

appear in the law and which, in fact, appear designed to defeat the intent of the law.

Beyond the citizenship requirement in the law, the Ministry of Finance has declared that claimants must prove that they were entitled to file a claim under a postwar 1946 restitution law, that they did file a claim, and that the claim was not satisfied. Remarkably, Susan Benda found a record in the Liberec town hall which establishes that her uncle returned to Czechoslovakia and filed a restitution claim in 1947.

Next, the Finance Ministry requires claimants to prove that a court expressly rejected the postwar claim. In a country that has endured the political and social turmoil of the Czech Republic over the past half-century, the notion that claimants in the 1990s must prove, not only that a court considered a certain case more than fifty years ago, but also must produce a record of the court's decision in the case, is outrageous. Susan Benda was able to produce a claim of title showing that the house was stolen by the Nazis in 1940, confiscated by the communist Czech Government in 1953 and purchased from the Czech Government in 1992 by its current owner-occupant. While Susan cannot produce a document showing that the court actually considered, and then rejected, her uncle's postwar claim, the chain of title and the witness testimony confirm that the Benda family never got the house back—in itself simple, dramatic proof that the postwar claim was not satisfied. Apparently, however, this proof was not sufficient for the Czech authorities and Susan Benda was forced to sue the Ministry of Finance.

Last September, more than three years after filing the claim, Susan Benda was vindicated when a Czech court agreed with her assertion that the Finance Ministry should not have attached the extralegal requirements for restitution. The court ordered the Finance Ministry to pay the Benda family compensation for the value of the expropriated house.

I wish Susan Benda's story could end here but it does not—the Czech Government has appealed the court decision apparently fearful that a precedent would be set for other claims—that is, out of a fear that property might actually be returned under this law. Thus, while the Czech Government proclaims its desire to address the wrongs of the past, those who, like Susan Benda, seek the return of wrongfully confiscated property are painfully aware that the reality is much different.

Another case that has come to my attention involves Peter Glaser's claim for a house in the town of Zatec. After the 1948 communist takeover in Czechoslovakia, Peter Glaser sought to emigrate to the United States. To obtain a passport, Mr. Glaser was forced to sign a statement renouncing any future claims to his home. In 1954, Mr. Glaser became an American citizen; in 1962, the communist Czech Government officially recorded the expropriation of Mr. Glaser's home in the land records.

In 1982, the United States and Czechoslovakia signed an agreement that settled the property loss claims of all American citizens against Czechoslovakia. The U.S. Government agency charged with carrying out the settlement advised Mr. Glaser that, because he was a Czechoslovak citizen when his property was

taken—according to the U.S. Government, this occurred in 1948 when Mr. Glaser was forced under duress to relinquish the rights to his house—he was not eligible to participate in the claims settlement program but must rather seek redress for his property loss under Czech laws.

When the post-communist Czech Republic passed a property restitution law in 1991, Peter Glaser filed his claim. In a cruel irony, despite presenting documentation from the U.S. Government attesting to the fact that Mr. Glaser was not eligible to participate in the U.S.-Czechoslovakia claims settlement program, the Czech Courts have repeatedly rejected his claim on the grounds that he was an American citizen at the time his property was taken—which, according to the Czech Government, occurred in 1962. The Czech Government asserts that Mr. Glaser's claims were settled and should have been compensated under the 1982 agreement. In other words, the current Czech Government and courts have adopted the communist fiction that although Mr. Glaser's property was expropriated in 1948, somehow the confiscation did not count until 1962, when the communists got around to the nicety of recording the deed.

This rationalization by Czech authorities looks like a back door attempt to avoid restitution. The reality of what happened to the property in Zatec is clear: Peter Glaser lost his home in 1948 when a totalitarian regime claimed the rights to his house in exchange for allowing him to leave the oppression and persecution of communist Czechoslovakia. As the Czech Government knows, communist expropriations—whether effectuated by sweeping land reform laws, as a condition or punishment for emigration, or under other circumstances—frequently went unrecorded in land registries, but that did not make the loss any less real for the victims. For the Czech Government today to cling to technicalities, such as the date the communists officially recorded their confiscation in the land registry, as a means to avoid returning Peter Glaser's home is a sobering indication of the Czech Government's true commitment to rectifying the wrongs of its communist past.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of property restitution is complex. No easy solutions exist to the many questions that restitution policies raise. Nonetheless, when a country chooses to institute a restitution or compensation program, international norms mandate that the process be just, fair and nondiscriminatory. The Czech Government has failed to live up to these standards in the cases I cited.

The Czech Government must end the discrimination against Czech Americans in the restitution of private property. Moreover, the rule of law must be respected. I call on the Czech Government to reconsider its disposition in the Benda and Glaser cases. Czech officials often say that aggrieved property claimants can seek redress in the courts for unfavorable decisions. However, when claimants do just that, as did Peter Glaser and Susan Benda, the Czech Government asserts outrageous or technical defenses to thwart the rightful owner's claim or simply refuses to accept a decision in favor of the claimant. Fortunately, Mr. Glaser, Ms. Benda, and others like them, have pledged to fight on despite mount-

ing costs and legal fees that they will never recoup. The passion and determination of Peter Glaser and Susan Benda, as of all victims of fascism and communism in Central and Eastern Europe, reveal that what may look to some as a battle for real estate is ultimately a search for justice and for peace with the past.

IN HONOR OF THE UNION COUNTY COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND THE WINNERS OF THE 1999 WOMEN OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

HON. ROBERT MENEDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 15, 1999

Mr. MENEDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Union County Commission on the Status of Women and the winners of the 1999 Women of Excellence award. This organization was established in September, 1989, and has dedicated itself to ensuring that women in Union County are treated fairly in the workplace. They continue to provide information and support to women that affects not only my district, but the whole state of New Jersey.

By providing this information to a number of governmental agencies, the Union County Commission on the Status of Women has played a central role in attaining and maintaining equality for women. They advise the Board of Chosen Freeholders in the policy and decisionmaking process of County government, recommend programs to promote the expansion of rights and opportunities available to women in Union County, and originate and implement comprehensive programs to meet the special needs, interests, and concerns of the women of Union County.

To accomplish this necessary and important task, the organization has consistently sought out the best and the brightest people to help them achieve their goals. They have been so successful in this venture that this year, twelve women are singled out for their drive, motivation, and accomplishment in guaranteeing that the rights of the women of Union County are protected. And, as they were singled out by the Commission, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize these women once again for their work and dedication:

- Business—Nora Holley MacMillan of Summit
- Community Service—Nancy Terrezza of Union Township
- Education—Roberta T. Feehan of Elizabeth Government—Charlotte DeFilippo of Hillside Government—Senator Wynona M. Lipman of Newark
- Health Care—Hazel H. Garlic of Elizabeth
- Journalism/Public Relation—Adele Kenny of Fanwood
- Law—Judge Susan M. McMullan of Westfield
- Law Enforcement—Sergeant Nancy McKenzie of Rahway
- Volunteerism—Glenda Magloire of Union County
- Women's Advocacy—Mayor Geri Samuel of Scotch Plains

Women's Advocacy—Nellie Suggs of Westfield.

These women exemplify leadership and dedication to both Union County and the community at large. For these tremendous contributions to New Jersey and their incredible example as public servants, I am very happy to honor these individuals for their achievements. I salute and congratulate all of them on their extraordinary accomplishments.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHARLES H. TAYLOR

OF NORTH CAROLINA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 15, 1999

Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, due to inclement weather I was unavoidably detained in North Carolina this morning and was therefore unable to cast a vote on rollcall Votes 34, 35 and 36. Had I been present, I would have voted "YEA" on rollcall 34, "YEA" on rollcall 35 and "YEA" on rollcall 36.

HONORING MS. RITA SCHWARTZ

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 15, 1999

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Rita Schwartz, for her exemplary community service, and for her numerous contributions to the Brooklyn community.

Ms. Rita Schwartz is the Director of Government Relations for the General Contractors Association of New York Inc., a trade organization representing the heavy construction industry. She is responsible for developing and implementing legislative and community strategies for the funding and building of the city's infrastructure system and is active politically in City Hall, Albany, and Washington. Ms. Schwartz is committed to developing opportunities for women and minorities in the construction industry and is involved in several organizations to help these groups gain access to various career opportunities.

Ms. Schwartz has served in the public sector for many years as Supervisor for Government Relations and Community Affairs with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. She was responsible for government and community relations and represented the Port Authority with civic, business, community groups and elected officials. In addition, she coordinated special projects and events and had an additional responsibility as Director of Homeless Service Programs for the Port Authority. Before working for the Port Authority, Ms. Schwartz was with the New York City Department of the Aging, the Health and Hospitals Corporation and the New York City Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs.

Ms. Schwartz is a lifetime resident of Brooklyn, she and her husband live in Brooklyn Heights where they raised their son and daughter. She served as a Board member of

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Community Board 2, and other community organizations. She received a bachelor's degree in music education from the State University of New York, Potsdam, a master degree from New York University and a Ph.D. Teaching Fellow at New York University.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Ms. Rita Schwartz, who has helped our community and has served as an excellent role model.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 15, 1999

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Chairman, during rollcall vote No. 38 on March 10, 1999, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, March 16, 1999 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 17

8 a.m.
Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
To resume hearings to examine the nature of risk management in agriculture and federal crop insurance programs.
SR-328A

9 a.m.
Environment and Public Works
Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.
SD-406

9:30 a.m.
Indian Affairs
To hold hearings on S.400, to provide technical corrections to the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996, to improve the delivery of housing assistance to Indian tribes in a manner that recognizes the right of tribal self-governance.
SR-485

Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Business meeting to mark up S.326, to improve the access and choice of pa-

tients to quality, affordable health care, and to consider pending nominations.
SD-430

Governmental Affairs
To resume hearings on the future of the Independent Counsel Act.
SH-216

Armed Services
Readiness and Management Support Subcommittee
To hold hearings on the efforts to reform and streamline the Department of Defense's acquisition process.
SR-222

10 a.m.
Veterans' Affairs
To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to review the legislative recommendations of the Disabled American Veterans.
345, Cannon Building

Energy and Natural Resources
Foreign Relations
To hold joint hearings on proposals to expand Iraqi oil for food.
SD-419

Appropriations
Legislative Branch Subcommittee
To hold hearings on proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2000 for the Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, General Accounting Office, and the Government Printing Office.
SD-116

Appropriations
Defense Subcommittee
To hold hearings on proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2000 for Air Force programs.
SD-192

Finance
To hold hearings on the implementation of 1997 Medicare changes to Medicare-Fee for Service and Medicare+Choice Programs.
SD-215

10:30 a.m.
Environment and Public Works
To hold hearings on loss of open space and environmental quality.
SD-406

2 p.m.
Armed Services
Airland Subcommittee
To hold hearings on proposed legislation authorizing funds for fiscal year 2000 for the Department of Defense, focusing on tactical aviation modernization, and the future years defense program.
SR-222

MARCH 18

9:30 a.m.
Environment and Public Works
To resume hearings on loss of open space and environmental quality.
SD-406

Appropriations
Energy and Water Development Subcommittee
To hold hearings on proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2000 for Civilian Radioactive Waste and Environmental Management programs.
SD-124

Armed Services
To hold hearings on proposed legislation authorizing funds for fiscal year 2000 for the Department of Defense, and the future years defense program.
SH-216

March 15, 1999