

school building. Mr. Sweeney has also been supportive of the arts and theaters in the downtown area.

Patrick has been a dear friend, colleague and mentor for many years. I have tremendous respect for him as a legislator. I was very pleased that he succeeded me as State Senator of the 23rd District when I was elected to Congress. It gives me great pleasure to publicly recognize the achievements of Mr. Sweeney.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in honoring Patrick Sweeney for his 35 years of Public Service. He will be saluted for his achievements at a dinner by the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party.

IN HONOR OF TERENCE FREITAS

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Terence Freitas. Terence was kidnapped in Colombia on February 25th, and slain while working on behalf of the rights of indigenous people. As a humanitarian and environmentalist, he leaves behind a legacy of activism and passion that inspires us all.

Terence graduated from the University of California at Santa Cruz in 1997 with a dual degree in biology and environmental studies. He was a conservation biologist and policy analyst, with extensive field experience in temperate and tropical rainforests. While at the University of California at Santa Cruz, Terence was an active member of the community. He was involved in numerous campus activities and helped to redesign the Crown College core course. Crown College is naming its college service award after him. In addition, an endowment has been established in his name to support the research of environmental studies at UCSC.

Terence also worked as an environmental consultant, researching American Indian Law and U.S. environmental policy. He was a long-time advocate for indigenous people and worked with Native American tribes while he was a student. His passions for working with marginalized cultures lead him in 1997, to the U'wa people in Colombia where he and two companions were on a mission to preserve the culture of the U'wa Indians.

The U'wa Tribe is fighting a battle to defend their rights and traditional territory. Ever dedicated to the fight for indigenous rights, Terence willingly put aside concern for his own safety and went to an area with one of the highest rates of documented human rights abuses, where violence, kidnappings and executions are part of everyday life. No one outside Colombia did more for the U'wa people than did Terence.

Terence helped to establish the U'wa Defense Working Group and lived life passionately. His fight will be continued by fellow activists, and Terence will be missed by all of those whose lives he touched. The loss of his young, vibrant life, is a tragedy for the whole world. The global humanitarian effort has suf-

fered greatly with the passing of Terence Freitas.

INTRODUCTION OF THE RELIGIOUS
FREEDOM PEACE TAX FUND BILL

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, one of the fundamental liberties of our country is freedom of religion. The right to exercise our religious beliefs free of government coercion. The Federal Government must not force a citizen to act against his or her religious beliefs.

Because of their strong religious convictions, some Americans do not pay their taxes. They do not pay their taxes because their religion forbids them from supporting war. Seventeen cents out of every tax dollar received by the Federal Government is spent on the military.

This military spending is inconsistent with the religious beliefs of hundreds and thousands of Americans. Because of their strong beliefs, these people would rather disobey their government than disobey their God or their beliefs. As a disciple of Ghandi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, preachings on non-violence, I understand the difficult choice these Americans face.

That is why I am introducing this legislation. The Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund would allow religious and conscientious objectors to pay their taxes without violating their religious beliefs. These taxpayers would have their tax payments placed in the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund. Money from this fund could not be spent for military purposes. Religious objectors would be assured that their tax payment would not increase military spending—that paying taxes would not violate their religious beliefs.

The Joint Committee on Taxation has determined that the Religious Freedom and Peace Tax Fund legislation is a slight revenue raiser. The bill will not reduce military spending. It simply will allow thousands more Americans to pay their taxes in good conscience.

VFW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY
WINNING ESSAY FROM HAWAII

HON. PATSY T. MINK

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I have the great honor to request permission to insert in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the text of the winning essay from Hawaii entitled "My Service to America," by Carmen M. Herlihy, in the 1998-99 VFW Voice of Democracy Scholarship Competition.

MY SERVICE TO AMERICA

(By Carmen Herlihy)

It was a little over two hundred years ago that a tremendous thing happened. Freedom was born. The birth of the United States Constitution was perhaps one of the most

important occurrences in our country's history. In that mother of freedom there sprung a child of the future, the Bill of Rights. These 10 amendments have been the backbone of the growth of modern society. People have lived in the comfort of knowing that they will always be there, for they have always been there. But as the population continues to grow, and differences in culture have sprung up, perhaps the existence of the freedom that we as citizens have taken for granted will slowly be taken right out of our patriotic hand.

It would be a lie to say that we live in a country that grants us complete freedom. After all, complete freedom would lead to chaos. Therefore laws were created to protect the well-being of all citizens. But we are privileged enough to live in a country that allows us to voice our opinions freely, worship in what we choose, and defend ourselves when necessary.

As I watch television broadcast of the unfortunate occurrences in places such as Kosovo, where people as young as children are being killed; Northern Ireland, where a 300 year old conflict has yet to be solved and China where oppression is not openly accepted, but expected by all, I thank the spirits of our founding fathers for their bravery and loyalty in the belief that a country that enables its citizens to grow, is a country that must be formed.

We as citizens of this great land have an obligation to fulfill; that obligation is to live out our reputation as being the land of opportunity and freedom, equality for all. It is a journey we must make in order to continue the tradition of freedom and basic human rights. The first of many battles is at hand.

On November third 19 hundred and ninety eight, a choice will have to be made by the citizens of a small state floating in the middle of the pacific ocean. Many people will vote on that issue without fully understanding the concept its carries out. To some it means savings the idea of traditional marriage, to other it means saving the constitution of the United States. Whatever the truth may be, another issue lies beneath the surface, one that many people would rather overlook. It is question of freedom.

Homosexuality. A word often said beneath ones breath. The thing about the word homosexuality that always amused me was the fact that people were afraid to say the word, fearing almost that was a contagious condition. It's safe to assume that a majority of the United States population disagrees with "Alternative" lifestyles. But does that mean that it acceptable to deny a group of people the basic human rights they are entitled to?

Have we learned nothing from the people of segregation that our country had endured not so long ago? There were people, such as Martin Luther King Jr., who were brave enough to stand up and demand the freedom that African-Americans were entitled to. There were the struggles women had endured in order to gain their right to an abortion. We live in a country that grants its citizens basic human rights that are necessary in order to live, freedom to be ones own person. Should we deny those freedoms to people who are different from ourselves? We have no right to impose our beliefs onto other people, nor does anyone have the right to deny the beliefs of another. If we do so, we will only be stepping back into our journey toward the United States our founding fathers had envisioned.

As citizens of this great country, we all have our service to America. But the freedom instilled in the United States grants us