

As the House sponsor of a bipartisan effort to lift the arms embargo against Bosnia, I am extremely concerned about the implications and consequences of such a policy should these allegations indeed be substantiated. It is ironic that President Clinton apparently was willing to turn a blind eye toward Iran while blocking a majority in the Congress—a bipartisan majority—that called for the United States—not Iran—to take the lead in upholding Bosnia's legitimate and fundamental right to defend itself.

Should the Bosnians have been given the means to defend themselves in the face of aggression and genocide? Absolutely. Should those arms have come from Iran? Absolutely not.

In the past few years, Members from both sides of the aisle put aside their differences to respond to the senseless slaughter of innocent civilians by well-armed Serb militants in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Repeatedly we raised our voices calling upon the President to display determined U.S. leadership in the face of aggression and genocide. These calls were repeatedly rebuffed. When we voted in overwhelming support to lift the arms embargo, we were told by the White House that such an action was not in the interest of the United States as it would lead to an "Americanization" of the conflict, result in the deployment of thousands of U.S. troops, and undermine the U.S. Security Council.

Mr. Speaker, when all is said and done, the fundamental issue at stake here—as in so many other instances—is one of leadership.

For nearly 3 years the Clinton administration, like the one before it, largely passed the buck on Bosnia. The Europeans, for their part, raised the specter of Islamic fundamentalism as an excuse for inaction. Mr. Speaker, it is inexplicable how turning a blind eye toward Iran—a terrorist state—was in the interest of the United States.

Regrettably, the international community and the United States refused to undertake meaningful action themselves to end the genocide or to provide the Bosnians with the means to defend themselves. By default at best, and with U.S. acquiescence at worst, Teheran was allowed to fill in the gap resulting from the failure of the Clinton administration to act and to lead. By turning a blind eye in this instance, President Clinton has unwittingly strengthened a small nationalist minority in Bosnia at the expense of those truly committed to the preservation of a multiethnic state; damaged our position in the United Nations; and potentially expose the 20,000 American troops he ordered to Bosnia to even greater danger.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the House leadership for pursuing this matter given its implications for U.S. interests in the Balkans and beyond.

TRIBUTE TO THE VETERANS OF
FOREIGN WARS, ALLWOOD MEMORIAL POST 6487

HON. WILLIAM J. MARTINI

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 24, 1996

Mr. MARTINI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a very special group of Ameri-

cans from the Eighth Congressional District of New Jersey.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars, Allwood Memorial Post 6487 has for a half century offered a steadfast portrait of loyalty, sacrifice, and self-resolve.

Our loyalties mark the kinds of persons we have chosen to become. Real loyalty endures inconvenience, withstands hardship, and does not flinch under assault. The individuals who make up the Allwood Memorial Post consistently allow this genuine loyalty to pervade the whole of their lives.

The members of VFW, Post 6487 remind us that the loyal, patriotic citizen expects no great reward for coming to his country's aid. On the contrary, a devoted patriot seeks only that his country flourish.

When it comes to honoring their country, their faith, and their comrades, the veterans of Post 6487 have demonstrated both the wisdom to know the right thing to do, and the will to do it. Certainly, they have lived up to the obligations of loyalty, patriotism, and service.

To be a loyal citizen means to achieve a high standard of caring seriously about the well-being of one's nation. I am proud to honor and praise Memorial Post 6487 for exceeding this standard. Congratulations for your 50 year history of American pride and patriotism.

HONORING THE SUMNER COUNTY
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 24, 1996

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I am taking this opportunity to applaud the invaluable services provided by the Sumner County Volunteer Fire Department. These brave, civic minded people give freely of their time so that we may all feel safer at night.

Few realize the depth of training and hard work that goes into being a volunteer firefighter. To quote one of my local volunteers, "These firemen must have an overwhelming desire to do for others while expecting nothing in return."

Preparation includes twice-monthly training programs in which they have live drills, study the latest videos featuring the latest in fire-fighting tactics, as well as attend seminars where they can obtain the knowledge they need to save lives. Within a year of becoming a volunteer firefighter, most attend the Tennessee Fire Training School in Murfreesboro where they undergo further, intensified training.

When the residents of my district go to bed at night, they know that should disaster strike and their home catch fire, well-trained and qualified volunteer fire departments are ready and willing to give so graciously and generously of themselves. This peace of mind should not be taken for granted.

By selflessly giving of themselves, they ensure a safer future for us all. We owe these volunteer fire departments a debt of gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

TRIBUTE TO MEREDITH TAYLOR

HON. MICHAEL D. CRAPO

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 24, 1996

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit the following essay by 16-year-old Meredith Taylor, one of my constituents. Meredith's essay won the Veterans of Foreign Wars Voice of Democracy Broadcast Scriptwriting Contest.

ANSWERING AMERICA'S CALL

(By Meredith Taylor)

A needy America called—a compassionate America answered. Listen:

"Give me liberty or give me death!" "Let the open arms of your Statue of Liberty shelter me from me land's potato famine!" "Just one more breath, please. The polio . . . it hurts . . . my iron lung . . . will it last?" "Don't whip me, master. Let me be free from slavery!" "We have a voice, let us women speak out and vote!" "Reporting NASA, this is one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind!" "Don't ask what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country!"

Patrick Henry called for the separation from England, and the colonists rallied for freedom. Oppression, tyranny and famine led helpless Irish and other immigrants to our encompassing harbors. America fed and clothed them. Agonizing pleas for life screamed to America's medical researchers to discover a cure for Polio. Dr. Jonas Salk answered with a vaccine. The Civil War split not only the North from the South, but families and friends because of the call to end slavery. President Lincoln died and so did slavery. Following the end of slavery the suffragette demanded the right to vote in America's future and the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed. Neil Armstrong walked on the silverdusted moon to answer the call of curiosity, "to know the unknown." President Kennedy called out to the citizens of America to step up and participate in a positive way in the reformation of each citizen's relationship to the United States. The response was civil rights legislation and Medicare for the elderly.

These were the inflammatory, pleading, demanding, awe-inspiring calls to America in the past, and each time America answered with justice, equality, research and compassion. Now Americans call out with greater intensity and passion.

"I never thought it could happen to me. I mean, I'm only fifteen and I have AIDS. And the baby . . . this means she could have it too." "One more man. Please just give me one more hit!" "I'm outta here. I quit school." "Don't hit me, momma, not again . . . please . . ." "What's a divorce, daddy? Why does mommy have to leave?"

These are the present day calls—the opportunities for us, you—me, to give something back to our nation and those who helped make such a strong foundation. How many AIDS-caused deaths and teenage pregnancies must occur before sex education is engraved into the minds of the ignorant? Not just sex education, but comprehensive education will assist in the rebirth of an "A" rather than an "X" generation—a generation free of substance abuse, hatred and discrimination. In the past the patriots, libertarians, adventurers and risk-takers strived to overcome political barriers, hatred, disease and economic hardships. It is incumbent upon all of us to unveil our loyalty and hope and to act with determination, desire and commitment. We must buttress the efforts of our civic organizations, city councils and religious groups. Each call can be answered if we listen.

As long as there are Americans, there will be the calls for clean air and water, conservation of resources and an effective educational system. But answering these calls with laws and money will fail unless we exhibit respect for people and property, love of God and country and compassion for the sick and poor. Then and only then can we answer the most important call—the right to be called an American.

TRIBUTE TO SISTER JOANNE M. CHIAVERINI AND FATHER PHILIP A. SCHMITTER

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 24, 1996

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to share with my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives the contributions to our community by two committed spiritual leaders. Sister Joanne M. Chiaverini, of the Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and Father Philip A. Schmitter are the two codirectors of the St. Francis Prayer Center. Sister Joanne and Father Phil have ministered to the spiritual, economic, and health needs of the people of northern Flint for many years.

Sister Joanne Chiaverini, a sister for 39 years, founded the St. Francis Prayer Center in July 1974 to be a spiritual oasis for persons of all denominational, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. She insisted the center be located where "the poor could walk" and has fostered a place that has provided programs, retreats, and classes for nurturing a healthy self image. She has lead the center to be a spiritual organization that ministers with and to the poor in roles of referral, initiation, and advocacy.

Father Philip Schmitter's commitment to the poor led him to move into HUD's River Park Apartments—a public housing complex—in 1978. He also became a full-time codirector of the St. Francis Prayer Center in 1978.

Sister Joanne, Father Phil, and the St. Francis Prayer Center have worked with neighborhood residents, civil rights groups, and environmentalists to raise awareness of the need for environmental equity. They have challenged the Federal Environmental Protection Agency and Michigan's Department of Natural Resources to do more to defend environmental quality in predominantly minority neighborhoods.

As a result of their hard work, the EPA has selected Flint as one of nine sites across the country where violations of environmental equity are being investigated. Flint was selected as the first site of the nine due to the well organized grass roots appeal initiated by Father Phil and Sister Joanne.

Mr. Speaker, the city of Flint is a better place to live in because of the good work of Sister Joanne, Father Phil and the St. Francis Prayer Center. They continue to stand as a symbol to all of the spirituality of St. Francis who saw all of us as part of the good gift of God's creation, to be kept clean, unpolluted, and preserved from exploitation.

CONGRATULATIONS WINNERS OF 1996 SPOKANE SCHOLARS FOUNDATION

HON. GEORGE R. NETHERCUTT, JR.

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 24, 1996

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the winners of the 1996 Spokane Scholars Foundation Awards. This award is solely based on the exceptional performance that these students have demonstrated in their course work and test scores in a specific academic subject. These students truly represent the finest young men and women in our community.

I am proud to announce this year's winners are: Mr. David Gosse from Cheney High School for his outstanding achievements in the area of science; Miss Sarah M. Westergren from Mead Senior High School for her outstanding achievements in the area of English; Mr. Robert M. Dirks from Lewis and Clark High School for his outstanding achievements in the area of mathematics; Miss Joy K. Crosby from North Central High School for her outstanding achievements in the area of foreign languages; Mr. Nicholas A. McCarthy from St. George's School for his outstanding achievements in the area of social sciences; and Miss Shayna Silverstein from Lewis and Clark High School for her outstanding achievements in the area of fine arts.

I congratulate all of these extraordinary students for their hard work in achieving this exceptional recognition and wish them the very best in all of their future endeavors.

HONORING THE WILLIAMSON COUNTY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 24, 1996

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I am taking this opportunity to applaud the invaluable services provided by the Williamson County Volunteer Fire Department. These brave, civic-minded people give freely of their time so that we may all feel safer at night.

Few realize the depth of training and hard work that goes into being a volunteer firefighter. To quote one of my local volunteers, "These firemen must have an overwhelming desire to do for others while expecting nothing in return."

Preparation includes twice-monthly training programs in which they have live drills, study the latest videos featuring the latest in fire-fighting tactics, as well as attend seminars where they can obtain the knowledge they need to save lives. Within a year of becoming a volunteer firefighter, most attend the Tennessee Fire Training School in Murfreesboro where they undergo further, intensified training.

When the residents of my district go to bed at night, they know that should disaster strike and their home catch fire, well-trained and qualified volunteer fire departments are ready and willing to give so graciously and generously of themselves. This peace of mind should not be taken for granted.

By selflessly giving of themselves, they ensure a safer future for us all. We owe these volunteer fire departments a debt of gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

NATIONAL PUERTO RICAN AFFIRMATION DAY

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 24, 1996

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, National Puerto Rican Affirmation Day was held on March 29, 1996, and I would like to share with my colleagues the remarks I made as the host of a public policy forum on health issues affecting the Puerto Rican community.

Welcome to this public policy forum. Today we are going to discuss the health issues that are affecting the Puerto Rican community. We will try to find solutions to the problems and to develop public policy guidelines that would help improve the health and access to medical services for our community.

Participants in this forum are: Dr. Nilsa Gutierrez, former director of the AIDS Institute of the New York Department of Health; Dr. Eric Munoz, medical director at the University Hospital in New Jersey; Mr. Aldoph Falcon, vice president for policy and research of the National Coalition of Hispanic Health and Human Services Organizations; Ms. Suleika Cabrera-Drianane, founder and executive director of the Institute for Puerto Rican and Hispanic Elderly; Mr. Enrique Baquero, president of Cyber Tech and a member of the board of directors of the Puerto Rico Hospital Association; and Ms. Miguelina Maldonado, director of Government relations and policy at the National Minority AIDS Council in Washington, DC.

After we finish the presentations on the various health issues we will open the debate to answer questions from the audience.

Puerto Ricans in the United States and those living on the island often suffer from diseases which are related to their environmental and socioeconomic conditions. Puerto Ricans have a high incidence of chronic illnesses, infant mortality, alcohol and drug abuse, and more recently, HIV/AIDS infection.

Poor living conditions, hazardous working environments, lack of access to medical services, and the rising costs of health care are some of the health challenges that the Puerto Rican community faces.

Many in our community work in industries which have a high number of uninsured employees. A large portion of the population resides in inner-city areas which lack adequate medical services for our community. In addition, low median family income, the lowest of any other group in the nation, and a high cost of living in inner-city areas have prevented Puerto Ricans from purchasing private health insurance. In 1992, 50 percent of the population had no private health insurance and 21 percent had no health coverage whatever. These are alarming rates for any community.

Puerto Ricans are growing every day more dependent on Government programs for health care insurance. In 1992, 32.2 percent of the Puerto Rican population received Medicaid benefits, a higher percentage than that of African-Americans, and five times higher than