

help start new small businesses, and stop the spread of AIDS.

Since its beginning, in 1961, more than 161,000 Americans have served as Peace Corps Volunteers in 134 countries. These are people who are dedicated and committed to making this a better world.

After serving and teaching in other countries, Peace Corps volunteers return to the U.S. with a greater understanding of other cultures and peoples.

It is truly a mutually beneficial cross-cultural exchange.

I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting the thousands of Peace Corps volunteers, past, present, and future, and in commending the Peace Corps for empowering and encouraging progress around the world for the past four decades.

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#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. JOSEPH M. HOFFEL

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 8, 2001*

Mr. HOFFEL. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday March 5, I missed two votes numbered 26 and 27. I missed these votes on account of illness. If present, I would have voted "yea" on both suspension bills.

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#### OPPOSING NATIONAL TEACHER CERTIFICATION OR NATIONAL TEACHER TESTING

### HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 8, 2001*

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce legislation to forbid the use of federal funds to develop or implement a national system of teacher certification or a national teacher test. My bill also forbids the Department of Education from denying funds to any state or local education agency because that state or local educational agency has refused to adopt a federally-approved method of teacher certification or testing. This legislation in no way interferes with a state's ability to use federal funds to support their chosen method of teacher certification or testing.

Federal control of teacher certification will inevitably lead to a national curriculum. National teacher certification will allow the federal government to determine what would-be teachers need to know in order to practice their chosen profession. Teacher education will revolve around preparing teachers to pass the national test or to receive a national certificate. New teachers will then base their lesson plans on what they needed to know in order to receive their Education Department-approved teaching certificate. Therefore, I call on those of my colleagues who oppose a national curriculum to join me in opposing national teacher testing and certification.

Many educators are voicing opposition to national teacher certification and testing. The Coalition of Independent Education Associa-

tions (CIEA), which represents the majority of the over 300,000 teachers who are members of independent educators associations, has passed a resolution opposing the nationalization of teacher certification and testing. As more and more teachers realize the impact of this proposal, I expect opposition from the education community to grow. Teachers want to be treated as professionals, not as minions of the federal government.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I once again urge my colleagues to join me in opposing national teacher certification or national teacher testing. Training and certification of classroom teachers is the job of state governments, local school districts, educators, and parents; this vital function should not be usurped by federal bureaucrats and/or politicians. Please stand up for America's teachers and students by signing on as a cosponsor of my legislation to ensure taxpayer dollars do not support national teacher certification or national teacher testing.

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#### DON'T FORGET THE MUSTANG FREEDOM FIGHTERS

### HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 8, 2001*

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, March 10th is the 42nd anniversary of the Tibetan Uprising Day and the Chinese occupation of Tibet. Every year we appropriately celebrate this solemn day by recognizing and remembering the thousands of Tibetan people who gave their lives on March 10th struggling for their freedom. This past year the brutality of the Chinese occupation government has been exceptionally cruel to Tibetan Buddhist religious practitioners. Many monks and nuns have been executed and tortured to death for their beliefs while the Panchen Lama still remains under detention. Accordingly, it is fitting that this month the Bush administration will introduce a resolution in Geneva at the United Nations Human Rights Commission condemning the Chinese government's contemptible lack of concern for the rights of the Tibetan and Chinese people.

We welcome the Bush administration's open-eyed approach to dealing with the Chinese government on human rights issues and its signals that it is willing to assist our friends on Taiwan. We are therefore hopeful that our government's policy toward Tibet will be brought in line with this refreshing pragmatism. A good start would be by remembering and recognizing the people of Kham who began their resistance against Chinese expansionism almost 51 years ago when the Communists launched their invasion of eastern Tibet in 1950. The brave Khampas and people from Amdo being intensely loyal to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and willing to sacrifice their lives to protect their religious beliefs and institutions, bore the brunt of the PLA's brutal effort to conquer Tibet. Years before Mao's hardened shock troops marched into Lhasa, the people of Kham and Amdo struggled against all odds to turn back the atheist Communist invaders. To this day they still pay dearly for

their religious beliefs and struggle for their rights. Their lands and their monasteries have yet to be completely returned to them and the Chinese government has yet to pay reparations.

During the 1950's and up until the early 1970's our government supported the Tibetan cause by training and equipping their fighters and by drawing attention in the international community to the Tibetan plight. When our government ended our assistance to the Tibetan fighters in the early 70's who were then operating out of Mustang, a remote area of northern Nepal, many of them stayed in Nepal. To this day, a number of these men and women still struggle for their survival while some have passed on.

Fourteen years ago, the Congress passed a resolution condemning China's occupation of Tibet. When President Reagan signed it, Lodi Gyaltzen Gyari, a great Khampa, a good friend and His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Special Envoy urged Congressman Charlie Rose and myself to send two of our staff assistants to travel to India and Nepal to learn more about the Tibetan issue. Towards the end of that visit, they met with a number of the Mustang fighters in a small camp in Pokara, Nepal. Our congressional staff reported back to us that these Khampas were still prepared to give their lives for their nation and remained intensely loyal to the United States. They continued to believe that we would never abandon them although it appeared to the outside world that that was exactly what we had done. The camp leader remarked to our staff, "friends don't abandon friends and America stands up for what is right."

When the Congress heard about these brave, earnest Khampas, we committed ourselves to renewing our Nation's contact with the Tibetan people. We passed the historic sense of the Congress resolution stating that Tibet is an occupied country and His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile are the true representatives of the Tibetan people. In addition, we directed the Voice of America to transmit into Tibet, thus giving the Tibetan people their first clear window to the outside world. Moreover, we ensured that various forms of political and material assistance began to flow to the Tibetan diaspora.

Accordingly, on this March 10th anniversary, may the Khampa fighters and all the elderly men and women of Tibet who continue their struggle inspire us today by their courage and enduring devotion to the cause of Tibetan freedom. As America—who offered them hope and then withdrew its promise—is especially indebted to the freedom fighters, I will look into how we might offer them more than just our sincere thanks. I have learned that many Tibetan elders are living in destitute conditions in Nepal and India. Let us all bear in mind the Mustang freedom fighters on this occasion and begin to consider how we can demonstrate in real terms that their cause remains our own.