STATEMENT CONCERNING THE FUTURE OF U.S. RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM

HON. AL GREEN
OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Friday, June 24, 2005

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, some prominent members of the Vietnamese community within my Congressional District have asked that I deliver a message to Congress regarding human rights issues in Vietnam. I take this opportunity to express their sentiments on the heels of Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai’s visit to the United States. I am convinced that while this is a historic and unprecedented visit, I believe that their concerns are equally important.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that this statement be made a part of the official Record.

As Vietnam is a nation that has a record of violating human rights and suppressing religious freedom. This has been recorded in the U.S. State Department’s 2004 Human Rights report on Vietnam. The report declares that the governing party, the Communist Party of Vietnam, has restricted the freedom of speech, the freedom of press, and the freedom of assembly, freedoms that our nation holds so dear. The Vietnamese government also continues to hold political and religious prisoners. It prohibits human rights organizations and political, labor, and social organizations from forming or operating. The 2004 U.S. State Department report also found that government security forces have been known to beat, shoot, and even bear responsibility for the disappearance of its citizens. These are not the government activities of a free nation.

The United States must not ignore the oppressive practices of governments with which we bear economic and military ties, for our relationships with other nations reflect our own national values and beliefs. While it is my sincere hope that relations between the United States and Vietnam will become stronger in the future, we must remember that our Nation prides itself upon protecting democracy and supporting human rights around the world.

Although Vietnam has made steps toward progress, we have seen that it still partakes in practices meant to oppress its citizens. Therefore, it is my expectation that the United States will work with Vietnam to improve its grave human rights and religious freedom records so that we may continue to take steps to strengthen and broaden our ties with that country.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize Mrs. Mildred Spitzer before the U.S. House of Representatives for her many lifetime achievements, longevity, and ongoing vigor and energy. She has demonstrated an indefatigable love of life and a commitment to helping others. Mildred Spitzer is a national treasure and a source of national pride.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate an extremely important anniversary.

Thirty-three years ago today, Title IX, the landmark legislation banning gender discrimination in federally funded education programs, was enacted into law.

I adamantly oppose restrictions to Title IX. Recent “clarifications” to the law will only lead to allowing schools to avoid providing equal opportunities to female students.

For women, especially young women, Title IX is one of the most important pieces of legislation in the past half century.

Title IX helps those who need help the most, particularly in low-income areas.

Girls who participate in athletics at the high school and college levels are more likely to graduate with higher grades than their peers who do not play sports. The health benefits of exercise are well documented and girls who play sports often take their appreciation of exercise and activity into their adulthood.

Team sports prepare girls for success in the workplace by teaching the benefits of teamwork and tenacity at a young and receptive age. Athletics imbue girls with self-confidence they may not be able to develop elsewhere.

We must not interfere with Title IX’s effectiveness. That is why I oppose the recent clarification and advocate for increased equality in sports for female students.

COMMEMORATING THE 33RD ANNIVERSARY OF TITLE IX

HON. JUANITA MILLENDER-MCDONALD
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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