July 17, 2001

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HON. FELIX J. GRUCCI, JR.
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, July 17, 2001

Mr. GRUCCI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the fifth anniversary of the tragedy of TWA Flight #800, remembering the passengers and crew who perished in that horrible event, and expressing our thoughts and sympathies to the families they left behind and those who participated in the rescue and recovery effort in the days following.

On the morning of July 17, 1996, Flight #800 crashed off the shores of East Moriches, New York. There were no survivors.

The tragic loss of one man who was known for being tough on Long Island’s South Shore, I was one of the first people on the scene in the moments following the crash of the U.S. Coast Guard Facility in East Moriches, New York.

This tragedy has left an indelible memory that will last forever in the minds of all the residents of Long Island. They rallied to the aid of those who worked so hard, day and night, in the recovery effort. For so long after this tragedy, many of our residents wanted to know how they could help the families of the victims or those participating in the rescue effort. They came with donations of food, clothing, and eventually contributed to the construction of two separate memorials.

The second title of this bill is, essentially, Mr. Coyne’s capital gains proposal from 1999. Under current law, there are five different tax rates for long term capital gains, and a 54 line tax form that must be endured. Moreover, this part of the tax code is already scheduled to be abolished because additional rates will take affect under current law in 2006.

The solution is clear. Replace this jumble of rates and forms with a simple 38 percent exclusion. Not only will this result in tremendous simplification (eliminating 36 of the 54 lines), but more than 97 percent of individuals would be eligible for modest capital gains tax reductions.

The third title of the bill repeals the hidden marginal rate increases in current law, and repeals the individual minimum tax. Most of my colleagues understand the phrases, PEP and Pease. Under current law, itemized deductions are gradually reduced by 3 percent of adjusted gross income above approximately $124,000. This is known as the Pease provision. In addition, personal exemptions are phased out for incomes between approximately $187,000 and $309,000. This is PEP. If we did not hide the effect of these provisions of current law, more people would know that these provisions result in hidden marginal rate increases. These marginal rate increases begin at almost 1 percent for incomes above $124,000, and increases for those with incomes above $187,000 by about .78 percent for each dependent. The important point here is that current law has a hidden marginal rate increase, which gets worse as families grow larger. The most recently passed tax bill made some progress in this area, but not enough.

The second part of this title is a complete repeal of the individual minimum tax. The minimum tax was intended to make sure that wealthy individuals did not overuse certain tax benefits and unfairly reduce their tax burden. It no longer accomplishes that goal. Most of the significant business related provisions have already been repealed. Since the AMT is not adjusted for inflation, more and more middle and upper middle income taxpayers are falling into the AMT. This is not what was intended, especially when you note that what pushes taxpayers into the AMT now, more often than not, are state and local income and property taxes, personal exemptions, and the nonrefundable credits. I repeat, this is not what Congress was trying to accomplish when the AMT was passed.

My suggestion is to repeal it for individuals, and substitute a simple tax on adjusted gross income. The current hidden tax is dropped, and is paid for with an explicit tax on the same income. The current hidden tax is dropped, and is paid for with an explicit tax on the same income. The current hidden tax is dropped, and is paid for with an explicit tax on the same income.

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As a long time resident of the community closest to the crash site, I was one of the first people on the scene in the moments following the crash at the U.S. Coast Guard Facility in East Moriches, New York.

Mr. HOBS. Mr. Speaker, Whereas, Mr. Anthony F. Carozza, known as "Tony" by his friends and family, retired on the first day of May 2001, after more than 40 years of exemplary service in the restaurant industry; and Whereas, Tony launched his career in 1960 with Gino’s successfully assisting in the start up of many of these famous food chains, and Whereas, in 1982, he desired a new challenge, and he opened three of his own pizza and sub shops, in Baltimore, MD, called Tony’s Snack Shops; and Whereas, in 1970, Tony Carozza and family grew tired of city life, and up and moved to Ocean City, Maryland, where Tony worked as pile driver in the frigid February waters before becoming a manager at Pappy’s Pizza and Beer, and taking over Beefy’s, the first real fast food restaurant in this resort town; and Whereas, in a small community where all the locals know each other, Tony, his wife, Mary Pat, and their four young children ran the restaurant, with each family member making his/her own significant and sometimes humorous contribution to the business; and Whereas, the Carozza home and Beefy’s served as a “home away from home” for countless friends, neighbors, and family members who shared many fond and funny memories with the Carozza family including many enjoying the famous upside down Christmas tree hanging from the rafters of Beefy’s; and Whereas, in 1980, Tony, a shrewd businessman who was known for being tough on
salesmen, began his 20 years in the food service industry, beginning with Shoreland Food Service, followed by PYA Monarch from 1985–1990, then Sandler Foods from 1990–1993, and ending finally in 2001 with J.P. Food Service/U.S. Food Service; and

Whereas, his many years of hard work in the restaurant business led to his becoming an award winning salesman with J.P. Food Service/U.S. Food Service bringing in over $3.5 million annually for several consecutive years; and

Whereas, Tony Carozza’s impressive work ethic and complete dedication to his family and his community have brought him many successes and much happiness, and his many friends and family members who recognize his integrity, his standards of conduct, and his honorable work and life code.

Now therefore, on behalf of the United States Congress, I take great pleasure and pride in joining with his family and friends to honor Anthony F. Carozza upon his retirement after more than 40 years of outstanding service to his customers, community, and family.