through terror attacks since the Sept. 13, If random acts of violence occur, they must feel safe riding buses, shopping in malls, and sending their children to schools. Substantive and visible improvement, the real test of the peace process is how well it will hold the trial-type hearing. The Commission, within 60 days of receipt, to set a date for a preliminary hearing, and later operation of this hotel will provide employment for hundreds of Palestinians. It will contain a modern commercial center to enable international visitors and Palestinian tribes. Every Member of Congress has heard about the OSHA: the time is now. Women business owners have more than 6 million businesses, which is one-third of all U.S. companies. Mr. Speaker, I am sure my colleagues will join me in saluting women leaders as well as the New Jersey Association of Women Business Owners. I want to congratulate the chapter on a successful event and wish the members many more years of growth and prosperity.

Mr. Arafat would be wise to stress the solving of such economic problems as a prime way to reduce tensions, improve the quality of life, and enhance opportunities for peace. Mr. Arafat could immediately develop profitable exports, under $1,200. Economic divergence exacerbates political and religious tensions. Economic downturn among young, single workers has increased from $13,800 to over $15,000, while Palestinian incomes have dropped by a third to under $4,000. Rather than growing to absorb these workers, the Palestinian economy has declined over the past two years. Thus, workers have the opportunity to find employment within Palestinian areas. The unemployment rate in Gaza always high, is now estimated at approximately 50 percent, with the rate in the West Bank exceeding 30 percent. Unemployment is highest among young, single men—the most likely recruits for terror-oriented groups. The US hosted an international meeting on Oct. 1, 1993, at which $2.4 billion in assistance to the West Bank and Gaza was pledged. Most of these funds have not been delivered or have been diverted from long-term emergency programs and costs of running the Palestinian Authority. The United States committed $500 million, of which $75 million annually for five years is managed by the Agency for International Development (AID). The other $25 million was to come from the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) to assist American investors through a combination of loans, loan guarantees, and political risk insurance.

AID has assisted a number of worthwhile projects, including $12 million for construction of six housing units with 192 apartments in Gaza called Al Karam Towers. AID is also helping to develop new water resources and assisting private sector economic growth through technical assistance, training, loans to local firms, and establishment of industrial parks. But AID funds have been diverted from long-term projects to help in establishing Palestinian self-rule. For example, AID committed $2 million to support local elections in the West Bank and Gaza, and to assist Palestinians in promoting more responsible and accountable government.

AID has minimized help for the agricultural sector, the one area where Palestinians could immediately develop profitable exports, especially under a new Free Trade agreement. We are locating additional funds to farm exports would be cost efficient. Peace Dividends: Lower Incomes. Although more Israelis have been killed through terror attacks since the Sept. 13, 1993, signing than in any comparable period, it appears that the Palestinians finally understand their responsibility to work with Israelis to enhance security concerns. The test for most Palestinians is whether the peace accords will result in an improved quality of life. Developing a thriving economy that provides new employment opportunities will relieve frustration and reduce tensions, but will also bring about the promise of a new life.

Economic divergence exacerbates political and religious tensions. Since the first Rabin-Arafat signing, Israeli per capita income has increased from $13,800 to over $15,000, while Palestinian incomes have dropped by a third to under $4,000. The US hosted an international meeting on Oct. 1, 1993, at which $2.4 billion in assistance to the West Bank and Gaza was pledged. Most of these funds have not been delivered or have been diverted from long-term emergency programs and costs of running the Palestinian Authority. The United States committed $500 million, of which $75 million annually for five years is managed by the Agency for International Development (AID). The other $25 million was to come from the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) to assist American investors through a combination of loans, loan guarantees, and political risk insurance.

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a message to the agency and to employers that OSHA’s sole purpose is ensuring that safety of employees through common sense regulation. What better way to do that than to bring the two sides together. The “us against them” mentality doesn’t do anyone any good. My legislation puts both the enforcers and the stakeholders on an even playing field in order to protect our most valuable resource: our work force. Please join me in this effort by cosponsoring my OSHA Reform Act of 1997.

RENEWAL ALLIANCE
HON. RON PACKARD
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, March 20, 1997

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss my recent participation in the renewal alliance—a unique bicameral Republican group committed to promoting the work of charities, churches, small businesses, and community organizations in helping to solve some of our Nation’s most intractable problems. Our renewal alliance believes that we must focus not just on the failures of Government, but also on the hope of rebuilding strong communities.

In the months ahead, our alliance will promote the many solutions already at work across the Nation, powered by nothing more than a compassionate dedication to lending a hand, spending a few hours a week, or giving charitably to efforts which help improve the lives of those around us. We will highlight legislation to create enterprise zones, tax incentives for charitable giving, educational reform, and removing bureaucratic barriers to problem solving with simple, people-based solutions. Most importantly, we will ask our colleagues and our community leaders to look not to the Halls of Congress for innovative ideas, but to the restaurants in our towns, the pews of our churches, and the conversations at dinner tables for the solutions that renew our society by helping those who make them work and those that receive their benefits.

While that sounds like a lifetime of service, that was just a beginning for Al Baldus. In politics, it is not unusual to see ambitious young public servants move up through the ranks from local office to the State legislature to Congress and, when their congressional career ends, do they cease being a public servant? It is unusual, however, to see someone serve an entire congressional career and feel such a sense of public duty that they return to the State house to start another legislative career.

That is exactly what Al Baldus did. After leaving Congress in 1980, Al worked for 8 years in the private sector, but then decided to return to Madison as a State representative for another 8 years. In all, he served 16 years in the legislature. Certainly, he could have chosen a less difficult path into retirement and probably could have made more money in the process. However, I think it’s clear that what motivates Al is not the trappings of political power, but the earnest desire to serve. I am certain that Al’s wife, Lolly, would have preferred to see more of him over the years as she and her husband raised their five children, but Lolly recognized Al’s heart was also with the people of his community and his State. That shouldn’t surprise anyone. Lolly served her community as well and developed a distinguished career herself as an administrative assistant at the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

I thank my friend Al Baldus for a lifetime of positive contributions to Wisconsin and the Nation. And I hope you’ll join me in congratulating Al and wishing him the best in his well-deserved retirement.

DEMOCRACY—ABOVE AND BEYOND
HON. CURT WELDON
OF PENNSYLVANIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, March 20, 1997

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, each year the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its Ladies Auxiliary conduct the Voice of Democracy broadcast scriptwriting contest. This year more than 109,000 secondary school students participated in the contest competing for the 54 national scholarships distributed among the 54 national winners. The contest theme this year was “Democracy—Above and Beyond.”

I am proud to announce that Ms. Natalie Bucciarelli from my congressional district in Pennsylvania won the 1997 Voice of Democracy broadcast scriptwriting contest for Pennsylvania. Natalie, a resident of Broomall, is a senior at the Academy of Notre Dame de Manur in Villanova, PA. I extend to her my very best wishes for success as she continues her education in college next year.

Natalie’s script is filled with enthusiasm for the spirit and promise that democracy holds for each individual. It is encouraging to see that our young people continue to cherish the gift of democracy. That is because once we take democracy for granted—or begin referring to it as simply a “slogan”—then democracy will truly become endangered. Mr. Speaker, I would like to share Natalie’s award winning script with my colleagues in the Congress.

“DEMOCRACY—ABOVE AND BEYOND”—1996-97 VFW Voice of Democracy Scholarship Program

(By Natalie Bucciarelli)

Mikhail Gorbachev, former General Secretary of the Soviet Union, not too long ago proclaimed that democracy was just a slogan—only a slogan. And he believed then that democracy, like other slogans, was empty and valueless and worthless. Some communist leaders before him, believed that our American democracy would eventually fall; it would succumb to tensions within our country—tensions: white against black, women against men, rich against poor.

But Mikhail Gorbachev misread the real meaning of democracy—the meaning above and beyond. He only looked at the imperfections of democracy—and it is true that democracy, like all political systems, is less than perfect. But Mr. Gorbachev wrongly believed that our democracy would become thin and faded and soon crack and crumble like a rotting wall. But democracy is not a wall. Walls, by their nature, keep people out. As Mikhail Gorbachev learned, such walls do come down.

The spirit of our democracy is not about walls. It is not about barriers. It is not about real walls in a democracy—not real walls. Yes, artificial barriers do come from time to time appear—Rosa Parks being forced to the back of the bus and Angela Davis in jail—but in the words of President Ronald Reagan: “No Irish or Italian need apply.” But such events have been only temporary obstacles to the real positive force and direction of our democracy. Our system of government has, above and beyond all others, served to include all people without regard to race, creed, gender, or ethnic background. Democracy has no equal in promoting the free exchange of ideas and in safeguarding the civil liberties of minorities. Democracy is, above and beyond all else, about “all men (and, ‘all women’) are created equal” and about those inalienable rights granted to each of us by our creator.

This is the spirit—this is the promise and the hope of democracy. Democracy promises to provide hope and opportunity. Democracy does not exclude, it includes. Democracy does not seek to destroy, it seeks to build. Our system of government tolerates and respects the free exchange of ideas. You can dare to dream in a democracy and if you believe in your dreams and work hard to achieve them you will receive them. Democracy is not me against you and you against me but each of us in support of the other. There is room for everybody. No blue, no red, no Muslim against white, young against old, female against male. Democracy is about the promise it