

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

MR. WALKER'S ESSAY

HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 2003

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I applaud Mr. Walker for this wondrous achievement. His essay is an example of the exceptional scholarship from the young men and women of our great nation.

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Scholarship Contest: Tennessee Winner]

FREEDOM'S OBLIGATION

(By Logan Walker)

On a cold, breezy day, a cool wind whips through the air unfurling the flag in the midday sun. The breeze heightens to a gust and in the furious waves, the flag lets out a crack like a whip. The crack resounds through the air reminding all who hear it of the flag's presence. But what does that flag mean? It means one thing: freedom. In America we pride ourselves on our institutions of checks and balances, all created with the purpose of maintaining freedom. But with freedom comes responsibility and obligations, but what is freedom's obligation?

This complex question is answered rather simply. Freedom's obligation is to protect principle over property, to guard ideas over oil, to defend the helpless, not the helpful. This is freedom's obligation.

For thousands of years people have been fighting over the lines on maps or the resources in a region, but America is more than that. Freedom demands of us to overlook our petty, selfish needs to satisfy the calling of a higher government: The government of humanity. Freedom is not about money, capitalism, oil, or land. It is about ideas, people, happiness, and liberty.

In the past twenty years a massive amount of criticism has risen against the United States for the wars it has participated in. Many claim our participation has been based solely on money rather than morals. Other critics claim that we simply make up moral justifications for fighting wars that we are really only interested in for monetary or political gain. Take for example the Kosovo War and the Gulf War. Both Yugoslavia and Kuwait were strategic oil suppliers. On the other hand, the United States gave detailed moral justifications for its involvement. Perhaps it is time that critics examine the fact that if you fight for any moral cause, you will most likely help your own, and the world economy, because any economy operates better and more effectively when it is not under the iron hand of a repressive regime.

But freedom's obligation is not just to one country, our own United States, but to all forms of democracy around the world. Many critics suggest that the United States is too much of a policeman in the world, but how could one assume so? What is America about? It is about freedom for all of mankind and justice for everyone. When someone is ten feet outside of our borders, do they become any less human? No. Then do they deserve any less protection than we would give another human life within our borders? Freedom's obligation is not merely to protect

any specific people's freedom, but to help people to understand that any group's cry for freedom is paramount to a regime's sovereignty.

A sad example, Taiwan is in a constant state of protest over democratization, but China, a repressive Communist relic, refuses to let them break away. Should the people of the United States simply sit back and take the money of the Chinese Government while ignoring the wails for freedom sounded by the people of Taiwan?

Freedom is not about Gross Domestic Product, the Stockmarket, or Armies. It is about people, principles, and morality. Freedom gives great benefits, but it also demands great sacrifice. The crack of the flag is not just there to remind us that we are Americans. It is there to remind us that we are a free people! A regime demands no sacrifice because it does what it wants at the expense of the helpless. Freedom, however, demands that we give up something of ourselves so that others, anywhere in the world, can share at least a fraction of what we have here. That is what brave American forces have been fighting for.

The Bible, the Quran, the Torah, and the Book of Buddhist Principles all suggest that you give something of yourself, whether it be your time or your money, to help someone else. They all stress the personal and moral rewards of sacrifice. But there is another document that preaches the benefits of sacrifice: the Constitution, because wherever freedom resides, sacrifice must follow, because freedom is love and love is sacrifice.

TRIBUTE TO MR. TED RAVELO OF
NORTH MIAMI

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 2003

Mr. MEEK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a wonderful human being and a magnificent activist symbolized by North Miami community leader Ted Ravelo, a Filipino-American. On Saturday, June 7, 2003, at the Design Center of the Americas (DCOTA) in Broward County, he will be honored by the Philippine American Federation of South Florida, Inc. at a gala event celebrating the 105th Philippine Independence Day festivities.

Mr. Ravelo came to the North Miami community some 15 years ago. He was the Director of the Southern Apparel Exhibitors at the Miami Merchandise Mart, after which he directed the Southeastern Apparel Exhibitors in Atlanta, Georgia. The citation for this gala event defines ". . . his loyal service to the community of North Miami and the Filipino-American community he has helped with utmost care and concern." Above all, however, this pioneering leader is more saliently characterized by his deep faith in the God he serves through countless Filipino immigrants in search of a warm friendship and timely advice. Being a dutiful husband to his wife, Ma. Teresa Padua-Ravelo, and a loving father to his two teenage children, Jamie and Jo Anne, he

has taken upon himself the awesome responsibility of providing the same brand of love and affection to many more Filipino-American families who search for guidance and direction in the ways and processes of how government and its various agencies function.

Indeed, Mr. Ravelo represents the best and the noblest of our community in his unceasing involvement with the socio-cultural well-being of his fellow immigrants in a manner that uplifted their own self-esteem and dignity. He continues to demonstrate a remarkable wisdom and warm friendship in serving his North Miami community, and still manages to enlighten his fellow citizens on the agenda of conscientious public service and good governance impacting our duties and responsibilities toward the less fortunate.

I am indeed a beneficiary of the brand of genuine advocacy he demonstrates both by way of word and example. I have learned from him the many struggles that immigrants throughout my district have had to confront on a daily basis, conscious of the fact that the will to succeed and be aware of the many nuances of public service undergird the civic responsibilities of a community leader and must characterize his advocacy role toward those who could least fend for themselves.

Continuing his mission to represent his fellow citizens and immigrants, Mr. Ted Ravelo was named to the North Miami Community Relations Board from 1997 thru 1998 and served as President of the Filipino Community Association of South Florida, Inc. Indeed, his quest for making a little bit of difference in the lives of people has always been his genuine way of changing the kind of world to which he was given to serve.

Named as the Activist of the Year by the North Miami Mayor's Economic Task Force in 1997, he has held the presidency of the Central North Miami Homeowners Association and vice-presidency of the North Miami Mayor's Economic Task Force, and has likewise held memberships on the Miami-Dade County Asian-American Advisory Board, Greater North Miami Chamber of Commerce and Asian-American Federation of Florida.

His involvement with the above organizations motivated his desire to run for the Mayor's seat of North Miami during the 1999 mayoral elections. Though he eventually lost his race, he ran a strong and credible campaign by focusing on the crucial issues impacting the well-being and equality of opportunity for his fellow citizens. His candidacy for public office has truly maximized his role as the consummate community activist who lives by the dictum that those who have less in life, through no fault of their own, should have more from those fortunate enough to have received the greater blessings from God. The collective testimonies he has received from the parents, community leaders and residents of North Miami and beyond represent an unequivocal testimony of the utmost respect and gratitude he now enjoys.

With the gala tribute to him on the historic celebration of the 105th Philippine Independence Day, the Filipino-American community in

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