

strategic partnership." Through the militant "white paper" Beijing stated it would militarily conquer Taiwan if Taiwan's democratically elected leaders refused to meet Beijing's timetable for reunification talks. This is a new condition meant to frighten voters in Taiwan prior to Taiwan's presidential election on March 18.

This latest bluster by Beijing is comparable to the 1996 Chinese "missile test" in the Taiwan Strait during Taiwan's first democratic Presidential election. Beijing failed to deter Taiwanese voters from electing President Lee Teng-hui. On March 18, the first time in China's 5,000 year history, Taiwanese voters will democratically choose a new president to replace a democratically elected leader.

Communist China's threats against Taiwan are deplorable. Taiwan is a vibrant democracy and its people should have every right to elect their new leader without any sort of outside interference. Beijing should recognize the fact that the Chinese people now have two separate governments—one democratic and the other a militant dictatorship. Reunification talks between Beijing and Taipei should be conducted as between two equal entities, allowing both sides to discuss the creation of a new democratic China through the free will of all Chinese people.

During this sensitive period, we should make clear to Beijing that the United States Government has zero tolerance for Beijing's bullying gestures toward the brave people of Taiwan. There current actions are sound reason to deny any trade agreements, such as the so called Permanent Normal Trade Relations proposal.

ORGAN DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION IMPROVEMENTS ACT

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, today, I am pleased to join with my colleague, RAY LAHOOD, in introducing the Organ Donation and Transplantation Improvements Act of 2000, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve the national system of organ allocation and transplantation.

Under the provisions of the National Organ Transplant Act (NOTA), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has the responsibility for establishing and administering a national organ allocation program. In April of 1998, the Department published a regulation which directs the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) to address a number of inefficiencies and inequities in the existing organ allocation program. UNOS, the United Network for Organ Sharing, and a number of transplant centers, strongly objected to the regulation. The groups in opposition sought and secured a rider to the Omnibus Appropriations enacted in 1998 which blocked implementation of the Secretary's proposed regulation.

In October, 1998, the Congress suspended implementation of the Final Rule for one year to allow further study of its potential impact.

During that time, Congress asked the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to review current Organ Procurement Transplantation Network (OPTN) policies and the potential impact of the Final Rule. The IOM study was completed in July of last year and provided overwhelming evidence in favor of the new regulations. Nevertheless, at the end of the last session of Congress, a second moratorium was added onto the Work Incentives Improvement Act, that provided for an additional 90-day delay of implementation of the Final Rule.

In the midst of this debate, last October, the House Commerce Committee debated and reported legislation, H.R. 2418, that would divest the Department of Health and Human Services of any authority to require anything of the OPTN. Functions of a scientific, clinical or medical nature would be in the sole discretion of the OPTN. All administrative and procedural functions would require mutual agreement of the Secretary and the Network.

Opponents of H.R. 2418, including the Governor of the great state of Illinois, believe that the legislation would create an unregulated monopoly of organ allocations, and allow UNOS to run the organ allocation program unfettered. The legislation also favors small states with small centers at the expense of patients waiting for transplants at larger centers. The state of Illinois represents 9 percent of the population and receives only 4 percent of the transplants.

The legislation which Mr. LAHOOD and I are introducing today takes elements from a variety of different sources and combines them into a comprehensive bill aimed at improving the performance of the nation's organ donation and transplant system. The bill includes elements from:

The existing National Organ Transplant Act (NOTA);

H.R. 2418, the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) Amendments of 1999;

The OPTN regulation promulgated by the Department of Health and Human Services and revised in 1999; and

Recommendations from the Institute of Medicine in its 1999 report: Organ Procurement and Transplantation.

The goal of the Donation and Transplantation Act is to increase organ donation rates and to foster a fair and effective system for improving the nation's organ transplantation system.

The legislation that we are introducing supports a number of programs aimed at increasing organ donation by establishing a grant program to assist organ procurement organizations (OPO) and other non-profit organizations in developing and expanding programs aimed at increasing organ donation rates; creating a Congressional Donor Medal to be awarded to living organ donors or to organ donor families; establishing a system of accountability and places the responsibility for increasing organ donation with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS must report its progress to Congress); and establishes a system of support for state programs to increase organ donation.

Congress created the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) in 1984 to create a fair and effective system for match-

ing organ donors with patients in need of organ transplants. The Act maintains the high medical standards established by Congress in 1984; further defines the organ allocation standards established by Congress in 1984 in order to ensure a fair and equitable system of allocation based upon the recent recommendations of the Institute of Medicine; establishes new standards of financial accountability in the operation of the OPTN; and requires the Department of Health and Human Services to work with the OPTN contractor to monitor and enforce the policies of the OPTN.

The Act further removes the burden for organ allocation from the Organ Procurement Organizations (OPOs) and establishes a process, based upon sound medical criteria, for the certification and recertification of OPOs. The legislation further provides an opportunity for OPOs that fail to meet standards to implement a corrective plan of action.

Our legislation implements the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine through the creation of an advisory board to review OPTN policies and ensure the best performance of the OPTN in the effective and equitable procurement and allocation of donated organs. The legislation also includes a provision to reimburse individuals who donate organs for the non-medical travel expenses and maintains the current standard of enduring that patients have the best data and information about the nation's organ transplant system. Finally, Mr. Speaker, as with the current law, our legislation provides that the OPTN will continue to be operated by a private non-profit organization, with rules that will be subject to review by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation that Congressman LAHOOD and I have introduced today is a sound compromise worthy of consideration. I hope that our colleagues will join us in support of this legislation.

HONORING ALVIS BROOKER, ALDERMAN, 23RD WARD, NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my good friend, the late Honorable Alvis Brooker, Alderman for the 23rd Ward of New Haven, Connecticut. On Monday, November 15, Alvis succumbed to the same rare liver disease that took the life of the great Walter Payton.

Alvis was an incredible force in the Dwight/West River section of New Haven, representing more than 5000 city residents. He was a member of the West River Neighborhood Association as well as the Dwight Central Management Team. Both of these groups are neighborhood organizations whose mission is to improve and enhance the neighborhood and quality of life for its residents. He worked diligently to address the needs of those he represented, especially the various security, housing, and revitalization issues they faced. He was instrumental in the George

Street revitalization project, which involved a complete rehabilitation of the New Horizon Apartments, an elderly affordable housing complex. He also played an integral role in securing the funding for the development of Shaws Supermarket at Dwight Place which has brought about an economic renaissance in the area. Alvis always brought the needs of his constituents to City Hall—ensuring that their voices were heard.

During his three term tenure on the Board of Aldermen Board, he chaired the Public Safety and Substance Abuse Committee as well as the Youth and Youth Services Committee. As a case manager with the New Haven Family Alliance, he worked with primarily high-risk adolescents with drug and alcohol problems. His career experiences brought an uncommon insight to these committees and he was able to communicate the specific issues which our young people face with a unique authority. Prior to his work at the New Haven Family Alliance, Alvis pursued a counseling career within the Connecticut Department of Corrections, counseling inmates with substance abuse problems and lectured on the Criminal Justice System at public schools and universities across Connecticut. He also started and facilitated a program entitled "Youth Reaching Out to Youth", a program that designed an environment where teens could counsel each other on the difficult issues which they faced each day.

In only 33 years of life, Alvis Brooker left an invaluable mark on our community. Behind the myriad of Aldermanic Citations and Mayoral Proclamations, there was a man who truly cared about his community. He was a leader in every sense of the word and will always be remembered for his unwavering commitment and tireless work on behalf of our children and families. He has certainly been an inspiration to all of us in the New Haven community and it was indeed a privilege to work with him and I am proud to have called him my friend.

It is with a heavy heart that I rise today to join his mother, Sallie, family, friends, colleagues, and the community he loved well to bid a fond farewell to my dear friend, Alvis Brooker. His strength and good heart will live on.

UPHOLDING DEMOCRACY IN
TAIWAN

HON. MAURICE D. HINCHEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, in the spring of 1996, the People's Republic of China (PRC) conducted two guided missile tests north of Taiwan, in an effort to intimidate the voting populous. Fortunately, the people in Taiwan recognized this act of intimidation by the PRC and overwhelmingly elected Lee Teng-hui as their first freely elected president in China's 5,000-year history.

This year, on the eve of Taiwan's second presidential election, the People's Republic of China has once again renewed its militaristic intimidation tactics against Taiwan. On at least two occasions, Beijing leaders had made it

abundantly clear that it could invade Taiwan if Taiwan refused to engage in reunification talks. There is widespread concern throughout Taiwan, South Asia, and here in the United States that the PRC will continue its efforts to intimidate Taiwan. These attempts to destabilize Taiwan's healthy policy and economy would eventually lead to the surrender of Taiwan to mainland China.

I trust the voters in Taiwan will once again choose one of the three leading candidates as their president on March 18. It is vitally important that Taiwan's security not be compromised in any way. In the meantime, the goal of both governments should be increased dialog and a cooling of inflammatory rhetoric. Fear and instability will not serve the people of either Taiwan or the PRC, and it certainly will not serve the interest of the United States.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SOCIAL
SECURITY BENEFITS PROTEC-
TION ACT OF 2000

HON. PATSY T. MINK

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a bill that is very important to me, to my constituents in Hawaii, and to the people of the United States of America—the Social Security Benefits Protection Act.

Under current law, the Social Security Administration does not pay benefits for the last month of life. It doesn't matter what day of the month the retiree dies. Even if a Social Security beneficiary dies on the very last day of the month, the surviving spouse or family members must send back the Social Security check for that month.

This is an unfair and heartless rule.

When a loved one dies, there are expenses that the family must take care of:

There are final bills to pay. There are utility bills that need to be paid. There is rent or a mortgage that must be taken care of, and oftentimes, there are final health expenses.

Companies will not cancel these bills for that final month of life. These expenses must still be paid. So why is Social Security telling the family that the final month of Social Security income must be returned? This money is needed for these expenses.

My bill corrects this unfair rule in a simple and straightforward way:

It says that if you die after the 15th of the month, your surviving spouse or the family estate will get the Social Security check for that full month.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me and support the Social Security Benefits Protection Act.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DEPOSIT
INSURANCE FUNDS MERGER ACT
OF 2000

HON. JOHN J. LaFALCE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. LaFALCE. Mr. Speaker, today I join my colleagues, the Chair of the Financial Institu-

tions Subcommittee of the Banking Committee, MARGE ROUKEMA, in introducing the Deposit Insurance Funds Merger Act of 2000. I would like to thank Congresswoman ROUKEMA for her leadership in putting forward this timely legislation.

I believe the merger of the Bank Insurance Fund (BIF) and Savings Association Insurance Fund (SAIF) is a matter of substantial public policy importance that should be addressed on its independent merits. A merger of the BIF and SAIF would clearly benefit the deposit insurance system by creating a single, more diversified fund that is less vulnerable to regional economic problems. In addition, a merger of the funds would more accurately reflect the reality of today's financial services industry, in which 46 percent of the SAIF deposits are held by commercial banks and FDIC-regulated state savings banks. In fact, the funds have lost their independent identities, and we should rationalize their structure. Both industries should support the change as bringing needed rationality and stability to the deposit insurance funds.

The merger of the funds is an issue that I therefore believe merits independent consideration and Congressional action in the near term.

I look forward to working closely with my colleagues on this very critical issue.

TRIBUTE TO LEE KANON ALPERT

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, my colleague, Mr. SHERMAN, and I, today pay tribute to Lee Kanon Alpert, who has been selected to receive this year's prestigious Fernando Award for outstanding volunteerism. He will be honored Friday March 10, 2000 at the 41st Annual Special Recognition Dinner by the Board of Directors of the Fernando Award Foundation and his name will be placed alongside previous winners at the base of the magnificent bronze statue of "Fernando" which stands in the San Fernando Valley Civic Center.

The Fernando Award was created to honor individuals who have exemplified leadership, volunteerism and dedication. It is recognized as the leading award for civic accomplishment in the San Fernando Valley. The process by which selection is made each year includes extensive participation by community organizations and community leaders. This year that process has yielded a particularly worthy recipient.

Lee has been a practicing attorney for over 28 years. In his distinguished legal career, he has developed expertise in numerous areas of the law, including administrative and governmental relations, arbitration and mediation, family law and real estate transactions. Despite his extensive professional responsibilities, he has taken an active role in the community, serving on numerous boards and commissions, providing public commentary on