

COMMENDING Rx NEW HAMPSHIRE

HON. CHARLES F. BASS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 5, 2004

Mr. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend six months of operation of Rx New Hampshire, a website and program designed to bring affordable prescription drug costs to New Hampshire residents. Launched on April 5, 2004, it has already hosted more than 14,000 visits and is responsible for hundreds of anecdotal cases of Granite Staters using the information to save on their needed medications.

New Hampshire Governor Craig Benson is a leader on this issue and has demonstrated that affordable prescription drugs and safety are not mutually exclusive goals. In order to provide citizens with the confidence to use any of the screened pharmacies located in Canada listed on the State website at <http://www.state.nh.us/governor/prescription/prescription.html>, Governor Benson directed the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services to identify only those Canadian pharmacies that meet strict domestic and international accreditation standards. Onsite inspections of facilities in Canada have also been performed by independent New Hampshire pharmacists for each listed provider. Samples have been bought and shipped through the normal process and were analyzed for active ingredients at the NH State Police Forensic Laboratory and examined by the NH Board of Pharmacy. No significant difference between these drugs and a duplicate prescription list that was filled from local U.S. chain pharmacies was found.

For more information, I have linked the prescription drug section of my Congressional Web site at www.house.gov/bass to the Rx New Hampshire page and urge my House colleagues and all Americans to visit and examine the good work and solutions offered in the Granite State.

I again call on Congress and the Federal Drug Administration to adopt importation policies that do not stand in the way of such innovative and proven solutions to these growing costs. I am certain that Governor Benson and the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services would be willing to lend their expertise to any other State or Federal agency wise enough to follow their lead.

HONORING MRS. GRECIA GRECIA ALAJAR

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 5, 2004

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Grecia Grecia Alajar, a retired teacher and Nevada's recipient of the Outstanding Older Worker Award. The work for and dedication to the community of retired individuals, like Mrs. Alajar, are inspiring to all of us as we seek to improve our districts and our States.

Mrs. Alajar, after a lifetime of teaching in the Philippines, Los Angeles, California, and Las Vegas, Nevada, returned to the workforce, this time as a member of health care delivery sys-

tem. She is an integral part of the operations of the First Choice Home Health Care Agency.

Mrs. Alajar was born and raised in the Philippines, where she taught high school before moving to the United States in 1970. After overcoming the language barrier, she began teaching mentally challenged children. Her good works continued as she impacted the lives of many children facing challenges. I applaud Mrs. Alajar and her dedication to our community as an excellent role model for us all.

HONORING THE FORMER FIRST LADY OF NORTH SAINT PAUL, DOLORES SANDBERG

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 5, 2004

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a dear friend of mine, the former First Lady of North Saint Paul, Dolores Sandberg.

Dolores Sandberg passed away last month, surrounded by her family including her loving husband William, her daughter Karen and two grandchildren, Caroline and William.

Dolores was a woman of great character and strength. She always had a tremendous sense of humor and wit and was always positive even as she dealt with her illness.

She was also a woman who supported and loved North St. Paul and its people along with her husband Mayor Sandberg, our beloved mayor. I know that I am not the only one who will miss her kind words, warm smile and soft voice.

We will miss Dolores dearly. She led a life of dignity and warmth, and will be remembered fondly in the hearts of many.

HONORING THE ANI DANCE ENSEMBLE

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 5, 2004

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, Mr. WAXMAN and I rise today to honor "the Ani Dance Ensemble," part of the Armenian Educational and Cultural Society, Hamazkayin, as it celebrates its 30th anniversary. Hamazkayin was founded by a group of community leaders on May 28, 1928, in Cairo, Egypt with the objective of providing a sound education to the new generation and preserving the ethnic identity and cultural heritage of the Armenian people forced to live outside their homeland after the 1915 Armenian genocide.

Subsequently, Hamazkayin chapters sprouted throughout the Middle East, Europe, the United States, Canada, South America and Armenia to instill, perpetuate and preserve the centuries of Armenian culture. Hamazkayin has been successful in establishing secondary and higher educational institutions which have prepared scholars, literary figures, and community leaders throughout Armenia and the Diaspora. The establishment of "the Ani Dance Ensemble" achieves the objectives of Hamazkayin through their unique performances of traditional Armenian folk dances.

"The Ani Dance Ensemble" was established in 1974 in Los Angeles, California under the leadership of artistic directors/choreographers Ms. Suzy Barseghian-Tarpinian and Mr. Yeghia Hasholian. The ensemble has had more than 80 dances in its repertoire, and presently consists of 40 dancers. Since its inception it has performed and captivated audiences throughout California as well as cities across the nation including Washington DC, Chicago, Illinois; Falls Church, Virginia; and Las Vegas, Nevada. In addition, the group has performed in Armenia and Karabagh in 1999, 2001, and 2004. The ensemble has also represented Armenian Culture through Armenian folk dances at the American Ethnic Day in Washington, DC in 1987. They are frequently invited by American, ethnic and Armenian organizations to perform at functions. As one of the oldest and most accomplished Armenian Dance Ensembles in the United States, it is recognized as one of the best ethnic dance groups in America.

It is our distinct honor to recognize the cultural contributions of "the Ani Dance Ensemble." I ask all members to join me in congratulating the "the Ani Dance Ensemble's" 30 years of performing traditional Armenian folk dances.

SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES OF CARIBBEAN DEVASTATED BY HURRICANES CHARLEY, FRANCES, IVAN, AND JEANNE

SPEECH OF

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 4, 2004

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 496, a bill I cosponsored, which expresses the sense of Congress on the need for humanitarian assistance to hurricane-ravaged Caribbean countries. As you know, Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne struck the Caribbean, leading to widespread destruction and devastation.

This is a matter of great concern to me because many of my constituents in Dade and Broward Counties are from, have ancestors from, or have relatives presently living on the islands of the Caribbean. I also represent the largest Haitian constituency in the country. Of all the islands in the Caribbean, Haiti was particularly hard hit. As of today, the toll was more than 2,900 dead or missing and presumed dead. An estimated 300,000 Haitians are left homeless. The extent of this destruction has severely strained the already meager resources of the government, law enforcement authorities, and the United Nations forces in Haiti.

Haiti especially has suffered. Just yesterday, the Washington Post reported the heartwrenching story of Monise Alsenor, a Haitian mother, two of whose children are missing after water tore through her house and swept her family away. She could not reach her children as they yelled "save me!" in Creole. She and her husband spent the night holding onto a tree while the water tugged at them and the tree thorns ripped off

their clothes. There are still reports of people living on roofs and of food and water shortages. The New York Times reported that two men were found lying in a semi-conscious state on the ground near an Argentine-run clinic. Doctors said that the two men appeared to have not eaten in several days and demonstrated signs of psychological trauma. I cite these accounts as examples of the terrible circumstances under which Haitians have suffered. Similar stories could sadly, easily be found thousands of times over throughout this poorest of nations and other countries in the Caribbean.

After Hurricane Jeanne ravaged the city of Gonaives, the international community's response was impressive. Trinidad-Tobago pledged \$5 million in aid. Venezuela pledged \$1 million and sent food, water, and medicine. Argentina dispatched rescue workers and supplies. Brazilians sent medical supplies. Chile also sent emergency aid, as did the Spanish, and the French.

Incredibly, the Bush Administration has been slow to respond to this tragedy. In the first several days after the disaster, as news reports out of Haiti detailed the widespread death, destruction and suffering, the United States was virtually silent while other nations, including European Union countries and Venezuela, immediately stepped in to help. For this reason, I wrote to President Bush to ask for substantial and immediate aid to help the flood victims. A copy of my letter follows this statement.

President Bush has proposed \$12.2 billion for hurricane relief and recovery in Florida and the Southern states. \$50 million of these funds are set aside for the Caribbean nations, and almost half is intended for Haiti. However, in the words of the Washington Post: "The amount set aside for the Caribbean nations is a pittance—not to mention a fraction of what was spent on U.S. military interventions in Haiti and Grenada." Millions more will be needed to help Haiti alone recover from Hurricane Jeanne's aftermath. The Bush administration should be supportive in a more substantial way.

It is because of these horrendous conditions that I support Congresswoman LEE's resolution. I call on this administration to provide greater humanitarian and emergency assistance to Haiti and other Caribbean nations.

SEPTEMBER 22, 2004.

President GEORGE W. BUSH,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR PRESIDENT BUSH: I write to bring to your personal attention a humanitarian crisis of the highest magnitude in Haiti and to ask that your Administration follow the lead of other nations and provide substantial and immediate assistance to help ease the desperate suffering of the people of Haiti.

Tropical Storm Jeanne caused devastating floods that ravaged this impoverished country this past weekend. As of this morning, the death toll in Haiti exceeded 800, with 1,000 missing. The death toll increases steadily as the water recedes.

Haiti is already the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, and this latest crisis has made conditions there even worse. This crisis also comes on the heels of ruinous floods four months ago when over 3,000 Haitians were killed, missing, or presumed dead. According to eyewitness accounts, there are bodies scattered in the streets. Some are forced to camp on the roofs of mud-filled homes. Unimaginably, families were sleeping in trees because of the destruction.

Numerous news reports document a desperate need for food, water, medicine, shelter and clothing. The Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Gonaives said that the possibility exists that several thousand Haitians may die of starvation. "We have nothing," he is quoted by the Associated Press as saying. "About 80 to 90 percent of the houses are under water."

The present interim government of Haiti is totally unequipped and unable to deal with this massive crisis. It has neither the necessary resources nor the organization. Private voluntary groups are also reportedly overwhelmed by the enormity of this crisis, and there are numerous reports of mobs seizing aid vehicles. Transportation in Haiti, extremely difficult even in the best of times, is particularly crippled now.

However, despite the fact that this crisis struck Haiti over four days ago, the Administration reportedly has released only \$60,000 in relief assistance to CARE. This is wholly inadequate to properly respond to this disaster. It pales compared to the \$1.8 million provided by the European Union and \$1 million and rescue supplies from Venezuela. Other nations are already acting. It is a national embarrassment that the United States of America should respond so slowly and inadequately to so great a crisis in a country so close to our shores. While your Administration assesses, monitors and watches, the suffering in Haiti gets worse.

Haiti does not need expressions of sympathy; it does not need promises. Haiti needs concrete help, and it needs it right now. Your Administration has a responsibility to immediately send significant U.S. emergency assistance to Haiti in the form of food, medicine, fresh water, clothing and emergency shelter and to immediately coordinate, with the international community, the manpower, transportation and distribution of these needed commodities to provide immediate relief to the people of Gonaives and the surrounding countryside.

The time frame for this aid should be hours, not weeks or months. Thank you for your attention and I look forward to your prompt reply to this urgent matter.

Sincerely yours,

KENDRICK B. MEEK,
Member of Congress.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 5, 2004

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, because of an emergency in my district, I missed rollcall votes Nos. 487, 488 and 489. If present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes Nos. 487, 488 and 489.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE RAILROAD SECURITY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS ACT OF 2004

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 5, 2004

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, not enough is being invested in improving rail and transit security. We have seen massive efforts to shore up security in our skies and even on our roads, but efforts to boost rail security have not received the same federal commitment.

At present, rail and transit systems move 14 million passengers a day—almost eight times as many passengers as the U.S. aviation system, which carries 1.8 million air travelers daily. The federal government spends \$9.16 per aviation passenger for aviation security yet only \$115 million has been appropriated for transit security over the last 2 years, or six-tenths of a penny per passenger. Our national homeland security strategy is only as strong as our weakest link. This funding balance needs to be addressed in any comprehensive legislation implementing the 9/11 Commission's recommendations.

For these reasons, today Representative KIRK and I are introducing the Railroad Security and Public Awareness Act of 2004, which would enhance rail worker security training; fund station, train and infrastructure security projects; and increase passenger awareness of railroad security. Rail security is a priority for many Americans, who depend on rail for both inter-city travel and commuter service. I know that many states, including my own state of Delaware, rely on rail—for commuters, personal transportation, economic necessity, or a combination of services.

Few of us doubt that there is a real threat to our transportation systems, including the U.S. rail system. On April 2, the FBI and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) sent out an uncorroborated bulletin stating that terrorists could attempt this summer to conceal explosives in luggage and carry-on bags, such as duffel bags and backpacks. The bulletin indicated that such bombs could be made of ammonium nitrate fertilizer and diesel fuel, similar to what was used to blow up the Oklahoma City federal building in 1995.

Awareness among workers and riders must continue, so that Americans are well educated on the threats to our nation's rail systems, and our rail systems are well equipped to respond to an attack. The March attacks on Madrid's commuter rail system clearly shows that al Qaeda is targeting and will strike rail targets throughout the world using simplified methods of delivery.

Areas of vulnerability within our rail systems and the various delivery methods for attacks should be outlined and incorporated into a strong plan for employee training, passenger screening, and incident response. I realize that the answers to rail security are not the same answers to air security. Standard security precautions may not be practical for rail, many of which have the potential to drastically reduce ridership and cargo use.

My legislation would do the following:

(1) Require the Secretary of DHS to develop and issue detailed guidance for a rail worker security-training program to prepare front-line workers for potential threat conditions. Each railroad carrier would develop a rail worker security-training program in accordance with that guidance and submit it to the Secretary for approval. The legislation authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security to make grants to railroads, hazardous materials shippers, owners of rail cars used in the transportation of hazardous materials, universities, colleges, and research centers, and State and local governments (for railroad facilities and infrastructure) for full or partial reimbursement of costs incurred to implement the program

(2) The Secretary of Homeland Security would develop and implement a national plan for public outreach and awareness. The plan