

promotes Russia's expansionism, even to the detriment of democracy and the welfare of the very Russian people. It is by design directed against the stability of Europe and it represents an insult to the Romanian nation. And, last but not least, in the future, its continuous existence will mar the good relations between the United States and Romania, thus hurting America's interests.

We, responsible and loyal American citizens of Romanian descent, are aware of the risky consequences of modifying borders. We are aware of America's limitations and of Russia's reluctance. But we also believe in America, we believe in justice, and we believe in redress. With good will, wisdom, and an open mind, the problem could be properly addressed. Thus, we recommend that the United States start considering the reunification of this land with Romania where it belongs. Such an approach would avoid further complications and undesirable consequences. To this end we are ready to lend our full and unconditional support.

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IN MEMORY OF FERN HOLLAND

HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 2004

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago, in a tragedy personified by the killing of a young woman from middle America, we were reminded of the unsung goodness and bravery of so many Americans serving their country overseas.

On March 9, 2004, Fern Holland, of Miami, Oklahoma, was the first American civilian killed in the Iraq war. Her death has sparked over 200 national news reports, and an outpouring of grief from around the globe. Fern's story has touched people like me who never knew her, but who can now never forget her.

It's rare these days to know someone who is willing to sacrifice the comforts America offers to serve others who are less fortunate. It is even more rare to know a person who is willing to sacrifice their own life in order to improve the lives of others around the world. Fern Holland was an American hero who sacrificed both the comforts of home, and indeed even her life, to make the world a better place. People who exemplify such compassion and courage should be honored, and by telling her story I hope that she will be remembered.

Fern was a successful attorney, first in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and later in Washington, DC. She walked away from a lucrative career to carry out human rights work in violence plagued Guinea, Liberia, and later Iraq.

In her first effort to help others overseas, Fern lived in a remote village in Namibia as a Peace Corps volunteer. She helped the villagers there learn English, and built a computer laboratory to access the internet. Later, Fern worked for the American Refugee Committee where she investigated sexual assaults in a violence-plagued refugee camp in Guinea. There, she established the first sex violence legal clinic that to date has processed more than 100 cases.

Last year, after major combat operations in Iraq concluded, Fern traveled to Iraq and

worked for the Coalition Provisional Authority as a women's rights specialist. She helped establish women's rights, she established service centers throughout Iraq, and she helped found an Iraqi women's political party. The day before her death, Iraqi leaders signed an interim constitution that includes a controversial provision Fern helped draft. It establishes a goal for 25 percent female membership in the national assembly. Knowing of the dangers in Iraq, especially in working to extend women's rights, Fern wrote to friends only weeks before her death, "I love the work and if I die, know that I'm doing precisely what I want to be doing—working to organize and educate human rights activists and women's groups".

These are but a few of Fern Holland's contributions to the world, a world which is a better place because of her. In this day and time, when the world seems dark and dreary, we look to people like Fern Holland who's bright light gives us hope. Fern displayed a compassion and commitment to people that Jesus spoke about when he said, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." Her sacrifice is an example and inspiration to all who strive for a better world, and she will be missed.

RECOGNITION OF TIARA PURIFOY

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 2004

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Tiara Purifoy of Beloit, WI, who recently appeared on the popular reality television show "American Idol." After being named a semifinalist with her powerful rendition of Whitney Houston's song "I Wanna Dance with Somebody," she was surprisingly eliminated before the singing even started on the wild card show on Tuesday, March 9, 2003. The show, which first aired in 2002, draws a nationwide audience in the millions, two nights a week. "American Idol" brings aspiring singers from across the nation to Hollywood, and awards the winner a recording contract and celebrity status. Tiara was selected at an audition in Hawaii.

While her dream of being the next "American Idol" has not yet come to pass, Tiara is still a star in the hearts of Wisconsinites. Tiara began singing as a small girl at age four in her church choir. She will continue to sing and perform with her traveling family group the Gospel Belles, where she sings lead. Her appearance on "American Idol" was not her first brush with fame, however. She describes her greatest accomplishment thus far as being named Miss Beloit in 1999 because she was able to be a positive example for young people.

Indeed, Purifoy proved to be a positive example to both young and old across the nation when she stood up to judge Simon Cowell, who is known for his hurtful and critical remarks to budding stars' performances. Despite praise from the other judges, celebrated performer Paula Abdul and Grammy Award winning producer Randy Jackson, Cowell told Purifoy she was capable of much more. With her absolute confidence and positive attitude, Purifoy retorted, saying she would let America decide. Indeed, America responded, and Purifoy moved on to the next round.

Even though Tiara is not the nation's new "American Idol," she will continue to share her sweet voice with her friends and family who continue to cheer for her back home in Beloit. Please share this opportunity with me, Mr. Speaker, to honor Beloit and Wisconsin's own American Idol.

BILL TO ALLOW A DEDUCTION FOR EXPENSES PAID IN CONNECTION WITH THE DONATION OF AN ORGAN

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 2004

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to introduce a bill to allow a tax deduction for expenses paid in connection with the donation of an organ.

Mr. Speaker, each year approximately 6,500 people die waiting to receive an organ transplant. However, 25,000 lives are saved due to the generosity of organ donors. While we have made significant strides to promote and encourage organ donation, we still fall short of our goal.

In response to this need, the legislation I now introduce will allow organ donors a tax deduction for up to \$15,000 per donation. Specifically, this bill amends the Internal Revenue Code to allow individuals to deduct qualified organ expenses such as travel and lost wages for donating all or part of a liver, lung, pancreas, kidney, intestine, or bone marrow for human organ transplantation.

Unlike previous bills that have been introduced in the House, this bill does not require donors to wait on what is often a long and tedious grant process to approve reimbursement. The donors will automatically be able to deduct up to \$15,000 in related expenses.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of this bill because I believe organ donors should not have to pay any price or expense for an act of kindness. I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass this important legislation.

DISABILITIES ADVOCATES FIGHT BUSH SECTION 8 PROPOSAL

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 2004

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, the Administration proposal for a drastic reduction in the ability of the Section 8 program to help people in need has caused a great deal of dismay, especially among those organizations that exist to provide services to the most vulnerable in our society. On March 22, a broad and inclusive coalition of people concerned with people with disabilities, people with low incomes, and others who have legitimate need for assistance sent a very thoughtful letter to the Chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, expressing their strong disagreement with this proposal. As the coalition notes, the funding level proposed by the Administration would mean that "approximately 250,000 low income families with children, senior citizens, and people with disabilities could lose their vouchers."