

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

DRUGS AND GUNS ACT OF 1999

HON. WILLIAM F. GOODLING

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 1999

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation intended to keep firearms out of the hands of those convicted of misdemeanor drug offenses. Current federal law prohibits a person convicted of a felony crime involving drugs and firearms from owning a firearm. However, those convicted of lesser drug offenses can legally own a gun. My legislation would impose strict penalties and fines for misdemeanors during crimes such as use or possession of an illegal substance when a firearm is present. Similar to legislation I have introduced in the past, my bill has had the endorsement of the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police and the National Association of Chiefs of Police.

Quite simple, this bill would expand current law to treat individuals who commit less-serious drug offenses in the same manner as people involved in other drug crimes, such as drug trafficking. Those found guilty of simple possession of a controlled substance, and who possesses a firearm at the same time of the offense, will face mandatory jail time and/or substantial fines in addition to any penalty imposed for the drug offense. Mandatory jail time and fines would be required for second and subsequent offenses.

The guilty party would be prohibited from owning a firearm for 5 years. Exceptions could be granted depending upon the circumstances surrounding each individual's case. Current law states that a person convicted of a drug crime can petition to the Secretary of the Treasury for an exemption to the firearms prohibition provided it would not threaten public safety. This legislation will not affect a law-abiding citizen's right to own a firearm.

By imposing stiff penalties on people convicted of lesser drug offenses where a firearm is present, we will send a serious message that the cost of engaging in this activity far outweighs the benefit. If my bill becomes law, individuals owning firearms for legitimate purposes (hunting, target-shooting, collecting, or personal protection) and who also engage in the use of illicit drugs will think twice before participating in their drug-related endeavors, facing the prospect of enhanced penalties and the loss of their firearms.

Mr. Speaker, the 104th Congress passed legislation to provide increased enforcement on our borders to reduce drug trafficking, and the 105th Congress passed the "Drug-Free Communities Act," to establish a program to support and encourage local communities who demonstrate a comprehensive, long-term commitment to reduce substance abuse among youth. Both measures became law. I urge my colleagues to continue to focus its efforts on

the drug war by passing this legislation in an effort to crack down on this criminal behavior. Drugs and guns are a lethal combination that must not be tolerated by a civilized nation.

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY RECOGNIZES THE 1999 ASIAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE CELEBRATION AND ASIAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 1999

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Asian-American Heritage Month and the many diverse accomplishments of Asian-Americans. I also recognize the Asian American Heritage Council of New Jersey, an organization dedicated to celebrating, integrating, and uniting Asian culture in America.

Asian-Americans have a long history of meaningful contributions to the United States.

On May 22, 1999, the Asian American Heritage Council of New Jersey will sponsor a statewide Asian-American Heritage Celebration in Edison, NJ. This organization, which incorporates various Asian-American groups in New Jersey, was founded by Dr. Stephen Ko in 1992. Each year a different ethnic group organizes a celebration in May; this year the activities are being planned by Chinese-Americans and will include dancing and shows by various organizations.

The Asian-American Heritage Celebration's keynote address will be delivered by my colleague from Oregon, the Honorable DAVID WU. Congressman WU is the first Chinese-American to be elected to the U.S. Congress.

The contributions of Asian-Americans to the society and culture of New Jersey and the United States are a vital part of the American fabric. I hope all my colleagues will join me in recognizing the Asian American Heritage Council of New Jersey.

TRIBUTE TO OUR LADY OF MERCY SCHOOL

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 1999

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to pay tribute to the faculty, parents, and students of Our Lady of Mercy School in Montgomery County, MD, for winning the Blue Ribbon Excellence in Education Award from the Department of Education.

Our Lady of Mercy School has a tradition of academic excellence, intellectual curiosity, fundamental moral and religious values, and an

atmosphere of care and respect. The school's mission sets goals which foster students' personal growth, empowers students as active learners, and encourages critical thinking and problem solving. Linkages with communities beyond Mercy help students develop an understanding of different cultures and an appreciation of global interdependence.

In 1998, Mercy received reaccreditation by the Commission on Elementary Schools of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools for its unique project on inclusive education in regular schools. Mercy's Educational Excellence Program: A Model for Inclusive Education identifies inclusive education as one that serves the physically and mentally challenged, empowers the talented and gifted student, and uses a multicultural perspective across the curriculum.

Academic and non-academic services are revised as Mercy's student population grows and changes. The needs of Mercy's stakeholders have served as the catalysts for the Rainbow and anti-drug programs, prayer partners, inclusive life skills instruction, academic tutors, and family health seminars. The role of Mercy's community is to partner in the education of students, to create a forum for adult learning, and to raise responsible, socially concerned individuals.

The Mercy Parent Teacher Organization coordinates parent volunteers to assist the school in the total education of the children. During the 1997-98 school year, 96.5 percent of Mercy's families volunteered. Mercy provides parents with educational opportunities through in-house and outside seminars, guest speakers, health programs, print materials, and private consultants.

As a former teacher, I wish to congratulate Our Lady of Mercy School for creating the right atmosphere for learning. I am proud of their well-trained staff, their supportive parents, and their excellent students. I wish them continued success in creating the excellence in education needed for tomorrow's schools.

HONORING BOB STONE'S RETIREMENT

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 1999

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Bob Stone, who is retiring after more than thirty years in the federal government representing the highest ideals of government service. For the past six years, Bob has been Vice President AL GORE's right hand man in leading the reinvention of the federal bureaucracy. Reinventing government is often referred to colloquially as "REGO" and Bob has been commonly called "Mr. REGO" for his dedication and commitment to

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