TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM KATTAK

HON. WILLIAM J. MARTINI

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 3, 1995

Mr. MARTINI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the passing of a valued member of the Eighth Congressional District in New Jersey.

In the wake of the celebration surrounding the opening of the Korean War Memorial, William Kattak died on the morning of July 31, 1995. As a proud veteran of the Korean war, Mr. Kattak was a patriotic American. He was a former commander of John Raad Post, the American Legion, commander of Passaic County American Legion and a 4th Degree Knight of Columbus.

Along with an ardent commitment to the United States of America, Mr. Kattak enjoyed a lengthy term as a public servant to Passaic County. For more than two decades, he served as the Passaic County clerk where he enjoyed the respect of the entire community. In addition, as an attorney, he served as Passaic County assistant prosecutor, trustee of the Passaic County Bar Association and department head of New Jersey judge advocate. However, Mr. Kattak will probably best be remembered for designing unique alternatives to increase efficiency and reduce bureaucracy in local government. For instance, he was personally responsible for devising a method to invest bail money which, in turn, netted Passaic County taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Even with all the meaningful accomplishments in public service, Mr. Kattak will be missed most by his loving family and close friends. He is survived by his wife Adrianne; three daughters, Joanne, Susan and Diane; four brothers and three sisters. The sorrow for the loss of William is summed up in the words of his daughter Diane. ''He was the guardian angel in our family. He took care of us and nobody will ever replace him. He was the best father anyone could ever ask for''.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that we all bow our heads in the memory of a great American, wonderful husband and loving father. Passaic County lost a great man, but the Kattak family lost a cherished member of a caring family.

THE BATEMEN-SAXTON-EDWARDS IMPACT AID COMPROMISE

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 3, 1995

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the agreement on Impact Aid that has been struck this evening, and I applaud Mr. BATEMAN, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. EDWARDS, and Mr. PORTER'S commitment to ensure adequate funding be provided to the Impact Aid Program when the House and Senate conference on this legislation.

The reason this agreement is so critical is because today we are faced with an $83 million gap in one of our countries most vital functions: the ability to educate our children and ensure our Nation's prosperity for generations to come. For the past 45 years the Federal Government recognized its obligation to compensate school districts for the costs of educating children whose patents live or work on federally owned land. I ask my colleagues today, what has happened to that obligation? Has the Federal Government become so single-mined in its attempt to reduce the deficit that it has become blind to the needs of our Nation's children.

Many of these children are those of the men and women who serve in our Nation's armed services. Is cutting their children's education how we choose to pay back the people who faithfully serve our country? In my opinion it's a crime to tell the children of military impacted communities that they have to receive a substandard education because the Federal Government does not want to pay it's fair share.

Many schools have had to close due to cutbacks in the Impact Aid Program. Many more have had to incur huge deficits just to keep operating. From Nebraska and South Dakota to New Jersey and New York schools of all sizes have had major difficulty keeping their doors open.

But the necessity of Impact Aid goes far beyond the 1.8 million children who are eligible under the program. Terminating the program will also have a significant impact on the 20 million students who attend schools that are dependent on Impact Aid funding. In my own district, thousands of children in the Middletown, Newport, and Portsmouth school districts are largely effect by the Impact Aid Program. What will happen to these children if this program goes unfunded? Where will they go if their school closes down?

Impact Aid is about more than education, it is also about the strength of communities. The people of Middletown, RI tell me they are particularly proud of the community, their schools, and their military population. For over 200 years these same people have extended themselves to the military and have achieved an excellent reputation that is passed from generation to generation of servicemen and women at the Naval base on Aquidneck Island. But there are limits to these relationships. It is unreasonable to expect local taxpayers to increasingly subsidize the education of military students.

Even with full funding of Impact Aid, Middletown Public Schools still experience over a $4 million loss in tax revenue from land occupied by the Navy instead of private housing or businesses. If the proposed reductions go into effect, a bad situation will become undoubtedly worse.

Mr. Speaker, the choice is ours and the choice is clear. We can choose to fund the future of America's students today or be prepared to pay the costs of an uneducated and unskilled work force tomorrow. I am gratified the leadership of this body has made the right choice and has committed itself to providing for our children's future.

FREDDIE MAC'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY JULY 24, 1970—JULY 24, 1995

HON. RICHARD H. BAKER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 3, 1995

Mr. BAKER of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, 25 years ago, Congress took a bold and innovative approach to help millions of American families own a home. During 1969 and 1970, hard-working Americans who wanted to buy a home were confronted with an economic nightmare of high inflation and escalating interest rates. In short, money to buy a home was scarce and expensive.

On July 24, 1970, in response to the collapse of the country's mortgage finance system, Congress created the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, commonly known as Freddie Mac. Its mission was clear: to help Americans buy homes by tapping a consistent flow of funds from national and international capital markets.

Freddie Mac has dedicated its resources and innovation to fulfilling that mission. Since 1970, Freddie Mac has purchased $1.2 trillion in mortgage loans, which has enabled 16 million American families achieve the dream of an affordable and decent house.

Freddie Mac purchases mortgage loans from lenders, packages these loans into securities, and sells these securities to investors. Through this process, Freddie Mac has created a broad, liquid, and efficient nationwide secondary mortgage market that is the envy of the world.

As my colleagues are acutely aware, in these times of severe budget restraints, it is important that the private and the public sector join as partners to increase housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income families. Freddie Mac is an exemplary model of this partnership. Freddie Mac has worked with State and local governments to leverage resources for homeowners across the Nation. In addition, Freddie Mac has increased its mortgage purchases of low- and moderate-income homebuyers from 28 percent in 1993 to 38 percent in 1994. Many of these mortgages are for homes owned by minority homebuyers and in central cities and in rural areas.

Mr. Speaker, by every measure Freddie Mac is a great success. As we work to consolidate government to serve taxpayers more effectively, we call on Freddie Mac to continue its commitment to all American homebuyers from all walks of life.

I am sure that my colleagues and the American people join me in expressing our appreciation and congratulations to Freddie Mac on their 25th anniversary. We wish Freddie Mac well in its next 25 years.

PROTECT FUNDING FOR THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING

HON. MIKE WARD

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 3, 1995

Mr. WARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the continued funding of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and in opposition to the proposed funding cuts in the Labor/HHS/Education Appropriations Act.

This legislation provides $240 million for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for fiscal year 1998. This figure represents a $20 million decrease in funding from the 1997 allocation and is $56.4 million below President Clinton's request. Let me put it another way, this is a $20,000 funding cut for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting has already suffered an 11.8 percent cut in the rescissions bill passed earlier by this House. This further reduction proposed by the Labor/HHS/Education appropriations bill will be devastating.

One needs only to consider the impact these funding cuts will have upon rural television stations, primarily in areas where access to cable television is extremely limited and where the only educational television and radio programs come from public broadcasting. In Kentucky, the majority of residents rely on public broadcasting for all educational programming, including programs which enable individuals to obtain high school equivalency degrees and attend college courses via television. Public broadcasting also provides invaluable children's programs to help educate children at home as well as in school.

I urge my colleagues to consider the impact these funding cuts would have upon those who rely on public broadcasting the most. I urge my colleagues to oppose these cuts and work together to protect the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO REDUCE POLITICAL ASYLUM ABUSE

HON. BOB FRANKS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 3, 1995

Mr. FRANKS of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a bill to root out fraud and abuse in our current system of political asylum.

Throughout the world, the human rights of prisoners of conscience and political opponents are casually exploited. Amnesty International's annual report, released last month, cites the fact that 78 countries still hold ''prisoners of conscience.''

For those people, the United States must extend its hand and offer refuge through political asylum.

Our Nation has always been a beacon of hope for people around the world seeking a safe haven from political, ethnic, racial, or religious persecution.

But it is important to keep the doctrine of political asylum in perspective. It represents only one element of America's immigration policies.

Last year, for example, our Government allowed more than 800,000 aliens to legally enter the United States. Of that total, only 11,784 were granted political asylum.

And until 1980, political asylum was a treasured and sparingly-used provision in our immigration laws, enabling our Nation to fulfill its commitment to protect those fleeing their homelands because of oppression.

But changes made in the asylum laws in the 1980s opened up the system to widespread abuse.

These well-intended but ill-conceived reforms included providing an unintended economic incentive for aliens to seek entry into the United States by claiming political asylum.

Most importantly, it gave asylum seekers permission to legally work in the United States while their claims were being considered by officials of the Immigration and Naturalization Service [INS].

Although President Clinton recently modified the work-permit provision, the floodgates had already been opened.

Asylum seekers have been pouring into the United States in staggering numbers.

Prior to 1980, less than 5,000 people a year sought political asylum in the United States. But last year alone, a record number, 150,000 in all—filed claims of political asylum. The New York-New Jersey metropolitan region is becoming a magnet for individuals seeking the protected status of political asylum. During the first quarter of this year, 8,165 people applied for asylum through the Newark District Office. Another 8,795 aliens made the same claim at the New York INS office.

The political asylum process has spun out of control.

Moreover, political asylum has become an increasingly popular route to circumvent safeguards in the law that help us to weed out bogus and fraudulent claims.

Contrary to popular opinion, it is not easy to gain legal entry into the United States. That fact can be attested to by the 3.4 million people around the world who are waiting for visas to be issued by our Government in order that they can legally come to the United States. Some of those people, depending on their home country and the immigration quota that applies to it, wait up to 10 years before they are issued a visa.

While many of those who arrive on our shores seeking political asylum have an arguable basis for their claim, others use it as an opportunity to leap frog over those 3.4 million people who are waiting in line for the issuance of their visa.

Even though the criteria are lax, the law on political asylum is clear when in says that the asylum candidate ''must face a reasonable fear of persecution.''

Today, there are people boarding planes and boats around the world, hoping to start a new life in the United States with phony claims of political asylum. And the odds are they'll be successful.

Political asylum has become a popular backdoor entrance to the United States. And with good reason. The system is easy to exploit.

By simply stepping off a plane and proclaiming the magic words ''political asylum,'' an individual gains special status that enables him to stay in the United States until his claim is verified. The lengthy and cumbersome process of reviewing asylum cases is filled with opportunities for an individual, with no legitimate claim of political asylum, to slip away and become part of our Nation's ever-increasing population of illegal immigrants.

New Jersey has become a major center for illegal immigrants. The INS ranks my State sixth in the Nation in the number of illegal immigrants.

Of the thousands of people who arrive each year in the New York-New Jersey area seeking political asylum, only 1.6 percent are actually detained until the outcome of their claim is determined.

The sheer volume of asylum claims and the severe shortage of detention facilities, has forced the Immigration and Naturalization Service to release a vast majority of those awaiting adjudication of their claim of political asylum. They are set free—released on their own recognizance and told to return on a specified date for a hearing.

At least one-third of those set free will never be seen again. They simply disappear, joining the ranks of the illegal immigrant population in our area.

Of all the political asylum claims, only 10 to 15 percent are found to be legitimate by the INS and are granted permission to remain in the United States. The others are ordered back to their homeland.

But when the time comes to report for deportation, the vast majority—more than 90 percent—do not show up. And in all likelihood will never be found. They too have joined the illegal immigrant population.

The backlog of pending asylum applications has swelled to almost 450,000 cases, leading to extensive delays. Those unfortunate individuals with legitimate claims of political as asylum are forced to spend months and even years in this country living with the uncertainty of not knowing whether they will be forced to return to their homeland.

The facts leave little doubt that the current system of political asylum is out of control.

Today, I am introducing legislation that will significantly modify how the INS deals with claims of political asylum. It is designed to send a clear signal around the world that fraudulent claims of political asylum will no longer be tolerated. The goal of my legislation is to preserve the fundamental principle of political asylum, while closing up the giant loopholes that are corrupting the process.

My bill targets individuals who escape or leave their homeland and travel to another country before coming to the United States.

It establishes a series of procedures that will have the effect of deterring those with no legitimate claim of political asylum from ever venturing to the United States.

Let me explain the key provisions of the bill.

It seems to me that an individual who fears for his safety because he is suffering severe discrimination or life-threatening treatment should be required to stop at the first country that would offer him ''safe haven.''

But under the current law, these refugees most often choose to pass by the first country that could offer safe haven and continue their journey to the United States. Fifteen years and hundreds of thousands of claims for political asylum later has taught us that many of these individuals are not seeking a safe refuge that comes from political asylum, they are actually looking for the economic opportunities that America has to offer.

Under my legislation, anyone who passes through another country that could offer a safe haven for political asylum would not be allowed to travel through to the United States and remain here while their claim is being adjudicated.

Upon entering the U.S., these asylum seekers would be sent back within hours to the country they passed through that would offer them political asylum. European countries have been following a similar course of action for many years.

In 1990, The European Community convened the Dublin Convention to establish a uniform standard for examining applications for asylum seekers that travel through several countries. The purpose of the Convention was to ensure that an application was examined by only one Member State, ignoring the preferences of asylum seekers that results in ''nation shopping.'' Members incorporated the ''country of safe haven'' principle which requires asylum requests to be reviewed by the