

In this spirit, the Council will celebrate its 51st annual Lincoln Day Banquet on February 22nd and will honor my long time friend and supporter, and senior citizen advocate extraordinaire, Mrs. Dorothy Seeley.

Dorothy has a well-earned reputation around the Milwaukee area and our entire state as a real go-getter and fighter for the rights of our senior citizens. From her years at Nordberg Manufacturing Company as a crane operator, to her union steward days, right on through her appointments by Wisconsin Governor John Reynolds and Milwaukee County Executive John Doyle, Dorothy has been a friend of working men and women and retirees. To this day, as President of United Seniors of Wisconsin, Dorothy pursues the never-ending battle to protect the rights of seniors, so that their voices can be heard here at home in Milwaukee, in Madison at the State Capitol and in Washington, D.C.

In 1990, Dorothy was given the prestigious honor of being named one of Wisconsin's Ten Most Admired Senior Citizens by Security Savings at an awards ceremony during the Wisconsin State Fair.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I ask that you join me in congratulating Mrs. Dorothy Seeley on a job well done. Keep up the great work, Dorothy, for many years to come. May God Bless.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 3161—
TORTURE VICTIMS RELIEF ACT

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 1998

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on February 4th, I joined my distinguished colleague from New Jersey, Congressman CHRISTOPHER SMITH, in introducing H.R. 3161, the Torture Victims Relief Act. Together, the two of us introduced similar legislation during the 104th Congress.

Our important legislation attempts to deal with the detrimental consequences of the most egregious form of violation of international human rights—the widespread use of torture. Human rights experts estimate that there are over 79 countries around the world where torture is practiced on a systematic basis. As a consequence, there are currently an estimated 200,000 to 400,000 victims of foreign governmental torture in the United States, who are in dire need of qualified psychological and medical treatment in adequate facilities. The traumatic experiences of torture—which according to experts in most cases does not ultimately aim to obtain information, but simply to break and destroy the victim's personality and human identity—result in continuous nightmares, flashbacks, anxiety attacks, and deep depressions.

In 1973, Amnesty International appealed to the world medical profession to respond to the international use of torture and to develop a multi-pronged treatment program to counter the severe effects of torture. These efforts—in particular under the outstanding leadership of Dr. Inge Genefke, MD, DMSc.h.c.—resulted in the establishment of the first Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1982. This international movement has now grown to encompass 173 centers in 76 countries. The suc-

cessful work of these centers—based on four parallel pillars consisting of psychotherapy, physiotherapy, social counseling and nursing—have shown that with adequate treatment, torture victims can resume productive and fulfilling lives.

Mr. Speaker, since torture is used by the most despicable of totalitarian oppressors around the world as one of their most common techniques for suppressing freedom of speech and democratic rights, it typically targets the strongest and most outstanding defenders of these democratic values in foreign countries. The United States has courageously defended and promoted the values of freedom and democracy around the world, the very principles on which this country was founded. The victims of torture are these courageous people who, knowing full well the risk of physical and psychological harm which will inevitably come to them if they are arrested, uphold our common values in the face of their brutal oppressors.

Mr. Speaker, these heroic defenders of human rights and human liberty deserve our strongest support. The Torture Victims Relief Act (H.R. 3161) will fully implement the provisions of the U.N. Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which prohibits the involuntary return of any person to a country if there is substantial evidence that a reasonable person in those circumstances would fear subjection to torture.

President Ronald Reagan signed the U.N. Convention on April 18, 1988, and the United States Senate ratified it on 21 October, 1994. With the ratification of this convention, these international norms became binding law in the United States. There is no domestic legislation, however, to implement these international legal provisions. Our legislation will rectify this oversight by providing the legal provisions necessary to implement the Convention on Torture.

Furthermore, our important bill will make important changes in the immigration procedures under which torture victims will be handled. The provisions of this bill expedite the processing for asylum applicants who make credible claims that they have been victims of torture. The legislation establishes the presumption that such applicants should not be detained while their asylum case is pending, and it designates refugees who are torture victims as refugees of special humanitarian concern with priority for resettlement at least as high as that given to any other refugee group.

In addition, the Torture Victims Relief Act provides for special training for officials who are involved in implementing immigration procedures. This training will provide information about torture and its long-term effects, and this will help these officials to consider the special physical and psychological circumstances a torture victim has to endure when they have to provide evidence in support of their asylum claim.

In order to ensure an adequate rehabilitation treatment for victims of torture, this bill authorizes \$5 million for FY 1999 and \$7.5 million for FY 2000 from funds authorized for the Department of Health and Human Services to support domestic torture treatment programs. In addition, the bill fully supports the international efforts I have outlined above. It authorizes \$5 million for FY 1999 and \$7.5 million for FY 2000 of funds authorized under the Foreign

Assistance Act for international rehabilitation services, and it authorizes \$3 million for FY 1999 and \$3 million for FY 2000 of funds authorized under the Foreign Assistance Act to contribute to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Torture Victims.

In a further effort to strengthen the international effort to address the scourge of torture, our legislation commits the United States to use its voice and vote in the United Nations to support the investigation and elimination of practices outlawed under the U.N. Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to join me in support of this important legislation.

COMMENDING THE HEROISM OF
CUB SCOUT WILLEM REYNAR

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 1998

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a brave and outstanding young American, Cub Scout Willem Reynar of Cub Scout Pack 440.

Willem Reynar is the epitome of a good Cub Scout, possessing courage and bravery beyond his years. In September 1997, Willem was able to think clearly and act quickly when he found his younger sister in a drowning situation. Willem didn't panic and in turn saved his sister's life.

I commend Willem Reynar for his courage and heroism. According to the great American author Mark Twain, "Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear—not absence of fear." Willem Reynar was able to conquer his fear and save the life of another human being.

Willem Reynar's bravery is an example to his Pack and to us all. Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to join me in commending Cub Scout Willem Reynar, a hero who truly deserves the Boy Scout Lifesaving Award.

BOB ADAMS: AN AMERICAN HERO

HON. J.C. WATTS, JR.

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 11, 1998

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to a friend, a role model and a hero in the black community. This man believes in the four values which have made America great. Those values are hard work, integrity, faith in God and persistence. In particular, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a successful black businessman who overcame dire circumstances to realize the American Dream.

Indeed, my good friend Bob Adams is the personification of the American Dream. Here is a man who was born into poverty and who understands what it feels like to go to bed with an empty belly, wake up with an empty belly, and then go to school and try to learn on an empty belly. There are millions of children in this country, Mr. Speaker, who have to endure the same horrible circumstances, but I am hopeful we can work in a bipartisan fashion in Congress to help end this suffering.