CONDEMNING IRANIAN PRESIDENT MAHMOUD AHMANDINEJAD'S THREATS AGAINST ISRAEL

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 28, 2005

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I strongly condemn the deplorable remarks made this week by the President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmandinejad and I commend my colleagues, Congressmen TOM LANTOS (D–CA) and HENRY HYDE (R–IL), for authoring this important resolution—H. Res. 523, Condemning Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmandinejad's threats against Israel—and bringing it to the floor of the House of Representatives.

The statement by Iran's President that "Israel must be wiped off the map" demands the strongest condemnation from the entire international community. Moreover, it is reprehensible that Mr. Ahmandinejad made these statements to a group of students. In an area of the world where violence has led to intense hardship and suffering the Iranian President's statement only promotes more violence. It is a sad day when the leader of Iran would poison the minds of young people rather than inspire them to build a peaceful Middle East.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 2, 2005

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, November 1, 2005, I missed rollcall votes numbered 557 and 558. Rollcall vote No. 557 was on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 3548, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located on Franklin Avenue in Pearl River, New York, as the "Heinz Ahlmeyer, Jr. Post Office Building." Rollcall vote No. 558 was on the motion to suspend the rules and pass, as amended H.R. 3989, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 37598 Goodhue Avenue in Dennison, Minnesota, as the "Albert Harold Quie Post Office."

Had I been present I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes Nos. 557 and 558.

ON INTRODUCING THE "ELIMINATION OF BARRIERS FOR KATRINA VICTIMS ACT"

HON. ROBERT C. SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 2, 2005

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues, Congressman RANGEL of NY, Congressman CONYERS of MI, Congressman THOMPSON of MS, Congressman JEFFERSON of LA, Congressman FRANK of MA, Congresswoman JACKSON-LEE of TX, Congressman PAUL of TX, Congresswoman JOHNSON of TX, Congresswoman LEE of CA, Congressman HASTINGS of FL and Congressman AL GREEN of TX in introducing the "Elimination of Barriers for Katrina Victims Act." We are pleased to be joined by a coalition of almost 100 national, state and local organizations who have expressed their support for the legislation, such as the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry, American College of Mental Health Administration, Drug Policy Alliance Network, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), NAACP, NAADAC–The Association for Addiction Professionals, National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, and the National Urban League, and the list is growing as word of the legislation gets out.

Millions of Americans were displaced from their homes due to Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita and hundreds of thousands have not been able to return and may never be able to do so. Having lost their homes, their communities, their jobs and other support systems, most have required emergency food, clothing, shelter, medical, or monetary assistance. According to FEMA reports, an estimated 2.1 million Americans have already applied for federal aid. Unfortunately, many of these individuals and their families are in desperate need, but, due to a prior drug conviction, will not be able to receive certain federal assistance available to other victims in need. While it is impossible to know for sure how many families will be denied public assistance because of drug convictions, it is likely in the tens of thousands.

More than 1.5 million Americans are arrested for drug offenses every year. Several federal laws disqualify those with felony convictions to receive certain federal benefits. A recent GAO report commissioned by myself and Congressman RUSH of IL reveals that these disqualifications are having a huge impact on receipt of federal benefits for which those with prior drug convictions would otherwise receive. For example, an estimated 41,000 students were denied college assistance during the 2003/2004 academic year because of drug convictions.

While the GAO was only able to collect data from 15 public housing agencies, out of more than 3,000, those 15 agencies denied housing to almost 1,500 families because of past drug violations in 2003 alone. That indicates that there are thousands of families and tens of thousands of individuals unable to receive housing benefits because a family member has a drug conviction.

The drug conviction ban on eligibility for federal benefits also applies to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or the TANF program. TANF eligibility applies to families with minor children. One study reflected that almost 25 percent of drug offenders released from prison in 2001 were eligible for TANF benefits, but were permanently barred from receiving it due to their state's application of the federal ban for a drug conviction. While some states do not apply the federal ban completely, other states, such as Alabama, Mississippi, Texas and Virginia, where many of the displaced families are staying, have fully applied the ban.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have inflicted suffering on millions of people. The suffering will fall even harder on victims denied aid because of past drug offenses. Parents who have lost everything and are struggling to feed themselves and their family will be denied TANF and food stamps; students who have lost their school, tuition, fees, room and board, but could continue their education in another school willing to accept them, or who were in school elsewhere when their parents lost the ability to continue paying for their education, will be denied student loans; and entire families that have lost everything in the disasters will be denied housing—all due to the federal bans for a past drug conviction.

The "Elimination of Barriers for Katrina Victims Act" applies only to past drug offenses, some of which were many years ago, and suspends the disqualification for only a 3-year period. This temporary adjustment period in federal disqualifications would allow families affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita a chance to put their lives back together through the same means as other victims who suddenly lost their homes and livelihood through no fault of their own. Therefore, we are introducing this bill today and urge our colleagues to quickly enact it into law to assist families who are otherwise hopelessly destitute because of the disasters and the impact of a drug conviction.

REINSTATEMENT OF THE CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL INCOME TAX

HON. SHERWOOD BOEHLERT

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 2, 2005

Mr. BOEHLERT. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Superfund Revenue Reinstatement Act of 2005, a bill to reinstate the corporate environmental income tax, which expired in 1995. The bill will provide a dedicated stream of revenue for our Nation's communities as they struggle to clean up the Nation's dirtiest abandoned hazardous waste sites and recapture lost jobs where they are most needed.

First passed by Congress in 1980, the corporate environmental income tax provided a dedicated stream of revenue for the so-called Superfund trust fund. In 1995, the last year before this corporate tax expired, it raised approximately $700 million. At a rate of 12/100 of one percent on corporate profits over $2,000,000, the tax was virtually without any real impact on business, but supported worthy and rightful public purposes—creating jobs, rebuilding our urban communities, and cleaning up a legacy of unfettered industrial activity. The oil industry—not one company but the entire industry—paid just $38 million in 1995. That's about what is earned by the industry in the first hour of the first day of the new business year.

Reinstating the corporate environmental income tax would raise about the same amount of revenue as it did in 1995, according to estimates made by the Joint Committee on Taxation in 2003. That's a negligible burden to provide dedicated funds for restoring superfund sites. But those are estimates are a few years old. With corporate profits at current levels, the revenue derived could certainly be higher.

And, where are these superfund sites? In urban areas of course, where redevelopment is needed and where jobs are needed. But what's been happening? Industry is developing greenfields in the far out suburbs because they don't want to touch superfund