

better than this bill. But clearly, today, we will not do better than this bill—and so, with some reluctance, I will vote for this bill.

Over the course of this year, the House has considered several important measures, including bills to respond to the terror attacks on our country. But this could be the most important bill of the year, and maybe even of this 107th Congress—because nothing is more important for the health of our democracy than improving the fairness and inclusiveness of our elections. That is why I am cosponsoring H.R. 1170, introduced by Representative Conyers.

That comprehensive reform bill would establish uniform and nondiscriminatory requirements for Federal elections, which must be met by the 2004 general election. Under that bill, all voting machines would have to: Allow voters to verify their votes before tabulation; notify voters of over votes and under votes; provide an auditable record; and be equally accessible to voters with disabilities and special needs.

Also, under that bill provisional ballots would be permitted in all Federal elections and all voters would have to get a sample ballot and instructions 10 days prior to election day, and would have to be notified of their voting rights under federal and state law and of the federal and state agencies to contact if they think their rights are violated.

The Conyers bill would provide for federal reimbursement to the states for meeting these requirements and a matching grant fund program that would provide advance assistance to enable states and localities for that purpose. And the bill would establish a politically balanced study Commission to examine voter registration and maintenance of voters rolls; issues of voter intimidation; accuracy of voting; establishing a federal or State election-day holiday; modified polling place hours; and whether an existing or a new Federal agency should provide continuing assistance to states. It would also examine access to ballots and polling places, including notice of voting locations and access for voters with disabilities, limited English proficiency, visual and hearing impairments, and with other special needs. The commission would develop recommendations of the best practices in voting and election administration.

These are all things that should be done—and while it does into do everything that should be done, this bill takes very important steps to improve current conditions. I opposed the rule because I wanted the bill to do more. I supported the motion to recommit for the same reason. But we should not refuse to do something even if we are not going to do all we should. So I will support the bill in the hope that it will be improved as the legislative process continues.

GETTING AMERICA'S ANTI-TERRORIST MESSAGE TO CENTRAL ASIA

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 13, 2001

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the International Relations Com-

mittee recently passed legislation to create Radio Free Afghanistan. I also commend the Administration for the steps it has taken to ensure that the United States does not lose the public relations battle as it wages the war on terrorism. It is vital that the people of Afghanistan and its neighbors know the truth about America's objectives in combating terrorism and understand how our actions benefit all of mankind.

Setting up Radio Free Afghanistan will give us a valuable tool to fight the vicious propaganda that Osama bin Laden and his supporters continue to spew forth. But Radio Free Afghanistan cannot succeed in isolation. Its broadcasts must be supplemented by stepped up and improved broadcasts to Afghanistan's neighbors—Pakistan and the Eurasian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. As my colleagues are aware, the Taliban are actively supporting an Islamic extremist insurgency in the Fergana Valley, where the borders of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan converge. It is conceivable that the Taliban's ultimate objective is Kazakhstan, the largest country in the region, rich in oil and minerals.

Broadcasts by Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty to these countries should be increased both in air time and in quality. They should also be broadcast in FM frequency, not short-wave, in order to reach the largest percentage of the population. In the case of Kazakhstan, I understand that these broadcasts are transmitted only in the Kazakh language, despite the fact that Russian remains the most widely used language in Kazakhstan. The only Russian-language broadcasts report on events in Russia, not in Kazakhstan. We need to broadcast in Russian to the Russian speakers in Kazakhstan.

Journalists and publishers in Kazakhstan and elsewhere are struggling to report the truth to their readers and listeners, but they are harassed and periodically shut down by the authorities. Getting newsprint on a reliable basis is also a problem. On November 27, 2001, President Nazarbayev threatened the media unless editors developed a code of conduct for journalists. The threatened clampdown came after critical articles appeared in the media concerning President Nazarbayev's son-in-law. Government agencies are sabotaging or shutting down Internet access as well. Local sources of non-government controlled news would be a valuable complement to U.S. government broadcasts. U.S. assistance, including supplying printing presses and ensuring continued access to the Internet, would be greatly welcomed by these lonely and persecuted voices of democracy and freedom.

In our broadcasts to these countries, we should bear in mind that repression and corruption are causing the people to lose hope; and if the governments that rule in the five former Soviet republics of Central Asia do not loosen their grip on their people, the people may respond to the siren call of Islamic extremists as holding out the only source of hope for change. Accordingly, even as we work with the governments of Central Asia to oust the Taliban and al-Qaeda from Afghanistan, we need also to make it very clear both to the governments and the peoples of the re-

gion that we oppose the repression and corruption that are causing so much suffering, deprivation and opportunities for Islamic extremists.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO MARIANO
APRAIZ

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 13, 2001

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a representative of the American spirit and drive, Mariano Apraiz. Mariano is from Spain originally, who after living in this nation for over thirty years, will take his oath and become a citizen of the United States. The ceremony will take place in Denver, Colorado on Friday, December 14.

The reason I bring Mariano's name to bear is to tell his story and determination to become an American. Mariano came to this country to find a new way of life and experience new opportunities in the world. He found work as a miner, rancher, and eventually a position in the local school district. Now at the age of 55, Mariano has made for himself successful life in this country and I praise him for his determination and courage to live his dream.

Mr. Speaker, when asked by the Grand Junction Sentinel why he wants to gain citizenship, he simply replies, "I want to vote." I think this statement speaks volumes for the pride Mariano has in his new country. He wants to be part of the process, he wants to participate in civic responsibility, and he wants to make a difference. Mariano has grown to love this nation and in these difficult and trying times, he is a symbol of national pride and spirit.

HONORING THE BISHOP FAMILY
AS THEY RECEIVE THE MASS
MUTUAL 2001 FAMILY BUSINESS
OF THE YEAR AWARD

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 13, 2001

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to congratulate an outstanding family and my good friends, the Bishops of Guilford, Connecticut as the recipients of the Mass Mutual 2001 Family Business of the Year Award. This remarkable family has been a fixture of the Guilford community for nearly 400 years and we are all proud to join with them as they celebrate this very special occasion.

Connecticut has a long and proud history in agriculture and our famous fruit orchards have become a highlighted attraction for visitors. From picking your own fruits and vegetables to learning the intricacies of the perfect apple cider, our orchards offer an unique view into one of our nation's oldest industries. The Bishop family has run Bishop Orchards since its establishment in 1871. Today, the families