

Another growing problem threatening ape populations, particularly in Africa, is the dramatic rise in bushmeat trade. Bushmeat, the term used to describe wildlife used for meat consumption, includes gorillas, chimpanzees, and a variety of other species. Once only used as a sustainable subsistence food source, the largely illegal commercial trade has skyrocketed in recent years with devastating impacts on ape populations. This dramatic rise has occurred for a number of reasons, but primarily because of increased hunting to feed local people who have been forced to rely on cash economies rather than traditional ways of life and the influx of commercial logging companies who use bushmeat to feed their employees.

In addition, as timber concessions continue to open up once remote forests with the construction of roads, logging trucks are hauling out hundreds, if not thousands, of pounds of bushmeat each week. Moreover, the increased prevalence of bushmeat has caused markets to move beyond local centers to urban areas and even international trade. According to the most recent reports, in the Congo Basin 4,500 gorillas per year and 3,000 chimps per year are killed solely for the bushmeat market. Even in the absence of habitat loss, the bushmeat trade in the Congo Basin is likely to lead to extinction of chimpanzees and gorillas there within the next century.

Perhaps most staggering are the results of a just-completed Harvard survey of great ape research sites. This survey found that great ape populations are known, or suspected, to be declining in 96% of protected areas. It is these sites where the prospect for ape survival is best. In these protected areas, great apes are increasingly threatened by hunting, logging, war, and increased human population pressure in surrounding communities.

We are only now beginning to understand and appreciate the complex role of great apes in maintaining the ecological health and biodiversity of tropical and subtropical forest habitats. Biologists fear that the loss of all great apes could irrevocably alter forest structure and the composition of species which could intensify other environmental threats caused by deforestation and agricultural development.

A broad range of actions is needed if there is to be any hope of saving great ape populations. Laws on logging and poaching must be enforced and developed to stem the unregulated and uncontrolled destruction of forest habitat and flow of bushmeat into the commercial marketplace. Long term support for protected areas, national parks, and buffer zones must be secured to protect habitat and wildlife. And, finally, conservation education and intervention programs must be expanded and funded, to involve more local people and scientists in the protection of great ape populations.

The challenges facing the conservation of great apes is immense. As a first step in the effort to address this problem I have introduced H.R. 4320, the Great Ape Conservation Act. The Act is modeled after the highly successful African and Asian Elephant and Rhino Conservation Acts, and would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to assist in the con-

servation and protection of great apes by providing grants to local wildlife management authorities and other organizations and individuals involved in the conservation, management, protection, and restoration of great ape populations and their habitats. The Great Ape Conservation Act will put money on the ground quickly, to start to halt the destruction of these animals.

At the CITES meeting I attended in April, delegates and NGOs from many of the African nations expressed great concern over the growing demand for bushmeat and how this demand is contributing to the rapid decline of wild animal populations. Support for an effort to halt the flow of bushmeat is coming from not only the U.S., but also from the range states and many other countries who want to see this problem addressed. Clearly, the time for action is now. Just as clear is the fact that mere urging on the part of the U.S. to save these species will not be enough, even with the support of other nations.

Whether its elephants or apes, rhinos or tigers, it's not enough to dictate to third world nations about the need to conserve their endangered biological diversity. We also must be willing to make the financial investment and provide them with the resources they will need to do the job. Only by incorporating the participation of the local residents will we be able to address the many social and economic factors preventing the long-term conservation and protection of great apes or any other species we think needs protection.

This was the goal of the African and Asian Elephant Conservation Acts as well as the Rhino, Tiger Conservation Act, and this is the goal of the Great Ape Protection Act. This bill will only be the first step, however, and we must quickly determine what more we can do.

It is critical that action be taken now, if we are to preserve the world's populations of great apes the chimpanzee, the gorilla, the bonobo, and the orangutan—for us and future generations.

The cost of delaying is too large to accept.

TRIBUTE TO GUS VELASCO

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2000

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, today I praise Mr. Gustavo "Gus" Velasco, a distinguished public servant in my 34th Congressional District in California. He is retiring as Assistant City Manager for Community Services of Santa Fe Springs, California after an illustrious career of 39 years of service.

Gus Velasco's steadfast commitment to public service has made him a recognized leader and admirable member of the community. He is the recipient of numerous awards and commendations including the Whittier Area Schools Administrators Association Award.

Since receiving a degree from the California State University of Los Angeles, Gus Velasco has served and supported the community of Santa Fe Springs in many different capacities, including teaching at area schools, serving as

President of the Santa Fe Springs Lions Club, and holding memberships on both the Salvation Army Transitional Living Center Advisory Council and the Santa Fe High School Educational Foundation. Also, Gus has been Director of Social Services at the Santa Fe Neighborhood Center where he worked for eleven years.

Gus Velasco's career with the City of Santa Fe Springs began in 1961 as the Director of Recreation. His outstanding service was recognized as he rose through the administrative ranks to take the helm as Assistant City Manager in which he has excelled for the past ten years. Gus' vision, tenacity, skill, and managerial excellence has fostered pride in the rich history and cultural heritage of the Santa Fe Springs community.

I have known Gus Velasco many years, since my own service as a City Council member and Mayor of the neighboring city of Norwalk, California which borders Santa Fe Springs to the south. I have greatly admired Gus Velasco's professionalism and unsurpassed level of personal commitment to the City of Santa Fe Springs, neighboring cities in Los Angeles County, the State of California, and to the profession of public service. Through selfless commitment and a relentless pursuit toward the betterment of his community, Gus has nurtured a strong sense of civic pride among the residents of Santa Fe Springs.

The citizens of Santa Fe Springs have greatly benefited from the outstanding work of Assistant City Manager Gus Velasco, and will undoubtedly benefit from his future endeavors on their behalf. To Gus, his wife of 40 years, Annie, his daughter, Renee, his three sons, Paul, Gus, and Jaime, and to his eight grandchildren, I extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation for his exemplary service, and further extend best wishes for every continued happiness, great health, and success in the years ahead. It gives me great pleasure to pay tribute to a superb public servant and fine American citizen, Gus Velasco, on the floor of the House of Representatives in Washington. Thanks for everything, Gus.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

HON. RICK LAZIO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2000

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Speaker, six years ago, a building and a community's heart were both ripped apart by the blast of the same terrorist bomb. The building was the AMIA Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The 86 deaths, the scores of wounded, and the destruction of the center of Jewish culture in the Argentinean capital, were a terrible tragedy.

Yet, this act of terrorist violence did more. The bomb went on to strip the Jews of that country of their equilibrium, their confidence, and their sense of self. For years, the investigation of this crime dragged on with no apparent outcome. For years the Argentine authorities have dragged their feet and have exhibited incompetence in following up obvious

leads that linked the Lebanese Hezbollah organization with homegrown Argentinean terrorists.

Yet, there is some good news to report. Years of constant pressure by Jewish organizations, Members of Congress, and other prominent leaders have finally forced the Argentine government to move. President Fernando de la Rúa has committed its government to pursue vigorously the investigation of this terrorist outrage, regardless of where the inquiry might lead.

From this time and place, we should make our intentions crystal clear. We shall not waver in our determination to see the responsible parties for this terrorist outrage brought to real and meaningful justice.

We shall not shrink from the task of working to ensure that everyone implicated in this crime—Hezbollah terrorists, members of the Argentine security forces, or any others—will pay the price for their dastardly deed.

We shall not waver away. We shall not tire of the cause. We will persevere because it is the right thing to do. We will see justice done!

A TRIBUTE TO DAVID GILMORE,
DIRECTOR OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HOUSING AUTHORITY

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2000

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, our Nation's capital is a much better place in which to live because of the many contributions made by David Gilmore. Since he has become the Director of the District of Columbia Housing Authority, we have a better understanding of those qualities that make up a dedicated public servant.

Only a few years ago, our capital city was referred to as a "broken city." Its poor housing was seen as a primary reflection of that reality. The local authority was burdened with dilapidated public housing projects, residents wary of any intervention and federal investigations that threatened severe funding cuts or total elimination of the department. Enter Judge Steffen Graae who appointed David Gilmore as a receiver of the local authority. Almost overnight, things began to change. With an intense commitment to the residents being served, he rebuilt much of the District's public housing.

During the years I was privileged to chair the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development and Independent Agencies, I found I could always rely upon David Gilmore for his practical analysis of the challenges we face trying to improve those services that need to be provided in a public housing system. Because of his integrity, he rebuilt the trust and confidence of residents that the housing authority could provide quality service to those most in need.

David insists that the interests of residents come first. Residents are treated with respect and encouraged to participate in training programs such as developing computer skills. Families are encouraged to focus upon chil-

dren in school and residents to participate in helping to manage the properties in which they live.

Mr. Speaker, if every major urban community had a housing director with the personal commitment and skills of David Gilmore, we would be much closer to solving the difficulties facing public housing. By showing that public housing can work, David Gilmore has done much to restore confidence in federal housing programs. David has made a major contribution to that effort to make our capital the "shining city on the hill."

COMPREHENSIVE RETIREMENT SECURITY AND PENSION REFORM ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 19, 2000

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support doing everything possible to strengthen retirement savings and help Americans achieve a secure retirement. The first task before us here in Congress is to ensure that Social Security will be solvent well into the future. My Democratic colleagues and I are working hard to achieve this goal. Our second task is to make it easier for the American people to save for their retirement.

Today there are over 35 million people over the age 65. By 2050, the number of people aged 65 and older is estimated to rise above 81 million. We must do everything possible to strengthen individual retirement savings that help Americans achieve a financially secure retirement. Additionally, we must help employers establish and maintain employee retirement plans. The Comprehensive Retirement Security and Pension Reform Act, of which I am a cosponsor, contains provisions to increase IRA's and help small employers offer pension plans, as well as other changes to make it easier for Americans to save.

Introduced by Representatives PORTMAN and CARDIN, H.R. 1102 increases the amount that individuals may contribute to traditional and Roth Individual Accounts (IRA's) from \$2000 to \$5000. Additionally, H.R. 1102 will encourage small employers to provide pension coverage by streamlining regulations and making it less expensive for small employers to set up pension plans and increasing their allowable contributions. H.R. 1102 will also enhance retirement security by reducing pension vesting requirements to three years; make retirement savings portable when workers change jobs; and allowing older workers to make catch up contributions to retirement savings plans. Additionally, it helps individuals with several employers by changing the regulation to eliminate the 100% of average compensation for the highest three-year provision under multi-employer pension plans.

I firmly believe that H.R. 1102 helps hard working middle class families plan for their retirement. This legislation received widespread, bipartisan support from Members of Congress and employer and employee organizations and unions.

I also supported the Neal substitute, as I believe it is important to ensure that lower income families receive the benefits of this legislation. However, I support final passage of the Portman-Cardin bill because I believe it will help many Americans earning below \$50,000 a year by allowing them to put away up to \$5000 a year in IRA and to increase the limits on their employer pensions.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the Comprehensive Retirement Security and Pension Reform Act.

TRIBUTE TO PERI BAILEY—
CANCER SURVIVOR

HON. ROBERT E. WISE, JR.

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2000

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to join with many friends in Charleston, West Virginia in offering congratulations and best wishes to Peri Bailey. As I deliver these remarks, a very special celebration is taking place on the second floor of Women & Children's Hospital in Charleston.

For the past year, Peri, who just celebrated her 3rd birthday, and her family have been battling cancer. Today the medical treatments will be supplemented with pop corn and snow cones to mark the occasion of her LAST chemotherapy treatment.

Peri, since I could not be with you today, I've asked my friend, Phil Luckeydoo, to be there on my behalf and he will bring along some balloons and a few magic tricks for you and your friends at Women's and Children's.

Peri, along with her family and friends, has demonstrated for us the true meaning of the words, courage, friendship, and faith. They have been a source of real inspiration to all West Virginians. And for that reason Mr. Speaker, I ask my fellow members of the House to join me in extending our congratulations and best wishes to Peri on this memorable day, July 20, 2000—the day she officially becomes a cancer survivor!

ASIAN PACIFIC CHARTER
COMMISSION, H.R. 4899

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2000

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing H.R. 4899, legislation to establish a commission to promote a coordinated foreign policy of the United States to ensure economic and military security in the Pacific region of Asia through the promotion of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, free trade, and open markets, and for other purposes.

Asia is a region vital to the future of our nation. Over the past 50 years, Asia has become a significant center of international economic and military power. Our nation has sacrificed the blood of our sons and daughters on Asian soil in defense of our national shores. America has fought three wars in Asia since 1941 and