

In causing this awakening, then, the terrorists have assured their own destruction. And those we mourn today, have, in the moment of their death, assured their own triumph over hate and fear. For out of this act of terror—and the awakening it brings—here and across the globe—will surely come a victory over terrorism. A victory that one day may save millions from the harm of weapons of mass destruction. And this victory—their victory—we pledge today.

But if we gather here to remember them—we are also here to console those who shared their lives, those who loved them. And yet, the irony is that those whom we have come to console have given us the best of all consolations, by reminding us not only of the meaning of the deaths, but of the lives of their loved ones.

“He was a hero long before the eleventh of September,” said a friend of one of those we have lost—“a hero every single day, a hero to his family, to his friends and to his professional peers.”

A veteran of the Gulf War—hardworking, who showed up at the Pentagon at 3:30 in the morning, and then headed home in the afternoon to be with his children—all of whom he loved dearly, but one of whom he gave very special care, because she needs very special care and love.

About him and those who served with him, his wife said: “It’s not just when a plane hits their building. They are heroes every day.”

“Heroes every day.” We are here to affirm that. And to do this on behalf of America.

And also to say to those who mourn, who have lost loved ones: Know that the heart of America is here today, and that it speaks to each one of you words of sympathy, consolation, compassion and love. All the love that the heart of America—and a great heart it is—can muster.

Watching and listening today, Americans everywhere are saying: I wish I could be there to tell them how sorry we are, how much we grieve for them. And to tell them too, how thankful we are for those they loved, and that we will remember them, and recall always the meaning of their deaths and their lives.

A Marine chaplain, in trying to explain why there could be no human explanation for a tragedy such as this, said once: “You would think it would break the heart of God.”

We stand today in the midst of tragedy—the mystery of tragedy. Yet a mystery that is part of that larger awe and wonder that causes us to bow our heads in faith and say of those we mourn, those we have lost, the words of scripture: “Lord now let Thy servants go in peace, Thy word has been fulfilled.”

To the families and friends of our fallen colleagues and comrades we extend today our deepest sympathy and condolences—and those of the American people.

We pray that God will give some share of the peace that now belongs to those we lost, to those who knew and loved them in this life.

But as we grieve together we are also thankful—thankful for their lives, thankful for the time we had with them. And proud too—as proud as they were—that they lived their lives as Americans.

We are mindful too—and resolute that their deaths, like their lives, shall have meaning. And that the birthright of human freedom—a birthright that was theirs as Americans and for which they died—will always be ours and our children’s. And through our efforts and example, one day, the birthright of every man, woman, and child on earth.

CONGRATULATIONS TO AZERBAIJAN

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I would like to present my most sincere congratulations to President Aliyev on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the restoration of Azerbaijan’s independence. The past several years have proven your nation’s commitment to democracy, and I encourage you to continue your efforts aimed at strengthening Azerbaijan’s independence, territorial integrity, and sovereignty. We, in the U.S. Congress, appreciate Azerbaijan’s friendship and support, especially in these times of the international campaign against terrorism. Please, accept, Mr. President, my best wishes to yourself and the Azerbaijani people on this anniversary.

RURAL EXEMPTION ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2001

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the “Rural Exemption Enhancement Act of 2001” (REEA). This modest proposal would ensure greater regulatory certainty for many of our nation’s rural telephone companies as they continue their efforts to bring quality and affordable advanced telecommunications services to our communities. I am pleased that this legislation has been endorsed by the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies as well as Sierra Telephone Company in my home district.

More than five years ago, Congress passed comprehensive legislation to reform our nation’s telecommunications laws—the Telecommunications Act of 1996. In crafting this legislation, Congress wisely included provisions which exempt rural telephone companies from the collocation, unbundling and resale obligations imposed upon incumbent local exchange carriers. Congress understood that these obligations would not serve the best interests of rural consumers and would deter investment in high-cost areas that are already challenging to serve due to a lack of economies of scale.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that the rural exemption accorded to rural telephone companies is not permanent and can be lifted by a State commission. Under section 251(f) of the Telecommunications Act, a new entrant may make a bona fide request to a State commission to lift a rural ILEC’s exemption. Following a 120 day evaluation of the request, a State commission may lift the exemption if the request from the competing carrier is not found to be unduly economically burdensome, is technically feasible, and is consistent with the universal service provisions of the Act.

I am very concerned, however, that the lifting of a rural telephone company exemption

by a State commission currently applies to both voice grade and advanced services. The current process for evaluating a petition to lift a rural exemption provides disincentive for small, rural carriers to make costly investment in advanced telecommunications service infrastructure. For these reasons, I am introducing the “Rural Exemption Enhancement Act.

My legislation should not in any way be interpreted to be a competing proposal to H.R. 1542, the “Internet Freedom and Broadband Deployment Act of 2001” passed by the House Energy and Commerce Committee. I am proud to be a cosponsor and active supporter of that proposal. The bill that I am introducing today would simply make it clear that a request to lift the voice grade exemption should be made and evaluated separately from the advanced services exemption.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress and the President will spend the remainder of this session developing legislation that is vital to our nation’s economy and national security. I look forward to working with my colleagues to move this legislation forward next year before the 107th Congress adjourns sine die.

IN HONOR OF CELIA CRUZ, RECIPIENT OF THE JAMES SMITHSON BICENTENNIAL MEDAL

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to musical legend Celia Cruz. On Tuesday, October 16, 2001, Ms. Cruz will be awarded the James Smithson Bicentennial Medal for her distinguished musical career and invaluable contributions to our nation’s cultural heritage. The award ceremony will take place at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC.

Celia Cruz was born and raised in the Santa Suárez neighborhood of Havana, Cuba. As a young girl, she spent much of her spare time entertaining her peers, friends, and neighbors by singing lullabies and melodies. In the 1940’s, she officially began her musical career by singing on numerous Cuban radio programs. She expanded her musical aptitude by studying at Havana’s Conservatory of Music from 1947 to 1950.

In 1950, Celia Cruz gained international acclaim by becoming the lead singer for Cuba’s top dance band, La Sonora Matancera. For over fifteen years, La Sonora Matancera electrified sold-out audiences with their vibrant and catchy Afro-Cuban melodies and rhythms.

Throughout much of her career, Celia Cruz has been hailed as the “Queen of Salsa” due to her energetic and animated musical performances. Cruz, a Grammy Award winner and Latina musical icon, has enjoyed a dynamic career that has spanned over five decades, recorded countless albums, and has often performed with musical great Tito Puente.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Celia Cruz, for her immeasurable contributions throughout her illustrious career. The James Smithson, Bicentennial Medal