

I first introduced the Progressive Flat Tax in the 104th Congress. I remain persistent not only because of the city's continuing and serious taxpayer deficit, but particularly because of the strong support I have received for the PFT from congressional leadership. They include Senate Majority Leader TRENT LOTT (R-MS), who sponsored the first-ever D.C. town meeting in the Senate and Senator CONNIE MACK (R-FL), Chairman of the Joint Economic Committee, and other members, who remain strong supporters of the PFT.

TITLE IV: THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA \$5000 HOMEBUYER CREDIT ACT

This title would make permanent the \$5,000 Homebuyer Credit, perhaps the most successful economic stimulus in the city's history. It is chiefly responsible for stemming the flight that almost destroyed the city's tax base during the 1980s and during the financial crisis and insolvency of the 1990s. The credit offers significant evidence that a tightly targeted tax incentive can have a major turn around effect on a specific problem confronting a city.

The credit has been so successful that we have recommended that states do the same for the many large cities that are rapidly losing taxpayers. In its first year, despite the city's financial problems and damaged reputation, the credit made the District first in home sales increases in the United States. According to an independent study by the Greater Washington Research Center, 70% of D.C. homebuyers have used the credit, and 51% purchased homes because of the credit.

Last Year, the Senate was so impressed with the Homebuyer Credit results that it increased the income limits for joint filers from \$130,000 to \$180,000. The limit for individual filers is \$90,000. This increase was passed by the House and Senate, but no omnibus tax bill was enacted last year. Nevertheless, the Senate action demonstrates congressional acknowledgment of the effectiveness of tax credits in general and of the \$5,000 homebuyer credit in particular. Fannie Mae has converted the credit into up-front money towards the purchase of a home, affording the credit significantly greater value to the individual.

The \$5,000 homebuyer credit proved itself so quickly and so well that I have been able to get it repeatedly extended by Congress. The credit is similar to the PFT in its magnet effect. Until the PFT is enacted, the \$5,000 credit is minimally necessary if the city is to have any chance of increasing its still small and depleted tax base. The credit has proved itself so definitively that to get the full effect, it should be enacted permanently.

TRIBUTE TO LUE IDA HILL

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 2, 2000

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I commend the 100th birthday of Lue Ida Hill from Swanton, Ohio. This remarkable woman lives a life that celebrates every day as a gift, every sunrise as the herald of new opportunities.

When Mrs. Hill referred to her centennial birthday as "just another day", she does so

not to comment on the routine of life, the monotony of "just another day", she sets an example to us all that everyday, indeed, every moment, ought to be a cause for celebration. For by celebrating, we give thanks for the blessings bestowed upon us by God.

Mrs. Hill has never known what most of us call retirement, for she continues to keep herself busy by helping her neighbors and bringing joy to those around her. With a bow in her hair, a tradition she began while working as a butcher, she was careening about her home in a motorcycle sidecar just months before her birthday.

Lue Ida is a first class woman from a first class community. She's never stopped working, whether it was at the farm helping out with the plowing or mending shirts for Arizona State University students. She's done it all with a gracious and genuine smile. Now, with 68 grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren, Lue Ida keeps the fellow residents of the Harborside Healthcare Facility hopping. There, they refer to her as a social butterfly, playing cards and chatting with her friends and neighbors.

If only we could all be half the "butterfly" Lue Ida is. Bringing happiness to those around us, joy to our loved ones, and recognizing the gift of what we have instead of complaining for what we don't.

Our entire community wishes to extend its warmest and most caring congratulations to Lue Ida Hill on the attainment of her 100th year. Few Americans reach this incredible life pinnacle. May God bless Lue Ida and keep her as America and the world move toward the new millennium. She is a legendary teacher to us all.

FRIENDS OF MUSTANGS RECEIVES THE "MAKING A DIFFERENCE" AWARD

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 2, 2000

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize an exceptional group, the Friends of the Mustangs group, who were honored by the Bureau of Land Management with the "Making a Difference" award. The BLM selected the Friends of the Mustangs group because of their dedication to Colorado and to its outdoors.

For the past 17 years, the Friends of the Mustangs group have volunteered and managed the BLM's Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Area. There, they saved the BLM over \$20,000 by volunteering over 2,500 hours, maintained the grounds, fixing fences and trails. They also performed pre-adoption inspections. As a result, the Friends of the Mustangs group has played an integral role in managing wild horses.

Mr. Speaker, it is obvious why the Friends of the Mustangs group was chosen for the "Making a Difference" award. I think we owe them a debt of gratitude for their service and dedication to Colorado and to its outdoors.

HONORING MR. DONALD ALMQUIST

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 2, 2000

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, I honor my friend, Mr. Donald Almquist, who is retiring after serving on the School Board in Greenfield, Wisconsin for 23 years. Don was the School Board president for eight years, and has also served as vice-president, and as treasurer.

After retiring from a lengthy career in the Marine Corps, Don settled down in Greenfield where he has been an outstanding member of the community ever since. His work with such civic organizations as the Greenfield Lions Club, Greenfield Historical Society, American Legion, Boy Scouts of America, Greenfield Little League, and Vietnam Veterans of America have helped to make his community a better place to live.

Over the past 23 years, Don has left his mark on the quality of education in Greenfield. He has initiated many programs for Greenfield students including a school breakfast program, and a Junior ROTC program. He was also instrumental in beginning the filming of School Board meetings for cable television broadcasting.

Though this is his second retirement, Don will certainly have no trouble keeping himself busy. While he will no longer be a member of Greenfield's school board, he will continue his public service as the city's 4th district alderman, and president of the Common Council. He will also remain active in the Lion's Club, as well as the Education Scholarship Foundation, and a number of other community organizations.

Don has received many awards from the Greenfield Lion's Club including: The President's Award, the Governor's Award, and the Melvin Jones Fellow Award. He was also honored with the 1996 Achievement Award as one of Wisconsin's Outstanding Vietnam Veterans.

And so it is my great pleasure to extend my gratitude to my good friend Donald Almquist for his years of service, and my congratulations to him and his wife, Beverly, on a well deserved retirement.

IN HONOR OF THE UNITED CEREBRAL PALSY OF HUDSON COUNTY EIGHTH ANNUAL "OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD" DINNER DANCE

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 2, 2000

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I honor the United Cerebral Palsy of Hudson County Eighth Annual "Outstanding Achievement Award" Dinner Dance.

Since 1951, United Cerebral Palsy (UPC) of Hudson County has had one mission: "To advance the independence, productivity, and full citizenship of people with disabilities." At UPC

of Hudson County, this is more than a mission, it is a cerebral way of life. And the annual "Outstanding Achievement Award" honors those who have truly embraced this way of life, giving of themselves in a profoundly selfless and compassionate manner.

This year there are three such individuals, and I am proud to honor them as well. I honor them for their compassion; I honor them for their dedication; and I applaud them for what they have done for people with disabilities.

Henry Sanchez, Migdalia Viole, and Vincent J. Bottino were chosen by UPC of Hudson County to receive the "Outstanding Achievement Award" because they exemplify the strength of character and sense of purpose necessary to become outstanding community leaders. Hudson County has benefited enormously from their very special contribution to the community.

I ask my colleagues to join me as I honor these extraordinary individuals for their unparalleled commitment to bettering the lives of people with disabilities. Congratulations to this year's "Outstanding Achievement Award" winners.

BLOOMFIELD CITIZENS COUNCIL
AWARDS

HON. WILLIAM J. COYNE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 2, 2000

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, today I honor a number of Pittsburgh residents who will be honored on May 6 with Bloomfield Citizens Council Awards. Every year, the Bloomfield Citizens Council presents these awards as a way of recognizing members of the community who have made a significant contribution to the quality of life in Bloomfield. I would like to take this opportunity to mention the 2000 award recipients and commend them for their efforts to make Bloomfield a better place to live.

For their hard work, commitment, and enormous amount of volunteer time given for the love of the community and its children, members of the Immaculate Conception School Parent Teacher's Guild are receiving the Mary Cercone Outstanding Citizens Award. The members of the Guild being honored include: Nick and Amy Balestra, Tammy Bruno, Nancy Cherico, Beverly Helwich, Craig and Rosina Koziell, Janet Langer, Larry Lordeon, Frank and Renee Magliocco, Faye Parker, Ray Polk, Crystal Scullion, and Antionette Surmacy. This group of people is a symbol of the family values and the rich heritage of the Bloomfield community.

As president of the Immaculate Conception Christian Mothers for 38 years, Ann Scullilli has earned the Neighborhood Loyalty Award. She has demonstrated a sincere dedication to the betterment of Bloomfield with the unselfish giving of her personal time and willingness to work with others as a true team player.

Patrick McGonigle is the 2000 recipient of the Community Commitment Award for this consistent willingness to assist the Bloomfield Citizens Council in its efforts to work for the betterment of Bloomfield. He has given his

time to promoting the Bloomfield Halloween Parade and the Bloomfield Preservation Center.

This year, the Extra Mile Award is given to Jolene Owens. She has given a decade of service to the Bloomfield Citizens Council. She has improved the BCC through her constant willingness to volunteer and by successfully accomplishing every task she is assigned.

For her heroic actions in entering a burning building to alert the second and third floor tenants of a life-threatening fire, Mary Gratta is the recipient of the Heroism Award. She risked her own life in the interest of saving others.

Nick and Amy Balestra have won the Keeping Christ in Christmas Award for their front yard display of a large handmade manger.

For their creative Christmas decorations that added beauty to the community, George and Eleanor Sciuillo are receiving the Most Outstanding and Completely Decorated Home Award.

Russell and Leah Carlisle are given the Most Creative Design Award for their balanced, colorful Christmas decorations.

The recipients of this year's Bloomfield Citizens Council awards have all made significant contributions to the quality of life in Bloomfield and deserve recognition for their efforts. I commend them all, as well as the Bloomfield Citizens Council, for their dedication to their community.

NEW FUNCTIONING DEMOCRACY IN
INDEPENDENT STATES OF THE
FORMER SOVIET UNION

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 2, 2000

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, functioning democracy in the newly emerging independent states of the former Soviet Union requires setting up new political institutions and developing the means of conducting the people's business. As we have seen in many of these countries, this is proving to be a challenge beyond the patience and political will of their leaders, particularly given the harsh economic conditions throughout the region. More often than not, responsible economic policies represent, in the short term, even greater hardships for the people whose support is essential if democracy and market economy are to be sustained in these countries.

In Ukraine this challenge was put to test earlier this year when the Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine's parliament, was confronted with a serious political crisis over the selection of the Speaker and other leadership positions. The Leftist forces, though in the minority, have managed to control the parliament for the past 18 months, thwarting the majority's efforts to implement President Kuchma's legislative agenda.

A vivid description of how the leftist speaker, Oleksandr Tkachenko, thwarted the majority and the subsequent developments that led to his ouster are provided in a report by the U.S.-Ukraine Foundation. In Update on Ukraine, February 24, 2000, Markian Bilynski writes.

Until January 21, the final day of the fourth parliamentary session, the Rada was presided over by a chairman whose political ambitions and sense of indispensability were matched only by his limitations. Oleksandr Tkachenko had been elected essentially by default 18 months earlier as elements within the Rada and beyond fought to prevent the chairmanship from falling into the hands of anyone harboring presidential ambitions. His eventual, somewhat surprise decision to run brought about a further politicization of the legislative process and was the principal reason behind the Rada's growing ineffectiveness. Tkachenko's final unabashed identification with the communist candidate—a fitting conclusion to what can only be described as a parody of an election campaign—represented an abandonment of any pretense at impartiality and irreversibly undermined his credibility as Rada chairman. At the same time, President Leonid Kuchma's re-election altered the broader political context within which the Rada had to operate to such an extent that Tkachenko was transformed from a largely compromise figure into an anachronism.

After the December election, President Kuchma's administration joined with the pro-reform majority to challenge Speaker Oleksandr Tkachenko and his Communist-Left forces and succeeded in electing a new Speaker and many of the leadership positions in the Rada. The result is a newly constituted parliament with a majority now occupying key positions that is capable of responding to President Kuchma and Prime Minister Yushchenko's reform agendas.

I would like to submit for the record and bring to the attention of my colleagues an interview with Grigoriy Surkis, a prominent, businessman and member of the Rada.

IT'S TIME FOR TRANSPARENCY

(By Grigoriy Surkis)

It would be desirable if our Parliament did not have deep divisions between the majority and minority factions; however this is not possible due to deep-rooted ideological divisions in the country.

Former Speaker Tkachenko, leader of the Communists in the Rada, demonstrated his inability to work out a compromise even when the majority announced a willingness to work cooperatively with Communist leaders on a legislative program.

By the way, leaders of the Ukraine Communists should learn a lesson from their Russian counterparts, who recently made a deal with the pro-government factions in organizing the Duma and distributing assignments among party leaders. They have a difficult time understanding that Communist authoritarianism does not exist in post-Soviet societies, nor is it as strong after eight years of democracy.

However, it remains to be seen how the pro-government block in Russia will get the Communist Speaker of the Duma to act on progressive legislation and actually achieve results. I sincerely wish that this arrangement will work so that the people of Russia benefit from progressive changes that will improve living standards that make for a better society.

In my opinion, Ukraine has chosen the right path. In parliament, we formed a majority bloc by uniting the "healthy" forces who were committed to reform legislation. This is necessary to ensure speedy action on