

States to maintain our support and partnership with Armenia as that country continues to make major strides towards democracy as evidenced by the May 30 parliamentary elections, as well as market reforms and increasing integration with the west. U.S. assistance also serves to offset the difficulties imposed on Armenia's people as a result of the blockades maintained by Azerbaijan and Turkey. The needs in the earthquake zone particularly for new housing construction requires special assistance.

I also strongly support the language in the House version directing the Agency for International Development to expedite delivery of \$20 million to the victims of Nagorno Karabagh, those victims residing in Nagorno Karabagh itself through September 30 of 2000. Last month in Stepanekart, I met with the organizations administering these aid programs and was impressed with their needs as well as their ability to deliver necessary services. This assistance previously appropriated, but not yet obligated, is as the House language makes clear not to be provided to the governments of Azerbaijan or Armenia.

I also urge the conferees to adopt the House language stating that the extent and timing of U.S. and multilateral assistance other than humanitarian assistance to the government of any country in the Caucasus region should be proportional to its willingness to cooperate with the Minsk Group and other efforts to resolve regional conflicts. The leaders of Armenia, Nagorno Karabagh, and Azerbaijan all understand the importance the U.S. places on progress being made with the peace process, and I stress the potential for a peace dividend in my discussions with the leaders in August and believe that all countries of the south Caucasus need to be mindful that U.S. assistance is dependent upon movement towards peace.

I also urge that the conferees adopt the House language supporting the confidence-building measures discussed in the April 1999 summit here in Washington in furtherance of a peaceful resolution of the NK conflict especially in the vicinity of Nagorno Karabagh. These measures include strengthening compliance with the cease-fire, studying post-conflict regional development such as transportation routes and infrastructure, establishing a youth exchange program and other collaborative initiatives to foster greater understanding among the parties, and reduce hostilities.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to stress the importance of maintaining section 907 of the Freedom Support Act. There is a clear bipartisan support in both houses for preserving this law which restricts certain direct government-to-government assistance to Azerbaijan until that country lifts its blockades of Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh.

The bottom line is that the conditions for lifting section 907 have not been met, and I hope the government of Azerbaijan will recognize that it is in Azerbaijan's own interests to lift the blockades so that section 907 will no longer be necessary. In the meantime, Congress must be clear: until steps are taken by Azerbaijan to lift the blockade, section 907 stays.

LET US QUICKLY REJECT THE 13 MONTH FISCAL YEAR

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, from time to time, we hear some pretty wacky ideas in Washington, none wackier than a recent suggestion, apparently emanating from the other body that the Congress adopt a 13-month fiscal year so as to circumvent the budget caps we agreed to back in 1998 which, as I recall, was a standard 12-month year. What will we call the newly created 13th month? Taxember? Spenduary?

And what will our big government friends think of next in their ongoing fiscal assault on hard-working, tax-paying families. An 8-day week? A 30-hour day? With more time for everybody to work for the tax man?

I have a really unique suggestion. Let us keep our promises, stand by the commitment we made to the American people. Let us honor those spending caps that the Congress and the President agreed to only about a year ago. Let us give the American people something they are not accustomed to, a Congress and a President who keep their word. I guess that is something you see only once in a blue moon, or, as they say, only in a 13-month year.

REMEMBERING JIM "CATFISH" HUNTER, HALL OF FAME PITCHER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last week America lost a legendary figure in the game of baseball. The town of Hertford and the State of North Carolina lost a friend and a hero. Hall of Fame pitcher Jim "Catfish" Hunter passed away, just one year after being diagnosed with ALS, the same disease that took the life of former Yankee first baseman Lou Gehrig.

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Mr. Speaker, Jim "Catfish" Hunter is a grand example of what a sports hero should be. He played baseball because he loved the game. The success he gained was secondary. During his career, no matter how impressive his accomplishments or how great the public

recognition, he never forgot his family or his community. In fact, he lived the kind of life that movies are based on.

Jim Hunter was raised in rural eastern North Carolina as the fourth of eight children. As a boy, he excelled in sports. In high school, professional scouts began taking interest in his pitching skills. Hunter's natural talent and dedication to the game led to a remarkable career which elevated a young country boy to a national sports hero. He was given the name Catfish in 1964 when former Oakland A's Charlie Finley signed the 18-year-old to play baseball.

Hunter admitted that he enjoyed hunting and fishing, and the A's owner apparently insisted on the name Catfish. Jim Catfish Hunter went on to win five world championship rings and a plaque in baseball's Hall of Fame.

As an 8-time All Star, he pitched in 6 World Series, helping to win three championships in Oakland and two more with the Yankees. His 15-year baseball career ended in 1979, but not before he won 224 games, pitched a perfect game, and in 1974 received the American League's Cy Young Award.

Jim Catfish Hunter gained the kind of superstardom that could have changed most men, but he remained the same unassuming man he was when he left Eastern North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, John Ruskin once said, "The first true test of a truly great man is his humility." Mr. Speaker, if this is the test, then Catfish Hunter will certainly be remembered as a great man.

At age 33, Jim Catfish Hunter retired from baseball and moved back to North Carolina, not far from where he was raised, to concentrate on his family. He had married his high school sweetheart Helen, and together they had three children, sons Todd and Paul, and a daughter, Kim. Hunter has been quoted as saying he would have given up all of his money and fame for the health to watch his grandson Taylor grow.

But Jim Hunter was a fighter. Instead of shying away from the disease, he worked to raise awareness of his illness in hopes of finding a cure. In fact, last May, Hunter attended the opening of the Jim Catfish Hunter ALS Foundation in Hartford, North Carolina. The event fell on May 8, the 31st anniversary of his perfect game.

Mr. Speaker, we remember him as more than just a great ball player. He was a wonderful man who loved his family and his community. In fact, I imagine he would like to be remembered as Jim Hunter, the husband, father, grandfather, and friend, rather than Catfish Hunter, the Hall of Fame baseball pitcher.

Today we celebrate his life and the legacy that he has left for future athletes. Mr. Speaker, the Nation and the game of baseball are better off because Jim Catfish Hunter passed this way.