

extends for five years compulsory licenses, which require superstations and distant broadcast stations to allow their signal to be retransmitted by satellite carriers. In order to promote competition, the bill sets specific prices at which the intellectual property owners, or broadcasters, will be paid for having their signal rebroadcasted.

It is ironic that even as we vote to allow compulsory licensing today, we are interfering in another country's attempt to address a public health crisis through giving consumers access to international markets and through the use of compulsory licensing. It is estimated 3.2 million South Africans are HIV positive, including 45 percent of its military. One in five South African pregnant women test positive for HIV. Access to affordable medicine is also a critical issue for the elderly and others suffering from chronic diseases and medical conditions. Prescription drugs are not currently an option for many patients in South Africa, where the drugs often cost more than they do in the United States. The 1997 per capita income in South Africa was estimated to be only \$6,200 annually.

To address the problem, President Mandela and the South African Government enacted a law in 1997 to reform the country's prescription drug marketplace. The law amends the South African Medicines Act to allow prescription drugs to be purchased in the international marketplace where prices are lower. It would also allow compulsory licensing in some cases. Regulations implementing the law have not been implemented while the law is being constitutionally challenged in South African courts by drug makers in their country.

However, the pharmaceutical industry has persuaded the United States government to work to have the South African law repealed. In February, the United States Department of State released a report titled, U.S. Government Efforts to Negotiate the Repeal, Termination or Withdrawal of Article 15(c) of the South African Medicines and Related Substances Act of 1965.

While special interest groups have tried to convince members of Congress and the administration that implementation of the South African Medicines Act would cause violations of international intellectual property rights agreements, I have seen no evidence that such violations are likely to occur. Compulsory licensing is not an assault on intellectual property rights. Instead, it is part of the copyright and patent systems which enable the interest of the public to be served. Compulsory licensing is permitted under Article 31 of the WTO Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). In fact, French law authorizes compulsory licensing when medicines are "only available to the public in insufficient quantity or quality or at abnormally high prices."

Today, the House of Representatives wisely exercised its power to continue the use of compulsory licensing in the broadcast industry to allow consumers to have access to broadcast signals, that in many instances they would otherwise be unable to receive. Certainly, the United States government should recognize the need of a government to allow its citizens to have access to needed medicine in order to address a public health crisis and

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

should not interfere with the situation in South Africa.

RECOGNIZING THE EFFORTS OF THE EMPLOYEES OF ROCKLAND COUNTY SEWER DISTRICT NO. 1

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the efforts of the employees of Rockland County Sewer District No. 1 in collecting over 7 billion gallons of sewerage annually, treating it, and returning clean water to the environment and the community.

As the 106th Congress works to protect and provide clean water to the communities of our nation, we must not forget those who make our legislation a reality. Their dedication protects each one of us from the pollutants which threaten the health and welfare of our children and our families.

In this spirit, the employees of Rockland County Sewer District No. 1 will be celebrating "Water Week," from May 2nd through May 8th, 1999. This event will celebrate the way people are working to protect and improve our water. It will provide the citizens of Rockland County with tours and exhibits promoting clean water initiatives; and will recognize those individuals who have dedicated their lives to protecting their community water supply.

Once again, I would like to thank the employees of Rockland County Sewer District No. 1 for their hard work and continued dedication.

TRIBUTE TO VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 1999

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW). The VFW is dedicated to protecting the rights and families of those who have served in the United States military. This year marks the 100-year anniversary of the VFW.

For over 200 years, the U.S. Armed Forces have fought for freedom and protected the natural born rights of every American citizen. Blood, sweat and tears of these men and women have built and solidified our great nation into a worldwide stronghold. In 1899, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States established itself a defender of the American veteran. To ensure their protection, the VFW continually echoes the soldier's voices through the halls of Congress and stands tall for widows whose spouses died across vast oceans and in the depths of foreign jungles. The VFW promotes veterans not only in times of war, but also when they return from battle, in times of peace.

April 27, 1999

Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise to honor the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. All Americans, past, present, and future, deeply appreciate their service and devotion.

CELEBRATING 300 YEARS OF THE SIKH COMMUNITY

HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 27, 1999

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, on April 10th, this city was treated to the sight of the thousands of Americans of the Sikh religion marching through Washington to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the Sikh's most sacred event, the founding of the "Khalsa" (Community of Sikh believers). For Sikhs in this country and around the world, it was a sacred and inspiring day.

However, both the reporting of the march and several subsequent comments placed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, made it appear as if the march was something it was not. For some reason, the comments in the newspaper and elsewhere made it appear as if the entire U.S. Sikh community was here to advocate separation from India, home of the world's largest Sikh community. This was simply not true. The Sikhs who came to Washington traveled here to show pride in their religion and their way of life. They came to celebrate the deep and abiding three-century heritage as found among the 22 million Sikhs worldwide.

It is a heritage that has enriched both this nation and the Sikhs home country, India. Sikhs have served at all levels of government in India, including the Presidency. They have played a key role in India's economic and military development. The vast majority of Sikhs are committed to India and its continued progress. The Sikh community is held in high regard by all Indians.

Sadly, a small number of Sikhs here seem to have been determined to pervert the purpose of the march. It was their intent to promote a narrow agenda—a partial dissolution of the world's most populous democracy, India. While this small minority is vocal and active, it is a very small minority of American and world Sikhs. But being active, it was their comments that got reported in the press and reprinted in the RECORD. What they espouse, a separate homeland for Sikhs has virtually no support in the Sikhs traditional homeland, the Punjab of India, and very little support here in the United States. And for good reason. Rupturing the territorial integrity of India invites greater instability in a region of the world where U.S. interests are best served by stability.

Mr. Speaker, the April 10 march showed the finest of America—freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech. The great numbers of Sikhs who visited our city recently came here to celebrate their religion and their way of life. Any suggestion that these Sikhs came here with a political agenda is incorrect and does a disservice to the community at large.