CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—HOUSE

July 23, 2001

So (two-thirds having vote in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for: Ms. SOLIS. During rollcall vote No. 259 on S. 408, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted “yea.”

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, due to official business in my District, I was unavoidably detained on Monday, July 23, 2001. Had I been present to vote on H.R. 2137 (Rollcall No. 257), the Criminal Law Technical Amendment Act, H.R. 1892 (Rollcall No. 258), the Family Sponsor Immigration Act and S. 458 (Rollcall No. 259), the James C. Corman Federal Building suspension bill, I would have voted “yea” on all three bills.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, due to a flight delay, I was unable to be present during recorded votes earlier this evening.Had I been present, I would have voted “yea” on rollcall votes 257, 258, and 259. Please be sure this is noted in the RECORD.

REPORT ON H.R. 2590, TREASURY, POSTAL SERVICE, AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 2002

Mr. SUNUNU, from the Committee on Appropriations, submitted a privileged motion (Rogers, H.R. 107–152) on the bill (H.R. 2590) making appropriations for the Treasury Department, the United States Postal Service, the Executive Office of the President, and certain Independent Agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes, which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

SECTION 1. RENAMING EDUCATION INDIVIDUAL RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS AS COVERDELL EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNTS.

(a) In General.—

(1) Section 530 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking “an education individual retirement account” each place it appears and inserting “a Coverdell education savings account”.

(2) Section 530(a) of such Code is amended—

(A) by striking “an education individual retirement account” and inserting “a Coverdell education savings account”,

(b) by striking “the education individual retirement account” and inserting “the Coverdell education savings account”,

(c) Section 530(b)(1) of such Code is amended—

(A) by striking “education individual retirement account” and inserting “a Coverdell education savings account”,

(2) Section 530(b)(1) of such Code is amended—

(A) by striking “education individual retirement account” and inserting “a Coverdell education savings account”,

(3) Section 530(b)(1) of such Code is amended—

(A) by striking “education individual retirement account” and inserting “Coverdell education savings account”,

(2) Section 530(b)(1) of such Code is amended—

(A) by striking “education individual retirement account” and inserting “Coverdell education savings account”,

(3) Section 530(b)(1) of such Code is amended—

(A) by striking “education individual retirement account” and inserting “Coverdell education savings account”,

(3) Section 530(b)(1) of such Code is amended—

(A) by striking “education individual retirement account” and inserting “Coverdell education savings account”,

(4) Sections 530(d)(5) and 530(e) of such Code are amended—

(A) by striking “educational individual retirement account” and inserting “Coverdell education savings account”,

(B) by striking “the educational individual retirement account” and inserting “the Coverdell education savings account”,

(C) by striking “Coverdell educational savings account”.

The heading for section 530 of such Code is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 530. COVERDELL EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNTS.”

The item in the table of contents for part VII of subchapter F of chapter 1 of such Code relating to section 530 is amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 530. Coverdell education savings accounts.”

(b) Conforming Amendments.—

(1) The following provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 are amended by striking “an education individual retirement account” each place it appears and inserting “Coverdell education savings account”:

(A) Section 72(d)(5).

(B) Section 497(a).

(C) Subsections (a) and (b) of section 497.

(2) The following provisions of such Code are amended by striking “educational individual retirement account” each place it appears and inserting “Coverdell education savings account”:

(A) by striking “Coverdell educational savings account”,

(B) by striking “educational individual retirement account” and inserting “Coverdell education savings account”,

(C) by striking “Coverdell education savings account”.

(3) The headings for the following provisions of such Code are amended by striking “education individual retirement account” each place it appears and inserting “Coverdell education savings account”:

(A) Section 26(b)(2).
EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES OF HOUSE TO FAMILIES OF PEOPLE KILLED IN FANGLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EXPLOSION IN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on International Relations, the Committee on Rules, and the Committee on Ways and Means be discharged from further consideration of the resolution (H. Res. 121) expressing the sincerest condolences of the House of Representatives to the families of the 42 people, including 37 children, killed in the March 6, 2001, explosion at the Fanglin elementary school in the Jianxi province of the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) to explain the resolution.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to send our condolences to the survivors of those who died. Let me say briefly, Mr. Speaker, 10-year-old Zhang Yanhong was a good student; and she always listened to her teachers. As a result, on March 6 of this year she and 36 other of her third and fourth grade classmates all lost their lives.

For years, the parents of the children in the Fanglin elementary school which is in the small village 480 miles southwest of Shanghai, had complained that their children were being forced by school officials to manufacture large firecrackers at school. Every day, the young children were required to spend hours mounting fuses and detonators into the firecrackers that were then sold by local Communist party officials. The underpaid teachers and government officials running the child labor scheme also set a sliding production quota in order to maximize their profits. It started at 1,000 firecrackers per day for the youngest children and reached 10,000 firecrackers per day for the fifth graders.

Mr. Speaker, something terrible was bound to happen and soon it did. On a Tuesday afternoon, the firecrackers exploded in the elementary school and took the lives of 42 people including 37 young children.

Chinese Prime Minister Zhu immediately denied that there had been any forced labor involved in Fanglin. Instead, Communist party officials invented a story about a mad man who entered the school and set off the explosion as part of his suicide attempt.

According to news accounts, Communist party officials blocked off roads into the village to prevent journalists from seeing the scene of the accident for themselves and interviewing residents. Residents who let journalists through the roadblocks anyway were reportedly arrested and their telephones disconnected to prevent contact with the outside world.

However, thanks to the brave and determined reporting of both Chinese and international journalists, and to the persistence of the children's parents, who refused to go along with the official cover-up of the deaths of their loved ones, Prime Minister Zhu was forced to eventually acknowledge what really happened and apologize in a nationally broadcast message.

The forced labor and child labor condemned by the government of the People's Republic of China violates several conventions of the International Labor Organization; but, unfortunately, the ILO has no enforcement powers. For now all we can do is express our deep condolences to the parents and thank the journalists who risked their lives and their freedom to report the story.

Mr. Speaker, continuing under my reservation, I want to begin by thanking the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for bringing this resolution to the floor and the help he has been in getting it here today. I think this is an important resolution, and it is an important message from the Congress of the United States addressing China's disgraceful record on child and forced labor. Many of us, along with the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), have been raising this issue year after year as Congress has considered legislation granting special trade privileges to China.

Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago nearly 3 million of our fellow citizens celebrated our Nation's independence on July 4, and millions of fireworks were set off in celebration of that great anniversary. Unknown to many Americans, millions of those fireworks may have been made by young Chinese children compelled to labor in dangerous factories to raise money for their schools.

On March 6 of this year, 37 young Chinese school children were killed in an explosion that occurred while third and fourth graders were forced to manufacture fireworks at the Fanglin Elementary School. For years before the explosion, the parents of these children had pleaded with school administrators and government officials to end the practice of forced child labor, but their concerns were ignored. The conditions of the labor of these little children were hazardous, and the demands were unrealistic. The youngest children in the school were expected to mount at least 1,000 detonators and fuses into firecrackers per day. Children who were slightly older were each required to manufacture 10,000 firecrackers per day.

It was only a matter of time before this kind of tragedy occurred. And when it did on March 6, the first response of the Chinese government was to deny the facts and try to cover up the fact that the incident took place and try to fabricate a story. What we found out later, because of the bravery of these parents and because of some of the members of the press in China, the international journalists, we now know the truth about forced child labor in this school.

A week after the Chinese government invented its story, the Chinese prime minister finally apologized for the incident and acknowledged that the firecrackers were manufactured in an elementary school. Prohibition on child labor is not only the standard for Western countries or developed countries, it is an internationally recognized labor standard that has been approved by the ILO of which the United States and virtually every country of the world is a member.

All children, no matter how rich or poor their country, deserve to spend their developing years learning in school. The children at the Fanglin Elementary School were denied that right. Unfortunately, nobody knows if the hundreds of thousands of firecrackers produced at the Fanglin Elementary School were eventually sold to stores and firecracker stands right here in the United States.

However, if they did enter the United States market, it is a violation of U.S. laws which prohibit the importation of products made by forced labor. I have called upon the U.S. Customs Service and the Department of Labor to conduct an investigation to determine which products are produced under Chinese forced child labor. A few years ago, the Chinese government acknowledged that it was encouraging industries to move production into Chinese elementary and high schools. The government excuses them by saying that the businesses that set up their factories in the schools. While the government claims that these school industries do not use child labor or forced labor, the