March 27, 2001

PRAISING THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM AT TRINITY COLLEGE

HON. JOHN B. LARSON
OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 27, 2001

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the work of the human rights program at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut for its dedication to increasing awareness of human rights injustices around the world and the active role it has taken in the campaign against such abuses. Because of the tireless efforts of Maryam Elahi, the Director of the program, Trinity College boasts a human rights program that is believed to be the only undergraduate interdisciplinary human rights program in the United States, challenging its students to become active participants in the fight against human rights violations around the world. This Friday will mark yet another instance of Trinity’s dedication.

On March 30, 2001, the Human Rights Program will be hosting an emergency call to attention to the plight of three teachers being held as political prisoners in Myanmar, the country formerly known as Burma, Ms. Ma Thida Htway, Mr. U Ye Tint, and Ms. Ma Khin Khin Leh. Their story has caught the attention of many world leaders including Her Majesty, Queen Rania al-Abdulla of Jordan. I am honored to have Queen Rania as a guest of the First Congressional District and as the keynote speaker of Friday’s ceremony.

The three teachers were arrested in July 1999 with a dozen other activists in connection to a march that had been planned commemorating the assassination of independence hero General Aung Sand and supporting the National League for Democracy (NLD). Ms. Ma Thida Htway, an elementary school teacher, was arrested for attempting to organize the 1999 uprising and creating a human rights movement. Mr. U Ye Tint, a private tutor, was helping students of the uprising produce pamphlets. Ms. Ma Khin Khin Leh, a nonpolitical, was arrested together with her three-year-old daughter, after the Military Intelligence was unable to locate her political activistic husband. After five days her daughter was released; however, Ma Khin Khin Leh sits in an unspecified prison for a life sentence. The two others were also sentenced to lengthy prison terms in a trial that fell short of the international standards for fair trials. All have been brutalized and tortured because of their political beliefs. This cannot continue.

The plight of these three teachers is just one of many human rights abuses which occur everyday. I have joined my distinguished colleagues and co-chairs of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, Mr. Lantos and Mr. Wolf, and many of my other colleagues, in a letter to Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, Secretary of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar, calling on him to review their cases and release them immediately and unconditionally. It is my hope that our efforts will generate a victory in the battle for the three teachers; and ultimately, have a positive impact on the war against human rights abuses.

Here in the United States, we take for granted the inalienable rights afforded to us by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The freedoms of speech, expression, and assembly are all rights exercised by American citizens everyday. We often forget these rights, which our forefathers fought so vigorously to ensure, are not freedoms enjoyed by all citizens of our world. I praise Trinity College for recognizing the significance of this international epidemic and urge my colleagues to join in the international campaign to combat these horrific violations of human rights.

SU CLINICA FAMILIA

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ
OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 27, 2001

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Su Clinica Familia (Spanish for “your family clinic”), a comprehensive primary health care service center in the Rio Grande Valley, on their 30th anniversary of operation in South Texas, and I ask my colleagues to join me in the observation of this important milestone.

Su Clinica’s work over the years has provided the only medical care available to so many migrant workers and low-income families in the Valley over the past three decades. On the anniversary of their 30th year in service to South Texas, we are breaking ground on April 6th to celebrate the new dimension of their work: academia.

Su Clinica is now a major principal partner with the Regional Academic Health Center (RAHC), and they will be the primary training ground for RAHC. This will be a new direction for them in which they will recruit, train, and retain doctors and health care professionals, all in the Rio Grande Valley.

Su Clinica burst onto the South Texas community health scene in 1971 to improve the health for families in Cameron and Willacy Counties in South Texas. Su Clinica was the birth of a dream of a group of generous patrons, the Archdiocese of Brownsville and other charity groups, all who wanted to see health care available to migrant and seasonal farm workers.

I have personal, particular appreciation for Su Clinica Familia. As a former migrant worker, I have a unique perspective of what it is like to be unable to afford health care. I have vivid memories from my childhood about the health of my family. We had no health insurance, and thankfully we were relatively healthy.

But when one of us was sick, my father would gather us up, no matter what the time of day, to pray for whoever was sick. That was our health insurance. I still advocate that people pray for their loved ones when they are sick, but no one should be without basic health care today.

Su Clinica’s unique health care services increase the self-worth of the people treated there. That self-worth is evident in the faces of the people who walk out of the clinic. The resulting longevity of their lives makes for productive and drug resistant tuberculosis along the border in the early 1990s, to working together today to stem the epidemic of rampant, drug resistant tuberculosis along the border, our relationship has been strong and productive.

The new direction in becoming the primary training ground for young doctors and health professionals is a natural outgrowth of Su Clinica’s three decades of work for our community.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in congratulating Su Clinica Familia for their longevity and success in bringing health care to low-income South Texans, at a time and in a place where the quality of health care has international repercussions.

Tuesday, March 27, 2001

A BILL TO PERMANENTLY EXTEND THE WORK OPPORTUNITY AND WELFARE-TO-WORK TAX CREDITS AND IMPROVE THE PROGRAMS

HON. AMO HOUGHTON
OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, Today I am joined by my colleague from New York, Mr. Rangel, in introducing our bill, "The Work Opportunity Improvement Act of 2001." The bill would permanently extend the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and the Welfare-to-Work Credit (W-t-W) and make one other change discussed below. Both programs are currently due to expire on December 31, 2001. As we reintroduce the bill to permanently extend the programs, I want to note how please I was to receive a report dated March 13, 2001 from the General Accounting Office which concluded that there is little evidence, if any, that employers are “churning” employees to take advantage of multiple credits. This report puts aside the churning charge that has surfaced in the past, and reflects favorably on the integrity of the programs.

Because there have been a number of improvements in the programs over the past few years, they are being well received in providing employment, with training, for our disadvantaged. During the past five years, WOTC and W-t-W have been an integral part in helping over a million and a half low-skilled individuals dependent on public assistance, enter into the work force. That does not mean there can’t be further improvements to the programs and will continue to review the programs for improvements that will benefit all the parties involved.

Such training can be costly and the credits provide an incentive to employers to hire the disadvantaged and provide the needed training while offsetting costs associated with the latter effort. Of course, many believe the programs would be even more successful if they could be extended indefinitely. We hear from both employers and state job services, which administer the programs, that the continued uncertainty surrounding short-term extensions impedes expanded participation and improvements in program administration. If the programs were made permanent, employers, both...
large and small, would be induced to expand their recruitment efforts and encourage the states to improve the administration of the programs. Such a change would benefit everyone.

The other provision in the bill would expand the food stamp category by increasing the age limit from 24 to 50 years of age. The current ceiling of 24 limits the availability of individuals in this targeted category. There are many individuals, over the age of 24, who could be gainfully employed if the age limit was expanded. Currently, the programs do an excellent job of helping women on welfare enter into the workforce. Over 80% of the hires in the programs are women. However, men from welfare households face a greater barrier to hire because they are no longer eligible for welfare once they turn 18. However, they can qualify if they are a member of a household receiving food stamps. But again, the age limit on the food stamp category is 24. We believe increasing that age limit to 50 will provide employers an incentive to hire such individuals and provide them with a sense of personal responsibility and self-esteem in assuming their responsibility as parents and members of society.

We use our colleagues to join us in cosponsoring this important legislation to extend and improve the two programs.

IN HONOR OF WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH—RECOGNIZING NEW MEXICO WOMEN

HON. HEATHER WILSON
OF NEW MEXICO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, March 27, 2001

Mrs. WILSON. Mr. Speaker, in honor of Women’s History Month, I asked New Mexicans to send me nominations of women in New Mexico who have given special service to our community, but may have never received recognition for their good deeds.

I received twenty-eight worthy nominations describing sacrifices and contributions these women have made for our community. The people who nominated the women described the dedication they have witnessed; volunteer hours for veteran services, Sunday School Teachers, service on non-profit boards, homeles programs, fund raising for scholarships for at risk youth, healthcare providers going above the call of duty, child advocates, volunteers at churches and synagogues, successful business women, wives, mothers and friends.

Allow me to share examples of the nominations.

Lydia Asharini—A community volunteer since the age of 10. She has actively mentored many young women through Big Brothers/Big Sisters and other youth programs. Lydia is a committed volunteer for Leadership New Mexico, fostering future leaders in our state. Her volunteer efforts have touched economic development, women’s programs and DWI activism.

JoAnn Carnahan—A hospice volunteer nominated by Elizabeth Carlin, a hospice patient. JoAnn takes Elizabeth for chemotherapy and stays with her for the 3–4 hours it takes for the treatments. JoAnn volunteers for a disabled man, doing his grocery shopping and laundry each week. At Christmastime she helps with the gift bags for hospice patients.

Connie Martinez—A community liaison in the San Jose neighborhood of Albuquerque, she works hard on issues important to her neighbors and friends. Although she has experienced many personal losses in her life, she remains committed to making a positive difference. Connie is an advocate on environmental issues such as Superfund and Brownfields sites in the community, and social and economic concerns that affect the residents of San Jose. Connie is also an active volunteer at her parish.

Carolyn Monroe—A successful business woman who shares her skills on several boards concerned with the economic well-being and growth in our community. She understands the need and benefit of helping individuals and organizations succeed in the business community. Additionally she gives her time and financial support to many non-profit organizations.

Gloria Septien—One of only four women in the United States who owns a radio station, and one of only Hispanic women owning a radio station. She has performed innumerable acts of kindness including food and toy drives for needy families and giving generously to charitable organizations, including the United Way.

Tamera Ward—A juvenile justice social worker who “walks the talk.” Tamera has developed programs to help youth begin their rehabilitation and make a successful transition once they are out of the institution. She helps teens in the institution tell their stories through “Tales from the Inside”, sharing why no one once they are out of the institution. She helps teens in the institution tell their stories through “Tales from the Inside”, sharing why no one.

These five excerpts from the nominations serve as examples of the women making history today and impacting the future in new Mexico. Please join me in honoring all of the worthy nominations: Julia Y. Seligman, Thema Honey, Aileen O’Bryan, Margareta Davidson (Posthumously), Maureen Sanders, Jodie Framan, Gwen Poe, Fran Bradshaw, Cathy Davis, Penny Howard, Carolyn Monroe, Melissa Barlow, Betty King, Mary Torrens, Paulina Slopek, Cathleen Tomlinson, Jan Johnson, Lorinda Romero, Virginia Eubanks, Vickie Terry, Manly Schaer and Sue Stearns.

WILDKITS SWIM AWAY WITH STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY
OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, March 27, 2001

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the Evanston Township High School swim team on winning this year’s Illinois State championship. After more than 40 long years, the State swimming championship title is back in Evanston. And after the many hours of hard work in the pool and countless laps, this team’s dedication to winning was finally rewarded.

Led by Coach of the Year Kevin Auger, this year’s outstanding and superbly talented Evanston Township High School swim team dominated the competition, broke state records, and swam away with the top prize. That was a proud moment for ETHS swimmers, coaches, faculty, and especially the parents of those remarkable student athletes. It was a very proud moment for all the residents of the city of Evanston and all Wildkit fans and alumni.

I urge all members to read the following article from the Evanston Review on ETHS’ great achievement, and to take a minute and read the names of the championship swim team members listed below.

ETHS Team Members: Glen Anderson, Jamaal Applewhite, Peter Bloom, Nate Crock-er, Brian Doyle, Justin Froelich, Taylor Hales, Alex Johnson, Sean Mau, Sean Mendnyk, Stuart Olsen, Terry Silkaitis, Stephen Skalinder, Will Vogel, Blake Wallace, Seth Weidman, and Brian Weiland.

ETHS Coaches: Kevin Auger, Jim Blickestaff, Chuck Fargo, Joey Halipem, and Aaron Melnick.

[From the Evanston Review, Mar. 1, 2001]

ETHS SNAG FIRST STATE SWIM TITLE IN OVER 40 YEARS

(By Dennis Mahoney)

Evanston freshman Alex Johnson brought his family’s favorite lawn ornament—a two-foot high plastic penguin—to the Illinois High School Association state swimming and diving finals Saturday at New Trier High School. “It’s always brought my family good luck, so I thought I’d bring it along,” Johnson said.

But good luck isn’t necessary at the state swim finals. The cream always rises to the top.

Led by the terrific trio of Terry Silkaitis, Sean McCaffrey and Blake Wallace, Evanston clinched the team title in just the top of the heap as the Wildkits captured their first state crown since 1960 Saturday.

Coach Kevin Auger’s team left no doubt about the outcome with a sizzling performance during Friday’s preliminary competition, then breezed to a team total of 139 points and easily outdistanced runner-up St. Charles East (110).

Silkaitis defended his individual championship in the 300-yard freestyle event, and also swam with the victorious 200 and 400 freestyle relay teams as part of a dominating performance by the Wildkits.

“Winning that last relay (in a school record 2:04.41) was just the icing on the cake for us,” said Auger after his celebratory dip in the New Trier pool. “This just feels awesome. These guys worked so hard and it’s just great to see this senior class accomplish this.

“For them to handle the pressure the way they did was just tremendous. Our big three swam virtually perfect Friday, and I told the guys we had to win yesterday to win it today.”

“Even after the sectional I didn’t think this was possible. It feels awesome, but it hasn’t really sunk in yet,” said Silkaitis. “It definitely was a nerve-wracking weekend. But I knew what I had to do—and I did it.”

The splendid senior almost pulled off a pair of individuals wins. He put together impressive back-to-back swims in the 200—with a