of our workforce. With minor accommodations they can become an even more important part of our society and be involved in strengthening America’s communities, businesses, and government. That is why I am so thankful to President Bush, who has highlighted the need to make workplaces, housing, education, technology, and our society in general, more accessible to all Americans. The President’s new Freedom Initiative is an important proposal which calls for funding of a broad range of programs that together can help create countless new opportunities for many Americans who continually face unnecessary obstacles because of their disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, I am eager to work with President Bush to make this new Freedom Initiative a reality. To this end, I recently sent a letter co-signed by 23 of my colleagues to the House appropriators seeking their support in providing funds for the President’s proposals. This is an issue on which we can all coalesce regardless of party background and help open doors for millions of people who are eager to conquer new challenges.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I extend my heartfelt thanks to the dozens of people who have made my tenure in Congress possible. Ensuring that some day every workplace in America will be able to respond to the special needs of workers seeking their support in proposing solutions to the plight of Americans with disabilities for many Americans who continue to face unnecessary obstacles because of their disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I extend my heartfelt thanks to the dozens of people who have made my tenure in Congress possible. Ensuring that some day every workplace in America will be able to respond to the special needs of workers seeking their support in proposing solutions to the plight of Americans with disabilities for many Americans who continue to face unnecessary obstacles because of their disabilities.

Well, Boxcar Bill traveled far from his humble beginnings, but she never lost sight of the hills of home or the people there. Birdie Kyle, a true coal miner’s daughter, a native West Virginian in every sense, served West Virginia and our Nation in the Congress for more than 3 decades. Birdie served with me in 1989, and I appreciate deeply her loyalty and dedication. Before that, she spent most of her career with the late Senator Jennings Randolph. Her mainstay of work for the Senator and for me was education. For Birdie, education was not a part of one’s life. It was life itself. Teachers captivated her. Students compelled her. Books were with her always, from her earliest moments to her latest nights. If books were her backbone, words were her blood. She was the mother of wordsmiths and, boy, could she make us sound good.

Birdie’s letters, more often than not, prompted replies, and I got more kudos from her letters than anything.

Her list of responsibilities in my office over the years reads like a record of the republic itself: Education to health care, the Postal Service to the Middle East. As one person who called to express their sympathy said, “She knew everything and everybody.”

How true. She could converse on every subject, but that was not her most unique attribute. She did not care if one was king or commoner. She was going to sway you to her belief before you left the building, and most of the time she did.

Will there ever be another Birdie Kyle? No. Can one person fill her shoes? No.

Birdie was, in addition, the poet laureate of the Red Hat Society. Birdie Kyle took on the White House regulation, OMB Circular A-191, that would deny assistance to States or localities that required religious charities to adhere to their nondiscrimination laws as they apply to gay men and women. Now, of course, these nondiscrimination laws have to be with the activities of these religious charities that do not relate to their religions.

A political deal should be beneath the dignity of the Salvation Army, given its long Christian heritage, not to mention the President of the United States. It is a deal to discriminate under the table.

According to the lead document, this cannot be done in the legislative process very easily, so they had to do it by regulation. Charitable choice already contains a fatal flaw, because, as put forward by the administration, it would allow a religious organization to discriminate using government money by requiring people it hires to do a government task to be of their religion. That is a clear violation of the Constitution of the United States.

I am a former Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. I
strongly support an exemption in the law that I administered, Title VII, which allows a religious denomination an exemption to the antidiscrimination law in hiring people of their own religion with their own money. But we cannot give the Baptists and the Lutherans and the Catholics and the Jews our money and say you can discriminate when you perform services in our name. That is already a problem with the bill.

But in order to make it perfectly clear, in case that does not survive, that at least people who are gay and lesbian should not be discriminated against, this would be done by regulation.

Mr. Speaker, why the Salvation Army would engage in this deal is really perplexing. The Salvation Army already gives services for different folks. Some of the Federal Government to do their wonderful work. They get it because they abide by government regulations that say when you use government money, you cannot proselytize, you cannot engage in religion, because this is America, and this is what we have stood for, for everybody. So they already get money, just like Catholic charities and just like Lutheran charities and just like Jewish charities all get money, and they have accepted it, and I hope they will continue to get it on the basis that everybody else who does the government’s work accepts it, and that is as long as we are doing the government’s work, then your money is the public money, and we cannot discriminate against anybody when giving those services.

This body has already a long history of discriminating against gays and lesbians in the District of Columbia, because there is anything in our law that allows equal protection for people of a different sexual orientation, then somebody hops up here and tries, and often succeeds, in overturning the law. Now we are trying to do to do what you do to the District of Columbia to hundreds of localities and States in the United States.

I hope everybody understands what it feels like to intrude in the affairs of local jurisdictions in a federalist society, a society where we say, look, different folks. Some of us behave one way with respect to our laws, others another way. Some people have chosen to protect gay men and lesbians against discrimination, and I say God bless them. In the 21st century we should not be discriminating against any Americans based on a characteristic that has nothing to do with performance. Sexual orientation has nothing to do with performance, and the last people, the last organizations that should be engaged in such discrimination are organizations that go by the name “Christian,” and the Salvation Army should be ashamed of itself that it has been caught red-hand-ed on the front page of the Washington Post in the column where you put war and peace. Thank God that they were exposed.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s ruling policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. McInnis) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. McInnis. Mr. Speaker, I am a little surprised by the previous speaker and her unrelenting attack against the Salvation Army. She apparently got the merits for this attack from one newspaper article. I have heard the gentlewoman previously speak from here. I think she is well-educated. She knows the numerous sources when she speaks. That is why I am very surprised that she takes one newspaper article and launches an attack against the Salvation Army, which I would like to say to the gentlewoman from Texas, was one of the fine organizations that came.

So I do not think a speaker, I do not think one should stand up here and make California look like some poor innocent victim in the Western United States who somehow is picked out of 50 States, California has been the lead State opposing any kind of energy transmission in their State, opposing power plants. They are the ones where the old saying, “Not in my backyard,” it is of that State that that came.

California has paid a very dear price. You leave the room; make up all 50 States, California has been the lead State opposing any kind of energy transmission in their State, opposing power plants. They are the ones where the old saying, “Not in my backyard,” it is of that State that that came.

The problem that you have got out there is you have to face a couple realities. Number one, conservation is absolutely critical, and it is going to be a critical component, and now California, and, frankly, the rest of the Nation, can avoid getting into the same spot that California got into by adopting some pretty simple methods of conservation.

Conservation does not mean you have to suffer in your life-style. There are a lot of very simple things that you can do in your life-style that do not give you a negative impact, that do not serve as an inconvenience for you. Just think of them: Shut the lights off when you leave the room; replace your oil every 3,000 miles by the quick-change method. Change your fan is turning in a clockwise fashion in the summer; make sure you change the oil on your car, instead of being marketed into changing it just because you need to. That is a little bit of the opposite of a crisis.

So I do not think one should stand up here and make California look like some poor innocent victim. Remember that the energy crisis that exists in California does not exist in 50 States. In fact, in 49 of the 50 States, they are not having the kind of problems that California is having. In other words, the problems in California are as a result of a combination of a number of different factors that have come into play, not the least of which is that the State of California has refused to help itself, has refused to help itself, by allowing power plants to be built over the last 10 years, by allowing natural gas transmission lines to go into their State, by allowing electrical transmission lines to go into their State.