

Under such a system, every Member State could come up for review on a periodic basis. Any such rotation should not, however, impede the Council from dealing with massive and gross violations that might occur. Indeed, the Council will have to be able to bring urgent crises to the attention of the world community.

The new Human Rights Council must be a society of the committed. It must be more accountable and more representative. That is why I have suggested that members be elected by a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly, and that those elected should have a solid record of commitment to the highest human rights standards. Being elected by a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly should help make members more accountable, and the body as a whole more representative.

A Council will not overcome all the tensions that accompany our handling of human rights. A degree of tension is inherent in the issues. But the Council would allow for a more comprehensive and objective approach. And ultimately it would produce more effective assistance and protections, and that is the yardstick by which we should be measured. I urge Member States to reach early agreement in principle to establish a Human Rights Council. They can then turn to the details such as its size, composition and mandate; its relationship with other UN bodies; and how to retain the best of the existing mechanisms, such as the special rapporteurs and the close ties with NGOs. Consultations with the High Commissioner would naturally be a very central part of this process, and she stands ready to assist. Let us all do our part to make this happen, and show that the United Nations takes the cause of human rights as seriously as it does those of security and development.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Human rights are the core of the United Nations' identity. Men and women everywhere expect us to uphold universal ideals. They need us to be their ally and protector. They want to believe we can help unmask bigotry and defend the rights of the weak and voiceless.

For too long now, we have indulged this view of our own capabilities. But the gap between what we seem to promise, and what we actually deliver, has grown. The answer is not to draw back from an ambitious human rights agenda, but to make the improvements that will enable our machinery to live up to the world's expectations.

Our constituents will not understand or accept any excuse if we fail to act. So let us show them that we understand what is at stake.

Thank you very much.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MOON HERNANDEZ, BOWIE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER OF THE YEAR

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 19, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Moon Hernandez, Bowie Elementary School Teacher of the Year.

Mrs. Hernandez is currently a second grade teacher at Bowie Elementary. She received her teaching degree from Texas A&M University, making her the first of five children in her family to graduate college.

Mrs. Hernandez has served on the District Education Improvement Committee for the last

four years and is presently the Literacy Link Lead teacher for the second grade teachers at Bowie. She has served as the second grade team leader and as a technology presenter at the TCEA 23rd Annual Convention.

Mrs. Hernandez's goal in teaching is to help children become independent thinkers so that they can be better prepared for the real world. She credits her mother, who would not let her miss a day of school even as a young child, as her inspiration for learning and teaching.

She works tirelessly to provide her students with superior problem solving skills and confidence in themselves.

Mrs. Hernandez is an incredible contributor to her community and to her students, and I am honored to have the chance to recognize her here today.

REGARDING H. CON. RES. 34

HON. JIM MARSHALL

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 19, 2005

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, on April 5, 2005, we short-circuited debate and used a suspension motion to honor Yogi Bajan. It has since come to my attention that Mr. Bajan is a controversial figure. Had I known of the controversy surrounding him, I would not have voted in favor of this suspension of the House's normal legislative process.

BANKRUPTCY ABUSE PREVENTION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 14, 2005

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am reminded of the words of the first President of the United States, George Washington, whose words are worth repeating at this time: "The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional as to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their country."

Republican priorities:

Many of them talk about protecting veterans and making sure veterans have the support they need when returning from protecting this country's freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Yesterday, the House passed H.R. 8, to make permanent the repeal of the estate tax. This bill will cost the American taxpayer \$290 billion over the next ten years. The cost over the first ten years could go to \$1 trillion.

Let me repeat that: \$1 trillion.

That is a huge cost to all of us.

The bill gives a tax break to the wealthiest 3/10 of 1 percent of estates, while imposing a new capital gains tax on most, including those of small business owners and farmers.

At the same time, the Republicans passed a budget that calls for \$800 million in cuts to the VA over the next five years.

Clearly, the Republicans are attempting to balance the budget on the backs of veterans'

health care, and on the backs of the widows and orphans of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our country's freedom.

Today, this same house will vote on bankruptcy legislation that does nothing to protect our veterans.

These brave men and women are serving their country in Iraq and Afghanistan, while at home, their lives and livelihoods are going down the drain. Many of these people have gone into debt and the circumstances of their debt occurred either before, during or after their active duty. This bill does not help these people.

Many of our service members—especially, the citizen soldiers of the Guard and Reserve forces, could face terrible financial problems because they do not qualify for a narrow protection of debt incurred while on duty if S. 256 becomes law.

Since 9/11, approximately half a million Reservists and Guardsmen have been called to active duty: Some more than once. Hundreds of thousands of Reservists and National Guardsmen are currently activated in support of ongoing military operations. According to the National Guard, 4 out of 10 members of the National Guard and Reserve forces lose income when they leave their civilian jobs for active duty.

The people of this country need to see what policies the republicans actually vote for. They talk the talk very well, but do not walk the walk or roll the roll for our veterans, who have sacrificed their bodies for this Nation.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MEGAN NEBGEN, GOODNIGHT JUNIOR HIGH TEACHER OF THE YEAR

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 19, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Megan Nebgen, Goodnight Junior High Teacher of the Year.

Mrs. Nebgen is the coach of the Dancin' Stars Team at Goodnight, a position she has held for the past two years. She is well-qualified for the position, having received a Bachelor of Science in Dance from Texas State University. She has brought energy and initiative to Goodnight, establishing the first Contest Team at the school.

Megan Nebgen believes that dance can be an excellent venue for growth for girls, teaching them to express themselves through movement and building their self-esteem. Her girls have won many awards in competition, but Mrs. Nebgen believes that the confidence and pride that the girls get from the dance program is their most important reward.

She believes that dance can help students in the rest of their lives, citing the fact that most of her students improve their marks in school when they are enrolled. Mrs. Nebgen also believes that team competitive dance can teach an important civic virtue: teamwork. Mrs. Nebgen herself is a team player within her school, taking time from her schedule to participate in both the Campus Management Team and the Veteran's Day Committee.

Mrs. Nebgen has made an important contribution to the health and happiness of the