This legislation is necessary because the Department of Transportation (DOT) decided to eliminate this critical service last Friday. Instead of permitting American Airlines, which purchased TWA, to have the TWA slots to serve this critical service.

Without this route, Los Angeles will be the largest U.S. city without non-stop air service to Washington's Reagan-National. In fact, California, the most populous state in the Union, will have no direct flights at Reagan-National and Los Angeles. As such, it does not increase the total number of flights at Washington's Reagan-National and permits Alaska Airlines to fly direct to Seattle.

Mr. Speaker, Californians rely upon nonstop air service between Los Angeles International Airport and Washington's Reagan-National Airport. Without congressional action, this convenient nonstop air service will end in September.

I urge all my colleagues to support this legislation.

HONORING THE 125 YEAR HISTORY OF LA VETA, COLORADO

HON. SCOTT MCI NNIS
OF COLORADO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, June 28, 2001

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay special tribute to La Veta, Colorado on its 125th Birthday. For over a century, the people of La Veta have contributed a rich heritage and diversity to the state of Colorado. I would like Congress to wish the citizens of La Veta a very happy 125th birthday.

In 1862, Col. John M. Francisco, a former U.S. Army officer and prospector, took a team of horses to the Sangre de Cristo Range to start a mining operation. The Spanish Peaks are a historic landmark to travelers—from the early Indians to the vacationer. Besides being the railroad, La Veta also has been the center of local agriculture and coal mining.

Mr. Speaker, the citizens of Colorado are proud of La Veta's 125-year heritage. It is an area rich in culture, history and heritage. For that Mr. Speaker, I would like to wish La Veta happy birthday and wish its citizens good luck and prosperity for the next 125 years.

HONORING YAKOV SMIRNOFF ON THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS CITIZENSHIP

HON. CHRISTOPHER COX
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, June 28, 2001

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Yakov Smirnoff, who will celebrate his 15th anniversary as a United States citizen on July 4, 2001.

When Yakov left the Soviet Union in 1977, he arrived in the U.S. with less than $100 in his pocket. But like so many new immigrants, Yakov quickly found a way to put his talents to use in his new country—and in only a few years he became one of America's most recognized comedians.

Yakov's brand of comedy appealed to so many Americans because it carried real insight. He poked fun at the daily consequences of Soviet tyranny, while displaying a remarkably American irreverence for our own foibles ("In the Soviet Union, I'd line up for three hours just to get a tasteless piece of meat and some stale bread; but in America, you can walk into any fast-food restaurant and get the same thing right away"). But he also reminded us of how fortunate we are to live in a free and democratic nation ("What a country!")—the name of his signature line. In fact, Yakov has said that his comedy has helped him "share his dreams of becoming a real American with the audience.

Yakov's dream of becoming an American citizen was finally fulfilled on July 4, 1986, in a ceremony held at the Statue of Liberty. Describing his joy at the occasion, Yakov says: "I suddenly had two revolutions. You can go to Italy but never become Italian. You can go to France but never become French. But you can come to America and become an American."