
of innovative technologies could significantly
of 22-year-old Jose Hernandez drowned twice en route to a religious retreat. This trag-
data sheet alone does not establish a legal basis for
these kinds of accidents seem to be symptomatic to these kinds of ve-
icles. Early last summer another one of these
be one hundred years of healing and hope in Cleveland's Ohio City neighborhood. Throughout the past
century, Saint Wendelin's has served as a spiritual refuge, opening its doors to any soul
in search of guidance and peace.
The ministry of Saint Wendelin's began in
1903, originally serving the Slovak community of
Cleveland's near west side. On May 3rd of
that same year, the community received per-
misson to found Saint Wendelin Parish. A small
church was soon constructed and on December 6, 1903, Father Koudelka cele-
brated Saint Wendelin's first mass. Not long
after, the Sisters of Notre Dame established
Saint Wendelin's School. The order would
continue to provide quality Catholic education
for the next seventy years.

In 1925, the current church and school com-
plex was dedicated. Always reaching outward, Saint Wendelin's welcomes all believers to join
in worship. It is a testament to the Saint
Wendelin ministry that Catholics from all cor-
ners of the city heed the call to celebrate at
the little church on Columbus Avenue.
Cleveland's vital tradition of Catholic edu-
cation is reflected at Saint Wendelin's with
their active participation in the Urban Commu-
nity School. Saint Wendelin's facilities serve
as a second home to over three hundred stu-
dents of Urban Community School.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in
honor and recognition of every member of
Saint Wendelin Church, and its leaders-Pastor
Jerome Lajack and Deacon James J. Arm-
strong, as they celebrate mass with Bishop
Anthony Pilla in commemoration of one hun-
dred years of service to God and community.
Saint Wendelin parish continues its dedication
to social justice and spiritual healing—with
the neighborhoods of Ohio City, and the world
community beyond.

IN HONOR OF SAINT WENDELIN
PARISH
HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH
OF OHIO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, April 3, 2003

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in
honor of the parish community of Saint
Wendelin Church, as they celebrate one hun-
dred years of healing and hope in Cleveland's
Ohio City neighborhood. Throughout the past
century, Saint Wendelin's has served as a spiritual refuge, opening its doors to any soul
in search of guidance and peace.
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1903, originally serving the Slovak community of
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PASSENGER VAN SAFETY ACT OF
2003
HON. MARK UDALL
OF COLORADO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, April 3, 2003

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today, I
am introducing the Passenger Van Safety
Act of 2003, legislation to enhance the safety
of large passenger vans, which are highly sus-
ceptible to rollovers and have been associated
with more than 500 fatalities since 1980.

In the last Congress, I introduced the School Bus Safety Act which had been de-
signed to prevent schools from taking advan-
tage of a loophole that allowed them to pur-
chase used 15–passenger vans even though it
was illegal for them to purchase new 15–pas-
senger vans because of safety issues. The bill
I am introducing today goes farther and ad-
dresses the safety of these vehicles.

I became aware of the safety problems of these vehicles when a church
group from Westminster, Colorado rolled the
15–passenger van they were driving 2 1/2
miles to Denver for a religious retreat. This trag-
edy resulted in four people dying. I found out
later that these vans were notorious for getting
out of control and were highly sus-
ceptible to rolling. These kinds of accidents
seem to be symptomatic to these kinds of ve-

icles. Early last summer another one of these
vans, full of firefighters, rolled over numerous
times killing four of the passengers in western
Colorado. Accidents will happen, but I believe
if these people had been in different vehicles
their deaths may have been avoided.

When these vans are fully loaded they be-
come highly prone to rollovers. In 2001, the
National Highway Traffic Administration
(NHTSA) conducted a study that dem-

onstrated the dramatic increase in rollovers
when these vehicles carry increasingly larger
loads. A fully loaded van has a rollover risk
that is six times higher than if there are only
five people in the van.

The bill I am introducing today would require
NHTSA to include 15–passenger vans in their
Dynamic Rollover Testing Program required
by the Transportation Recall Enhancement,
Accountability, and Documentation (TREAD)
Act, which currently does not include these ve-

hicles. It does not make a lot of sense to me

to exempt them from the same safety stand-
ards that NHTSA will apply to other passenger
cars and sport utility vehicles. This information
will give drivers information they need in order
to safely operate certain vehicles under dif-

ferent conditions.

This legislation would also require 15–pas-
senger vans to be included in NHTSA's New
Car Assessment Program (NCAP). NCAP pro-
vides consumers information on how different
vehicles withstand crashes, and was recently
expanded to include the risk of rollover. Cur-

rently, NCAP does not do rollover testing for
vehicles that carry more than 10 people.

In addition, the bill requires NHTSA to work
with van manufacturers to evaluate and test
the potential of new technologies to help driv-
ers maintain control of their vans. Specifically,
NHTSA would look at Electronic Stability Con-
trol (ESC) systems that some SUVs are al-
deady equipped with and rear-view mirror-
based rollover warning systems. These kinds
of innovative technologies could significantly
reduce rollovers and save lives.

"Fifteen-passenger" vans were initially de-
nigned to carry cargo, not people. But now
these vans are widely used by airports, hotels,
and other commercial interests to transport
customers from one location to another. Peo-

ple using these vans may not realize that the
Federal Motor Carrier Administration (FMCA)
has not completed rulemaking on Federal
motor carrier safety regulations for 15–pas-
senger vans that are used for commercial pur-

poses. This bill would require the FMCA to
complete their rulemaking, which began in
1999, to ensure that commercial passengers
get to their destinations safely.

This bill was built on the foundation of my
School Bus Safety Act of 2001 and it still ad-
dresses the van loophole created in 1974
when organizations were banned from pur-
chasing new 15–passenger vans to transport
school age children but were allowed to pur-
chase the vans used.

This legislation removes this nearly 30-year-
old loophole in the Federal regulations and ex-
tends the ban to include leasing, renting, and
buying of these vans, thereby making the buy-
ers accountable, as well as the seller. These
changes will insure that the intent of the 1974
law is finally realized. The bill would also
strengthens the penalties on those who violate
this important safety provision.

The legislation raises the prescribed penalty
for breaking this law from “not more than
$1000” to “not more than $25,000,” thereby
giving the enforcement agencies something to
make it worth their while to pursue. This provi-
sion is important because from 1974 until 1997,NHTSA, which had responsibility for
administering the law, did not initiate a single en-
forcement proceeding in the entire country.

Safety transcends party lines. Senator
Snowe and I have had tragic events take
place in our states that unfortunately made us very aware of the dangers of 15–pas-
senger vans. Last year there was a tragic ac-
cident in the State of Maine that cost the lives
of 14 forestry workers who were killed when
their 15–passenger van rolled off of a bridge,
killing all but one. This was the single worst
motor vehicle accident in Maine's history. So
we are introducing identical bills in the House
and the Senate. With bipartisan support we
hope to end these kinds of needlessly tragic
accidents.

Mr. Speaker, one of the government's roles
is to ensure the safety of its citizens. This leg-
islation gives consumers the information they
need to know about the safety of these vans
and it eliminates a loophole that allows people
to get around a child safety law. I strongly
urge my colleagues to support this common
sense legislation.

TRIBUTE TO THE SAN FERNANDO
CATHEDRAL
HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ
OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, April 3, 2003

Mr. GONZALEZ Mr. Speaker, last week the
San Fernando Cathedral celebrated the com-
pletion of its renovation. Today I am intro-
ducing a resolution honoring the San Fer-
nando Cathedral—the oldest cathedral in the
United States and the oldest standing struc-

ture in the State of Texas. I and
my fellow colleague from San Antonio, Ciro
Rodriguez, want to pay tribute to this exquis-
te building, and the great history and culture
that it embodies.
San Fernando Cathedral is both literally and
figuratively the geographic centerpoint of San
Antonio. This cathedral is not only revered by
the people of San Antonio, but by all the peo-
ple of this Nation, who remember the strength
and sacrifice of those who built this country.
As I mentioned before, just last week, the ren-
avation of this magnificent building was com-
pleted. Let us stand here today to mark this
achievement.
The San Fernando Cathedral is a grand
structure, rich in its history and meaning. Like
many of America's greatest institutions, it was built by the worn hands of the very poor. Fifteen Spanish families, sent by the King of Spain to establish a mission in Texas, laid the cornerstone of the church in 1731. They called it "La Villa de San Fernando." Like most of us, they were immigrants, looking towards a new future for a new home. What they ultimately built was a nation. A nation of many people, of many backgrounds.

They united under the cathedral's roof. As a symbol of their unity, the congregation joined Old World and New World saints—Our Lady of Candlemas and Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe—as patrons in addition to the town's official patron, King Fernando III of Spain. San Fernando Cathedral is a place where all people still come together each week, by the thousands, to meet and pray. Like the generations before them, they also come to the cathedral to seek refuge from a world too often ravaged by hunger and violence, as soldiers did during the Battle of the Alamo.

I honor the San Fernando Cathedral today because I believe that, like the immigrants that built it, this building has an honored place in our history and most certainly has an honored place in our future.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CORPORAL PATRICK NIXON

HON. BART GORDON
OF TENNESSEE
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, April 3, 2003

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Corporal Patrick Nixon, who gave the ultimate sacrifice to his country while serving in the United States Marine Corps. Patrick died in fighting near Nasiriyah, Iraq.

Patrick's parents, Debra and David Nixon, live in Gallatin, Tennessee, where I have the honor of representing them in this most esteemed body. My thoughts and prayers are with Debra and David and the rest of Patrick's family and friends. Full of hope and promise and sense of duty to his country, Patrick joined the Marine Corps after graduating high school in 2000.

Like his grandfather Joseph and his two brothers, Bill Hudson and Joe Nixon, before him, Patrick chose to serve his country by joining the Armed Forces. Patrick was a dedicated and courageous Marine. He understood the risks of serving in the military and did so with honor. This nation owes Patrick and all of the young men and women serving in our Armed Forces a huge debt of gratitude.

Our brave fighting men and women go in harm's way so the rest of us can enjoy the liberties of this great democracy. We should never take their service to this country for granted. Patrick was a young man who dreamed of teaching history one day. Our children will miss the opportunity to learn from such a courageous man.

I have deep admiration for Patrick, who has touched the lives of so many. His family, friends and community will never forget him and the sacrifice he made to protect the United States of America. God bless Patrick and all the men and women who sacrifice so much to protect this nation from harm.

INTRODUCTION OF THE UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP ACT OF 2003

HON. TOM LANTOS
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, April 3, 2003

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a critical and comprehensive initiative—the United States International Leadership Act of 2003—aimed at strengthening American leadership of the United Nations and at other international organizations.

Mr. Speaker, let me first express my sincere gratitude to the bill's cosponsor, the distinguished Chairman of the Rules Committee, and a dear friend from my home state of California, Congressman DAVID DREIER.

Many of the ideas for our bill came from a Council on Foreign Relations report that Chairman DREIER co-authored last year with our former International Relations Committee Chairman, Lee Hamilton.

The report, "Enhancing U.S. Leadership at the United Nations," focused attention on a critical problem in American foreign policy—our inability consistently to promote our interests and values in multilateral fora such as the UN. It also offered concrete steps to rebuild our influence.

The United States International Leadership Act builds on the Dreier-Hamilton report and is designed to give our diplomats the tools they need to ensure that America once again punches at its weight in the UN.

Specifically the bill:

- Creates a Democracy Caucus at the UN to encourage other democracies to join us in promoting positions at the UN that support freedom and oppose tyranny and hatred.
- Requires the State Department to pay high-level visits each year to key countries to make sure that their leaders understand that support for our positions at the UN is critical to their overall relationship with us.
- Directs the President to use U.S. influence to reform the criteria for leadership and membership at the UN, to ensure that rogue regimes and authoritarian governments cannot continue to thwart the noble purposes that each body was created to advance.
- Provides increased training to our Foreign Service Officers to help them develop the skills they need to conduct effective diplomacy at the UN and other multinational organizations.
- Affords Foreign Service Officers—for the first time ever—an opportunity to advance their careers by undertaking assignments to represent the U.S. to the UN and to other multilateral organizations.
- Creates a new Office on Multilateral Negotiations to be headed by a Special Representative with the rank of ambassador who has the responsibility to make sure that we have the resources and the strategies needed to prevail in each critical negotiation and decision we face at the UN and in other multilateral negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, it is an undeniable fact of life that our participation in the UN and other international organizations is critical to achieving our foreign policy goals. Right now the UN is helping us to advance our war against terrorism by obligating all countries to freeze the assets of terrorist groups. UN treaties and inspectors are also an important part of our effort to prevent the proliferation of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. UN agencies are also critical in spearheading the fight to combat the ravages of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and now the terrifying new sickness, SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome).

Despite these and many other examples of critical benefits we obtain from our engagement at the UN, the U.S. has often been blocked in its attempts to take action in these institutions to advance its goals and objectives. A recent example is the United Nations Human Rights Commission, where Libya—a gross human rights violator—was elected chairman, and the United States temporarily lost a seat. Another was the UN's World Conference Against Racism, where rogue regimes successfully hijacked a critical forum on race and turned it into an ugly anti-Israeli and anti-American circus.

A big part of the problem is that decisions at many international organizations, including membership and leadership, are made by regional groups where there is intensive cooperation by repressive regimes. The International Leadership Act, by building a Democracy Caucus and by developing expertise in the United States Government in the area of multilateral diplomacy, represents the beginning of what will be a long effort to rationalize and strengthen the UN, and other international organizations, by systematically reducing the leverage of repressive regimes and ensure that these organizations serve rather than thwart U.S. national interests.

Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere hope that this measure will be quickly enacted and signed by the President, so that we can begin this critical project.

HONORING MARINE CORPORAL RANDAL ROSACKER

HON. SCOTT McINNIS
OF COLORADO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, April 3, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I stand before you today to honor a young man tragically taken from us while in the service of his country. Last Monday, Marine Corporal Randal Rosacker, a native of Alamosa, Colorado, was killed while serving in the conflict in Iraq. I am truly humbled to honor him before this body of Congress and this Nation. The sacrifice of Randy and his fellow Marines will be long remembered by our grateful Nation.

Randy was the oldest of three children and was known as a born leader. In High School, his teammates voted him captain of the baseball team. Randy had always wanted to become a marine and joined when he turned 18, despite scholarship offers to play college football. By doing so, Randy was upholding the finest military traditions of both his family and this Nation and I know Randy's family and friends take pride in the uniform he wore and the ideals for which he fought. Our Nation will long endure due to the strength and character of men and women like Randy who serve our country.

Each generation must renew its commitment to defend our liberties. Today in Iraq, a new generation of young Americans is fighting