

Fresno Consolidated Charter, Association of California School Administrators and a part time faculty member at CSUF. He has been a member, vice-chair, and chairman of various education committees and councils and has served as Chairman of the Board of Regents of the Armenian Schools under the auspices of the Western Prelacy Armenian Apostolic Church. Meher is an active member of several Armenian organizations and has received many awards and honors from organizations such as the Fresno City Council PTA, Fresno City Youth Development Program, Armenian Community Schools of Fresno and Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church of Fresno.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Meher Chekerdemian on receiving the Armenian Educational Foundation's Educator of the Year Award. Meher has been an outstanding educator for many years. I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing Meher Chekerdemian many years of continued success.

IN HONOR OF GREEK  
INDEPENDENCE DAY

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 17, 1999*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Greek Independence Day, March 25th.

The fall of Constantinople in 1453 to the Ottoman Empire brought a halt to the important leadership role of Greeks. Their heritage remained important, however, for others around the world. Tsarist Russia emulated the Orthodox and imperial models of Byzantium. Classical Greece offered inspiration and guideposts for the flowering of the Renaissance. And the influence of Classical Greece on the founding fathers of American independence is universally known.

During the rule of the Ottoman Empire, the Greek people never lost sight of their distinct identity and deep devotion to their Orthodox Church, whose clergy played a critical function in maintaining their language and religion. As the eighteenth century ended, the Greeks began organizing a struggle for their freedom. On March 25, 1821, Bishop Germanos called for all to join the campaign for Greek independence. Despite overwhelming odds, thousands of Greeks throughout the region responded to this inspiring call and fought heroically.

The combination of Greek sacrifice and bravery with the help of foreign volunteers succeeded by the end of the 1820s in establishing an independent Greek state. It was a struggle that caught the world's attention, in large part because of the admirable ideals of freedom and revived opportunities for a heroic peoples. We cherish and honor these same ideals today. The Greek-American community offers a cultural bridge between the two countries and takes pride that Greek ideals contributed to America's revolution before Greeks themselves had the chance to follow a related and successful campaign for freedom.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in celebrating Greek Independence Day.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CHIEF JIMMIE L. BROWN RETIRES  
FROM MIAMI-DADE POLICE DEPARTMENT

**HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 17, 1999*

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to one of Miami-Dade County's finest, a man who has valiantly defended the streets of our cities for over thirty years, Miami-Dade County Police Chief Jimmie L. Brown.

A special celebration will soon be held in honor of Chief Brown's long devotion and commitment to defend and protect our South Florida streets. For the last 30 years, Chief Brown has served in law enforcement, his latest assignment being Chief of Special Investigations. He also serves as church pastor, radio show host, adjunct professor and consultant, always being instrumental and positively influential to many in the community. As a soldier in the U.S. Air Force, Chief Brown was awarded a Bronze Star and Air Force commendation medals for service in Vietnam.

General Robert E. Lee once said, "duty is the sublimest word in our language. Do your duty in all things. You cannot do more. You should never wish to do less." These words embody the kind of exemplary life that Chief Brown conducted as he always lived a life of sacrifice and service.

Chief Brown additionally volunteers his time and energy to a host of other community organizations and affiliations. Having received over 100 awards from professional and civic groups, as well as having earned an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from International Seminary, Chief Brown will retire in April and will be missed greatly by all members and employees of the Miami-Dade Police Department.

FRIENDS OF IRELAND

**HON. JAMES T. WALSH**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 17, 1999*

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of St. Patrick's Day, I am inviting all my colleagues to become a Friend of Ireland. The Friends of Ireland is a bipartisan Congressional organization established in 1981 by the late Speaker, Thomas "Tip" O'Neill. Every successive Speaker has carried on the tradition with Speaker HASTERT and Minority Leader GEPHARDT serving as honorary Chairmen of the group.

The purpose of the Friends of Ireland is to increase the bonds of friendship and understanding between the American people and the people of Ireland. We look for a peaceful solution to the problems of this troubled land. Our organization is open to all members of the 106th Congress who share its principles and has attracted widespread support over the years. There are also several Senators who are members of the Friends.

Over the years, the statements of support for peace in Ireland, condemnations of human

*March 17, 1999*

rights abuses, assistance to the International Fund for Ireland and general expressions of goodwill have made a difference. The voice of the United States Congress is listened to very attentively in Ireland both in the Republic and in the North.

I would like to share with you this year's St. Patrick's Day Statement:

STATEMENT BY THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND ST.  
PATRICK'S DAY 1999

On this St. Patrick's Day 1999, the friends of Ireland in the United States Congress join with the 44 million Americans of Irish ancestry in commemorating an extraordinary year for the people of the island of Ireland. We are proud of the dramatic progress achieved in last year's Good Friday Agreement. We commend those who contributed to this historic agreement.

The Agreement is a unique opportunity to end a tragic conflict which has caused needless tragedy and destruction. It holds out the promise of a new beginning, honorable and realistic, for all involved. The Agreement was endorsed decisively by the people in both parts of the island of Ireland as a clear democratic mandate to their political leaders. We call on all those leaders to implement that mandate fully and fairly, and to embrace the opportunity for peace offered by the Agreement with courage, imagination and empathy. History will not deal kindly with those who fail to do so.

We are pleased to welcome to Washington over the St. Patrick's Day period many of those who were central to the success of the negotiations leading to the Good Friday Agreement. We particularly welcome the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, whose outstanding commitment and leadership, both during the negotiations, and in the succeeding months, have been deservedly recognized. We also pay tribute to Prime Minister Tony Blair, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Marjorie Mowlam, Minister for Foreign Affairs David Andrews, the leaders of the Northern Ireland political parties, and many other Irish and British Government officials for their courage and determination to reach agreement despite the opposition they faced.

We congratulate John Hume and David Trimble on the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of their efforts for peace. We take pride in the contribution made to the peace process by President Clinton and many other leaders in the United States. We especially salute our former colleague, Senator George Mitchell, for his indispensable leadership, and welcome the recent establishment by the U.S.-Ireland Alliance of the Mitchell Scholarships in his honor. We welcome the generous \$3 million contribution of the Irish Government to this scholarship fund, announced by the Taoiseach last September during our President's visit to Ireland. We also welcome the Irish Government's support of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, through a grant to promote the Festival of Irish Arts, in May 2000.

Ireland has given to America in many ways, including men to fight our battles from Revolutionary War to Desert Storm. In appreciation for these services, and as a special tribute to 12 Irish citizens who gave their lives as members of the U.S. Armed Forces in the Vietnam War, we are pleased to note that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund's traveling wall, called the Wall that Heals, will be making a tour of Ireland from April 16 to May 3 this year.

This July, we look forward to welcoming the first 4,000 young men and women who

will enter the United States under special visas provided by the Irish Peace Process and Cultural Training Program Act of 1998. The visa will allow these young adults from both communities an opportunity to experience America's unique blend of cultural diversity and economic prosperity. After their visit, they will return home providing the crucial skill base needed to attract private investment in their local economies. That Congress initiated and passed this visa legislation with unanimous support is evidence of our continuing bipartisan commitment to supporting the Good Friday Agreement.

We believe the most crucial task now facing the Irish and British Governments and all the political leaders in Northern Ireland is to build momentum for the full implementation of the Agreement. Inevitably, there will be continuing difficulties to surmount in resolving this deep and long-standing conflict. We believe the implementation of the Agreement offers the best way forward and the best yardstick to judge the policies and actions of those struggling to overcome these difficulties. We do not believe that the goals of the Agreement can be served by inaction or procrastination in implementing its provisions. Those who take political risks for the implementation of the Agreement can be assured of our consistent support.

Following last month's decision by the Assembly to approve the designation of the Northern Ireland Departments and the list of cross-border bodies, and the signing last week by the United Kingdom and Ireland of the historic treaties to set up the institutions, it is vital that this decision be implemented without delay. Progress in all of these areas is, of course, dependent on the establishment of the multi-party Executive, as provided in the Agreement. We are dismayed at the delay in establishing the Executive, and urge it be established as soon as possible. It is the best way to create conditions for progress on other difficult issues, including the problem of decommissioning.

The carnage inflicted on the town of Omagh last August was a grim reminder that, in spite of all that has been achieved, there are those who still do not recognize the futility of violence. The cowardly murder of Rosemary Nelson this week reminds of the urgency of the task at hand. The horror of these actions unites all the people of Ireland and Great Britain, and friends of Ireland everywhere, in a determination that such methods will be totally repudiated and will never succeed. We also condemn, in the strongest terms, the practice of sectarian attacks, punishment beatings, and other acts of violence. These actions are a violation of fundamental human rights, and serve only to promote further division and recrimination. Against this background of irresponsible and unacceptable reliance on violence, we commend all those who, notwithstanding the pressures caused by these attacks, refuse to be diverted from the pursuit of peace and political progress.

We have in the past consistently drawn attention to the importance of developing a police organization in Northern Ireland capable of attracting and sustaining the support of all parts of the community. We welcome the creation of the Patten Commission to propose new arrangements for policing, accountable to and fully representative of the society. A major responsibility rests on the members of the Commission on this vitally important issue. Their mandate from the Agreement should lead to far-reaching change and we look forward to their report later this year.

We attach particular importance to the provisions in the Good Friday Agreement which promote a new respect for human rights. Such respect is essential if the commitment to equality, which lies at the very heart of the undertaking, is to be given practical effect. We are heartened by progress in relation to the Human Rights Commissions and look forward to the development of close cross-border co-operation on this vital issue. We also hope to see early progress on the review of the criminal laws, and the dismantling of emergency legislation.

We are concerned by evidence of the lack of protection for lawyers active on human rights cases in Northern Ireland, as described by the Special Rapporteur of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, and urge an early response to calls for an independent inquiry into the murder of Belfast lawyer Pat Finucane. We will also continue to follow closely the progress of the inquiry into the tragic events of Bloody Sunday in Derry in 1972.

As preparations for this year's marching season begin, we note with concern that, despite efforts to encourage dialogue, the situation at Drumcree remains disturbing. We call on all involved to uphold the decisions of the Parades Commission.

The Friends of Ireland welcome the strong support which President Clinton and both parties in Congress have given to the peace process, and to the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, including the continuing support for the International Fund for Ireland. We salute the parties on what has been achieved thus far and believe that with commitment and determination, and a readiness to seek accommodation, the remaining differences can be overcome.

As we prepare to enter the new century, the parties to the Good Friday Agreement have a truly historic opportunity to achieve peace with justice for the benefit of all generations to come. As always, we in the Friends of Ireland stand ready to help in any way we can.

*Friends of Ireland Executive Committee:*

DENNIS H. HASTER, RICHARD A. GEPHARDT, JAMES T. WALSH, EDWARD M. KENNEDY, DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN, CHRISTOPHER J. DODD, CONNIE MACK.

INTRODUCTION OF TRIBAL SELF-GOVERNANCE AMENDMENTS OF 1999

**HON. GEORGE MILLER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 17, 1999*

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the "Tribal Self-Governance Amendments of 1999" and am pleased that 22 of our colleagues have co-sponsored the legislation. My bill makes permanent a demonstration project that exists under current law which gives Indian tribes who meet certain criteria, such as experience in government contracting, accounting, and management capability, the right to take over the operation of Indian Health Service (IHS) hospital, clinics, and other health programs. The demonstration program, called Self-Governance, already is permanent for programs in

the Interior Department and is an outgrowth of the original Self-Determination Act contracting authority.

The aim of the Self-Governance program is to pare down the layers of federal bureaucracy governing Indian affairs. Giving Indian tribes direct control over IHS programs has made the tribes more accountable to their members, and has resulted in a more efficient and innovative operation of health programs than had been administered by federal officials in the past.

The Self-Governance program allows tribes with two or more existing contracts with the IHS to combine them into one "compact", re-distribute funds among programs where justified by need, and tailor or redesign various health programs to fit specific tribal needs.

This legislation truly helps further tribal sovereignty. I believe it is one thing to talk about legal theories contained in law books but it is quite another to see how tribal control and operation of these health programs have resulted in improvement of health care to Indian people. This legislation provides Indian Tribes with the opportunity to provide services and care for their own people. Further, this legislation will help reduce federal bureaucracy and give more local control over federal programs.

Similar legislation passed the House last Congress but was not acted on in the Senate. I urge speedy consideration of this important legislation.

THE CITIZENS' CHOICE ACT

**HON. MARTIN OLAV SABO**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 17, 1999*

Mr. SABO. Mr. Speaker, most Americans and Members of the House of Representatives agree that our campaign finance system must be reformed. During this Congress, I hope we will be able to build on last year's progress by passing legislation to give ordinary Americans a greater voice in campaigns for the U.S. House.

Reforming our campaign finance system is one of the most difficult problems before Congress. In the past, sweeping comprehensive reform has yielded a multitude of unintended consequences. Our campaign system is complex, and it will not yield to easy solutions or quick fixes. That is why I am introducing legislation that takes a small but important step in the right direction—toward limiting campaign spending and leveling the playing field between challengers and incumbents.

My bill, the Citizens' Choice Act, creates a voluntary system of publicly financed general elections to the U.S. House of Representatives. Under my bill, a House of Representatives General Election Trust Fund would be funded by a voluntary \$5 check-off on income tax returns, and would consist of one account per political party in every congressional district. Candidates who accept money from this fund must agree to spend no more than \$600,000 on their campaigns. The spending limit would be waived if a candidate's opponent refuses to participate in the public funding and raises at least \$100,000. My bill also