

six other officials who were slain yesterday were leaders of this transition to democracy. They were also leaders in combating corruption, bolstering the economy, and establishing peace in their troubled region. Their senseless deaths present a tragic loss to Armenia—and to freedom and democracy worldwide.

I urge my colleagues to join me in offering my deepest condolences to the Armenian people, and my strongest support to their ongoing efforts to bring democracy, peace, and stability to their nation.

LEGISLATION REGARDING ZOHREH FARHANG GHAFAROKHI

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 28, 1999

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing private legislation today that would grant my constituent, Zohreh Farhang Ghahfarokhi, permanent residency in the United States.

In 1984, Zohreh Farhang Ghahfarokhi's husband, an Iranian citizen, brought her and their young daughter, Shahrzad, on a business trip to the United States. The trip was successful and Ms. Ghahfarokhi's husband secured a succession of legal business visas to stay in the United States. A second daughter, Sepideh, was born 3 years later in Los Angeles.

In 1994, Ms. Ghahfarokhi's husband filed an application for permanent residency with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) on behalf of himself, his wife, and their daughter, Shahrzad. The family was interviewed at the INS Los Angeles District Office in March 1996 and expected to be issued green cards.

In the summer of 1996, Ms. Ghahfarokhi and her husband obtained advanced parole travel documents from the INS and visited Iran. According to Ms. Ghahfarokhi, their arranged marriage was often strained and, once back in Iran, her husband grew increasingly angry and verbally abusive because she had become more independent than the more traditional women in Iran. She has indicated that her husband confiscated his family's identification cards, his wife's Iranian passport, and the advance parole documents for her and their elder daughter. In addition, Ms. Ghahfarokhi said that he contracted the Iranian Government to formally revoke his permission to allow his wife and daughter to leave the country.

According to Ms. Ghahfarokhi, her husband returned to Los Angeles a week later, intentionally abandoning his family in Iran. She said that she had no identification papers, very little cash, and nowhere to stay in Tehran. She filed a complaint with the Tehran police, whom she said located her husband's brother and required him to secure an apartment for her and the girls and provide them with money for food.

In September 1996, Shahrzad turned 18 and was able to apply for an Iranian passport without her father's permission. She received her passport 2 months later and traveled by herself to the American Embassy in Frankfurt,

which issued her an advance parole travel document to return to Los Angeles. According to Ms. Ghahfarokhi, it took another month for her to convince an Iranian judge to override her husband's authority and grant permission for her and her younger daughter to leave Iran. Finally, in December, Ms. Ghahfarokhi and her younger daughter left Iran, obtained advance paroles from the embassy in Frankfurt, and returned to Los Angeles.

According to Ms. Ghahfarokhi, once her husband learned that his wife was back in Los Angeles, he closed their joint bank account. Shahrzad worked full-time to help pay the rent, which prevented her from starting her freshman year at UCLA. Ms. Ghahfarokhi said she believed she had no option but to file for divorce. As part of the divorce proceedings, the judge ordered her husband to pay alimony and child support, which she says he failed to do.

According to Ms. Ghahfarokhi, her husband approached her a few months later to apologize for his behavior in Iran and to try to reconcile with her. He promised to support her and the girls financially and threatened to withdraw their INS application for permanent residency if they divorced. Ms. Ghahfarokhi said she felt trapped because she and her daughters were financially insecure and she and Shahrzad needed legal immigration status. She said for the sake of her daughters, she moved back in with her husband in June 1997 on the conditions that he accompany her to marital counseling, provide her with financial security by giving her some assets in her own name, and withdraw the revocation of his permission for her to travel in and out of Iran.

In the months that followed, Ms. Ghahfarokhi has indicated that her husband broke each of his promises, and she separated from him in the summer of 1998. Their subsequent divorce was finalized on March 14, 1999, and the court is apparently taking steps to ensure that her ex-husband complies with the agreements on the division of property, alimony, and child support.

According to Ms. Ghahfarokhi, since 1994, she and Shahrzad had been assured by the INS office in Los Angeles that their applications for adjustment of status were moving forward. The INS advised them that it routinely takes 2 to 3 years to process these applications and issue green cards. The INS issued Shahrzad an employment authorization card in March 1998. In July of that year, however, the INS denied her application for advance parole.

Confused by the denial, Shahrzad went to the INS office and was shocked to learn her father had withdrawn the petitions for her and her mother on December 13, 1996. Since that time, the INS had supplied Ms. Ghahfarokhi and Shahrzad with misinformation about their status and issued work authorization cards.

Over the next few months, Ms. Ghahfarokhi said she and Shahrzad met with a number of immigration lawyers, none of whom were able to offer a solution. Current immigration law allows for a battered or abused spouse of a lawful permanent resident to self-petition for legal status, but Ms. Ghahfarokhi was unaware of and when her ex-husband had become a permanent resident. Furthermore, since he had never physically abused her and the worst incidents of mistreatment had occurred in Iran,

the lawyers advised her that it would be futile for her to petition on her own behalf.

After Ms. Ghahfarokhi and Shahrzad asked me for assistance, my office contacted the INS, which confirmed that the women are undocumented and out of status. Further, if they were to leave the United States, they would be subject to the 10-year ban on re-entry, as required under the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. The INS also indicated that there was no administrative remedy available to Ms. Ghahfarokhi and Shahrzad and that private legislation would be necessary for them to receive relief.

Subsequently, in August 1999, Ms. Ghahfarokhi's husband's attorney contacted Shahrzad to advise her that her father regretted removing her from his petition and was willing to re-instate her on the petition if the INS would allow it. Shahrzad accepted her father's offer. The INS approved her father's application on September 15th and hers on her 21st birthday on September 21st. Since that time, however, he has remained estranged from Shahrzad and her family.

While Shahrzad has regained her legal status and can pursue her dreams of finishing college and attending law school, Ms. Ghahfarokhi's situation has not changed, and she and her daughters fear that she will be deported. The legislation I am introducing today would grant Ms. Ghahfarokhi permanent residency in the United States. She and her family have endured a tremendous amount of uncertainty and hardship due to actions outside of their control. I request that my colleagues support this legislation.

THE CRAIG MUNICIPAL EQUITY ACT OF 1999

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 28, 1999

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce a bill to solve a unique Alaska problem occurring in the city of Craig, a city located in the far southeastern part of Alaska on Prince of Wales Island, the third largest island in the country. Craig is unlike any other small town or village in Alaska. It has no land base upon which to maintain its local services and no ability to utilize many Federal programs which are dependent upon a large Alaska Native population for eligibility.

Nevertheless, the community has grown from a mostly Native population of 250 in 1971 to over 2,500 residents, most of whom are not Alaska Natives. Despite this change in demographics, the town is surrounded by land selections from two different Alaska Native Village Corporations. In fact, 93 percent of the land within the Craig city limits is owned by these village corporations. Under Federal law passed in 1987, none of the village land is subject to taxation so long as the land is not developed. The city of Craig has only 300 acres of land owned privately by individuals within its city limits to serve as its municipal tax base. It can annex no other land because the entire land base outside its municipal boundaries is owned by the Federal Government as part of the Tongass National Forest or another Alaska Native corporation.