

JANUARY 6, 1998.

DEAR SIR: I am writing to you to ask you to save the Paoli Battlefield. We need to remember the men who fought to make our country free. Please do not build houses on the Paoli Battlefield.

Sincerely,

MELISSA CLARK.

JANUARY 5, 1999.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE WELDON: It has come to my attention, through my daughter's fourth grade class, that a part of our local history is being threatened by "progress". The site to which I refer is the Paoli Battlefield, located in Malvern, PA.

Our children are being taught the importance of this site in their local history lessons and are also being taught to respect sites such as this for their intrinsic and irreplaceable value. We should be willing to support our lessons to our children by protecting the Paoli Battlefield from development.

Thank you for your efforts in support of protecting this site, hopefully with permanent registry as an historic landmark. I will be happy to lend any assistance, as I am able, to further this cause.

Very truly yours,

BONNIE HUGHES-SABBI.

DECEMBER 22, 1998.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE WELDON: People know that it is wrong to build something on historical land. Valley Forge Park is part of our history, so we should also save the site of the Paoli Massacre Battlefield. My classmates and I have been studying it, and I think that building things on historical land is destructive. If General Anthony Wayne were here, he would do all he could to stop people from building something on the ground of our past.

Don't let people build on the site of the Paoli Massacre Battlefield! Please save it!

Sincerely,

BESS MCCADDEN.

DECEMBER 11, 1998.

DEAR MR. WELDON: I think that you should stop this craziness because it should remain a burial ground. Paoli isn't very popular except for the Paoli Battlefield. That puts us in the battlefield book. It is a historical sight [sic]. It's disrespectful to mow down a memorial battlefield. One of my ancestors was buried at that battlefield there so I care very deeply about this battlefield.

CATHERINE WAHL.

DEVOTED EMPLOYEES SAVINGS LIVES

HON. JAMES T. WALSH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
G1THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1999

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, on Christmas Day, the New York Times ran a wonderful article that tells a story about the careful and thoughtful work of a cadre of employees at the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) who test toys to ensure they do not injure or kill children. One CPSC employee, Bob Hundemer, who works in CPSC's engineering laboratory, calls his toy testing work a "labor of love." The article goes on to describe some of the testing methods used to determine if certain toys are risks to children. The article quotes Robert Garrett, acting director of the lab: "I walk out of here every day thinking

we're made the world a better place," adding, "I am not sure every government agency can say that."

As the new Chairman of the VA-HUD Independent Agency Appropriations Subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over the CPSC, I am delighted to read about Federal employees who are so devoted to the mission of their agency.

I commend this article to my colleagues.

[From the New York Times, December 25, 1998]

IN PARADISE OF TOYS, THE GAME PLAN IS TO SAVE LIVES

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24.—In the Washington suburb of Gaithersburg, Md., far from the intrigue of the capital and even farther from the North Pole, employees of the Consumer Product Safety Commission test toys of every description for dangers and defects.

Bob Hundemer, an engineering technician, has tested toys at the agency for two decades. He has cultivated a scrupulous and unforgiving eye for potential hazards and quickly detects whether a toy is up to standard—whether it is safe as well as inviting beneath the Christmas tree.

"This is a killer," Mr. Hundemer said, pointing to a fluorescent yellow rattle with an unusually thin stem and tiny ball at the tip. "The end could get jammed in a baby's mouth so easily and cause choking."

Mr. Hundemer's office is a 5-year-old's paradise. A bookcase overflowing with brightly colored tops, dolls, toy cars, and jacks-in-the-box covers the back wall. A sign reading "Caution: Adults at Play" adorns his door.

Robert Garrett, the acting director of the engineering laboratory, said: "After years in the private sector, I realized that I could get a job with the Government doing about the same thing. I thought I'd died and gone to heaven."

At the annual Toy Fair in February, giant manufacturers like Mattel and Hasbro, as well as small toy companies from around the country, gather in New York City to display their wares. Representatives from the commission attend the show and examine all the new toys. They discuss potential problems with the manufacturers and then work with them to insure that potential hazards are eliminated.

"The big retailers don't want to recall their products," said Kathleen P. Begala, the commission's director of public affairs. "With mailings and bad press, it's a very expensive process for them, and so there is an incentive to cooperate with us."

Mindful that injuries kill more children than any illnesses, the agency, which has requested just over \$57 million for its 2000 budget, performs four tests on toys it reviews.

One, the template test, examines small parts of a toy that could catch in a child's throat and affect breathing. Mr. Hundemer uses a truncated cylinder that represents an average child's mouth and throat. Any piece of a toy that fits into the cylinder is considered dangerous.

The sharp-edge test uses a special tape to indicate whether any side of an object could cut the skin.

The force test determines how easily parts of the stuffed animals, like eyes and noses, can be removed from the toy. Mr. Hundemer uses an instrument that resembles pliers to grasp the eye of a stuffed toy, for example, and applies 15 pounds of pressure, about the strength of a 2-year-old. He tries to rip off the part for about 20 seconds.

In the impact test, a toy is dropped four and a half feet to test durability. "We use something pretty cheap," Mr. Hundemer said. "It's called gravity." If pieces of the toy break off, and the shards of plastic fail the template test, the toy is considered not safe.

The commission officially approves toys that survive the tests.

Like veterans telling war stories, Ms. Begala and Mr. Hundemer recalled some of the most troublesome toys. They remembered the Cabbage Patch doll accused of "eating" a child's hair, the Chinese slap bracelets made with cloth and sharp metal that could cut a child and Woody, the cowboy with plastic spurs that had sharp edges and a small plastic badge.

Mr. Hundemer added that this year's hot toy, the Furby, was safe.

"People shopping for toys need to be sure that toys do not contain parts smaller than their child's fist," Mr. Hundemer said.

Mr. Garrett mused happily on his career.

"I walk out of here every day thinking we've made the world a better place," he said.

Then, pausing, he added, "I am not sure every government agency can say that."

CONGRESSIONAL COMMISSION ON SERVICEMEMBERS AND VETERANS TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 1999

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be an original cosponsor of the "Servicemembers and Veterans Transition Services Improvement Act of 1999." This measure contains the improvements in benefits and services for America's service members and veterans recommended by the Congressional Commission on Service Members and Veterans Transition Assistance.

By way of background, the Commission was established by Public Law 104-275 and was directed to review the programs and benefits designed to facilitate the transition from military service to civilian life for those who have served in uniform. The Commission was encouraged to be thorough in its analysis of existing programs and to be bold in its recommendations for program changes and improvements. Without question, the Commission has met those challenges and transmitted to Congress a meticulous examination of transition programs in place today and an impressive list of recommendations to improve and enhance those existing programs and benefits.

Many of the Commission's proposals, particularly those related to veterans' education and training, can serve as a blueprint for the 106th Congress. Of particular interest to me is the recommendation to significantly increase and expand educational opportunities under the Montgomery GI Bill. I agree with the Commission's statement that education ". . . is the most valuable benefit our Nation can offer the men and women whose military service preserves our liberty." I know from first hand experience the benefits of these educational benefits and I look forward to discussing this and the Commission's other initiatives in depth during upcoming hearings.

I want to commend Tony Principi, chairman of the Transition Commission, and all of the Commissioners for their excellent service, dedication, and hard work on behalf of America's servicemembers and veterans.

There will be those who will say the recommendations made by the Transition Commission are too costly. If we value a strong defense and believe our Armed Forces and society in general will reap real benefits from the service of our best and brightest in our military, we cannot afford not to improve the transition benefits we offer to those who serve our nation in uniform.

CONGRESSMAN PETE STARK
PROFILED IN U.U. WORLD

HON. WILLIAM J. COYNE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 4, 1999

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following remarks for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. The magazine U.U. World, which is published by the Unitarian Universalist Church, recently published a profile of Congressman PETE STARK, my long-time Ways and Means colleague. The article highlights some of Congressman STARK's concerns about the effects of welfare reform. I believe many of us share those concerns. I commend this article to my colleagues' attention.

[From the U.U. World, Jan./Feb. 1999]

A STARK ASSESSMENT: U.S. REP. PETE STARK SPEAKS OUT ON HEALTH CARE AND WELFARE REFORM

(By David Reich)

When President Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, more commonly known as the welfare reform bill, U.S. Rep. Fortney Pete Stark didn't make a secret of his displeasure. "The president sold out children to get reelected. He's no better than the Republicans," fumed Stark, a longtime Unitarian Universalist whose voting record in Congress regularly wins him 100 percent ratings from groups like the AFL-CIO and Americans for Democratic Action.

One of the Congress's resident experts on health and welfare policy, the northern California Democrat has earned a reputation for outspokenness, often showing a talent for colorful invective, not to say name-calling. First elected to the House as an anti-Vietnam War "bomb-thrower" (his term) in 1972, Stark has called Clinton healthcare guru Ira Magaziner "a latter-day Rasputin" and House Speaker Newt Gingrich "a messianic megalomaniac." When the American Medical Association lobbied Congress to raise Medicare payments to physicians, Stark, who chaired the Health Subcommittee of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, called them "greedy troglodytes," unleashing a \$600,000 AMA donation to Stark's next Republican opponent.

"I've gotten in a lot of trouble speaking my mind," the congressman admits with a rueful smile. For all his outspokenness on politics, Stark appears to have a droll sense of himself, and he tends to talk softly, his voice often trailing off at the ends of phrases or sentences.

Back in the 1960s, as a 30-something banker and nominal member of the Berkeley, Cali-

fornia, Unitarian Universalist congregation, Stark upped his commitment to the U.U. movement after his minister asked him to give financial advice to Berkeley's Starr King School for the Ministry. "I think I was sandbagged," he theorizes. After a day of poring over Starr King's books ("The place was going broke," he says), he was invited by their board chair to serve as the seminary's treasurer. "I said, 'Okay,'" Stark recalls. "He said, 'Then you have to join the board,' 'I said, I don't know, I guess I could.'"

The UUing of Pete Stark culminated at his first board meeting, when the long-serving board chair announced his resignation, and Stark, to his astonishment, found himself elected to take the old chair's place. "There I was," he reminisces, his long, slim body curled up in a wing chair in a corner of his Capitol Hill office. "And I presided over a change in leadership and then spent a lot of time raising a lot of money for it and actually in the process had a lot of fun and met a lot of terrific people."

The World spoke with Stark in early October, as rumors of the possible impeachment of a president swirled around the capital. But aside from a few pro forma remarks about the presidential woes ("His behavior is despicable, but nothing in it rises to the level of impeachment"), our conversation mainly stuck to healthcare and welfare the areas where Stark has made his mark in government.

World: You have strong feelings about the welfare reform bill. Do the specifics of the bill imply a particular theory of poverty?

PS: They imply that if you're poor, it's your fault, and if I'm not poor, it's because I belong to the right religion or have the right genes. That the poor are poor by choice, and we ought not to have to worry about them. It's akin to how people felt about lepers early in this century.

World: Does the welfare reform law also imply any thinking about women and their role in the world?

PS: Ronald Reagan for years defined welfare cheat as a black woman in a white ermine cape driving a white El Dorado convertible and commonly seen in food check-out lines using food stamps to buy caviar and filet mignon and champagne and then getting in her car and driving on to the next supermarket to load up again. And I want to tell you she was sighted by no less than 150 of my constituents in various supermarkets back in my district. They were all nuts. They were hallucinating. But they believed this garbage.

And then you've got the myth that, as one of my Republican neighbors put it, "these welfare woman are nothing but breeders"—a different class of humanity.

World: You raised the idea of belonging to "the right religion." Do these views of poor people, and poor women in particular, come out of people's religious training?

PS: No, my sense of what makes a reactionary is that it's a person younger than me, a 40- or 50-year-old man who comes to realize he isn't going to become vice president of his firm. His kids aren't going to get into Stanford or Harvard or make the crew team. His wife is not very attractive-looking. His sex life is gone, and he's run to flab and alcohol.

World: So it's disappointment.

PS: Yes. And when the expectations you've been brought up with are not within your grasp, you look around for a scapegoat. "It's these big-spending congressmen" or "It's these women who have children just to get my tax dollar. The reason I'm not rich is

that I pay so much in taxes, the reason my children don't respect me is that the moral fabric has been torn apart by schools that fail to teach religion."

And then there's a group that I've learned to call the modern-day Pharisees, people from the right wing of the Republican party who have decided the laws of the temple are the laws of the land.

World: Then religion figures into it, after all.

PS: Oh, yeah, but to me that's a religion of convenience. In my book those are people with little intellect who listen to the Bible on the radio when they're driving the tractor or whatever. But I do credit them with being seven-day-a-week activists, unlike so many other Christians.

World: Going back to the welfare reform bill itself, how does it comport with the values implied by the UU Principles, especially the principle about equity and compassion in social relations?

PS: If you assume we have some obligation to help those who can't help themselves, if that's a role of society, then supporters of the welfare reform bill trample on those values. "I'm not sure that's the government's job," they would say. "It's the church's job, or it's your job. Just don't take my money. I give my cleaning lady food scraps for her family and my castaway clothes to dress her children. I put money in the poor box. What more do you want?"

The bill we reported out, the president's bill, was motivated by the belief that paying money to people on public assistance was, one-squandering public funds and, two preventing us from lowering the taxes on the overtaxed rich. I used to try and hammer at some of my colleagues, and occasionally, when I could show them they were harming children, they would relent a little, or at least they would blush.

World: Did you shame anyone into changing his or her vote or making some concessions on the language of the bill?

PS: We got a few concessions but not many. Allowing a young woman to complete high school before she had to look for a job because she'd be more productive with a high school education—you could maybe shame them into technicalities like that. But beyond that they were convinced that if you just got off the dole and went to work, you would grow into—a Republican, I suppose.

World: It's been pointed out often that many people who supported the bill believe, as a matter of religious conviction, that women should be at home raising kids, yet the bill doesn't apply this standard to poor women. Can the bill's supporters resolve that apparent contradiction?

PS: Yes. I hate to lay out for you what you're obviously missing. The bill's supporters would say that if a woman had been married and the family has stayed together as God intended, with a father around to bring home the bacon, then the mother could stay home and do the household chores and raise the children. They miss the fact that they haven't divided the economic pie in such a manner that the father can make enough money to support mother and child.

Now, I do think young children benefit grandly, beyond belief, by having a mother in full-time attendance for at least the first four years of life. But given the reality that a single mother has to work, you have to move to the idea of reasonable care for that mother's child. And by reasonable care I do not mean a day care worker on minimum wage who's had four hours of instruction and doesn't know enough to wash his or her