

TRIBUTE TO COLORADO REGIONAL
TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 2003

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Colorado's Regional Transportation District (RTD) for being named the best transit agency in the United States and Canada by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA).

The APTA represents 1,500 public transportation agencies nationwide. This award is given for large systems that provide more than 30 million passenger trips per year, and is based on the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the member agencies. The award measures performance over a 3-year period, and recognizes outstanding service and operations from 2000 to 2002.

Denver has been named the most congested city of its size in America and the third most congested city nationally. So, RTD's task is a big one. But it has performed admirably—keeping its operating costs competitive, increasing its ridership and delivering outstanding service to its customers. The District provided more than 81 million passenger miles last year within the seven county metropolitan Denver area, operating over 1,100 buses over 179 routes and 49 light rail vehicles. At the same time, through an aggressive accident prevention program, RTD has reduced accidents over the 3-year period by 54 percent. To date in 2003, accidents have been reduced an additional 32 percent below last year's levels, reaching another all-time record low. And, with an attentive response to Colorado's ever-growing population, RTD has continued to add rail and bus transit services and been able to reduce traffic congestion by 13 percent by providing mass transit options throughout the metropolitan area. Congestion costs have been reduced by \$220 million annually, reducing air pollution, fuel consumption, and drive times.

With its sites on the future needs of the metropolitan region, new light rail systems are being planned and developed. A recent public-private partnership with the Colorado Department of Transportation, the Denver Regional Council of Governments, the City and County of Denver and local landowners, a development effort will renovate historic Union Station and the surrounding 19 acres to create an intermodal facility that will develop and expand transportation systems and commercial opportunities in central Denver.

RTD has been recognized for its quality, its sophisticated operations and its many safety improvements. Employees at the District benefit from General Manager, Cal Marsella's hands-on management style, and RTD has been recognized for its advancement of minority and female employees, and sensitivity to low-income and disabled customers through eco-passes and specially equipped buses. RTD's internal management has focused on strong marketing and community relations, policy development, financial management, and improved departmental and safety operations. With a concerted effort to provide innovative approaches to challenging transportation needs, Marsella has guided his 2,400 employees and 725 private service provider

employees to achieving this outstanding award.

I think Mary Blue, the RTD Chairman of the Board, put it well when she commended the staff by saying "Winning APTA's highest award shows that our prudent policies and sensible fiscal approach have paid off. This is a win not only for our employees and board members, but also for our passengers and taxpayers."

The Denver metropolitan area and Colorado are fortunate to have the Regional Transportation District provide outstanding service to its residents. We applaud their performance and celebrate the well deserved recognition they have received from the American Public Transportation Association.

RECOGNIZING PRESIDENT CHEN
SHUI-BIAN OF TAIWAN UPON HIS
RECEPTION OF THE INTER-
NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS
AWARD

TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, the experts told us during the 1980's that freedom for South Africa was a lost cause, and sanctions would never work. South Africa is now free. They said that the Soviets would never release Nathan Sharansky. He is now a Member of the Israeli Cabinet. They said that freedom for East Timor was a lost cause. East Timor is now free. And they said democracy, free press and civil society would not thrive in Taiwan.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Taiwan are living proof that there are no "lost causes" when it comes to human rights, only battles yet to be won. Taiwan's democratic development is exemplary of Chinese people around the world who, regardless of where they live, seek the same basic human freedoms as everyone else.

Mr. Speaker, like South Africa, Soviet refusniks, and East Timor, the road to freedom in Taiwan was not easy, and there were many choices to be made along the way. After political activists in Taiwan were arrested in 1980, Chen Shui-bian could have stayed silent. But instead, he joined the team of attorneys defending them. In 1986, when the Taiwan Government locked Mr. Chen behind bars for "criminal libel"—otherwise known as telling the truth—it would have been easy to withdraw from politics upon his release. Instead, Mr. Chen joined the Democratic Progressive Party, and ran successfully for the legislature in 1989.

In 1994, Mr. Chen ran for Mayor of Taipei even though the position of mayor had never been held by a member of the opposition party. He won. And during the 2000 Presidential elections in Taiwan, it seemed inconceivable that a member of the opposition would actually win the presidency for the first time in Taiwan's history. Not only did he prevail, but the peaceful transition of power demonstrated the strength and vitality of Taiwan's nascent democracy.

Mr. Speaker, it would have been easy upon Mr. Chen's election to focus solely on "bread and butter" issues—the economy, national security, education. He did all that, but Mr. Chen

never forgot the battle he waged for freedom, and the moral imperative to constantly fight for internationally-recognized human rights, freedom and democracy.

Mr. Speaker, President Chen Shui-bian proceeded to enshrine human rights as part of Taiwan's laws. He established Taiwan's first-ever Human Rights Advisory Committee. He continues to fight for the Taiwanese people to receive the respect they deserve in the international community. And he has zealously guarded and promoted Taiwan's democratic system, serving as a beacon for democracy throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr. Speaker, some great fighters for freedom and human rights have preceded President Chen Shui-bian in receiving the International Human Rights Award—Nelson Mandela, Elie Wiesel, Andrei Sakahrov, and George Mitchell, to name but a few. Given Mr. Chen's decades-long struggle for human rights and democracy in Taiwan, it is only fit and just that he has been invited to join this most-exclusive and noble club.

It is with great pleasure that I enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD a copy of President Chen's speech upon accepting the International Human Rights Award.

(By President Chen Shui-bian, Republic of China)

President Horton, Congressman Lantos, Congressman Ackerman, Mr. Rabaut, Mr. Wu, Executive Director Dr. Kantrow, Board Member Dr. Chen, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen: Good evening!

On behalf of the government and people of Taiwan, I would like to pay special tribute to the International League for Human Rights (ILHR). Over the last 62 years since its establishment, the League has worked unrelentingly in carrying out its mission of defending human rights and rights advocates who have risked their lives to promote the ideals of a just and civil society.

The Human Rights Award conferred on me this evening is an honor bestowed upon the 23 million people of Taiwan. It signifies both affirmations and expectations. The award is representative of the international validation that the people of Taiwan have received for decades of effort in pursuit of democracy, freedom and human rights. It is also a reminder that we have assumed by destiny the duty of protecting human rights and of upholding international human rights principles.

The year 2000 marked Taiwan's first peaceful transfer of power and our country's first alternation of political parties, an accomplishment unprecedented in the history of all Chinese societies. In my inaugural speech, I proposed a goal of building our nation on the principles of human rights. We are committed to abide by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action. We also pledged to bring Taiwan on par with the international human rights system despite our authoritarian past.

Over the past three and a half years, concrete actions have been taken to fulfill our commitments. In step with the institutionalization of human rights protection mechanisms, comprehensive human rights policies and implementation measures have been carefully drafted, as outlined in our Human Rights Policy White Paper, and the Organic Law of the National Human Rights Commission is currently under review in our National Legislature.

My office has established a presidential Human Rights Advisory Committee and the Cabinet has also established an Inter-Ministerial Committee. Both have been collaborating with local and international human