

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I certainly would like to thank my colleague, the gentleman from New York, for his kind comments.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Res. 443.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EWING). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, permit me to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the gentleman from Alaska, Chairman DON YOUNG, and the gentleman from American Samoa, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, for bringing H. Res. 443, the Centennial Raising of the American Flag in American Samoa, to the floor of the House of Representatives today.

The United States first made contact with the Samoan Islands in 1839 as a part of a congressionally authorized naval expedition to the South Pacific, led by Commander Charles Wilkes. From this expedition a number of agreements and treaties were formed that resulted in President McKinley issuing an executive order on February 19, 1900 placing the Eastern Group of Samoan Islands under the control of the Department of the Navy, establishing the authority of the United States to give the islands protection.

On April 17, 1900 the leaders of the Islands of Tutuila and Anunu'u signed instruments of cession to the United States, and the United States flag was raised at the United States naval station. Roughly four years later the King of Manu'a and the chiefs of the Manu'a Islands that now comprise the easternmost islands of American Samoa signed the last instrument of cession. In 1929 Congress recognized these acts of cession in law and delegated the authority for the administration of the islands to the President of the United States.

As Japan began emerging as an international power in the mid-1930's, the U.S. Naval Station on Tutuila began to acquire new strategic importance. By 1940, the Samoan Islands had become a training and staging area for the U.S. Marine Corps. It was this massive influx of Americans that gave Samoans a sudden taste of the benefits of a modern western society.

Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 443 recognizes the historical significance of the centennial raising of our flag over the United States Territory of American Samoa and reaffirms our commitment to improved self-governance, economic development and expansion of domestic commerce for the United States citizens and nationals of American Samoa.

One-hundred years later, the flag of our nation remains a beacon of hope to the troubled countries of the South Pacific and stands as a symbol of freedom and justice in the world.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time, and urge the Members to support the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. DOOLITTLE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 443, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

POPE JOHN PAUL II CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL ACT

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3544) to authorize a gold medal to be awarded on behalf of the Congress to Pope John Paul II in recognition of his many and enduring contributions to peace and religious understanding, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3544

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Pope John Paul II Congressional Gold Medal Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that Pope John Paul II—

(1) is the spiritual leader of more than one billion Catholic Christians around the world and millions of Catholic Christians in America and has led the Catholic Church into its third millennium;

(2) is recognized in the United States and abroad as a preeminent moral authority;

(3) has dedicated his Pontificate to the freedom and dignity of every individual human being and tirelessly traveled to the far reaches of the globe as an exemplar of faith;

(4) has brought hope to millions of people all over the world oppressed by poverty, hunger, illness, and despair;

(5) transcending temporal politics, has used his moral authority to hasten the fall of godless totalitarian regimes, symbolized in the collapse of the Berlin wall;

(6) has promoted the inner peace of man as well as peace among mankind through his faith-inspired defense of justice; and

(7) has thrown open the doors of the Catholic Church, reconciling differences within Christendom as well as reaching out to the world's other great religions.

SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design to Pope John Paul II in recognition of his many and enduring contributions to peace and religious understanding.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purpose of the presentation referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the "Secretary") shall strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck pur-

suant to section 3 under such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, and at a price sufficient to cover the costs thereof, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, overhead expenses, and the cost of the gold medal.

SEC. 5. NATIONAL MEDALS.

The medals struck pursuant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; PROCEEDS OF SALE.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is hereby authorized to be charged against the Numismatic Public Enterprise Fund an amount not to exceed \$30,000 to pay for the cost of the medal authorized by this Act.

(b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the sales of duplicate bronze medals under section 4 shall be deposited in the Numismatic Public Enterprise Fund.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. VENTO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH).

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, on rare occasions Congress awards the Congressional Gold Medal to persons who have contributed significantly to making the world more humane. This bill authorizes that such a medal be struck for the Pope.

John Paul II's dedication of his Pontificate to the freedom and dignity of every individual human being, his use of moral authority to hasten the fall of totalitarian regimes, his efforts to reconcile Christendom and reach out with respect to people of all faiths, and most of all his commitment to the teachings of Jesus Christ provide a model of grace to all peoples of the world.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul wrote, "I have become all things to all, to save at least some. All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I too may share in it."

Last Thursday, John Paul II celebrated his 80th birthday, and Saint Paul's observation is an appropriate summary of Karol Wojtyla's extraordinary trajectory on this earth, from the small town of his birth in Southern Poland, Wadowice, through the war years in Cracow, leadership of Cracow's Archdiocese during the difficult Communist times, finally to the Ministry of Peter in Rome. In this journey, he has left an indelible mark on his Church and the history of our times.

With the world watching, John Paul II has begun to show burdens of age, but he has lost none of the extraordinary vigor that has characterized the 21½ years of his Pontificate, one of the longest in church history.

On New Year's eve, for instance, he celebrated a long, formal Te Deum in Saint Peter's basilica, had dinner in his quarters with Vatican aides and friends, after which they all sang carols. At midnight, he appeared in his window and delivered his traditional New Year's greeting to an adoring crowd in Saint Peter's Square below.

Then he celebrated yet another mass, his first of the new millennium, in his private chapel. His staff was exhausted, but by 9 the next morning he was in another basilica in Rome leading another mass.

From the moment he became a priest in Cracow, Karol Wojtyla has conceived his role as a pastor, a representative of Christ on Earth who has to be seen by the faithful. Since he became Pope in October of 1978, he has made 92 pastoral trips abroad to 123 countries and territories, meeting more leaders and bringing the message of God to more people than any other Pontiff before him.

This year alone, he has been to Mount Sinai in Egypt, followed in Christ's footsteps in the Holy Land, and prayed at the Shrine of the Virgin Mary in Fatima, who he believes interceded to save his life when he was shot in Saint Peter's Square in 1981.

As a leader of a billion members of his faith, John Paul II is generally considered the preeminent religious leader in the world. But his moral authority goes beyond his church. It extends to all who seek a message of love and compassion, of dignity that defies materialism, of freedom of thought unconstrained by political oppression.

Above all, he has urged people all over the world never to give up hope. He likes to recall that his first words in Saint Peter's Square were an echo of Christ's exhortation, "Be not afraid." Wherever he has traveled, John Paul II has championed human rights and individual dignity, both of which, in his view, include freedom of worship. With this definition of liberty, he turned the Church in his native Poland into a protector, not only of Catholics but of all citizens oppressed by communism, no matter their religion, if any. In so doing, he helped discredit the Communist system in Poland and bring about its downfall elsewhere in the world.

It used to be said in Poland that while he was the Archbishop of Cracow, the country's Communist leaders considered him their greatest threat. Likewise, in Moscow, once he became Pope. It is no accident that China's leaders have so far refused to allow him to conduct a pilgrimage in their country.

In traveling the world, John Paul II has reached out to the other great religions. Last month, he sought to bridge the historic divide between Christians and Jews. In a gesture of breathtaking eloquence in its simplicity, he placed a sheet of paper in a crack in Jerusalem's Western Wall: "God of our fathers," he wrote, "we are deeply saddened by the behavior of those who, in the course of history, have caused these children of yours to suffer; and asking your forgiveness, we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of the covenant."

To exemplify his personal compassion, an elderly Israeli woman came forth during this historic pilgrimage. She recalled how she was one of the lucky ones who survived Hitler's con-

centration camps. Upon her release in 1945, she was placed on a train to return to her home in Cracow. When she arrived, barely able to stand, with hardly any flesh on her bones, she stumbled onto the station platform, and there a strong young man in priestly garb picked her up in his arms and carried her two miles to a place where she could be nurtured back to health. The priest was Karol Wojtyla.

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In times singularly bereft of leaders of high moral stature, John Paul II stands out, a Pontiff whose presence fills the great basilica of Saint Peter and radiates out beyond. In voting for this Congressional Gold Medal, we are honoring a historic figure, an individual whose conviction and morality have infused mankind with renewed self-confidence.

In closing, I would like to quote these words by John Paul II that I think express his soaring nobility:

"At the end of the second millennium, we need perhaps more than ever the words of the risen Christ: 'Be not afraid!' Man who, after Communism, has stopped being afraid and who truly has many reasons for feeling this way, needs to hear these words. Nations need to hear them, especially those nations that have been reborn after the fall of the Communist empire, as well as those who witnessed the event from outside. Peoples and nations of the entire world need to hear these words. Their conscience needs to grow on the certainty that Someone exists who holds in his Hands the key to death and the netherworld, Someone who is the Alpha and the Omega of human history, be it the individual or collective history. And this Someone is Love, Love that became man, Love crucified and risen, Love unceasingly present among men. It is Eucharistic Love. It is the infinite source of communion. He alone can give the ultimate assurance when He says 'Be not afraid!'"

Mr. Speaker, John Paul II has sundered depotism and ennobled faith by displaying to fellow mortals the courage of conviction.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3544, and I associate myself with the eloquent remarks of our distinguished chairman, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH), with regard to the awarding of a Congressional Gold Medal to Pope John Paul II.

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I, of course, as I said, rise in support of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I would point out that Pope John Paul II chose his name from his two predecessors that reigned very briefly, Pope John Paul XXIII and Pope Paul VI. He has, of course, for the past 2 decades been the leader of a billion Catholics in the world, including myself. We are very proud of the work

that he has done and the tremendous contributions he has made over the past 2 decades as we have seen the startling changes occur around the globe. He has been instrumental in his role in terms of leadership, positive leadership.

I have had the privilege when visiting in Rome with other Members of Congress to have audiences with the Pope, as so many of my colleagues have, and I am sure that they have been as impressed as I have been by his breadth of vision and leadership and the charge that he admonished us with with regards to our responsibility as elected officials, as well as, of course, our responsibility as citizens of the world.

He has certainly exemplified that role in his much-traveled work, his wonderful solidarity in spirit from his native Poland, one the first non-Italian popes to have served in a long time. And, of course, being an Italian-American, I'm very keenly aware of that ancestry and the special role that he had played.

But to observe and to witness the types of changes that have occurred in central Europe under the guidance and under his leadership and his contributions has really been a joy for all of us to behold.

I might point out that, while much traveled, he has obviously been a pioneer. His visit most recently I think in the last few years to Cuba, as an example, pointed out that he is a great risk-taker in terms of being willing to travel and to try and challenge the various governance and human rights questions around the world. And in our hemisphere, as well as in others, in Africa, his encyclicals with regards to social and economic justice, as well as with regards to life, have been of much use as we have tried to look for guidance and look for the finest values of our society and of humanity and spirituality.

So I strongly rise in support of this measure. I commend the chairman and the sponsors. I have been pleased to join as sponsor myself in this measure. I urge my colleagues to strongly support this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD a detailed statement of our ranking member, the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE), and a statement by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KANJORSKI) of the Committee on Banking, both of whom admire and strongly support this resolution. They have been called to the White House on a meeting. But for that, they would surely be here in honor to make this presentation by our side.

Mr. LAFALCE. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to honor a man whose enduring contributions to humanity will forever be etched in history: His Excellency, Pope John Paul II. As a spiritual leader of 1 billion Catholic Christians all over the world (millions of them in the United States), and an inspiring force for peace to people of all faiths, it is only fitting that we pay tribute to the Holy Father's

remarkable contributions to humanity. Pope John Paul II has touched the lives of many and continues to be a powerful and enduring force in fostering peace among nations, and in reconciling the three great religious faiths of the children of Abraham: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. I am honored to stand before this House today, joining Catholics from my district, the U.S., the rest of the world, and people of all faiths, in recognizing this remarkable man's monumental contributions to humanity.

Karol Joseph Wojtyła was born 80 years ago in an industrial town near Cracow in Poland. In fact, the Holy Father just celebrated his 80th birthday this past Thursday, May 18th, during which he celebrated Mass, ate lobster with senior clergy in the Vatican, and sang songs with Polish compatriots. As a teenager during the Second World War, Karol Wojtyła experienced, first-hand, the horrors of Nazism, the Holocaust, and soon thereafter, Communist totalitarianism. "I have carried with me the history, culture, experience and language of Poland," said the Pope once. "Having lived in a country that had to fight for its existence in the face of the aggressions of its neighbors, I have understood what exploitation is. I put myself immediately on the side of the poor, the disinherited, the oppressed, the marginalized and the defenseless," said the Pope.

After considering a career as an actor, and even petitioning three times to become a Catholic monk, he was persuaded by the then-Archbishop of Cracow—who recognized his charisma, oratorical talents, and potential to help people directly—to pursue the priesthood. He was ordained as a Catholic priest in 1946, became Archbishop of Cracow in 1958, Cardinal in 1967, and was elected Pope by the Vatican's college of Cardinals in 1978 at the age of 58—the first non-Italian Pope since 1522.

The Holy Pontiff, by his own description, is a moral leader who believes in the sanctity of the human being. Over the years, he has denounced the excesses, and affronts to human dignity, of the two major competing social systems of the 20th century, communism and capitalism. He has condemned the atheistic and dehumanizing forces of Communism, which he experienced in Poland. And he has denounced the more unsavory aspects of modern capitalism, such as greed, abject poverty, selfishness, and secular atheism. According to his spokesman, the Holy Pontiff's goal is to establish a mode of Christian thinking to serve as a meaningful alternative to the humanist philosophies of the 20th century, such as Marxism and post-Modernism. His moral philosophy, and its impact on world affairs, earned him the honor of *Time* magazine Man of the Year of 1994, which described him as "The most tireless moral voice of a secular age."

Pope John Paul II's moral philosophy has brought much needed attention to the plight of the world's poor. In this vein, the Pope has called for substantial reduction or outright cancellation of the international debt that seriously threatens the future of many of the poorest nations. Inspired in part by the Pope's example, we are proud to have contributed to the enactment of international debt relief legislation last year, which was facilitated by the Jubilee 2000 Movement—through which the Holy Father has nurtured meaningful ecumenical cooperation.

Pope John Paul II has already left us a substantial body of written work that will nourish future generations with the wisdom and benevolence of this moral philosophy. In fact, his writings fill nearly 150 volumes. Through his encyclicals, homilies, letters, and other writings, this "Pope of Letters" has inspired the world to embrace universal principles of human dignity and human rights. In 1994, his popular volume of philosophical and moral ruminations, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, became an immediate best-seller in 12 countries.

The most traveled Pope in history, Pope John Paul II has brought his message of peace and reconciliation to 117 countries. In his most recent visit to Israel, for example, the Holy Father prayed at the Western Wall, one of Judaism's holiest sites. His prayer, an unprecedented act of contrition on behalf of Catholic Christians, read as follows: "We are deeply saddened by the behavior of those who in the course of history have caused these children of Yours to suffer and, asking Your forgiveness, we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of the Covenant." And how can we forget his groundbreaking trip to Cuba in 1998? On that papal visit, he condemned the dehumanizing and immoral aspects of both Cuban communism and the outdated—and senseless—U.S. trade embargo. As customary, his words echoed in the farthest corners of the world.

Pope John Paul II understands one of the most fundamental Christian principles that has become a hallmark for fostering reconciliation: forgiveness. In one of the most remarkable acts of forgiveness ever witnessed publicly, the Holy Father confronted the man that attempted to assassinate him and forgave him for his grave sin.

The Holy Father's acts of compassion stem from his inherently benevolent nature. His compassion, charisma and moral authority are celebrated by leaders of other faiths. For instance, the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of the world's Buddhists, has said of the Pope: "He really has a will and a determination to help humanity through spirituality. That is marvelous. That is good. I know how difficult it is for leaders on these issues." Rev. Billy Graham, a spiritual adviser to many U.S. presidents, has also said about the Pope: "He'll go down in history as the greatest of our modern Popes. He's been the strong conscience of the whole Christian world."

Mr. Speaker, when Pope John Paul speaks, whether to those gathered at St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, or in a Mass delivered in the backwaters of Cuba, the world listens. The world listens because he is the most powerful moral force in our lifetimes, an apostle for social justice, a champion of the poor, and a harbinger of peace. I urge the Congress to move swiftly on this legislation, so that we can bestow this well deserved gold medal to His Holiness Pope John Paul II, at the dawn of the New Millennium and the Jubilee 2000 celebration.

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my strong support for H.R. 3544, the Pope John Paul II Congressional Gold Medal Act. I am a cosponsor of this notable legislation that would award Pope John Paul II with a gold medal in recognition of his many powerful and enduring contributions to international peace and religious understanding. This bill is also necessary to honor a man who

has served not only as a spiritual leader to Catholic Christians in the United States and around the World, but also as a political champion for human rights.

In the more than 20 years of his papacy, John Paul II has been an exemplar of the power of faith against the forces of intolerance and corruption. His support of the Solidarity trade union in his native Poland in the early 1980s, combined with his unwavering support of Catholics living in the former Soviet Bloc nations and his steadfast opposition to the communist regimes suppressing their beliefs, contributed immeasurably to the eventual collapse of those oppressive systems.

Pope John Paul II has additionally been a tireless worker for international peace, traveling hundreds of thousands of miles in order to share his spiritual messages with millions of individuals like myself. In October 1995, during his visit to the United States and the United Nations, I had the opportunity to meet with the Pope John Paul II and learn firsthand more about his good work.

The Pope's effort have also proven instrumental in virtually all of the World's major conflicts of the past two decades. He brought his message to Central America in the 1980's during its period of revolution and bloodshed. He spread his message to fight apartheid in South Africa, tribal war in Central Africa, and genocide in the Balkans. In an effort to relieve them of their pain, he has traveled to these places to show them he shares in their loss and despair. Most recently, Pope John Paul II served as counsel in bringing together Israelis and Palestinians in a non-denominational effort to cease the brutal conflict that has plagued these two peoples for far too long.

This legislation is appropriate in light of the fact that many entities around the world that have similarly honored the Pope. From being designed as the *Time* Magazine's "Man of the Year" in 1994 to serving as the namesake of a Catholic grade school in my hometown of Nanticoke, Pennsylvania, Pope John Paul II has received many honors. I coincidentally have the good fortune of being visited today by 28 students in the graduating 8th Grade class at Pope John Paul II School. I am therefore very pleased that we are at this time taking up this legislation to honor the great man for whom their institution is named.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, in recognition of his 80th birthday and his leading the Catholic Church into its Third Millennium, we should acknowledge the important accomplishments Pope John Paul II has made to our World during his lifetime. I encourage all Members of the House to support this bill.

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, let me thank my good friend, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. VENTO), for his thoughtful observations.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to my distinguished friend, the gentleman from New York (Chairman GILMAN).

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise; and it is an honor and privilege to associate myself with the legislation offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr.

LEACH), which honors one of the most remarkable individuals alive today, who is also one of most influential persons in all of world history.

His Holiness Pope John Paul II celebrated his 80th birthday just last week. The entire world expressed fellowship and congratulations upon his reaching this milestone. It is an appropriate time, therefore, to pay tribute to him by this measure.

The minting of a gold medal in his honor is a timely way that we in the Congress, on behalf of all of the people in our Nation, can thank this saintly man for his guidance and inspiration throughout the years. His pontificate was the longest of the 20th century and is a beacon of leadership as we begin the 21st century.

His Holiness was born in Wadowice, Poland, in 1920, just a short time after his homeland gained its long-sought independence.

Karol Joseph Wojtyla, as he was known then, suffered under the Nazi occupation of his nation, as did all of his generation. He was active in an underground organization which helped Jewish people seek refuge from the Nazis. It was his actions at that time, what he observed and what he learned during World War II, that inspired him to enter the priesthood. He was ordained on November 1, 1946 and, in October 1978, was elected the first non-Italian Pope since 1522, taking the name John Paul II to honor his three immediate predecessors.

In 1981, His Holiness was a victim of a dastardly assassination attempt. Although he was hospitalized for 2½ months, his steely courage, coupled with his splendid physical condition honed by a lifetime of athletics, allowed his full recovery.

Throughout the past 22 years, Pope John Paul II has been an inspiration to all of us and is universally beloved.

Mr. Speaker, the coinage of a gold medal in Pope John Paul's memory is an appropriate way to begin this new century. I strongly urge our colleagues to fully support this measure.

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to mention that my colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KANJORSKI), was hoping, as I said, to be here to speak in support of the bill and was unexpectedly summoned to the White House, as I indicated. If he had been here, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KANJORSKI) would have mentioned that Pope John Paul II is the namesake of a Catholic grade school in his hometown of Nanticoke, Pennsylvania.

Coincidentally, he has the good fortune of being visited today by 28 students in the graduating 8th grade class at Pope John Paul II School, who may have been here earlier but may have had to leave.

In any case, I wanted to mention that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA).

(Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to stand here to extend my warmest congratulations and expression of appreciation to the chairman of the committee, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH), for his leadership in bringing this important legislation before our colleagues for their approval.

I also want to thank our ranking member, the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAFALCE), and our good friend, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. VENTO), for this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, it is only appropriate that we honor one of the greatest spiritual giants of the world today, Pope John Paul II but not only because he is a spiritual leader to some one billion Catholics around the world but also for the fact that he stands as an example of a great Christian in teaching spiritual values which cut through political ideology, which is something that I have always admired about this great Christian leader of the world.

Mr. Speaker, long before he became the Bishop of Rome, Pope John Paul II was known as Karol Jozef Wojtyla, a young boy from Poland. According to biography, Wojtyla's childhood was not happy. By the age of twelve, he had lost his mother, brother and sister. Before he was ordained to the priesthood, he lost his father. In the interim, World War II ravaged Europe. When the Germans began rounding up Polish men, Wojtyla took refuge in the archbishop of Krakow's residence. He remained there until the end of the war.

In 1946, Wojtyla was ordained to the priesthood. He earned two master's degrees and a doctorate. In 1978, the Sacred College of Cardinals chose Wojtyla as the next pope after the death of John Paul I.

Mr. Speaker, Pope John Paul II became the first pope to visit a synagogue and the first to visit the Holocaust memorial at Auschwitz. According to one report, in ending the Catholic-Jewish estrangement, he calls Jews "our elder brothers."

I would like to offer even a little gesture to our majority leadership by extending an invitation to Pope John Paul II to have a joint session of the Congress and have this great leader address us, because I think we all need his guidance and certainly some of the examples that he will share with us, and perhaps a few words or a sentence can be added into this resolution to extend that invitation to Pope John Paul II to address this great body and to our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, again, I want to thank my good friend, the chairman of the committee, for his leadership in bringing this legislation. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS), who has been one of our leaders on the debt relief program championed by the Jubilee 2000, which is, of course, one of the major initiatives of Pope John Paul II.

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the kind words of the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. VENTO).

Mr. Speaker, I would like to associate myself with the remarks of the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA). The people of Alabama and the people of American Samoa both share a love for Pope John Paul II.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill introduced by my good friend, the gentleman from Iowa (Chairman LEACH), to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Pope John Paul II.

Pope John Paul II was born in Poland on May 18, 1920, and is said to be the most recognized person in the world. He is by far the most traveled Pope in the 2000-year history of the Roman Catholic Church, having visited almost every continent and country where he personally addressed tens of millions of people on almost each visit.

Pope John Paul II is one of the most important statesmen, diplomats, and political figures of our time. But he is far more. He is a great pastor, evangelist, and witness of Christianity. As spiritual leader to the world's one billion Catholics, the Pope has commenced a great dialogue with modern culture that transcends the boundaries of political or economic ideologies that has dominated the world since the beginnings of modernity in the 1700s.

He is one of the most prolific writers in this century. His writings have made great contributions in the area of theology, philosophy, sociology, politics, culture, and science. Having witnessed firsthand the brutal inhumanity of Nazi and Communist regimes, the Pope understands the true dignity of each human being. He has heroically opposed the offences against human dignity that have tragically marked the 20th century.

As much as any single person of this century, John Paul II has worked to protect the rights of each individual and to promote respect and understanding between cultures, nations, and peoples.

To truly find world peace, the Pope encourages all people to answer the most important question we face: What is the ultimate truth about man and his relationship to God?

As part of his pastoral work, the Pope has consistently identified the moral challenges facing free societies and the importance of resolving those challenges. The Pope has tirelessly preached against the dangers of unreasonable and unfettered license that pays no respect to the dignity of each person. His prophetic voice in the defense of the unborn, the aged, and the marginalized is well known. His defense of the dignity of all persons serves as a guideline for all Americans on how to treat each other with respect, based not on mere sentiment but on the deep and true respect for the image of God in each person.

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His ability to harmonize faith and reason sheds light on difficult public

and ethical issues that plague modern society. John Paul's pastoral leadership gives hope and courage for millions of Catholics and countless others in America who struggle to sanctify their lives in the midst of the modern secular world.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, there is no question the Pope has been a beacon of light and witness to hope for countless millions. It is only appropriate to recognize these accomplishments and to show our appreciation by awarding him the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to belatedly wish the Pontiff a happy birthday. His 80th birthday was last week. This is an appropriate way for us to recognize that as well. We hope he has many more.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, today we honor Pope John Paul II, who in his 20 years as leader of the Catholic Church has become pastor to the world, boldly proclaiming the Gospel—the Good News of Jesus Christ—and its message of love, hope, and reconciliation. The Holy Father walks the path to peace that surpasses understanding, the road that leads to Heaven. How appropriate it is that we honor him with a Congressional Gold Medal, as he just celebrated his eightieth birthday last week. Even after eight decades of doing the Lord's work here on earth, the Pope's charisma and steadfast faith shine brightly, giving hope to millions of people of all faiths.

During his pontificate the Holy Father has made an astonishing 176 visits to 117 different countries, he speaks some eight languages, and has written 13 incisive encyclicals. He is truly a world leader, and an unparalleled champion of those who cannot speak for themselves: the poor, the unborn, those condemned to death, and those whose basic rights as children of God are trampled upon by oppressive regimes. He waged an unrelenting crusade against the forces of atheistic Communism, and continues to preach the message of life, hope, and love amid the oppressive tide of the culture of death. Pope John Paul II's encyclical "The Gospel of Life" (*Evangelium vitae*) reminds all of us—especially those in public service—that the gift of human life is so precious, so full of dignity, that it must remain inviolable and be defended against all manner of violence.

The Pope writes in that important document that:

This is what is happening also at the level of politics and government: the original and inalienable right to life is questioned or denied on the basis of a parliamentary vote or the will of one part of the people—even if it is the majority. This is the sinister result of a relativism which reigns unopposed: the "right" ceases to be such, because it is no longer firmly founded on the inviolable dignity of the person, but is made subject to the will of the stronger part.

And elsewhere in *Evangelium vitae* Pope John Paul II states in unambiguous terms:

Abortion and euthanasia are thus crimes which no human law can claim to legitimize. There is no obligation in conscience to obey such laws; instead there is a grave and clear obligation to oppose them by conscientious objection . . . In the case of intrinsically unjust law, such as a law permitting abortion

or euthanasia, it is therefore never licit to obey it, or to "take part in a propaganda campaign in favor of such a law, or vote for it."

In the Kingdom of God, that civilization of life which John Paul II has so fervently sought to build, there is no place for the systematic killing of unborn children.

My family and I have had the awesome privilege of meeting the Holy Father: in Newark, New Jersey, in the crowd in 1979 at New York's Shea Stadium, and most recently in Guatemala. I have personally witnessed and been inspired on numerous occasions by his power that comes from being so rooted in God, and so devoted to the service of others. Pope John Paul II is truly the Vicar of Christ on earth, a man who has, and continues, to faithfully and courageously walk in the shoes of the Fisherman, Peter.

It is said that the Holy Father has had no personal bank account since being ordained a priest over 50 years ago. He has truly stored up treasure in heaven, and we are all better people for his untiring work here on earth.

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of legislation, H.R. 3544, that would provide a Congressional Gold Medal, on behalf of Congress, to Pope John Paul II. As a cosponsor of this legislation and a member of the House Banking Committee, I believe that this Congressional medal would be an appropriate honor for Pope John Paul II who has served as the leader of the Catholic Church since 1978.

In order to be fiscally prudent, this legislation also includes a provision stipulating that the cost of this medal should come from the Numismatic Public Enterprise Fund and cannot exceed \$30,000. In addition, this legislation authorizes the sale of duplicate coins to be deposited into the Numismatic Public Enterprise Fund to repay it for this donation.

On May 18, 2000, the Holy Father celebrated his 80th birthday. This Congressional Medal will help ensure that Pope John Paul II receives recognition for the public service that he has provided to all Catholics around the world. From his boyhood home of Krakow, Poland, Pope John Paul II has never forgotten his roots. As a young man during World War II, he witnessed the deportation of tens of thousands of Polish Jews and Christians to Nazi death camps. This experience made an indelible impression on the man who would become Pope John Paul II. Just this year, in his first trip to the Holy Land, he eloquently addressed survivors of the Holocaust. At Israel's Holocaust memorial, Yad Vashem, Pope John Paul II assured the Jewish people that the Catholic Church is deeply saddened by the hatred, acts of persecution and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews by Christians at any time and in any place.

Pope John Paul II has made great contributions to mankind. For example, this year the Holy Father led an effort to reduce the poverty among the poor by calling for the reduction or outright cancellation of the international debt that is burdening the world's poorest nations as part of the Jubilee 2000 project. I am pleased that Congress, with my support, included this international debt relief legislation in last year's omnibus appropriations bill. This law will ensure that the world's poorest nations have much of their debt forgiven and instead invest their scarce funds to rebuild domestic health and education programs.

Pope John Paul II should also be recognized for his written works that inspire the world to embrace universal principles of human dignity and human rights. Some of his famous works include "Notificationes," published in 1971. In 1981, he published the Encyclical Letter, *Laborem Exercens* on Human Work. In 1982, he published the Apostolic Letter, *Caritatis Christi* about the role of the church in China. In 1984, he published the Apostolic Letter, *Salvifici Doloris* on the Christian Meaning of Human suffering.

Pope John Paul II worked tirelessly with the Solidarity movement in Poland to oppose communism. In 1980 and 1981 he met with Lech Walesa of the Polish Independent Syndicate *Solidarnosc*. He also traveled to Poland on several occasions to encourage democracy in his birthplace. In 1991, he met with Lech Walesa again, as the new President of the Polish Republic.

Pope John Paul II has also worked tirelessly to bring his message of peace and reconciliation to the world. In 1969, he visited the parish of Corpus Domini and made a visit to the Jewish Community and the Synagogue in the Kazimierz section of Krakow. He has traveled to 117 countries to pray with Catholics around the world. He recently traveled to Jerusalem in Israel to the Western Wall. In 1998, he traveled to Cuba to celebrate mass with that nation's Catholic parishioners.

I urge my colleagues to support this initiative to honor Pope John Paul II, the Holy Father, with a Congressional Gold Medal.

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to cosponsor and support H.R. 3544, the Pope John Paul II Congressional Gold Medal Act. Over the years, Pope John Paul II has become one of the world's greatest moral and spiritual forces of all time. I admire His Holiness' efforts to foster peace and promote justice, freedom, and compassion throughout his life. In his travels around the world, Pope John Paul II has inspired millions of people of all faiths and races because of his strong desire for peace and brotherhood.

I had an opportunity to attend a private mass with His Holiness. Afterwards, His Holiness remarked to me, "Congressman, God bless Ronald Reagan." Those five words speak volumes about a collaborative partnership between Pope John Paul II and President Reagan to rid the world of the evils of Soviet communism.

Without the help of His Holiness, America and her allies would not have been successful in our efforts to free the world from Soviet communism. Millions of citizens around the world owe Pope John Paul II a debt of gratitude for his valiant efforts.

I want to thank His Holiness for his life and apostolate because he is a man of peace whose words for a more just society inspire us all. His Holiness is a deserving recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal because he has done so much to help our troubled world.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to Pope John Paul II. It is difficult to talk briefly about a man who has done so much since being elected to succeed Pope John Paul I in 1978. So, let me make these few comments. Pope John Paul II has worked tirelessly to unite the people of different countries and different religions, regardless of their color or their politics. He did this as a youth, as a professor at Catholic University of Lublin, as the

Archbishop of Krakow and continues to do so as the head of the Roman Catholic Church.

He is said to be the most recognized man in the world. In fact he was named "Man of the Year" in Time magazine in 1994. But, that is not why I stand before you. I stand before you because this man has dedicated his life to the salvation of others.

I still remember when he was chosen by the College of Cardinals. There was a great deal of discussion about him, not because he was selected to become the Pope, but rather because he was the first non Italian Pope since 1522 and because he was only 58 years old. Now, twenty-two years later, neither his birth place nor his age are part of the discussion. I think that there is a lesson for all of us in that fact.

I support this award because Pope John Paul II has reached out to the people of this planet. He encourages fraternity and encourages people to live the gospel. And, in the final analysis, he has made the world a better place for us to live. I cannot think of a better reason for this body to give this or any award.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great man, Karol Jozef Wojtyla. Now known to the world as Pope John Paul II, this leader of the Catholic Church has championed the cause of promoting human rights and eliminating poverty and hunger around the world. Called by some the man of the century, John Paul II has been unafraid to articulate his vision of a better world and has the passion and integrity to work toward that goal. The bottom line in the debate over the nature of truth and freedom, he argues, is the sanctity of all humans who are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, including life and liberty—as written in our very own Declaration of Independence.

He was also a key figure at a pivotal juncture in world history. As a Cardinal in Poland, he was a shrewd and unflinching opponent of communism, advancing the church's agenda without allowing outright hostility and repression to develop.

As Pope, his support of the Solidarity movement was instrumental in the downfall of the government.

Today, just over nineteen years after a would-be assassin shot him on May 13, 1981, we vote to award Pope John Paul II with the Congressional Gold Medal. I ask all Members and the world to acknowledge his faith, his intellect and his wonderful contributions.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3544, the Pope John Paul II Congressional Gold Medal Act. As you know this bill would authorize a gold medal to be awarded on behalf of the Congress to Pope John Paul II in recognition of his many and enduring contributions to peace and religious understanding.

Born Karol Wojtyla in Wadowice, Poland in 1920, Pope John Paul II has remained a leading champion of human rights around the world, and a strong moral leader for us all. Ordained in 1946, Pope John Paul II spent eight years as a professor of social ethics at the Catholic University of Lublin, Poland. In 1964, he was named the archbishop of Krakow and only three years later he was appointed cardinal by Pope Paul VI. As the Archbishop of Krakow, he would prove himself to be a noble and trustworthy pastor in the face of Communist persecution.

On October 16, 1978, Cardinal Wojtyla was elected Pope. He took the name of his predecessors, and became the first Polish leader of the Roman Catholic Church and the youngest Pope in this century. In this capacity—as our society has grappled with serious social questions, Pope John Paul II has dealt with them in such a way as to maintain a peaceful and fair world order. In fact, over the last 50 years, he has remained a dedicated servant to the world. Throughout his many travels, he has promoted peace, nuclear disarmament, and the conquering of world hunger among other things. In addition, he has remained a beacon of strength and hope for every world citizen he comes into contact with.

As a result, I fully support this act and urge my colleagues to authorize the Congressional Gold Medal in honor of Pope John Paul II. God bless you and God Bless America.

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud cosponsor and strong supporter of H.R. 3544, to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Pope John Paul II for his outstanding leadership in promoting peace and understanding across the globe. Pope John Paul II is one of the greatest humanitarians of all time and this special award is a testament to his successful life's work in making the world a better and safer place.

Pope John Paul II has been a revolutionary in the world of religion. He has been a spiritual leader to over one billion Catholic Christians around the globe. He has served as an inspiration to millions of American Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

Pope John Paul II has led the charge to unify not only diverse sects of Christianity, but also to bridge the gaps between all respected religious peoples throughout the world.

Over the years, Pope John Paul II has traveled the world as a "warrior of peace." His tireless effort to bring people together of different faiths has demonstrated to the rest of the world the wonderful possibilities of the good that can and will prevail when people of diverse, sometimes seemingly bipolar backgrounds begin to listen to one another too long.

From the United States to developing nations, Pope John Paul II has traversed the globe with a message of hope and freedom as our New Economy's prosperity continues to beat down the plight of poverty.

Pope John Paul II should be commended for his work in promoting democracy and for the demise of communism throughout Europe. Being such an outspoken leader in the battle of good versus evil enabled Pope John Paul II to play a critical role in the debate which lead to the fall of the Berlin Wall. Time and time again, Pope John Paul II spoke up and defended liberty and justice wherever totalitarian regimes have arisen.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for bringing consideration of this legislation to the House Floor. Pope John Paul II is a deserving recipient of this special award, as he has been a leader in promoting peace and democracy throughout the world. With that said, I am privileged to join my colleagues in support of awarding Pope John Paul II the Congressional Gold Medal.

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3544, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3544.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.

#### VETERANS AND DEPENDENTS MILLENNIUM EDUCATION ACT

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 1402) to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance programs providing education benefits for veterans, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 1402

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS; REFERENCES TO TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Veterans and Dependents Millennium Education Act".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents; references to title 38, United States Code.
- Sec. 2. Increase in rates of basic educational assistance under Montgomery GI Bill.
- Sec. 3. Additional opportunity for certain VEAP participants to enroll in basic educational assistance under Montgomery GI Bill.
- Sec. 4. Increase in rates of survivors and dependents educational assistance.
- Sec. 5. Adjusted effective date for award of survivors' and dependents' educational assistance.
- Sec. 6. Revision of educational assistance interval payment requirements.
- Sec. 7. Availability of education benefits for payment for licensing or certification tests.
- Sec. 8. Extension of certain temporary authorities.
- Sec. 9. Codification of recurring provisions in annual Department of Veterans Affairs appropriations Acts.
- Sec. 10. Preservation of certain reporting requirements.

(c) REFERENCES TO TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE.—Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this Act an amendment