

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