

is a flat violation of the Constitution, constituting a bill of attainder. The Constitution says Congress shall pass no bill of attainder.

The Supreme Court has ruled a bill of attainder is a legislative act that, no matter what their form, applies either to named individuals or to easily ascertainable members of a group in such a way as to inflict punishment, and then without a judicial trial. That's exactly what this amendment does.

It may be that ACORN is guilty of various infractions, and if so, it ought to be investigated, maybe sanctioned, whatever, by the appropriate administrative agency or maybe by the judiciary. Congress must not be in the business of punishing individual organizations or people without trial.

That's what this amendment did. It is flatly prohibited by the Constitution. And once confidence in this institution is sapped, when we ignore the Constitution, we ignore constitutional principles, that whatever one may think of the subject matter or the organization here, the Constitution and the ban on bills of attainder is there for the protection of the liberties of all of us.

It's unfortunate that we passed this, and I certainly hope it is removed in the conference committee.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

#### HONORING PRESTON M. "PETE" GEREN, III

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. EDWARDS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EDWARDS of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the dedicated public service of our friend and former colleague, Preston M. "Pete" Geren, III. Tomorrow, September 18, will be the last day of Mr. Geren's service as Secretary of the United States Army, but I am confident it will not be his last day of service to the country he has served so well.

Pete Geren's service to country began 26 years ago as an aid to the distinguished Senator from Texas, Lloyd Bentsen. The depth and breadth of Pete's public service since then has been rarely matched in American history.

For 8 years, this native son of Fort Worth served the 12th District of Texas here in the U.S. House of Representatives. As a member of the Armed Services, Science and Technology, and Public Works and Transportation Committees, Congressman Geren earned the respect of Democrats and Republicans alike as an intelligent, hardworking, and effective Member of Congress. He championed, among many others, the

causes of a strong national defense, fiscal responsibility, and bipartisanship.

Pete Geren earned the respect of his constituents in Texas and his colleagues here in Washington because he always treated others with respect. He personified the Golden Rule each and every day, and in doing so, set a standard of public service that we would all be well served to follow.

I will never forget a December day in the late 1990s, standing right on the back row here, when House votes were unexpectedly added for a Friday afternoon. Pete was torn between going back to Texas, where his family was, and seeing his daughter in her school Christmas play or staying in Washington for the unscheduled vote.

This devoted father agonized over that decision and ultimately decided that he had an obligation to cast a vote on behalf of his constituents. It was not long after that that Pete made the decision to retire from Congress. And I will always believe that his love of family and the missed Christmas play that day strongly impacted his decision to retire.

Four years later, his country called on Pete Geren once again. A lifetime Democrat, Pete was called by the George W. Bush administration to serve in the Pentagon. 2001 began a remarkable chapter of service to our Nation's defense.

From 2001 to 2009, during a time of war and a critical time in our Nation's history, Pete Geren served as Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense in the areas of interagency initiatives, legislative affairs, and special projects. He then was appointed to serve as the Acting Secretary of the Air Force, and later as Acting Secretary of the Army.

In March of 2007, Pete Geren was confirmed as United States Secretary of the Army. In that position, he championed the cause of improving the quality of life for every Army soldier and every Army family. For years to come, because of the dedicated leadership of Secretary Geren, soldiers will live in better housing. They and their families will receive better health care, and they can know that their children will attend quality schools. Pete Geren, as Secretary of the Army, set up covenants between communities and the military installations in which they existed.

Pete Geren's accomplishments are too numerous, Mr. Speaker, to list them all today, but I think one of his greatest legacies will be that he proved that in the rough-and-tumble world of politics in Washington, D.C., one can succeed at the highest levels of public service through hard work, respect for others, solid integrity, and genuine humility.

Pete Geren is living proof that public service can and should be a noble calling. I wish him, his wife, Becky, and their family all the best in the years ahead.

#### SOUDER AMENDMENT ON STUDENT LOANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SOUDER. I wanted to briefly explain what happened to the Souder amendment in the student loan bill. We had worked out an agreement last night, and then I was occupied over in a border security hearing that was very important on SBInet and didn't make it over to the floor. I appreciate that Chairman MILLER explained the compromise some, but I wanted to go through a little bit of what the history of this is.

First, in existing law, both a possession conviction and a dealing conviction will result in your loss of a student loan. You can get that loan back by going through treatment, drug testing. You can get it back in the second year.

The second time it happens—this is while you have a loan—if you get convicted, then you would be suspended for 2 years, unless you went through treatment and then were drug-tested as clean. The third time and you're out. Now, for dealing, it was two times.

There's been a lot of ruckus about how this law was initially applied, but we fixed that. I had no intention ever of punishing people who at some time in their life had problems, whether it was in high school or in their later life that they had convictions.

I believe in forgiveness. I believe it's important that people get back on the right track. I believe that we need to work in our prison population to get them to move back to school, to get the degrees possible.

The initial debate on this law on the House floor and in committee said: You will lose your loan. You can't lose a loan if you don't have a loan. We had debate about that for many years. We got that fixed. But I believe, overwhelmingly, every poll shows that the American people believe that if you are convicted, which is not easy when you're on a college campus, while you're getting taxpayer funding, you should lose the funding. It doesn't mean you're going to lose school. It doesn't mean you're going to go out. But why should the taxpayers fund you if you're going to be basically drug-addled while you're at school?

The challenge with this debate is that it has become kind of a cause celebre in the marijuana community. As this progressed, as we did the reauthorization on student loans, the so-called Souder amendment was not completely knocked out, but possession was knocked out. We left the law in place for dealing.

So my amendment today would have reinstated possession as a grounds for losing a student loan.

Congressman PERLMUTTER from Colorado came to me and said he had a suggested compromise. He made his compromise, which basically says that conviction of a felony offense of narcotics