

Even worse, the Administration's proposal sows the seeds of many debilitating disputes under state and local law, even for mergers that have received full federal approval.

Although the bill pays lip service to "small" shippers, it could literally destroy a major segment of American small business—the short-line railroads that serve so many smaller cities and towns. That is because the Administration wants to fund the entire \$17 million STB budget out of so-called "user fees." The STB already defrays \$1.6 million of its costs through filing fees, and we have received numerous complaints about those charges from shippers. Now the Administration would impose more than 10 times that burden on "users." We don't know who the users are, since the bill doesn't even attempt to identify them.

We had some experience with such fees imposed on our small railroads several years ago by the Federal Railroad Administration. Our Committee found that these small companies—the ones that literally are the only way to keep rail service in small communities—were paying up to 17 percent of net income in so-called "user fees"—on top of their state and federal taxes. That's why we ended those FRA fees, and I see no reason to impose a similar burden on struggling small businesses through STB fees, as the Administration now proposes.

While I cannot endorse much of what the Administration has proposed in its STB bill, I remain hopeful that a compromise can be reached on the contentious issues that have prevented an STB reauthorization bill from being enacted.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DAVE CAMP

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 28, 1999

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, due to the occasion of the birth of my third child, I was unable to record my votes on the following bills, amendments and journal votes that were considered here in the House of Representatives the week of October 18, 1999.

Had I been present I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 520, 521, 524, 526, 527, 528, 529, and 532.

I would have voted "no" on rollcall votes 511, 518, 519, 522, 523, 525, 530, and 531.

MEMORIAL TRIBUTE TO ARMENIAN PRIME MINISTER VAZGEN SARGSIAN

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 28, 1999

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my deepest condolences to the people of Armenia and their countrymen throughout the world, whose democratic struggle has been dealt a severe blow. We are greatly saddened at the untimely death of Ar-

menian Prime Minister Vazgen Sargsian, who was assassinated along with a number of cabinet officials and lawmakers yesterday in the chambers of Parliament in Armenia.

The forty-year-old Premier was a young and intelligent leader who had just been appointed Prime Minister by President Robert Kocharian last June. Though he clearly had many more brilliant years ahead of him, his stellar accomplishments in moving his country toward the road of democratic rule elevated him to the second highest political office in Armenia. The former athletic instructor, who was elected to parliament and served as Defense Minister prior to assuming the Premiership, was a man who embraced the ideals of free-market democracy.

Along with several of my colleagues, I had the honor of meeting Prime Minister Sargsian here in the U.S. Capitol just four weeks ago. We discussed trade, commerce, and the establishment of closer relations. I shared with him the great honor I have to represent one of the oldest Armenian-American communities in my Los Angeles County district. I related to him how earlier this year, I visited the Armenian Mesrobian School, the Armenian Social Services Center, and the Holy Cross Cathedral, and was tremendously impressed by the efforts and resources that Armenian-Americans dedicate to the betterment of the entire community.

I stand with my Armenian-American constituents who are undoubtedly in a state of shock over yesterday's violent acts. My heartfelt sympathy and earnest prayers are with the Armenian-American community, the people of Armenia and the families of the victims of this senseless tragedy.

ASSASSINATION IN ARMENIA

HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 28, 1999

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, on October 27, 1999, a group of five or six assassins burst into Armenia's parliament and gunned down Armenian Prime Minister Vazgen Sargsian. The gunmen also claimed the lives of Karen Demirchian, Speaker of the Armenian parliament; Yuri Bakhshyan, Deputy Speaker; Minister Leonard Petrosian, and Michael Kutanian, a senior economic official. Two other unidentified members of parliament were dead, too.

Words cannot adequately describe the deplorable and disgusting acts of violence committed by those individuals. To indiscriminately murder government officials in cold blood is cowardly.

Recent reports describe the gunmen have taken a number of hostages, and President Robert Kocharian is negotiating with the gunmen. Kocharian agreed to allow the lead gunman on national television to make a statement in return for the release of some hostages.

Unfortunately, the other details are still very sketchy. We do not know why they did what they did although they proclaim their actions as a coup d'etat. All we know is that the

senseless slaughter of those government officials strikes a blow to democracy in Armenia.

As some may know, Armenia, a democratic nation with a population of 3.5 million, people, has made much progress since the Armenian genocide in 1915. The Ottoman Empire subjected the Armenians to an eight-year long killing spree that ultimately claimed the lives of over 1.5 million Armenians. Hundreds and thousands more were forced from their homeland. We all know that rebuilding a ravaged nation requires much blood, sweat, and tears, but the Armenian people have worked long and hard to make Armenia into the democratic nation it is today. The Armenian government under the late Prime Minister Sargsian was headed for even greater progress. The commitment to peace and prosperity in their region was clear.

I am very saddened by the horrific events and deeply concerned by the bloodshed and senseless loss of lives, but this only goes to show that democracy is not just an obscure ideal ensconced in an old written parchment or in dusty history books sitting in the garage. Democracy is an ideal that government should be for the people. Democracy is an ideal that many people have sacrificed their lives for, and in some parts of the world, people continue to sacrifice their lives for.

Mr. Speaker, my prayers are with the people of Armenia and Armenian-Americans as we all pray that this will be resolved peacefully without further bloodshed and the angel of justice exacts just payment from those murderers.

HONORING JAN AND TIM JOHNSON ON THE OCCASION OF THE TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF CINCINNATI HILLS CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

HON. ROB PORTMAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 28, 1999

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my constituents, Jan and Tim Johnson, who will be recognized at a gala dinner and pageant on Saturday, October 30, 1999 for their many contributions to the prestigious Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy (CHCA) located in Mason, Ohio.

CHCA is one of the fastest-growing schools in the country, and has earned a reputation for excellent academics, competitive sports and extracurricular activities. In 1997, I had the privilege of presenting the U.S. Department of Education's Blue Ribbon School Award to CHCA Elementary. CHCA's goal is to nurture and support each student toward individual growth. The school embraces students, parents and faculty within the care of a Christian community.

Jan and Tim Johnson were early supporters of CHCA and tirelessly volunteer their time to the school and to the Cincinnati community in general. They have four children, two of whom graduated from CHCA.

Tim, a professor of Finance at the University of Cincinnati, has been an invaluable resource and serves as the Finance Chair for the CHCA Board of Trustees.