

October 28, 2000

the New York City officer involved in an orchestrated drug raid.

Our legislation is intended to reauthorize a highly successful program which provides a partnership between the federal government and state and local law enforcement agencies in order to make sure that every police and corrections officer who needs a bulletproof vest gets one. It is clear to us that every officer on the street should have a vest, and that the need to supply officers with vests is important enough to warrant direct federal assistance. Furthermore, the overwhelming positive response we have received from law enforcement agencies and officers to this program highlights the continued need for the program.

Mr. Speaker, at the heart of this effort is our desire to save the lives of police officers. When we make this commitment, we offer protection not just to the officers, but to every community in America. We prevent the suffering of families of fallen officers. We prevent the loss of leaders in our communities. Perhaps most importantly, we give those who protect us the ability to do their job better, more confidently, and with a knowledge that their entire nation is behind them every day, in even the most dangerous situations.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to stand up in support of our police and corrections officers, and vote for S. 2413.

RETIREMENT OF HON. TILLIE
FOWLER

SPEECH OF

HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 24, 2000

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, for the past eight years, I have had the privilege of serving in the U.S. House of Representatives with the distinguished gentlelady from Jacksonville, Florida, Tillie Fowler. It has been my and my wife, Emilie's great pleasure to get to know Tillie and her husband Buck. They have become close friends of ours as we worked together to serve our constituents in Florida.

The residents of Florida's 4th Congressional District have been fortunate to be represented by a hard-working, dedicated Member of Congress. Tillie has served as the Vice-Chairman of the Republican Conference, making her the highest-ranking woman in the Congress and the only Floridian who is part of the leadership. While she has been involved in the leadership, she has not neglected the needs of her constituents.

Her service on the Armed Services and Transportation Committees has been exemplary. She worked very hard to ensure that Florida received its fair share of highway funding.

Tillie Fowler is a class-act and we need more individuals like her here. We will truly miss her. But we know that she will not stop serving the residents of Florida no matter what she does next.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RETIREMENT OF HON. TILLIE
FOWLER

SPEECH OF

HON. TILLIE K. FOWLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 24, 2000

Mrs. FOWLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to make my last address as an honored Member of this distinguished body. There is no doubt in my mind what I will miss the most about this job. It will not be the late nights—and it will not be the ever-changing schedule. I will miss my friends—and I have made so many.

This institution is filled with so many extraordinary people, who, in my time here, have done some extraordinary things.

I make it a point in every speech I give back home to talk about the people I serve with here in this great body. I want people to know that the portrayal they see of politicians in the press and on TV is far from accurate. While scandals and controversy may sell newspapers, they are certainly not the norm around here.

I never give a speech without talking about the dedication, the devotion and the selflessness with which nearly every Member of Congress serves this institution and his or her country.

I may not always agree with someone's politics or ideology, but I would never question the sincerity or the purpose with which they pursue their agendas. People serve here for the right reasons—I truly believe that.

Serving with all of you has been such an honor. And as I look back over the last eight years, I look with pride at what we were able to do in such a short time.

Together, we reformed Congress. We have made this institution more open, more accountable and more responsive to the people. When I first set foot on this House floor in 1993, Congress' approval rating was a dismal 17 percent. That number is much higher today.

Together, with the hard work of the American people, we turned around an economy saddled by high interest rates and high unemployment.

Together, we balanced the federal budget for the first time since I was a staffer on Capitol Hill back in the 1960's.

Together we ended welfare as we knew it, and created a new system that rewards work and responsibility.

If I have one wish as I leave this institution, it is that some progress can be made toward reducing the partisanship that has plagued us.

I have tried very hard over my eight years to focus on the task at hand and leave the partisanship on the Capitol steps. When you look back at some of our best accomplishments, you find that they were mostly gained with support from both sides of the aisle. That should be a lesson to future Congresses.

I was proud to serve on the planning committee for the two bi-partisan retreats, and I hope that those retreats will continue and their mission expand.

I was also proud to serve on Speaker Hastert's leadership team these past two years. When he was unexpectedly tapped for

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the speakership, I said then he was the right man for the right time. Working with him the last two years, I witnessed first hand how true that statement was.

Always the calm in the eye of the storm, the speaker's steady hand and sharp focus have resulted in an impressive list of accomplishments, despite our razor thin majority. Some in the body may not always share his priorities or his political philosophies, but I have never heard a cross word spoken about Speaker HASTERT as a person. In this era of personal attack and partisanship, that is a real testament to the Speaker, and it has been my privilege to serve on his team.

To my constituents, I want to say that representing you has been the greatest honor of my life. I have tried to be both an effective representative and an honest steward of the incredible trust you have placed in me.

I want to thank all my colleagues who have taken to the House floor the last few days to say such nice things about me. I am humbled by their words and touched by their sentiments. While I will retire from this institution, I am not retiring from life. If there is one thing I learned from my parents, it is that public service and service to your community is a lifetime obligation. There will be new opportunities and new challenges, and I look forward to those. But serving in this body, with all of you, will forever be one of the most cherished times of my life. God bless you, God bless this institution, and God bless America.

INTRODUCTION OF H. CON. RES. 433
REGARDING BELARUS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to cosponsor House Concurrent Resolution 433, a resolution introduced on Monday by my colleague on the International Relations Committee, Mr. Gejdensen, concerning the recent parliamentary elections in Belarus.

The Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and other European institutions, as well as the State Department, all concluded that these elections were not free, fair and transparent and that they failed to meet the international norms for democratic elections. Unfortunately, the Lukashenka regime did not meet the four conditions that the OSCE set back last spring—namely, a democratic election law, an end to human rights abuses, access by the opposition to the state media, and genuine powers be granted to the parliament. Instead, in the run-up to the elections, we witnessed the denial of registration to many opposition candidates; detentions and fines of individuals advocating a boycott of the elections; confiscation of 100,000 copies of an independent newspaper among other examples of harassment of the opposition; rampant governmental interference in the election process and extensive irregularities on election day itself. These elections represent a continuing pattern of violations of human rights and the erosion of democracy which has