

up for justice and fair treatment for all Americans.

During his life, César E. Chávez was committed to providing fair wages, better working conditions, decent housing, and quality education for all.

Mr. Chávez also served the United States proudly in the Navy during World War II.

His spirit and his vision are still alive today and I am determined to celebrate what he stood for and his great accomplishments.

Madam Speaker, today, I introduce legislation to rename the post office located at 2777 Logan Avenue in the Barrio Logan section of San Diego as the "César E. Chávez Post Office." This is the least we can do to honor such a great but humble man dedicated to justice. Please join me in giving Mr. Chávez his rightful place in American history.

**INTRODUCTION OF THE TAXPAYER
ABUSE AND HARASSMENT PRE-
VENTION ACT: CONGRESS
SHOULD NOT ALLOW BOUNTY
HUNTERS TO ABUSE TAXPAYERS**

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 29, 2007

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, last week I introduced H.R. 695, the Taxpayer Abuse and Harassment Prevention Act of 2007, along with Representatives STEVE ROTHMAN, RUSS CARNAHAN and 42 other original cosponsors. If enacted into law, this legislation would repeal the provision tacked onto the 2004 corporate tax bill (H.R. 4520, the so-called American Jobs Creation Act in the 108th Congress) that hands over the tax returns of millions of American taxpayers to private contractors to collect delinquent taxes, and allows them to keep 25 percent of their take as a commission for services rendered.

Three weeks ago, on January 9th, in her annual report to Congress the National Taxpayer Advocate identified the IRS' private debt collection initiative as one of the most serious problems facing taxpayers and called on Congress to repeal the IRS's authority to use private collection agencies to collect federal taxes. The Advocate's report illustrated why the IRS private tax collection program is a waste of taxpayer dollars, invites overly aggressive collection techniques and jeopardizes the financial privacy of American taxpayers:

The IRS's Private Debt Collection initiative is not cost efficient, adds unnecessary costs and burdens to taxpayers, diminishes the improved image of the IRS, and surrenders too many valuable components of our tax administration system. Therefore, Congress should repeal IRC §6306 and thereby terminate the Private Debt Collection initiative.

We must repeal this provision because it opens the door to taxpayer intimidation and abuse, practices that have been outlawed by Congress. This practice amounts to bounty-hunting—at taxpayer expense—by allowing collection agencies to harass those same American taxpayers, many of whom are guilty of nothing, with the incentive of collecting their commission as their primary motivation. Giving unaccountable outside bounty hunters unfettered access to Americans' personal financial data poses a risk that we just cannot afford.

What's more worrisome is the IRS' inability to oversee the work of these private debt collectors. A 1996 pilot program for private collection was so unsuccessful that a similar pilot program planned for 1997 was cancelled outright. The contractors used in the pilot programs regularly broke the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, did not protect the security of personal taxpayer information, and even then failed to bring in a net increase in revenue. An audit report of the pilot program found that, "contractors blatantly circumvented IRS policies and procedures even when security personnel identified inappropriate practices." In fact, the report found that contractors made hundreds of calls to taxpayers during times prohibited by the FDCPA, and that calls were even placed as early as 4:19 a.m.

While IRS employees are explicitly forbidden from being evaluated on the basis of revenue collected, the private collection scheme would actually link contractor pay to the amount of revenue collection. This policy encourages contractors to use aggressive collection techniques to boost their remuneration. Furthermore, the IRS is currently liable for damages to a taxpayer resulting from the misuse of confidential information by an IRS employee, but taxpayers will not be able to recover damages from the federal government where contractors are guilty of malfeasance.

The House had already expressed its will that this provision not become law when it approved by voice vote an amendment to the FY2005 Treasury Appropriations bill that prevented the expenditure of any federal funds for private collection of federal taxes. Unfortunately, the Treasury Appropriations bill never became law, and the House language was stripped out of the FY 2005 omnibus spending bill by the Republican leadership in the conference—behind closed doors, in the dead of night.

We must repeal this onerous provision. We must protect American taxpayers from intimidation and abuse. We must ensure that personal financial records are protected and remain private. Two decades ago this Congress passed the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act specifically to protect Americans from intimidation and abuse, but last year this Congress perpetrated an injustice by allowing these very abuses to go forward.

I urge my colleagues to join me in working with the IRS to find a more effective means of collecting delinquent tax debt collection and avoid this risky scheme altogether. Let's pass the Taxpayer Abuse and Harassment Prevention Act.

**TRIBUTE TO HIS EXCELLENCY
LAZAR ELENOVSKI**

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 29, 2007

Mr. PASCRELL. Madam Speaker, I would like to call to your attention to a man I am proud to recognize, His Excellency Lazar Elenovski, Minister of Defense of the Republic of Macedonia, on the occasion of his visit to the United States.

It is only fitting that he be honored in this, the permanent record of the greatest freely elected body on earth, for he has a long his-

tory of dedication and commitment to international relations.

Minister Elenovski was born in 1971 in Skopje, Macedonia, and went on to graduate from the Faculty of Economy at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University. A member of the New Social Democratic Party of Macedonia, a part of the coalition government, he was appointed Minister of Defense in August 2006.

Minister Elenovski has long been a great advocate for Atlanticism in Macedonia. He worked to promote and implement the Euro-Atlantic idea and values in Macedonian society in the early 1990s. This effort culminated in his founding of Young Europeans for Security (YES) in 1995.

He was also one of the founders of the Social Democratic Youth of Macedonia (SDYM), and served as its Secretary General from 1996–1999, and then as its president until 2001. He was a member of the Presidency of the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia from 1997 until 2003. He is a signer of the Protocol for Cooperation between the SDYM and PASOK Youth in Athens in 2001.

Between 2001 and 2005, Minister Elenovski served as Secretary General of the Euro-Atlantic Club of Macedonia, and in late 2005, was elected President of the Euro-Atlantic Council of Macedonia, a member of the Atlantic Treaty Association. During this time he was also Deputy LEO of Public Transport in Skopje.

He has implemented many initiatives for the support of NATO and EU integration projects in his nation, for the civilization values of Atlanticism, and notably for the democratic development of Macedonia. In May of 2004, he initiated and served as a signatory of the Declaration for Euro-Atlantic Partnership and Cooperation between the Atlantic Associations of Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia. He is also a founder of the Central and South Eastern European Security Forum-Balkan Mosaic.

Minister Elenovski is known as an advocate for regional cooperation and integration. Along with civil and local authorities, he has worked on many regional and international projects which strengthened regional cooperation, and improved the security and stability of the nation and region.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join our colleagues, Minister Elenovski's friends, and me in recognizing the outstanding achievements of a true leader, the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Macedonia, Lazar Elenovski.

**INTRODUCTION OF THE NIAGARA
FALLS NATIONAL HERITAGE
AREA ACT**

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 29, 2007

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Act, which will provide Federal resources to preserve and promote one of America's greatest natural wonders.

Every time I make the long drive across my congressional district, I am reminded of how fortunate I am to represent a region with such a diverse geographic make-up. From the Ontario shoreline, to vast vineyards and apple orchards, to the waterfront on Lake Erie, Mother