are currently being illegally detained in violation of their constitutional rights.

President Lukashenka must make good on his promise to hold free parliamentary elections in 2000 and presidential elections in 2001. Please join me in supporting this resolution.

H.R. 3116, THE FAIR COMPETITION IN FOREIGN COMMERCE ACT

HON. JIM KOLBE
OF ARIZONA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. KOLBE, Mr. Speaker, for decades the United States has carried the standard in promoting democracy, market liberalization, and economic development abroad. To further those goals, we have spent literally billions of dollars in developing countries. And we have made progress. Nations have made economic progress over the past few decades and democracy is taking root in some of the rockiest soil in the globe. With the creation of the World Trade Organization a few years ago, the vast majority of international trade is now governed by clear and transparent rules.

But, as the Asian financial crisis and the theft of billions of dollars of IMF money in Russia shows, we still have a long way to go. Too many places in the world continue to be held in the grip of corruption and cronyism. The obvious impact of these two evils are the loss of untold millions, even billions, of dollars. But the corrosive effects of corruption and cronyism are worse; they are all too often hidden and ignored.

Government corruption undermines the rule of law—the very cornerstone of democracy. Government corruption undermines economic development, squandering billions of dollars of investment capital on enrichment of the few rather than the benefit of many. Government corruption undermines the ability of U.S. business to compete freely and fairly for foreign government contracts, costing U.S. corporations millions of dollars in lost sales. Government corruption undermines the integrity of public service and erodes the confidence of the public in their own government. Most important, government corruption steals hope—the hope for a better future that all citizens of the world have a right to expect. If nurturing democracy and expanding economic opportunity continue to be a goal of this country, then eliminating corruption and cronyism in government procurement must also be a priority. That is why I am proud to join with my colleague, ROBERT MATSUI in introducing H.R. 3116, the Fair Competition in Foreign Commerce Act. This legislation builds upon the excellent work of the Organization on Economic Development and Cooperation which set the international standard with its Agreement on Bribery and Corruption. The agreement makes it a crime to offer, promise or give a bribe to a foreign public official in order to obtain or retain international business deals. Sadly, there are today only thirty-four signatory countries to this agreement.

H.R. 3116 complements the work of the OECD, particularly that of the Development Assistance Committee Recommendation on Anti-Corruption Proposals for Aid-Funded Procurement, approaches the problem of corruption in international government procurement through U.S. foreign aid and multilateral financial institutions. It is not a club or a blunt instrument, but its says in no uncertain terms that the United States will not continue to underwrite corrupt practices in other countries.

Our bill requires the Treasury to develop a plan to promote international government procurement reforms using U.S. participation in international as the tool. It prohibits U.S. non-humanitarian foreign assistance to nations that have not demonstrated significant progress towards institutionalizing open and transparent government procurement practices.

We want to assist the administration's efforts to promote government procurement transparency, whether through the World Trade Organization or the Free Trade Area of the Americas. But we also want to ensure that transparency in government procurement doesn't take a back seat—that is why we require the administration and other nations to focus on institutionalizing open and transparent international government procurement practices.

The key to the legislation is building institutions in countries which promote and protect transparency in government procurement activities. We want nations to develop the institutional capacity needed to properly monitor international government procurement contracts. Where nations lack such capacity, we encourage the use of third-party procurement monitoring to ensure openness and transparency in the process. Third-party procurement monitoring is a process where an uninvolved third-party is hired to monitor every stage of the procurement process. The procedure has been used successfully in South America and Africa to fight corruption in international government procurement. Third-party procurement monitors have the expertise needed to ensure that a project is competitively bid and effectively executed. In turn, this expertise gets passed on to the host governments, which further institutionalizes open procurement practices. The goal should be a process free from cronyism and corruption. This legislation will help us accomplish that goal.

RECOGNIZING THE WORK OF THE AIR, LAND EMERGENCY RESOURCE TEAM

HON. SAM JOHNSON
OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the Congress' attention seven young men and the members of the Joseph Rankin family who sacrificed time and effort to serve the people of Russia from July 10–August 25, 1999. They have volunteered their time to help construct an orphanage in Moscow to improve living conditions. In addition to the joy they received from investing in the lives of others, this cross-cultural experience gave these individuals a greater appreciation for the benefits and privileges we enjoy in America. These individuals are to be commended for the willingness to put the needs of others before their own.

Daniel Buhler, MI; Michael Hadden, GA; Jesse Long, WA; Timothy Moye, GA; Joseph Rankin, MI; Joyce Rankin, MI; Benjamin Rankin, MI; Daniel Rankin, MI; Joseph Rankin, MI; Justin Turner, MI; Jefferson Turner, GA; Neil Waters, VA.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM MISSES IMPORTANT TARGET

HON. DOUG BEREUTER
OF NEBRASKA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. BERETUER, Mr. Speaker, this Member highly commends to his colleagues this editorial I submit from the November 1, 1999, Norfolk Daily News regarding campaign finance reform. The editorial rightly notes that campaign finance reform must address the use of union dues (regardless of the union member's wishes) for political contributions.

From [Daily News, Nov. 1, 1999]

REFORM MISSES IMPORTANT TARGET
CAMPAIGN FOR NEW RESTRICTIONS FAILS TO PUT FOCUS ON MAJOR SOURCE OF PROBLEMS

At the same time as the McCain-Feingold proposal aimed at changing rules of campaign financing was being defeated in the U.S. Senate, a major endorsement aimed at influencing the 2000 election results was taking place. Its unsurprising results bear on the issue, inaccurately described as "reform," since that term implies beneficial change, not cosmetic change. McCain-Feingold's aim was to reduce the "soft money" contributions by which unlimited amounts may be given to political parties—not individual candidates—for advancing the views of major donors on major issues. It is a contrast to the $1,000 individual contribution limits, never adjusted for inflation, which can be provided directly to candidates. Bear in mind on this issue that such some organizations, notably the AFL-CIO, can support their favored candidates with endorsements, publicity and in-house politicking with little regard for financing limitations.

The recent AFL-CIO endorsement of Vice President Al Gore's bid for the Democratic nomination was not unanimous, and it lacked important initial support from two of the major affiliates, the Teamsters Union and the United Auto Workers. They are likely to check in later. But that endorsement kicked into gear a $40 million union mobilization for the primaries and the general election. It is "soft money" but vital support—in part provided in violation of the rights of that apparent minority of union members which may want Bill Bradley as the nominee, or as an extreme example, members who might even choose a Republican.

The unions have every right to back whatever candidates they choose. They do not have the right, however, to spend mandatorily the $800,000 that was supposed to have been allocated to collective bargaining and the more restricted cause of improving the status of union workers. Being forced, through mandatory fees, to support candidates and causes with which one disagrees is a violation of a fundamental
REAL ESTATE FLEXIBILITY ACT OF 1999

HON. JIM McCREADY
OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. McCREADY. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation, the Real Estate Flexibility Act of 1999, to remove a present-law tax penalty that confronts individual real estate investors who wish to sell debt-encumbered property.

This legislation is important to our Nation’s real estate markets. It would provide real estate investors with flexibility in managing tax liabilities while at the same time allowing debt-strapped property to be put to its highest and best use.

An example will help to illustrate the need for this legislation. Assume that an individual investor owns commercial investment real property that is valued at $100 and that is encumbered by debt of $90. The individual’s basis in the property is zero. Assume that the individual wishes to sell the residential real estate market and that a buyer offers to purchase his commercial property for fair market value. Under the terms of the transaction, the buyer will assume the $90 of debt and will pay the individual $10 in cash.

Under current tax law, the individual will be taxed not only on the cash received, but also on the discharged debt. In this case, the tax paid by the individual on the sale—as much as $25 in this case (taking into account tax on unreaptured depreciation)—will exceed the $10 in cash the individual actually receives. Thus, selling the property would force the individual to come up with cash out of pocket to pay the IRS.

In light of this disincentive, many individuals in this situation do not sell. Rather, they sit and hold. As a result, the underlying property does not pass into the hands of new owners who may be more likely to make improvements and put the property to its highest and best use.

In these circumstances, I believe an individual taxpayer should be given flexibility to pay this tax liability when he or she has the necessary cash. The Real Estate Flexibility Act of 1999 would allow individuals wishing to sell debt-encumbered property to elect to pay tax on the sale only to the extent of the cash received; the individual would have to reduce basis in other property to the extent that gains are not taxed. In our example, the individual would pay tax of $10—i.e., the amount of the cash actually received—upon disposition of the commercial real estate and would reduce his or her basis in other depreciable property by the amount of untaxed gain on the commercial property.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

CONGRATULATORY REMARKS TO THE FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM OF SOUTHEAST MISSOURI FOR 26 YEARS OF SERVICE TO PUBLIC EDUCATION

HON. JO ANN EMERSON
OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I’d like to take this opportunity to commend the Foster Grandparent Program of Southeast Missouri for recently completing its 26th year serving the senior citizens in the communities of East Prairie, Poplar Bluff, and Sikeston, Missouri.

The Foster Grandparent Program of Southeast Missouri has had a tremendous impact on the senior citizens who serve as mentors to at-risk children in local elementary schools. This program serves as a way for these mentors to be significant change-agents in their communities during their golden years.

In addition to providing an opportunity for seniors to feel a sense of self-worth and responsibility within the community, let me also share with you some stories from teachers who have seen first-hand the tremendous impact of the Foster Care Program.

One teacher from Mark Twain Elementary School in Sikeston, Missouri, spoke of a boy who suffered from a learning disability but progressed greatly with the help of a foster grandparent. “With his foster grandma’s help, this child has made tremendous progress this year, in spite of his disability. He has changed from a frustrated student who couldn’t read or spell to a student who beams because now he can pick up first grade and second grade-level books and read them with fluency. The positive impact that this foster grandparent has had in this student’s life with her genuine care and concern, and one-on-one tutoring, cannot really be measured.”

Another teacher spoke of a grandmother who worked one-on-one with several students throughout the school year. “This woman is such a great asset to our school and my classroom. She fulfills these children’s needs in every way possible, not to mention the invaluable assistance she provides me. Without her, I could not give the extra attention to the students with the class size being so large. This grandmother is wonderful and gives the children an extended family while away from home.”

I received dozens of letters from teachers, principals, participants, and mentors in the program, all of whom believe that this program is one of the most rewarding programs within their communities. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of programs like this that realize the potential of senior citizens to make significant contributions to our society, and I congratulate the Foster Grandparent Program of Southeast Missouri for their wonderful efforts over the past 26 years.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION ADDRESSING NAZI ASSET CONFISCATION

HON. JIM RAMSTAD
OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, over 50 years ago, Nazi Germany began a systematic process of eliminating an entire race. Over 6 million men, women and children lost their lives in this tragic chapter in human history simply because they were Jewish. They were the ultimate victims.

Others were forced to work as slaves in German factories. Some were subjected to brutal experiments, and others had their assets and belongings stolen from them to be given to those of “Aryan” stock or used by the German government in its war effort.

Amazingly, these criminal acts have yet to be settled. The U.S. government is currently involved in negotiations between German companies and Nazi victims here in the U.S. which could lead to compensation for some of the victims.

I believe the companies which profited from their complicity with the Nazi regime and the Holocaust should pay for their actions. It is absolutely appalling that to this day, German banks and businesses have not admitted their role in this theft nor have they returned the fruits of their crimes. It is inexcusable that German banks and businesses continue to deny their obvious guilt and refuse to compensate the victims.

That’s why I am introducing legislation today which would allow victims of the Nazi regime to bring suit in U.S. federal court against German banks and businesses which assisted in and profited from the Nazi’s Aryanization effort.

My legislation would clarify that U.S. courts do have jurisdiction over these claims and would extend any statute of limitations to 2010.

There are people who say this occurred too long ago and that we should leave these events in the past. I strongly and fundamentally disagree. There must never be a statute of limitations on Aryanization, as genocide and related crimes should always be punished.

These companies need to come forward, open their books and return their criminally-obtained gains to close this open wound on the soul of humanity.

This legislation will right a terrible wrong in the annals of world history, and it’s long overdue.