

SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH
FAIRNESS ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. JIM RYUN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 26, 2005

Mr. RYUN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 525, which would authorize small businesses around the country to establish Association Health Plans. An estimated 45 million people are uninsured in the United States, and the number has grown since 1989. Eighty-five percent of these people are in working families where the price of premiums have increased so much that they cannot afford the coverage that will give them peace of mind.

The majority of Americans receive health insurance coverage through their employers, but with rising health care costs, many small businesses can no longer afford to provide coverage for their employees. H.R. 525 would remedy this by allowing small businesses to band together to garner greater buying power when bargaining with health care providers. Let's give Americans access to more affordable health care and support Association Health Plans.

TRIBUTE TO THE MOUNT
CLEMENS ROTARY**HON. SANDER M. LEVIN**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 28, 2005

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Mount Clemens Rotary as they plan a unique local celebration of the 100th anniversary of Rotary International.

The Mount Clemens Rotary Club, organized in 1920, is the oldest and largest service club in Macomb County. The Mount Clemens Rotary and many individual rotarians have been at the forefront of activity in their community. A few of the many projects over the years include: assistance through the Cripple Children Society and the Boy Scouts; providing aid to the Clinton River Flood victims; working in the Relief Store during the Great Depression; leading the Urban Renewal Program in the 1950s and 60s; and helping to establish both Rotary Park in Downtown Mount Clemens and the Playscape on the old Wilson School property.

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of Rotary International, the Mt. Clemens Rotary is preserving a bit of history in downtown Mt. Clemens. Two cannons, donated by the United States Government in 1901, were originally in front of the old Macomb County Court Building. The cannons were placed on pedestals and remained there until 1942 when at the request of the U.S. Government they were donated as part of the World War II scrap metal effort.

For sometime the Macomb County Historical Commission has wanted to replace the missing cannons, but the cost was always a major hurdle. Members of the Mount Clemens Rotary Club decided this worthy project could both commemorate local history and the history of Rotary.

The two cannons are accurate representations of a cannon used by General Alexander Macomb in 1812 and a cannon used by Colonel Stockton in the Civil War. General Alexander Macomb was the hero of the battle of Plattsburg and Lake Champlain during the War of 1812. General Macomb with only 3,000 troops was able to rout 13,000 British troops. The other cannon was dedicated to the memory of the Michigan Eight Calvary Regiment and their commander, Colonel John Stockton. The Regiment along with the Battery M of the 1st Michigan Artillery was organized and trained at Camp Stockton in Mount Clemens from the Fall of 1862 to May 1863.

Mr. Speaker, on August 27, 2005, the Mount Clemens Rotary, working with the Macomb County Historical Society, will replace and rededicate the two cannons at a grand ceremony during the Bath City Festival. I look forward to joining with them, and ask my Congressional colleagues to join me in saluting a major community asset, the Mount Clemens Rotary, on this important and historic occasion.

A PROCLAMATION HONORING EVA
J. DENNEY ON HER 100TH BIRTH-
DAY**HON. ROBERT W. NEY**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 28, 2005

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, whereas, Eva J. Denney was born on June 19, 1905; and Whereas, Eva J. Denney is celebrating her 100th birthday today; and

Whereas, Eva J. Denney, is a long-time active participant in the social and civic life of her community; and

Whereas, Eva J. Denney has exemplified a love for her family and friends and must be commended for her life-long dedication to helping others.

Therefore, I join with the residents of the entire 18th Congressional District of Ohio in wishing Eva J. Denney a very happy 100th birthday.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC-CENTRAL
AMERICA-UNITED STATES FREE
TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMEN-
TATION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 27, 2005

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I voted against the Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement. As negotiated by the Bush Administration, it fails the fundamental tests that our trade agreements should meet.

First, our trade agreements must be structured to raise labor standards, not put downward pressures on the rights and protections of American workers. All workers—in the U.S., the Dominican Republic and Central America—deserve fair wages, safe workplaces, and reasonable working conditions.

Second, all citizens—in the U.S., the Dominican Republic and Central America—deserve

clean air and clean water. Polluting factories that poison our environment should not be located in San Salvador or San Jose, any more than they should be in Baraboo or Beloit, or Waunakee or Wisconsin Dells.

The United States should be a leader in the world in raising standards for everyone. DR-CAFTA was an opportunity to enshrine these fundamental protections in a model trade agreement that could have served as a template for raising working standards, wages, safety and environmental protections around the world. Instead, it is an opportunity squandered.

Unfortunately, even more than an opportunity squandered, it threatens to undermine those very protections that American workers and their families have every right to expect. We need a truly fair trade deal. DR-CAFTA isn't fair, and it isn't a deal.

RECOGNIZING MICHAEL "MIKE"
WALKER OF LOWER LAKE, CALI-
FORNIA**HON. MIKE THOMPSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 28, 2005

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize California Highway patrolman, Michael "Mike" Walker of Lower Lake, California as he retires from 33 years of public service.

Born in Vallejo, California, and raised nearby in Benicia, Mike learned at an early age the importance of public service and the necessity of helping others. Compelled to serve our country, he enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1972. He served as an instructor teaching jungle survival techniques overseas. His hard work and commitment were duly noted as he earned four promotions during his three years in the United States Marine Corps.

In 1975, Mike joined the Benicia Police Department as a reserve officer. One year later, he transferred to the Alameda County Sheriff's Department where he served as Deputy Sheriff. Three years later, in 1978, he joined the California Highway Patrol and went through the academy in Sacramento. Upon graduation Officer Walker was assigned to the Glendale law enforcement team. In 1980 he transferred to Newhall and in 1984 to Clear Lake where he has spent the past 21 years serving the citizens of Lake County.

Officer Walker served as an instructor, training and arming his fellow officers with the proper knowledge and skills needed for fieldwork, including physical methods of arrest and advanced accident investigation.

Officer Walker is a kindhearted man, who has selflessly devoted his life to helping others. He is revered throughout Lake County as someone always willing to lend a hand wherever it is needed.

In retirement, Mike and his beloved wife of 29 years, Dorrie, plan on spending more time with their children, Christopher and Patricia, and their 2 grandchildren, Denim and Katie.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, it is appropriate that we honor and thank California Highway Patrolman Michael "Mike" Walker for his hard work and dedication to public service and extend our best wishes to him in retirement.

MR. LEONID NEVZLIN'S STATEMENT BEFORE THE HELSINKI COMMISSION

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 28, 2005

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, some major news organizations have been reporting current developments in Russia, directed by the Kremlin, that clearly undermine democratic institutions in that country. The latest initiative, a measure just approved by the Upper House of Parliament, further consolidates political control in Vladimir Putin's party and reduces any opportunity for opposition parties in future elections. It also greatly limits outside groups from monitoring or observing vote tabulation and reporting in national elections.

This week, my colleagues heard directly from a prominent "victim" of Mr. Putin's effort to purge political opposition. In an appearance before the Helsinki Commission, Mr. Leonid Nevzlin, who is a major share holder in the YUKOS Oil Company, discussed his situation and the political deterioration in Russia. When he visited Washington three years ago, Mr. Nevzlin was Deputy Chairman of the Upper House International Relations Committee, and advisor to the government on Middle East Policy, and head of the Russia Jewish Congress. Today, Mr. Nevzlin is forced to live in exile in Israel because he, like his long time associate and friend, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, dared to oppose the forces within the Kremlin.

Mr. Speaker, Leonid Nevzlin's statement before the Helsinki Commission clearly states the current situation in Russia today. I ask that it be included in the RECORD at this point.

STATEMENT TO THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE "HELSINKI COMMISSION"

(By Leonid Nevzlin, July 13, 2005)

Mr. Chairman, I welcome the opportunity to appear before the Helsinki Commission to discuss the current situation in Russia and the concerns of all of us about the Putin government and the future of Russia.

First, I wish to emphasize the value of the Commission's mandate and stated criteria to promote compliance with the fundamental standards of civil society in Russia and the other former Soviet republics.

Second, those of us who have witnessed first-hand the travesty of justice in Russia much appreciate the concerns expressed by the co-chairmen about the improper handling of the Yukos trial and the sentencing of Mikhail Khodorkovsky and his colleagues by Russian authorities. Your formal statement to the world's press that the "case appears to the world to be justice directed by politics" and that the "selective prosecution such as appears to be the case here will wreak havoc on Russia's legal system" reflects that the chairmen of this commission have an accurate view of the Khodorkovsky trial and the weakened state of the legal system in Russia.

Third, it is vitally important that the Helsinki Commission continue monitoring the implementation of the provisions of the 1975 Helsinki Accords as they relate to Russia and report its findings to the public. While the U.S. Administration and Congressional leaders must necessarily balance many variables in the bilateral relationship, the Helsinki Commission has a clear mandate to insure that human rights and basic freedoms are maintained in the countries under its jurisdiction.

Mr. Chairman, it is my opinion that the rule of law is the cornerstone of civil society because it serves to protect the rights and freedoms of all citizens. What we have witnessed this past year in Russia is a legal system that differs very little from the Soviet days. The state prosecutor is an instrument of the Kremlin and the judiciary is not truly independent. When the finest lawyers in Russia cannot get a fair and just trial for their clients when the whole world is watching, no one in Russia can expect to obtain justice.

The lives of many hundreds or even thousands of people have been harmed forever as a result of the abuses of the Russian government, which has violated basic human rights and its own laws again and again. Many of those cases do not receive wide attention, but some do, and human rights groups have begun to document them. They are worthy of your attention and your future labors.

I am most familiar with the cases involving Yukos. Beyond Mr. Khodorkovsky and myself, Alexei Pichugin, a mid-level Yukos executive, has been sentenced to 20 years in prison in a secret murder trial conducted entirely behind closed doors. Mr. Pichugin has been drugged, interrogated without his lawyers present, kept from his wife and denied independent medical treatment—even after he lost nearly 70 pounds while in the custody of the FSB. My colleague, Platon Lebedev, who is suffering from liver ailments and who was arrested in his hospital bed, has also subsequently been denied independent medical care. He was tried in the same cage with Mr. Khodorkovsky in a show trial in which Russian and international legal norms were repeatedly violated. He, like Mr. Khodorkovsky, has now been sentenced to 9 years in prison.

The scope of the attack on those associated with Yukos has been broad in scope and terrible in its tactics. For example, Svetlana Bahkmina, a young Yukos lawyer, was arrested in December. She has been interrogated by FSB or other Russian officials to the point where her lawyers report that she has lost consciousness. She has been isolated from her children, ages 3 and 7. In the meantime, Russian government officials have said that Ms. Bahkmina will be released when her boss, Yukos' chief in-house lawyer, returns to Russia from England, where he is effectively a political refugee.

Other Yukos employees have had to flee Russia, too, and have found refuge in the democracies of the world. In a stark example of how the world now recognizes Russian "justice" for what it is, the Bow Street Magistrate's Court in London rejected a Russian extradition request for two such Yukos employees charged in the anti-Yukos campaign. Having heard all of the evidence, and noting President Putin's personal involvement in the cases, the judge concluded that no Russian court could be expected to withstand the Kremlin's political pressure such that it could provide a fair trial to these men. Subsequently, the British Home Office has given political asylum to a half dozen additional Yukos "refugees."

Beyond Yukos, just recently, it was reported that Russian prosecutors have opened a criminal case against former Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov. Mr. Kasyanov was dismissed by Mr. Putin last year and has been critical of the administration since then. He has specifically criticized the handling of the Yukos case and has expressed his own higher political aspirations. The Kasyanov case has all the earmarks of another Yukos-style campaign, in which the powers of the FSB and Russian federal prosecutors are misused by the Kremlin to destroy a political opponent.

The West, and particularly America, is rightfully concerned by the Kremlin's co-

opting of Russia's criminal justice system as a tool to crush political opposition. The West is further properly concerned because, in the Yukos case, the Kremlin's campaign attacked what had become a model for corporate governance and transparency.

No one should doubt for a minute President Putin's motive in the dismemberment of the Yukos Oil Company and the state take-over of its major production unit. Energy is both very profitable and, given that major industrial companies depend on imports for their energy needs, inherently political. It is the Kremlin's aim to control Russia's energy sector to insure its dominant role in the world energy market. This will most certainly enhance President Putin's standing given that Europe and other countries become more dependent on Russia as a major supplier. The respected Count Lambsdorff of Germany warned last week that his country was on a perilous course by increasing its dependence on natural gas imports from Russia.

On civil society, whatever progress was made in developing democratic institutions during the Yeltsin years have all but disappeared under the current regime. The major tenets of democracy, as we know them, barely exist in Russia today. While there may be a degree of freedom and liberty, the institutions that protect those rights have been usurped by forces within the Kremlin. The government now owns or controls all media outlets, the courts are not truly independent, there is no viable political opposition, and the list goes on. It is increasingly apparent that former KGB and FSB officers are now dominant in the Kremlin and whatever transparency existed a few years ago is not in evidence today. The result is an emerging form of corruption at the highest levels in the Russian government. This corruption threatens to corrode the foundation of the Russian government to a degree that could put at risk Russian security and stability as well as the long-term economic well-being of the Russian people. I fear this will be Vladimir Putin's legacy.

This current view of Russian authorities is not confined to me or to opponents of the Kremlin. Valentin Gefter, the Director of the Human Rights Institute in Moscow said to your committee just a few short weeks ago that "very often, political, corporate and even personal reasons prevail over the rule of law [in Russia]." I absolutely agree. Michael McFaul, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and executive director of the Council's Task Force on Russian American Relations, headed by former U.S. Vice Presidential nominees Jack Kemp and John Edwards, said that "Four or five years ago, there was a debate about whether Putin was a democrat. The debate is now over. The question today concerns the nature and extent of Putin's authoritarianism." Finally, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said that the Russian government's handling of the Yukos case "shook people's confidence," and that Russian officials must demonstrate that laws and regulations are fair and applied "consistently over time, applied over various cases."

It is not just Yukos that is under persecution by Russian authorities. As reported by Irina Yasina, the head of the Open Russia Foundation, a non-profit organization established by Mr. Khodorkovsky, myself and our colleagues to promote a democratic Russia, non-governmental organizations have been under "direct pressure and threats from the Ministry of Interior Affairs, Public Prosecutor's Office and Federal Security Services." This year, the Ministry of Justice has suspended the activity of the Nijny Novgorod Society of Human Rights and frozen the accounts of the Society of Russian-Chechen