

STATEMENT FOR FLAG DAY

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 14, 2001

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to our most cherished symbol of freedom, the American flag, and to recognize its importance to our national identity.

Until the 13 colonies rebelled against Great Britain in 1776, each enjoyed a separate existence from the others with few ties among them. Their common fight against British rule, however, brought them more than independence. It brought the realization of a national identity. The adoption of our national flag, on June 14, 1777, served as a symbol of this blossoming union.

John Paul Jones, the revolutionary war hero, the first to sail to sea under this new flag, stated that: "The Flag and I are twins.

. . . So long as we can float, we shall float together. If we must sink, we shall go down as one." Many veterans share his passion. Today we offer our profound gratitude to those who have fought and died to protect the freedoms that our flag represents.

Today is a time to reflect upon the flag and what it means to America. It is a time to recognize that we live in a great nation that, with work, can become greater still. It is a time to contemplate America's place in the world and to know that our flag stands as a beacon of liberty and justice. We know that these freedoms have not come easily and we are grateful to those who have fought for these ideals: in battle, in the courts, in Congress, and in our everyday lives, we must work to uphold the ideals for which the Stars and Stripes truly stand.

TERRIFIC TENNIS IN THE 6TH DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA

HON. HOWARD COBLE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 14, 2001

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, on May 26, the Sixth District of North Carolina became the home of the 4-A men's state championship tennis team—Walter Hines Page High School in Greensboro. The Pirates completed their title match with a season record of 22-0—their second consecutive season with no losses.

The Cone-Kenfield Tennis Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill was the site where the Pirates defeated Fayetteville Terry Sanford High School 6-3. The single game winners included sophomore Jon Isner, freshman Robert Hogewood, and junior Adam Kerr. Both teams were undefeated up to this point and after single matches the score was 3-3. The game was still in anyone's court.

Doubles matches were going to decide who would be the team to lose. All three Page High School doubles teams won their matches, which gave the state title to the Pirates.

Congratulations are in order for Head Coach Jill Herb, Assistant Head Coach Tom Herb, along with assistant Jerry Steinhorne.

Members of the championship team included Robbie Bernstein, Steven Eagan, Pete Georges, Andrew Hjelt, Robert Hogewood, Charlie Holderness, Jon Isner, Adam Kerr, Dean Mandaleris, Jonathan Newman, Daniel Rowland, Drew Saia, Jarrett Saia, Jason Steinhorn, David Stone, Robert Sullivan, David Tursky, and Danny Redell.

Everyone at Page High School can be proud of the Pirates. On behalf of the citizens of the Sixth District, we congratulate Athletic Director Rusty Lee, Principal Dr. Terry Worrell and everyone at Page High School for winning the state 4-A Men's Tennis championship. In fact, winning two straight championships is impressive, but going undefeated for two years in a row is remarkable.

EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER THE STATE OF LABOR RIGHTS IN THE U.S.

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 14, 2001

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, the right of workers to organize themselves into a union and bargain collectively are fundamental rights protected by various international conventions. Among them is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, one of the first major achievements of the United Nations. Article 23 of the UDHR states that "everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests." Another is the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, adopted in 1949 at the 32nd assembly of the International Labor Organization and ratified by 148 countries. The very first line of this document reads: "Workers shall enjoy adequate protection against acts of anti-union discrimination in respect of their employment."

United States law also codifies these basic labor rights. The National Labor Relations Act, signed in 1935, guarantees employees the right to organize and chose their bargaining representative. The Act also protects employees from retaliation by their employer for exercising their rights under the NLRA. Section 8 of the Act makes it an Unfair Labor Practice for an employer to "interfere with, restrain, or coerce employees" in the exercise of their rights to organize and bargain collectively. Specifically, employers are barred from discharging or otherwise discriminating against an employee because he or she has engaged in union activity or has filed charges or given testimony under the NLRA.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, there remains in this country a large gap between theory, in which these basic rights are protected, and practice, in which these rights scarcely exist. According to Human Rights Watch, "workers' freedom of association is under sustained attack in the United States, and the government is often failing its responsibility under international human rights standards to deter such attacks and protect workers' rights." The evidence for this is great. Fewer than 40% of all workers who participate in an NLRB election gain coverage under a collective bargaining agreement; this number was over 75% in the

early 1950s. Of the successful campaigns to form a union, only 66% result in a first contract for the newly organized workers. Unionization rates in the U.S. are at some of the lowest levels in decades.

Some will argue that this demonstrates that American workers lack interest in unions. But given unions' demonstrated ability to win Americans better wages, better benefits, and better working conditions, this explanation carries little weight. The real reasons American workers are unable to fully exercise their basic rights are three: First, certain employers will utilize any means, legal or otherwise, to prevent their workers from forming a union. Second, in current form American labor law provides little resource to those whose rights are violated, and imposes little penalty on those who choose to ignore the law. And third, international trade agreements make it easy for employers to escape their legal responsibility to honor workers' rights by taking their operations elsewhere in the world.

What do certain unscrupulous corporations do to fight unionization? They coerce, intimidate, threaten, and sometimes even abuse workers. They fire workers are seen talking to union representatives, as Up-To-Date Laundry did recently in Baltimore. They hire union-busting lawyers to slander the local union in front of a captive audience of workers, like the Marriott Corporation did in San Francisco. They alert INS officials to the illegal immigrants in their workforce, even though these employers conveniently ignored their workers illegal status when hiring them.

Walmart threatened to shut down its butchering operation and start selling pre-packaged meat in its stores because a mere 11 workers wanted to unionize. A company called NTN Bower tried to undermine a United Auto Workers unionization drive by threatening to move their jobs to Mexico. A leaflet they passed out to workers read, "With the UAW your jobs may go south for more than the winter!"

This last example suggests the impact of trade agreements on U.S. anti-union activity. As Professor Kate Bronfenbrenner of Cornell University has demonstrated, "plant closing threats and plant closings have become an integral part of employer anti-union campaigns," and that these tactics, combined with others, are "extremely effective" in undermining union organizing efforts. Professor Bronfenbrenner specifically cites NAFTA as facilitating this behavior.

All of this should make us wonder: what does the law do to stop these kind of actions? The answer is virtually nothing. The following quote from Human Rights Watch is illustrative: "An employer determined to get rid of a union activist knows that all that awaits, after years of litigation if the employer persists in appeals, is a reinstatement order the worker is likely to decline and a modest back-pay award. For many employers, it is a small price price to pay to destroy a workers' organizing effort by firing its leaders." If an employer can go so far as to fire worker with near impunity, certainly the law will not be enough to dissuade this employer from other illegal anti-union tactics.

What is needed to end the abuse of these basic human rights in this country is strict enforcement of existing labor law, tougher penalties for labor law violators, the streamlining of