

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING ORGANIZATION COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT, COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES (CASA)

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 13, 2001

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to honor an organization in Northern Virginia that has made serving neglected and abused children its priority. Court Appointed Special Advocates has been serving the community for over a decade, and its dedication throughout our region is being rewarded at the Springfield Inter-Service Award Ceremony on March 14, 2001.

Court Appointed Special Advocates, or CASA, is a national organization dedicated to ensuring that the best interests of abused and neglected children are represented in court. It was started in Washington State in 1976 by King County Superior Court Presiding Judge David W. Soukop. The court found that before the formation of CASA, attorneys did not spend the necessary time and did not have the adequate training to provide the thorough investigation needed in these cases. Judge Soukop decided to recruit volunteers to do the required research and stay with the children as their court cases unfolded.

There are programs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands. There are 25 CASA offices in Virginia, the largest of which is in Fairfax. The office in Fairfax was opened in 1989 and to date has helped over 3,000 children. With 150 volunteers, it is currently serving 400 children. Working with attorneys, school and medical officials, and social workers, CASA volunteers act on behalf of the children involved in cases so they do not become just another docket number.

CASA volunteers must complete hours of training and are then sworn in by a judge. Before taking on a case, volunteers work hard to attain knowledge of the case by sitting in on a day of proceedings on that particular case. The dedication of these volunteers to the children they are asked to represent helps these children through very traumatic times. The first priority of CASA is to help children. They do not investigate the abuse; they only look into information about the child and the family. Their mandate is "what is in the best interest of the child."

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I wish the very best to CASA as it is honored at the Springfield Inter-Service Awards Banquet in Springfield, Virginia. The volunteers certainly have earned this recognition, and I call upon all of my colleagues to join me in applauding their remarkable achievement.

INTRODUCTION OF FLAG PROTECTION AMENDMENT

HON. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 13, 2001

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reintroduce legislation which would amend the Constitution to prevent desecration of the American flag. This measure is identical to H.J. Res. 33, which I sponsored in the last session of Congress, and language previously adopted by the House. It is necessary to restore protections for the symbol of our nation and all its honored traditions, which were sadly wiped away in the 1989 Supreme Court ruling on *Texas v. Johnson*.

In that fateful 5-4 ruling, the court cast aside longstanding national laws and 48 state laws recognizing the flag's special status and honoring its place in American society—ruling that its desecration is protected under the first amendment. For those who see our flag as a revered symbol of freedom and the great sacrifices that were made to sustain it at home and abroad, that decision was a horrible affront—and the call to action was immediate.

Inspired to preserve our national trademark and unalloyed symbol of unity, Congress quickly moved to pass a law restoring flag protections. But in its 5-4 ruling on *United States v. Eichman* in 1990, the Supreme Court once again found that flag protections were inconsistent with free expression rights accorded under the first amendment. That ruling made it clear that restoration of flag protections would require a constitutional amendment.

Since that ruling, the House four times has acted on a Flag Protection Constitutional Amendment, passing it three times with well over the two-thirds majority required. The Senate has also acted, failing to achieve the two-thirds votes necessary to move the amendment forward to the states for ratification by a mere handful of votes. With the Senate coming just three votes shy of that goal last year, and a new administration which has expressed its support for the Flag Protection Amendment, we are now within reach of victory.

As a combat veteran who served 20 years in the Navy, there are almost no words adequate to convey the significance of the U.S. flag to me. But I can tell you that each color on that flag, each star and each stripe evokes emotion in me, and together they stand as a symbol of everything I believed in about this country when I fought to defend it. When I heard that some in my country were opposing my military's involvement in Vietnam, that flag reminded me of our tolerance for differences and our endurance through unity. It was a steady symbol of the liberties we enjoy—a way of life that should be protected for future generations and defended for others who as-

pire to it. And for POWs who endured unthinkable torture and deprivation, it was a source of hope and strength that helped them persevere another day.

There have been several major incidents of flag burning since the Court ruling in 1990. These incidents tear at me, and represent a direct attack on all I hold dear about this country. The Constitution was not designed to protect actions which jeopardize others' rights, and the government has long acted to restrict speech and conduct that could cause harm to others. Those who want to express their anger against this country have options that don't involve destroying the sacred symbol that belongs to all citizens.

At a time when we are faced with increasing youth violence and cultural breakdown, restoring our most recognized sign of unity would be a positive step in the right direction—providing a steady reminder that living free comes with responsibility to respect others.

Mr. Speaker, the state of Israel has laws protecting not only its flag, but the flags of its allies as well. It is inexplicable to me that the United States is being told by its courts to tolerate such acts of hatred and violence against its flag when our allies go to such great lengths to protect it. Over 75 percent of Americans consistently agree: the time to restore protections for our flag is long overdue. I ask my colleagues to join me in support of this constitutional amendment, and to move it back to the American people for speedy ratification.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CASS BALLENGER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 13, 2001

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, I regret that I missed rollcall votes 43, 44, and 45 on the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Act of 2001 (H.R. 3). Had I been present, I would have voted "Yea" to Table the Motion to Reconsider; "No" on the Motion to Recommit with Instructions; and "Yea" on Final Passage of H.R. 3. As Co-Chairman of the Inter-parliamentary Forum of the Americas, which met in Ottawa, Canada, last week, I had to leave the House chamber following my vote against the Rangel Substitute Amendment to H.R. 3 in order to make my flight to Canada. My attendance at this forum is in furtherance of my official duties as Chairman of the International Relations Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere. The Forum included representatives from 27 nations, and I was the sole representative of the U.S. Congress in attendance.

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