

May 17, 2001

POST OFFICE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 2001 LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2001

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, please accept the following letter of endorsement for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, which corresponds with my introduction today of the Post Office Community Partnership Act of 2001.

AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION,
1776 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., NW, SUITE
400,

Washington, DC, May 15, 2001.

Hon. EARL BLUMENAUER,

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE BLUMENAUER: The American Planning Association is pleased to endorse the Post Office Community Partnership Act of 2001. APA applauds your outstanding vision and leadership in introducing this legislation and once again bringing this important issue before the U.S. House of Representatives. This legislation recognizes and protects the central and compelling role that the local post office plays in the economic and social life of a community by providing a needed method for community input and support for local planning.

The Postal Service has too often closed or relocated facilities in ways that abandon service for some communities, vacate historic structures in downtown areas, and contribute to urban sprawl without providing for adequate community involvement in the decision-making process. This measure gives local citizens a greater voice in decisions about the location of postal facilities and ensures that local plans addressing growth management, land use, traffic congestion, environmental protection, downtown revitalization and historic preservation are respected by the Postal Service.

Increasingly, communities across the nation are developing comprehensive plans to better manage development, preserve vital resources and encourage sustainable economic development. It is essential that the Federal Government is a good neighbor and partner in these smart growth communities. The Post Office Community Partnership Act simply guarantees that the Postal Service operates within the guidelines that a community develops for all other citizens and businesses, without establishing an unduly burdensome mandate on the Postal Service.

In a national voter survey sponsored by APA and conducted at the end of 2000, we found that an overwhelming 82% of voters support legislation ensuring that federal facilities are located in places that are easily accessible to citizens and are consistent with local growth management plans. This support transcended partisan affiliation, demographic group and regional location.

The post office is an institution at the heart of any community, particularly small towns. By protecting the values and vision of local citizens as embodied in the planning process, this bill lives up to its title by creating a real and lasting partnership between the Postal Service and communities.

APA lends its enthusiastic support to your efforts and urges the United States Senate to enact this legislation.

Sincerely,

BRUCE McCLENDON,

FAICP President.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSISTANCE PARTNERSHIP ACT

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2001

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Cultural Heritage Assistance Partnership Act. The legislation would establish a program within the National Park Service to help preserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the United States. The program would coordinate Federal activities and provide information, technical assistance and grants to States, Indian tribes, local governments and non-profit organizations.

Our nation's cultural heritage is a diverse array of natural, historical, cultural, scenic, and recreational resources. The hallmark of these treasures is that they are authentic.

Together they define an area or region's distinct character. Communities increasingly recognize their cultural heritage as a valuable resource, both esthetically and economically. Cultural heritage tourism is now a \$50 billion segment of the \$600 billion US travel industry.

Within Colorado are six state heritage areas, designated by the Colorado Heritage Area Partnership and the governor. Colorado also has one federally designated heritage area, Cache La Poudre. The Colorado program is still relatively young and depends largely on volunteers and some small grants. Yet the heritage they share is very important not just to Colorado, but to the rest of the country as well.

Other states—such as Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Utah—have developed or are in the process of developing heritage area programs. I'm told that at least 20 states have developed cultural heritage tourism programs.

At the national level, however, no Federal agency has the role of coordinating the many government programs that could assist the cultural heritage programs being developed by States, tribes, local governments and private organizations.

My legislation would create the Cultural Heritage Assistance Partnership Program in the National Park Service to provide information and technical assistance on cultural heritage resources and activities, including heritage areas, heritage tourism and related economic and community development.

Technical assistance would include developing models of cultural heritage partnership agreements; holding workshops, conferences, training and public meetings; developing guidance on ways to access Federal programs; and coordinating meetings with Federal agencies and non-federal partners. An awards program would be established to recognize exemplary projects or program that carry out the purposes of this Act.

The legislation also provides for a modest grant program, to provide grants, on a competitive basis, to States, Indian tribes, local governments and nonprofit organizations. Annual funding for the grants is capped at \$9 million. No applicant could receive more than \$50,000 in grants in any fiscal year, all grants must be matched on a 50 percent basis, and

8503

all recipients must have at least one partner who also contributes facilities, supplies or services for the project.

Mr. Speaker, my bill has gained support from many international, national and local interests—not only from my own State of Colorado, but organizations from all over the country. Many of them are listed below, and the list grows daily.

They speak far more eloquently than I can about what the bill would do to further their efforts to preserve and enhance the cultural heritage of our great nation.

ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSISTANCE PARTNERSHIP ACT

COLORADO

Colorado Preservation, Inc.

Colorado Community Revitalization Association.

City of Lafayette, Colorado.

Operation Healthy Communities (Durango Colorado).

Park County Historical Society, Colorado.

OTHER STATE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS:

Connecticut River Watershed Council—Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont.

Historic Staunton Foundation, Virginia.

Kentucky Organization of Professional Archaeologists.

New River Community Partners, North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia.

New York State Archaeological Association.

Public Policy Information Fund, Austin, Texas.

Rio Grande Institute, Marathon, Texas.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Association of Museums.

American Cultural Resources Association.

American Planning Association.

National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers.

National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Partners in Parks.

Preservation Action.

Scenic America.

Society for American Archaeology.

US/ICOMOS.

SELECTED STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSISTANCE PARTNERSHIP ACT

COLORADO

Colorado Community Revitalization Association (CCRA) wholeheartedly endorses the Cultural Heritage Assistance Partnership Act that Congressman Udall will be introducing this week in Congress.

CCRA is a statewide nonprofit organization that has, as one of its programs, the Colorado Heritage Area Partnership program (CHAP). Within Colorado there are six state heritage areas.

The heritage areas in Colorado are volunteer efforts that receive sporadic project funding from grants. Two of the areas have been fortunate to have volunteers who have had the flexibility to provide minor assistance to the heritage areas as part of their employment.

As Colorado wrestles with ways to control and direct its growth, the goals of Colorado's heritage areas become more difficult to realize and simultaneously all the more critical. Recognition of the importance of our heritage and providing ways to identify, inventory, preserve and enhance all the elements that make up what we call "heritage" is vital to securing our place in history. We

must protect and enhance the qualities that make Colorado, Colorado.

BARBARA SILVERMAN,
*Executive Director,
Colorado Community
Revitalization Association.*

On behalf of Colorado Preservation, Inc. (CPI), I write in support of the Cultural Heritage Resources Partnership Act which you are sponsoring and the assistance it could provide to heritage areas.

As Colorado's statewide historic preservation organization, CPI sees the needs of historic preservation around the state more clearly than most organizations. As CPI members, we see these needs through the lens of one of our own programs, Colorado's Most Endangered Places Program. As a citizen-driven initiative, this program identifies historic places that are about to be lost forever.

Most of the places that get placed on the Endangered Places List each year would not have been noticed had it not been for this annual listing and the publicity it generates. Yet, even with recognition that a historic place is threatened, many of these endangered places are located in small towns or rural areas where there is little funding for them. Local citizens typically want to save a beloved building in their town but often have no idea where to turn for help.

The bill which you are sponsoring would provide much needed technical assistance to these sites which otherwise would have no one to advocate on their behalf. And the program could generate good partnerships with already existing programs. For example, it could link to other Endangered Places Programs around the country since many statewide historic preservation organizations like CPI sponsor such a program.

This bill is a good idea and one that could provide needed assistance to areas that could really use it. Additionally, the bill could bring economic relief to local economies particularly those in rural areas.

As the public loves heritage areas and will travel to visit them, there is tourism potential. So add tourism development to the list of ways in which a local area could benefit from the bill.

Thank you so much for your efforts to take on this issue of helping heritage areas and for understanding that these areas bring an economic advantage to places that need it the most.

MONTA LEE DAKIN,
*Executive Director,
Colorado Preservation, Inc.*

This legislation sounds like an answer to some of the prayers of local preservation organizations, especially in rural areas. We have been involved as partners with Park County, Colorado, and several state and federal organizations and agencies to strengthen the mechanisms to preserve our important cultural heritage resources.

This is difficult work when you are starting from scratch, and there is little or no technical advice available. The National Trust and the NPS websites and publications are excellent sources, but sometimes it comes down to being able to hire the expertise to get the pump primed, to get the local people sensitized and trained.

Colorado is fortunate in having the magnificent State Historical Fund that grants funds for historic preservation projects. However, there are areas of cultural heritage that do not qualify for this program—devel-

oping archives of documents and photographs, assisting local museums, conducting oral histories, writing community histories that are not directly related to preserving sites and structures.

Partnerships are "Best Practice" for accomplishing significant work in rural communities. Bringing together everyone who is interested in and responsible for cultural heritage preservation is essential. The proposed legislation will go a long way to help us in our efforts.

JACKIE W. POWELL,
Director, Park County Historical Society.

FORT COLLINS, CO.

As someone who has done applied research and community outreach on cultural heritage issues, especially as they relate to local economic development, I strongly support the passage of the Cultural Heritage Partnership Act.

If possible, I'd appreciate any further information on the bill as it develops. Thanks!

STEPHAN WEILER, PH.D.,
*Assistant Professor & Regional Economist,
Department of Economics, Colorado State
University.*

I serve on the boards of directors of the South Park Historical Foundation, Inc., The South Park Symposium, and the Park County Advisory Board on the Environment. The proposal by Representative Mark Udall to establish a Cultural Heritage Assistance Partnership Program as part of the Cultural Heritage Assistance Partnership Act would be beneficial to the three organizations I serve on in Park County, Colorado.

Park County has an abundance of cultural heritage worth preserving but the pressure to build for the expanding population could sweep much of it away. Assistance to preserve and manage a significant portion of this rich cultural heritage is needed.

GARY MINKE,
Park County, Co.

I am in full support of Rep. Mark Udall's proposed legislation establishing a Cultural Heritage Resources Partnership Program. Many communities are trying to preserve their heritage resources.

In Park County, we have several programs such as a local historic register, a State Heritage Area, historical archives, historic preservation/rehabilitation, river conservation/recreation, and view corridor preservation, which are actively working on small budgets with dedicated volunteers to preserve cultural resources and promote heritage tourism.

This legislation would benefit all communities by recognizing the importance of heritage preservation, acting as an informational base/disseminator, and providing small grant programs. Please add my name to the list of supporters for Rep. Mark Udall's proposed legislation.

LYNDA JAMES,
Bailey, Co.

As a non profit organization that supports community development and mobilization, I am expressing our interest in the Act that Rep. Mark Udall is planning to introduce. Feel free to add the name of our organization. We serve 5 counties in SW Colorado.

LAURA LEWIS,
*Executive Director,
Operation Healthy Communities.*

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The American Association of Museums is proud to support Rep. Mark Udall's outstanding legislation, the Cultural Heritage Assistance Partnership Act. Please list us as a supporter of this legislation.

Founded in 1906, the American Association of Museums (AAM) is dedicated to promoting excellence within the museum community. AAM currently represents more than 16,000 members—11,500 individual museum professionals and volunteers, 3,100 institutions, and 1,700 corporate members. Individual members span the range of occupations in museums, including directors, curators, registrars, educators, exhibit designers, public relations officers, development officers, security managers, trustees, and volunteers.

Museums are first and foremost educational institutions and are entrusted to care for over 750 million objects and specimens. We strongly support programs, such as the one that would be established by the Cultural Heritage Assistance Partnership Act, to preserve and protect our national heritage for both recreational as well as educational purposes.

We strongly support preserving and protecting our wealth of cultural, scientific, technological, historic and artistic treasures so that they may be available to current and future generations as a learning resource. In this way, we can provide our children with the most well rounded and comprehensive education possible.

EDWARD ABLE, JR.,
*President and CEO,
American Association of Museums.*

US/ICOMOS (the US National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites) welcomes the proposed Cultural Heritage Assistance Partnership Act (CHAP) and its efforts to foster and support cooperative partnerships designed to preserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the United States.

We are particularly pleased to see that you have included international organizations including ICOMOS as one of those involved in coordination efforts. We believe that ICOMOS with its 6000 members who are part of its 116 national committees (of which the US Committee, US/ICOMOS, is the largest) has much to bring to such a partnership program and we strongly believe that cultural heritage programs and activities in the US can gain from intellectual contributions to their efforts from professional colleagues in other countries.

The need for coordination and collaboration among players in the field of cultural heritage protection is great and we applaud the Cultural Heritage Assistance Partnership Act as a step toward enriching a variety of programs large and small in this country and elsewhere through the program of partnerships that you have proposed.

With best wishes for the success of your efforts to achieve a truly collaborative and cooperative program where knowledge, expertise and technical information in the field of cultural heritage can be shared by Americans and their colleagues, at home and abroad.

ROBERT WILBURN,
President, US/ICOMOS, Washington, D.C.
ANN WEBSTER SMITH,
Vice President, ICOMOS, Paris, France.

OTHER STATES AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

Florida

I am a Ph.D. Candidate at the Univ. of Florida (Dept. of Anthropology), finishing in

August. I could see many groups in Florida benefiting from the grants to be included in this act. Also, the idea of people striving to form partnerships is much needed.

It seems that many people talk about collaborating, but never know how to go about implementing such an effort. I hope the act passes Congress, as it is widely beneficial.

TANYA M. PERES,
Ph.D. Candidate,

Dept. of Anthropology, Univ. of Florida
Indiana

Since 1996 in southwestern Indiana, we have developed a partnership of 10 organizations to present public education programs about regional archaeology, and we invite the public and school groups to visit our ongoing excavations. We do this in conjunction with the celebration of Indiana Archaeology Week, but our various public events extend over a month.

See the web site below for a list of our partners, and the kind of program we present with thousands of volunteered hours. The public loves our programs, and we do receive contributions from local businesses, but you might guess that we are always searching for grant funds.

Rep. Udall's Cultural Heritage Resources Partnership bill would create the kind of program that could help us continue giving the public a "first hand view" of the past, which teaches about the value of archaeological research and preservation of heritage resources.

CHERYL ANN MUNSON,
Department of Anthropology,
Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

Kentucky

I was recently forwarded a copy of the Cultural Heritage Resources Partnership Act, and wanted to applaud your efforts on behalf of the Kentucky Organization of Professional Archaeologists. I have participated in numerous educational projects involved in Kentucky archaeology. They are always well received, and generate great public interest in the preservation of our cultural and historical resources.

As a professional, I often write reports that detail the specifics of archaeological sites in a scientific fashion. Programs that will be generated by this legislation will bring the stories of our cultural heritage directly to the public, rather than a dusty bookshelf. This legislation will serve to enhance the efforts of those who work to protect our history.

Thank you for your efforts. We are in full support of this legislation.

HANK MCKELWAY, Ph.D.,
President, Kentucky Organization
of Professional Archaeologists.

Maryland

Please include my name on the list of supporters of the Cultural Heritage Assistance Partnership Act. Thank you and good luck. If there is anything further that I can do on an individual level, please feel free to contact me. I will be happy to provide whatever assistance I can.

PATRICK LANG,
Historian,
Bethesda, MD.

New York

I would very much like to support your efforts in the introduction of this bill. There are numerous "heritage areas" in New York State and throughout the United States which the Cultural Heritage Resources Partnership Act will aid in preserving.

SUSAN WINCHELL-SWEENEY,
Secretary,
New York State Archaeological Association.

I would like to support your efforts in the introduction of this bill. It will serve as important in the effort to preserve our cultural heritage in the United States.

MARIE-LORRAINE PIPES,
Zoarchaeologist,
Victor, NY.

Virginia

Please include the Historic Staunton Foundation as a supporter of the bill. We are a local non-profit org. that could certainly use technical support of the NPS. Thanks

FRANK STRASSLER,
Executive Director,
Historic Staunton Foundation, Staunton, VA.

OVERVIEW OF CULTURAL HERITAGE
ASSISTANCE PARTNERSHIP ACT
(By Representative Mark Udall)

Background and Need: Our nation's cultural heritage is a diverse array of natural, historical, cultural, scenic, and recreational resources. The hallmark of these treasures is that they are authentic. Together they define an area or region's distinct character. Communities increasingly recognize their cultural heritage as a valuable resource, both esthetically and economically. Cultural heritage tourism is now a \$50 billion segment of the \$600 billion US travel industry. Yet no Federal agency has the role of coordinating the many government programs that could assist the cultural heritage programs being developed by States, tribes, local governments and private organizations.

Program: The legislation would establish a Cultural Heritage Assistance Partnership Program within the National Park Service to coordinate Federal programs and to provide information, technical assistance and grants to States, Indian tribes, local governments and non-profit organizations. In turn it would also provide Federal agencies with opportunities to benefit from the knowledge and experience of their non-Federal, cultural heritage partners.

Federal Coordination: To carry out the purposes of the Partnership Program, the Act would establish a Federal Coordinating Council composed of the heads of 11 Federal departments and agencies. The Secretary of the Interior would serve as chair. The purposes of the Council are to:

Identify Federal programs that can assist the Partnership Program;

Establish methods to collaborate together and with other governmental and nongovernmental entities on cultural heritage programs and projects;

Find ways to cut red tape and increase efficiencies in delivering services under existing Federal programs to States, Indian Tribes, local governments, and private organizations; and

Assure that the Partnership Program is responsive to the diverse needs of communities, from urban centers to remote rural areas, and are balanced in outreach and funding.

Citizens Advisory Committee: The legislation establishes an 11 member Citizens Advisory Committee appointed by the Secretary of the Interior to provide independent advice from the private sector to the Partnership Program and the Federal Coordinating Council. Members would be chosen for 5 year terms from among individuals who represent a range of technical expertise as well as broad based interests in cultural heritage resources, heritage areas, heritage tourism and related economic and community development.

Partnerships: In carrying out the Partnership Program, the Secretary of the Interior

would coordinate with and seek the participation of organizations and agencies involved in heritage areas and related cultural heritage tourism and economic and community development, including:

- (1) Private sector non-profit organizations.
- (2) Educational and training institutions.
- (3) Professional societies and trade associations.
- (4) State and local government agencies and affiliated organizations.
- (5) Indian tribes and tribal organizations.
- (6) Other offices and programs within the National Park Service, including Units of the National Park System.
- (7) Federal agencies, including agencies not represented on the Federal Coordinating Council, and Federal organizations such as Coastal America and the National Rural Development Council; and
- (8) International agencies and organizations.

Information, Technical Assistance, and Awards. The Partnership Program would provide information and technical assistance on cultural heritage resources and activities, including heritage areas, heritage tourism and related economic and community development. The information would be available electronically on the World Wide Web. Technical assistance would include developing models of cultural heritage partnership agreements; holding workshops, conferences, training and public meetings; developing guidance on ways to access Federal programs; and coordinating meetings with Federal agencies and non-federal partners. An awards program would be established to recognize exemplary projects or programs that carry out the purposes of this Act.

Grants. The legislation authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to make grants, on a competitive basis, to States, Indian tribes, local governments and nonprofit organizations. Annual funding for the grants is capped at \$9 million. No applicant could receive more than \$50,000 in grants in any fiscal year, and all grants must be matched on a 50 percent basis. All grant recipients must have at least one partner who also contributes facilities, supplies or services for the project. Priority would be given to projects that have more than two entities who contribute facilities, supplies or services or projects representing a broad base of interests that can increase community involvement.

Types of Projects: Among the types of projects that may be funded are projects that:

- (1) Develop plans, programs, training, and informational materials relating to the development, management or interpretation of cultural heritage resources and heritage areas or potential heritage areas;
- (2) Create innovative projects that address natural resource conservation, environmental education, outdoor recreation, economic revitalization, archaeology, historic, scenic and cultural preservation, and the arts, humanities and folklore;
- (3) Carry out cultural heritage activities in conjunction with libraries, museums and schools
- (4) Improve the organizational and management capacity of cultural heritage organizations and agencies;
- (5) Create or implement innovative ways to combine historic property restoration and conservation with economic and community development;
- (6) Provide electronic access, including equipment and training, especially in rural or underserved urban communities, to promote cultural heritage activities or heritage areas;

Among the types of projects that may be funded are projects that:

- (1) Develop plans, programs, training, and informational materials relating to the development, management or interpretation of cultural heritage resources and heritage areas or potential heritage areas;
- (2) Create innovative projects that address natural resource conservation, environmental education, outdoor recreation, economic revitalization, archaeology, historic, scenic and cultural preservation, and the arts, humanities and folklore;
- (3) Carry out cultural heritage activities in conjunction with libraries, museums and schools
- (4) Improve the organizational and management capacity of cultural heritage organizations and agencies;
- (5) Create or implement innovative ways to combine historic property restoration and conservation with economic and community development;
- (6) Provide electronic access, including equipment and training, especially in rural or underserved urban communities, to promote cultural heritage activities or heritage areas;

(7) Develop alliances among heritage areas within a State and among the States;

(8) Share information with other nations on cultural heritage programs in the United States; and

(9) Develop programs for collecting information on cultural heritage activities and resources in other nations that might serve as models for similar activities in the United States.

Report: The legislation directs the Secretary of the Interior to prepare a report to Congress within 4 years of enactment that describes the accomplishments of Partnership Program; identifies any problems that were encountered in implementing the provisions of this Act; and recommends any changes that are needed in the Partnership Program, including amendments to the Act.

Definitions: Standard definitions are provided for terms used throughout the Act. The term "Heritage Area" is defined as "a discrete geographic area or region (including trails, corridors, rivers, and watersheds) designated by Federal, State, tribal or local legislation or executive action and having a distinctive sense of place embodied in its historic buildings, communities, traditions, cultural and natural features."

Annual Funding: In addition to the \$9 million authorized annually to be appropriated for the grants program, the \$500,000 is authorized for information and technical assistance and \$500,000 for program administration.

RECOGNITION OF "STAMP OUT HUNGER" FOOD DRIVE

HON. STEPHEN HORN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2001

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the men and women of the United States Postal Service for their tireless efforts on behalf of the "Stamp Out Hunger" program. On Saturday May 12th letter carriers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam collected food donations from postal customers along their routes in what has become the largest volunteer effort in America.

Saturday's collection marks the ninth consecutive year that the National Association of Letter Carriers, in conjunction with the Postal Service and Campbell's Soup, has conducted this food drive. The nationwide effort began with a generous donation of one million pounds of food from Campbell's Soup. Since the "Stamp Out Hunger" program's inception nearly 400 million pounds of food have been collected and distributed to hundreds of local food banks and pantries. The food drive comes at a critical time to help food banks and pantries restock their bare shelves that have emptied from the winter months.

I commend the thousands of letter carriers and the millions of postal customers that contributed to the success of this year's "Stamp Out Hunger" food drive. These individuals can should be proud knowing that their contributions will make a difference.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING ANN BANCROFT

HON. BILL LUTHER

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2001

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Speaker, my home state of Minnesota is proud of its strong and historic pioneer spirit. The often-brutal winters of Minnesota that early inhabitants endured, however, are no match for the icy tundra of Antarctica, recently traversed by a woman from Scandia, Minnesota.

Ann Bancroft is the first woman ever to cross the ice to the North and South Poles. She dogsledded 1,000 miles to the North Pole as the only female member of the Steger Expedition and led the 67-day American Women's Expedition to the South Pole on skis. Not content with these outstanding achievements, she also founded and led the nonprofit Ann Bancroft Foundation, dedicated to celebrating the successes of women and girls.

In the true spirit of a pioneer, Ms. Bancroft not only crossed geographic boundaries, but she traveled across gender barriers as well to become an inspiration for women and girls around the globe. Her work continues to celebrate the potential and the victories of women every day. I want to take this opportunity to recognize Ann Bancroft for her bravery not only to go where no woman has gone before, but also for encouraging young women to reach for their own dreams.

HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS IN KAZAKHSTAN

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2001

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the lamentable human rights situation in Kazakhstan. On April 4, in a meeting with Kanat Saudabaev, Kazakhstan's new Ambassador to Washington, I welcomed his desire for cooperation and his willingness to improve his country's image, but I emphasized that Kazakhstan's reputation has indeed been badly tarnished and that concrete actions, not implausible pledges of democratization, were necessary. Considering the recent political trends in that important Central Asian country, I would like to share with my colleagues a number of the concerns I raised with Ambassador Saudabaev.

As a Washington Post editorial pointed out on May 1, President Nursultan Nazarbaev has recently been intensifying his longstanding campaign of repression against the political opposition, independent media, and civil society. Especially alarming is the escalation in the level of brutality. In the last few months, several opposition activists have been assaulted. Platon Pak of the "Azamat" Party was stabbed on February 7. Fortunately to survive, he said his attackers told him to "deliver their message to the head of his political party." On March 1, Ms. Gulzhan Yergalieva, the Deputy Head of the opposition "People's Congress of

Kazakhstan" and a well-known journalist, was—along with her husband and son—attacked and robbed in her home. Prior to these incidents, both opposition parties strongly criticized the Kazakh Government's running of an electoral reform working group. In late February, Alexandr Shushannikov, the chairman of the East Kazakhstan branch of the "Lad" Slavic Movement, was beaten by unknown assailants in the town of Ust-Kamenogorsk.

Less violent harassment of the opposition has continued unabated. Amirzhan Kosanov, the Acting Head of the Executive Committee of the opposition Republican People's Party of Kazakhstan (RNPK), found threatening graffiti in the stairwells of his apartment building, on the doors of his apartment, and on neighboring buildings on March 17. Later that night, hooligans threw rocks at the windows of the apartment of Almira Kusainova, the RNPK's Press Secretary. In one case, a large rock shattered one of the windows.

To add insult to injury, Mr. Kosanov has been barred from leaving Kazakhstan. He is the former Press Secretary of Akezhan Kazhegeldin, Kazakhstan's former Prime Minister and now the exiled head of the RNPK. Claiming Mr. Kosanov had access to "state secrets," the authorities have confiscated his passport—even though he had left Kazakhstan many times before. To round out the campaign against Mr. Kosanov, a series of articles and reports in pro-government media have accused him of adultery and pedophilia.

In addition, Pyotr Afanasenko and Satzhan lbrayev, two RNPK members who were Mr. Kazhegeldin's bodyguards, were sentenced in April 2000 to three years in prison for a weapons offense; an appeals court upheld the convictions. The OSCE Center in Almaty has stated that it considers the charges to be political in nature. Moreover, these two individuals, as former members of the security forces, should be in special prisons instead of being incarcerated among the general prison population, where they are in danger.

Along with the targeting of opposition activists, the ongoing crackdown on freedom of the press has continued. Most media outlets have long been under the direct or indirect control of members of the president's family, leaving independent and opposition media under constant pressure and at serious risk. After the opposition weekly XX1st Century printed articles last October about alleged corruption by President Nazarbaev, the publication's editor, Bigeldy Gabdullin, was charged with "harming the honor and dignity of the President." On April 3, Yermurat Bapi, editor of the opposition weekly SolDat, was convicted of "publicly insulting the dignity and honor of the President." The court also ordered that the print run of SolDat in which the offending article appeared be destroyed.

Mr. Bapi, who was sentenced to one year in jail and ordered to pay \$280 in court expenses, was immediately pardoned under a presidential amnesty. Still, his conviction remains on the books, which will prevent him from traveling abroad, among other restrictions. Mr. Bapi is appealing the verdict. As for Mr. Gabdullin, the prosecutor's office issued a press release on April 6 stating that it had dropped the case against him due to "the absence of [a] crime," although his newspaper has not yet received formal confirmation.