

and extensive background. Their insight and observations could prove to be invaluable.

In addition to members of the Commission on Post-Conflict Reconstruction visiting Iraq, members of Congress should visit as well. In my opinion, it would make sense for the chairman and ranking member—or their designees—of the following committees to travel to Iraq:

House and Senate Armed Services committees;

House International Relations Committee;

Senate Foreign Relations Committee; and

House and Senate Appropriations committees.

Members should spend time in all parts of Iraq. Obviously safety and security are issues that must be considered, but the trips could be made in small groups without publicity. The only way to get a feel for what is happening is by visiting the towns and cities and talking to the people living there.

In addition to meeting with military commanders, these members or their designees should meet with Ambassador L. Paul Bremer III, the civilian administrator of Iraq, and other officials from the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA)—now called the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA)—USAID officials, and representatives from the NGO community and other international aid organizations. Meetings with Iraqi citizens also should be set up.

Congress needs to be involved in-and kept up-to-date on-the reconstruction of Iraq. Clearly, there is a great deal at stake for the United States in Iraq. The reconstruction effort is going to be long and arduous. No one is naive enough to believe it is going to happen overnight. Nor is anyone naive enough to think that it is not going to come without problems and challenges.

Yet, if Congress is not involved, the Bush Administration is going to be left without a partner in rebuilding Iraq. The Congress is the Bush Administration's greatest ally. There should be nothing to hide. And after my trip, I believe there is great deal to tell-much of it positive.

We must, however, be realistic. We have a long, long way to go in the reconstruction of Iraq. We have won the war, and we must be careful not to lose the peace. Failure cannot be an option. A well developed plan for reconstruction is imperative and congressional involvement will help the Bush Administration from steering off course as it works to rebuild Iraq.

ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE TAXPAYER ABUSE PREVENTION RESOLUTION OF 2003

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2003

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker today I am introducing the Taxpayer Abuse Prevention Resolution of 2003, a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that private sector debt collection agencies should not be paid on a commission basis or as a percent of the amount of federal taxes they collect.

The Internal Revenue Service has proposed paying private debt collectors a 25 percent

commission to collect unpaid tax debt. That proposal will jeopardize the rights and privacy of American taxpayers. The following organizations oppose the IRS proposal and have expressed their strong support for this important consumer protection legislation I am introducing today: Citizens for Tax Justice, Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union, National Consumer Law Center, National Consumers League.

Two pilot projects were authorized by Congress to test private collection of tax debt for 1996 and 1997. The 1996 pilot was such a failure that the 1997 project was cancelled. Contractors violated the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA) and did not protect the security of personal taxpayer information. An IRS Internal Audit Report found that contractors made hundreds of calls to taxpayers during times prohibited by the FDCPA, and that calls were even placed as early as 4:19 a.m.

The Administration's proposal to privatize tax collection services flies in the face of Section 1204 of the IRS Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998, which specifically prevents IRS employees from being evaluated on the basis of the amount of taxes they collect in order to eliminate incentives to use overly aggressive tax collection techniques. Despite concerns about aggressive collection techniques, the Administration now wants to pay private debt collectors \$3.25 billion in commissions to collect taxes that IRS employees could collect for roughly one-tenth of that amount.

Paying private debt collectors on a commission basis will be costly and will threaten the rights and privacy of the American taxpayers. We must ensure, as this resolution seeks to do, that federal tax collection functions will not be handed over to private sector bounty hunters. Our constituents deserve that assurance.

Mr. Speaker, American taxpayers need to know that their government works for them, not against them. I urge this Congress to pass the Taxpayer Abuse Prevention Resolution of 2003.

HONORING PAUL LINN, SR., EARL CANTOR, SARAH CRISPIN, DON CANTOR, ANNA MAE PORTER, AND JAMES DAUGHERTY

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to have the chance to come before this body with a story of great hope and inspiration. I am proud to stand before this body today to update you on the remarkable story of a family that I first brought to your attention back in October. Paul Linn Sr., Earl Cantor, Sarah Crispin, Don Cantor, Anna Mae Porter, and James Daugherty have traveled great distances and overcome many obstacles to reunite for the first time in 67 years. On Saturday, these fine individuals will meet face-to-face, reuniting as a family. Though they were separated from a young age, the dedication and love that they have shown in searching each other out is truly inspirational. I pay tribute to them again today for the dedication and resilience that has brought them together for this weekend of celebration.

Eight months ago, I relayed to you the remarkable story of this family. It is a story of a

family whose beginning was filled with pain, loss, and confusion. A story about a family suffering the ills of abandonment and tragedy. However, today I share with you a new story of a family reunited through the strength and persistence of the bonds of blood. What began as a random search for a replacement birth certificate ended in the reunification of brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, grandmothers, grandfathers and countless grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to once again recognize Paul, Earl, Sarah, Don, Anna, and James as they celebrate family and enjoy the rewards of faith and persistence. As I said eight months ago before this body, their story is one of great satisfaction and inspiration. I wish them all the best as an old family is reunited in Colorado.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PAUL RYAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2003

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I was absent for legislative business last week from June 2, 2003 through June 5, 2003 due to the birth of my son, Charles Wilson Ryan on Friday, May 30, 2003. As a result, I missed roll-call votes 227 through 248.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on the following rollcall votes:

227, H. Res. 159, Expressing the Profound Sorrow on the Occasion of the Death of Irma Rangel;

228, H. Res. 195, Congratulating Sammy Sosa of the Chicago Cubs for hitting 500 Major League Home Runs;

229, H.R. 1465, Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service in Iron Station, North Carolina as the "General Charles Gabriel Post Office";

230, S. 222, the Zuni Indian Tribe Water Rights Settlement Act;

231, S. 273, the Grand Teton National Park Land Exchange Act;

234, H.J. Res. 4, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of the United States Authorizing the Congress to Prohibit the Physical Desecration of the Flag of the United States;

235, H. Res. 231, Supporting the Goals of Peace Officers Memorial Day;

236, H. Res. 257, Providing for Consideration of H.R. 760, The Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act;

237, H. Con. Res. 177, Recognizing and commending the members of the U.S. Armed Forces, and the allies of the United States and their armed forces, who participate in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq and the dedication of military families and countless others for their support;

238, H. Res. 201, expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that our Nation's businesses and business owners should be commended for their support of our troops and their families as they serve our country in many ways, especially in these days of increased engagement of our military around the world;

239, H.R. 1954, Armed Forces Naturalization Act;

242, H.R. 760, The Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act;