

Madam Speaker, due to an existing oversight, workers living in my district in southwest Washington may be subject to additional tax burdens imposed by other States along the Columbia River.

The current law allows States to impose additional taxes based on the percentage of time their vessel was docked or operating in those States' waters and I will say it again, that is simply not fair.

Madam Speaker, we can do something about that. We can make the law fair and we can make it apply equally to everyone.

Madam Speaker, the legislation I am introducing today, the Transportation Employee Fair Taxation Act of 1999, will correct this oversight.

My bill will expressly prohibit the taxation of income earned by waterway workers by States other than the ones in which the workers reside. It will close the unfortunate loophole that says we treat all the other groups of interstate workers one way and bargemen and river pilots the other.

It is not complex legislation. It is very straightforward. It is not lengthy legislation. It is a two-page bill. But it is good legislation. It is needed legislation and it is fair legislation. I am proud to say also that it is bipartisan legislation.

Of the 12 original cosponsors of this measure, 8 are Democrats and 4 are Republicans. So I urge my colleagues from both parties to join in this effort, to ensure tax fairness for all of our citizens by taking swift action to pass this bill.

NEEDED: JUSTICE AND A POLITICAL SOLUTION FOR THE KURDISH PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, before we adjourn for our spring district work period, I wanted to draw attention to the plight of the Kurdish people.

There was a lot of attention to this otherwise usually ignored issue last month with the apprehension of Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party, the PKK.

Mr. Ocalan has been fighting for autonomy for the Kurdish people who are the victims of oppression by Turkey, as well as Iraq, Iran and Syria. The Turkish regime refuses to even acknowledge the Kurds' existence, referring to them as Mountain Turks, prohibiting all expression of Kurdish culture and language in an effort to forcibly assimilate them, and jailing, torturing or killing Kurdish leaders.

The Iraqi regime has used poison gas on its Kurds and has destroyed 4,000 Kurdish villages. The Iranian regime

has lined them up against firing squads, while the Syrian regime barely tolerates them with no rights.

Madam Speaker, while the treatment of the Kurds in Iraq, Iran and Syria is deplorable, the Turkish mistreatment of the Kurdish people is particularly shocking for a very basic reason. Turkey is considered an ally of the United States, a member of NATO, and the recipient over many years of millions in economic and especially military assistance courtesy of the American taxpayer. This embarrassing record of American support for the Turkish regime reached a new low last month when our intelligence and diplomatic services actually helped a Turkish commando team to capture Mr. Ocalan in Kenya. This action violates the spirit of the torture convention to which the United States is a signatory.

Mr. Ocalan, had he been here in the United States I cannot imagine that he would have been turned over to Turkey, just as Italy refused to do so when he was in Italy. This shameful collaboration with Turkey has resulted in Mr. Ocalan being held in solitary confinement on an island prison in Turkey with no access to his international team of lawyers.

Plans call for him to be tried in a secret military-type court with no jury and no foreign observers.

Given the unlawfulness of this abduction and the illegitimacy of the state security court's tribunal, there is ample reason to assume that Mr. Ocalan will not receive a fair trial.

Madam Speaker, I want to note that the injustice of the Ocalan abduction and trial and the much larger issue of the oppression of the Kurdish people has not gone unnoticed around the world. Here in Washington over the past weekend, a rally was held across the street from the Turkish Embassy. The Congressional Human Rights Caucus and the Human Rights Alliance recently commemorated the 11th anniversary of Saddam Hussein's massacre of over 5,000 Kurds in the village of Halabja.

The suffering of the Kurdish people has not gone completely unnoticed but we need to do more for the Kurdish people. The government of Turkey's undeclared war on the Kurds has claimed close to 40,000 lives and caused more than 3 million people to become refugees.

Mr. Ocalan's appearance in Rome with a pledge that he was ready to renounce violence presented an opportunity for peace but neither Turkey nor the United States took him up on his offer.

Madam Speaker, let me say it is not too late. We should use our leverage over Turkey to demand that an international tribunal prosecute Mr. Ocalan since Turkey is at war with the Kurds and cannot be expected to conduct a fair trial. I hope that the European

Union to which Turkey is seeking admission will also put pressure on Turkey. We must demand a fair trial for Mr. Ocalan but this should only be a first step in our efforts to press Turkey to enter into negotiations to achieve a political solution to this ongoing struggle. This is fundamentally in Turkey's interest, too, in the long run, since they cannot continue to keep down 35 million people living in their midst.

On January 21, we celebrated, or the Kurds celebrated their new year, which is called Newroz, symbolizing a day of resistance and deliverance from tyranny for the Kurds. In that spirit, I hope that we will soon witness a turning point from the terrible tragedies that the Kurdish people have experienced and instead see the rebirth of a strong and free Kurdistan.

Madam Speaker, this week U.S. forces have gone into the battle in the former Yugoslavia in an effort to prevent the genocide of the Kosovar people. I strongly support that effort which shows America at its best and I hope that the same resolve and sense of outrage that caused us to act to protect the Kosovars will finally motivate America and the free world to put an end to the genocide of the Kurdish people.

Let me point out that the Kurdish new year, Madam Speaker, was actually last Sunday, March 21, Newroz, and that was the day when the Kurds celebrate their new year.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION FROM CHINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Guam (Mr. UNDERWOOD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Madam Speaker, I take this opportunity to speak to one issue which is of some national significance because it evidences a pattern that is occurring, and that is illegal immigration from China.

I would like to point out that, Madam Speaker, that Guam is a very isolated community from Washington, DC. It is some 9,000 miles away and it is the closest U.S. soil to China.

During the past year, there has been an inordinate amount of illegal immigration into Guam from China, and we assumed that it was from perhaps nearby the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, but as it has turned out these are illegal immigrants who come in on fishing boats directly from the Province of Fuqing inside China.

This kind of illegal immigration is not the kind of illegal immigration that we normally assume exists, which is that people are fleeing either for political reasons or looking for an economic better way of life.

All of those might be part of this, but usually when we watch the kinds of