that no man be limited by separate facilities that inherently violate his right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. He is an American icon, a legendary Federal jurist from Alabama whose historic civil rights decisions forever shattered segregation in a “Jim Crow” South. His monumental ruling striking down the Montgomery bus-segregation law as unconstitutional created a broad mandate for racial justice that eternally eliminated segregation in public schools and colleges, bathrooms, restaurants and other public facilities in Alabama and across the South. Judge Johnson was an innovator and a crusader for all mankind who will be remembered eternally for giving true meaning to the word justice.

Today, I rise to honor Judge Johnson for helping to bring equality to the American dream; I honor him for bringing justice to an inhumane system of law; I honor him like Martin Luther King, Jr., for allowing justice and righteousness to roll down like a mighty stream.

AMENDMENT TO CZECH CITIZENSHIP LAW LAID BEFORE

HON. STENY H. HOYER
OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 1999

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an issue I have raised in this Chamber many times before: the Czech citizenship law. For 5 years, as a member of the Helsinki Commission, I have argued that the law adopted when the Czechoslovak Federal Republic dissolved, on January 1, 1993, was designed to and had the effect of leaving tens of thousands of former Czechoslovaks de jure or de facto stateless. I have argued, and as Czech officials eventually admitted, all of those people were members of the Romani minority. And I have argued that to have a law with such a narrow and discriminatory impact was no accident. Most of all, I have argued that this law needed to be changed.

In 1996, the law was amended in an effort to placate international critics of the law, but that amendment was mere window dressing and the Czech citizenship law still left tens of thousands of former Czechoslovaks stateless, every one a Roma. Moreover, there was an important principle at stake: citizenship laws in newly independent states which discriminate against permanent residents who were citizens of the former state on the basis of race, language, religion or ethnicity are not compatible with international norms. That failure to uphold this principle in the Czech Republic could have critical reverberations in every former Soviet Republic and, more to the point, every former Yugoslav Republic.

Many people working on this issue believed that the 1996 amendment was all that was politically possible; that we would simply have to resign ourselves to a generation of stateless Roma. The leadership of the Helsinki Commission, including the current Chairman, Congressman CHRIS SMITH, held our ground and insisted that the Czech law should be amended again, to bring it into line with international norms. Meanwhile, throughout this first post-Communist decade, the number of violent attacks against Roma climbed, year after year. By the fall of 1998, the Czech government had requested asylum in Canada. By 1998, NGO’s reported that there had been more than 40 racially motivated murders in the Czech Republic since 1990, more than the number of racially motivated murders in Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovakia combined—countries with much larger Romani populations. Midway through 1998, the city of Usti nad Labem announced plans to build a wall to segregate Romani residents from ethnic Czechs—a ghetto in the heart of Europe.

Fortunately, the Czech Government elected last year appears to take the human rights violation of Czech Roma much more seriously. Early after taking office, Deputy Prime Minister Pavel Rychetsky announced that amending the citizenship law would be a priority for his government. Acting on that commitment, the Chamber of Deputies adopted an amendment on July 9 that will enable thousands of Roma to apply for citizenship.

This amendment must still be passed by the Czech Senate and signed into law by President Vaclav Havel—both steps are expected to take place this year. More critically, it will be necessary to ensure that there is an active campaign to reach all those who have been denied citizenship, to make sure this right is fully exercised. But for now, the Czech Chamber of Deputies has upheld an important principle and, even more importantly, upheld the rights of the Romani minority.

H.R. 2633—THE POLICE BADGE FRAUD PREVENTION ACT OF 1999

HON. STEPHEN HORN
OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 29, 1999

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, today I reintroduced H.R. 2633, the Police Badge Fraud Prevention Act, a bill intended to remove the state and local police badge from the reach of those who wish to use badges to commit crimes.

If a man or woman in a police uniform knocks on your door and shows a badge, you wouldn’t think twice about opening the door. But by doing so, you may be putting your family in danger. Counterfeit police badges—and fraudulently obtained real ones—have allowed criminals to invade people’s homes and terrorize their families.

In 1997, Los Angeles police arrested two men suspected of committing more than 30 home-invasion robberies by impersonating police officers. Among the more than 100 items confiscated from the suspects’ home were official Los Angeles police badges.

Despite state statutes against impersonating police officers, criminals appear to have turned the badge into an easy access to police badges and the means to manufacture counterfeit badges. The local Fox television affiliate in Los Angeles found out just how easy it is in an undercover investigation. The undercover reporter bought a fake Los Angeles Police Department badge from a dealer for $1,000, a fake California Highway Patrol badge for $40, and for $60 a fake badge from the police department of Signal Hill (a city in my Congressional District).

The threat of counterfeit police badges reaches across state lines. Criminals can purchase badges on the Internet and through mail-order catalogs. The interstate nature of the counterfeit badge market calls for a national response to this problem. There is currently no federal law dealing with counterfeit badges of state and local law enforcement agencies.

H.R. 2633, the Police Badge Fraud Prevention Act, would ban the interstate or foreign trafficking of counterfeit badges and genuine badges (among those not authorized to possess a genuine badge). This legislation would complement state statutes against impersonating a police officer, addressing in particular the problems posed by Internet and mail-order badge sales. This is similar to H.R. 4282 in the 105th Congress. The new version of the bill includes exceptions for cases where the badge is used exclusively in a collection or exhibit; for decorative purposes; or for a dramatic presentation, such as a theatrical, film, or television production. The Fraternal Order of Police is endorsing this bill.

Misuse of the badge reduces public trust in law enforcement and endangers the public. This bill should be enacted to stop criminals from using this time-honored symbol of law enforcement for illegal purposes. I am delighted to have the following co-sponsors. They are: Mrs. MORELLA, Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. SHOWS, Mr. BARTIA, Mr. HOLDEN, Mrs. KELLY, Mr. INSLEE, Mr. VISCOSKY, Mr. GENE GREEN, Mr. KOLBE, Mr. LUSTER, Mr. ENGLISH, Mr. ADAM SMITH, Mr. STUPAK, Ms. DAFFERN, Mr. OSE, Mr. REYES, Ms. BERKLEY, and Mr. GARY MILLER.

I urge my colleagues to co-sponsor this legislation and urge the House to pass it.

Mr. Speaker, the text of H.R. 2633 is short. It follows:

H.R. 2633
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
This Act may be cited as the “Police Badge Fraud Prevention Act of 1999.”

SEC. 2. POLICE BADGES.
(a) In General—Chapter 33 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:
"§ 716. Police badges
"(a) Whoever—
"(1) knowingly transfers, transports, or receives, in interstate or foreign commerce, a counterfeit police badge;
"(2) knowingly transfers, in interstate or foreign commerce, a genuine police badge to an individual not authorized to possess it under the law of the place in which the badge is the official badge of the police;
"(3) knowingly receives a genuine police badge in a transfer prohibited by paragraph (2); or
"(4) being a person not authorized to possess a genuine police badge under the law of the place in which the badge is the official badge of the police, knowingly transports that badge in interstate or foreign commerce; shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 180 days, or both.
"(b) Penalties—A person convicted under subsection (a) shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 180 days, or both.