June 14, 2000

DEATH TAX ELIMINATION ACT OF 2000

SPEECH OF
HON. HELEN CHENOWETH-HAGE
OF IDAHO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Friday, June 9, 2000

Mrs. CHENOWETH-HAGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the fundamental unfairness of the Death Tax. This is a tax that preys upon small business owners, farmers, women, minorities, and families in mourning. There is no question. Our current system of death taxation is simply inexcusable. No family or child should be forced to pay for the death of a loved one. Yet, this is precisely what happens.

One of the founding principles that our forefathers invoked when founding our nation was that of "No taxation without representation." In a perverse way, the Death Tax is quite possibly the clearest violation of this principle that has ever been passed into law. For, if you are dead, who can possibly represent you?

This is a tax that attacks the very foundation of small business. There are some in this body from the other party who often claim that this tax only affects the rich. Well, that is simply untrue. I wonder how many Democrats actually believe that small family farms are rich? How many cattlemen are rich? How many restaurant owners are rich? These are the people who this ghoulish tax affects.

These are our brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, and parents. These people are our neighbors. These people are ordinary American citizens. The truth is, those who actually have the money can actually afford to find ways to circumvent this tax. Those small business people who live on the financial margins cannot.

Furthermore, the Death Tax acts as a disincentive to saving. Who would want to save for their children their whole life only to have up to forty percent of their savings confiscated at death? Under the current policy, vacations and fungible assets actually provide a higher return than saving your money for your children. This is outrageous.

Some on the other side of the aisle cry, "The sky is falling!" when the elimination of this onerous tax is mentioned. Who are they kidding? The sky is nowhere close to falling. Since 1940, inflation adjusted tax revenues of the United States government have risen by 2000%!

The fact remains, eliminating the Death Tax will actually help families, small businessmen, and the economy. For instance, according to a WEFA Group U.S. Macroeconomic Model and the Washington University Macro Model, the U.S. economy would have increased its output by another eleven billion dollars a year had we eliminated the Death Tax in 1996. Furthermore, America could well have seen increases of an average of eight billion dollars in personal income levels if we had done this.

Mr. Speaker, it's time to end the Death Tax. Let's give it a wake and bury it this year. The futility of this tax is simply too much to put up with any longer.

HIGHER EDUCATION TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS OF 2000

SPEECH OF
HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS
OF NEW JERSEY
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Monday, June 12, 2000

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, the following message is from Steve Nisenfeld, father of Bryan Nisenfeld for whom Bryan's law is named and which was incorporated into H.R. 4504.

The family and friends of Bryan Nisenfeld wish to express their extreme gratitude to all the advocates, aides, Congressmen and staff members who worked diligently on Bryan's Law. We firmly believe this bill is very important. Its passage will provide increased protection for missing students who might otherwise be overlooked by the university's staff, faculty or security force. In the case of Bryan Nisenfeld, there was a tip by a friend of Bryan Nisenfeld unreported as missing by Roger Williams University for six agonizing days though administrators at the university were aware of threats made against his life.

University administrators, by their own admission, overlooked the threatening phone calls Bryan received prior to his disappearance. This response by Roger Williams University denied Bryan's family an opportunity to intervene on Bryan's behalf and maybe save his life. At the very least, Roger Williams University, by its failure to report Bryan missing on a timely basis denied trained professionals time to immediately launch a search for him.

We know that time is an essential ingredient used by law enforcement in locating a person. The actions of Roger Williams University officials delayed this important process.

The Nisenfelds hope and pray the law requires all universities and colleges implemen policies that protect missing students. This law requires all universities and colleges implement policies that protect missing students. It also provides enforcement to parents and students searching for a safe college to attend.

The Nisenfelds hope and pray the law continues through the legislative channels and wins approval in the Senate. Bryan Nisenfeld was a caring, giving individual who rallied behind social causes. The Nisenfelds believe passage of this bill speaks for Bryan's character. We thank you all. Bryan Nisenfeld's memory will forever live on. Thank you all.

FLAG DAY

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA
OF WISCONSIN
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, June 14, 2000

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, on Flag Day, to remind all Americans to pause and pay their respects to the banner that has come to symbolize the freedom and liberty that we hold so dear.

June 14, 2000, marks the 223rd birthday of the U.S. Flag. In 1777, less than a year after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and more than a decade before the Constitution was finalized, the Continental Congress adopted the Stars and Stripes pattern for the national flag. Flag Day was first celebrated in the year of the flag's centennial, 1877. After that, many citizens and organizations advocated the adoption of a national day of commemoration for the U.S. Flag. However, it was not until 1949 that President Harry Truman signed legislation officially making Flag Day a day for us to remember what the Stars and Stripes stand for, and honor those who gave their lives for them.

The brother of one such brave soldier from my district contacted me recently to relate to me the great patriotism and love for his country of his fallen family member, Joseph G. Serkestich, who was killed in a World War II battle in Metz, France, on November 17, 1944. During his basic training at Camp Swift, TX, he sent a letter to the Father of his church back home in Wisconsin that exemplifies how those soldiers felt about their flag, and reminds all of us of its true meaning.

On July 31, 1942, Pvt. Serkestich wrote of what he felt was the army's most moving ceremony, the end of the day retreat. His words ring as true today as they did when they were written:

There the men all stand in formation, facing the flag of our country. While the colors are being lowered the men stand at attention and present arms... The thrill comes when one stares at the flag there high in the sky, he wonders what is it there for. What does it mean? Liberty, freedom, happiness and freedom of religion... I will fight to defend it whenever an enemy tries to take it from us. I will die for it as Christ died for me. All America should be proud of its flag not of its material beauty, but for what it stands—life, liberty and happiness—to be also proud of its soldiers who fought to make it, and who fight to preserve it.

The Serkestich family also sent me a poem entitled "I Am Your Flag". These excerpts eloquently remind us all of what this hallowed national symbol really stands for:

I was born on June 14, 1777.
I am more than just a cloth shaped into a design.
I have led your sons into battle from Valley Forge to the bloody jungles in Vietnam.
I walk in silence with each of your honored dead to their resting place.
My red stripes symbolize the blood spilled in defense of this glorious nation. My white