drug confiscation—these instructions tell Americans:

''Don't use marijuana or cocaine for 2 days before because dogs may smell.''

''Don't open boxes in Mexico.''

''Customs and Border Patrol don't care about medication.''

''Medication must be used only in U.S.A. not in Mexico.''

Ironically, while Mexican authorities don't mind supplying dangerous drugs to American citizens, they strictly prohibit their use in Mexico. In fact, there have been high-profile cases where U.S. citizens have been arrested for opening sealed boxes of controlled substances while still on Mexican soil.

This gaping hole in U.S. drug policy exists because of a so-called ''personal use'' exemption to the Controlled Substances Act that allows American drug dealers to bring in up to a 90 day supply of such drugs without a legitimate prescription or medical purpose, as long as they are declared at the border. This exemption is so lax that studies along the southwest border have found records of people bringing in thousands of pills in one day—multiple drugs and thousands of pills in a single day for ''personal use.''

A 1996 study published in Clinical Therapeutics, entitled Pharmaceutical Products Declared by US Residents on Returning to the United States from Mexico by McKeithan and Shepherd raises serious concerns about the trafficking of controlled substances along the U.S.-Mexico border. The number and types of pills that the Shepherd study found at a typical border crossing backup DEA's view that these drugs are being used for illegal purposes.

The Shepherd study estimated that in just one year at the Laredo border crossing, over 60,000 drug products were brought in to the U.S. by more than 24,000 people. All of the top 15 drug products, which represent 94.1 percent of the total quantity of declared drugs, were controlled substances. These dangerous drugs, classified as prescription tranquilizers, stimulants, and narcotic analgesics, are potentially addictive and subject to abuse.

Specifically, Valium was declared by 70 percent of the people, with the average person bringing in 237 tablets. Rohypnol, commonly referred to as the ''date-rape drug,'' was brought in by 43 percent of those who declared their prescription medication. Over a full year, that means that over 4 million doses of Valium and almost 1.5 million doses of Rohpnol where brought in at a single border crossing. Further, the median age for those who declared Valium and Rohypnol was 24 and 26 years old respectively.

Fortunately, Rohypnol, which is ten times more potent than Valium, has recently been banned for importation into the U.S. Unfortunately, there are hundreds of dangerous controlled substances, readily available in Mexico, that pose similar threats to American citizens.

This blatant perversion of our nation's drug laws must be stopped. The personal use exemption should allow American citizens who become injured or ill while traveling abroad to bring needed medicine back into the United States—it was never intended to allow drug dealers to legally import large quantities of hazardous, mind-altering drugs into our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I have been working with Customs, DEA, and the Office of National Drug Control Policy to solve this problem. The legislation I have proposed offers a targeted and straight-forward solution to this problem.

My proposal would limit the exemption for individuals who do not posses a prescription issued by a U.S. physician or documentation which verifies a legitimate prescription. An individual without this documentation would be limited to 50 dosage units of a controlled substance. The 50 dose limit would provide those people who have a legitimate need for a controlled substance ample time to seek medical attention in the U.S. while virtually eliminating the abuses that are now prevalent along the U.S. border.

I want to be very clear about what this legislation does and does not do:

The legislation is strictly limited to controlled substances. Again, controlled substances are drugs that the DEA has either banned or subjected to closely regulated status because of their danger, addictiveness and potential for abuse.

The legislation is strictly limited to those individuals that do not posses a U.S. prescription or documentation that a prescription exists. The legislation does not impact the ability of people with a prescription issued by a U.S. doctor to import any medications, including controlled substances.

The legislation does not in any way change current U.S. law as it relates to the importation of prescription drugs that are not considered controlled substances. In other words, this legislation will not make it more difficult for people to obtain drugs to treat heart disease, cancer, AIDS or other serious illnesses, because these drugs are not controlled substances. In fact, none of the top 20 heart, cancer or AIDS drugs are controlled substances.

I would also like to note that although this problem occurs primarily along the Mexico border, it impacts communities well beyond the southwest. The study in Laredo found that residents from 39 states crossed the border and returned to the United States with a variety of drug products in large quantities.

Mr. Speaker, this should not be a controversial proposal. DEA and Customs identified this as a critical problem over two years ago. General McCaffery has written to me and expressed his belief that there is general agreement among my office, ONDCP, DEA, and Customs regarding the scope of the problem and the proposed solution.

Members of this House recognize that prescription drug abuse is a serious problem in this country, and a growing problem among our youth. The purity and low price of prescription pills makes them an attractive alternative to street drugs.

More Americans abuse prescription drugs for non-medical purposes than use heroin, crack and cocaine. Surprisingly, prescription painkillers, sedatives, stimulants, and tranquilizers account for 75 percent of the top 20 drugs mentioned in emergency room episodes in 1995.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very important issue that must be addressed, and I appreciate the leadership of Mr. MCCOLLUM, the Chairman of the Crime Subcommittee, and the other supporters of this legislation on this important issue.

THE TELEPHONE EXCISE TAX REPEAL BILL

HON. W.J. (BILLY) TAUZIN

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of the Telephone Excise Tax Repeal bill.

Members of the House—if there is one thing that we politicians are experts on, it is talking. Talking on the telephone is not a fit subject for taxes. My word, if there is at least one thing an American ought to be able to do for free—without paying a tax to the Government—it is talking. It is time to repeal the tax on talking.

Under current law, Americans who use local telephone service, toll telephone service, or teletypewriter exchange service—in short, just about every American who uses a telephone—pays an excise tax for using that telephone service. The law requires the phone companies to figure out your phone bill, and then tack on an extra 3 percent to the bill. The Federal Government takes the 3 percent. You can go look at your monthly phone bill, and—right there—you will see what the Federal Government has taken from you because you used your telephone.

For all of you who have advocated higher taxes on tobacco as a public health measure, you ought to be amazed that—here in the land of free speech and the hallowed First Amendment—we tax talking on the telephone more than we tax tobacco. I suppose that means that Congress thinks talking is a greater risk to the public than smoking.

Americans should not have to pay a tax to the Federal Government for the privilege of calling their neighbors to chat, or of talking to Mom on Mother's Day or Dad on Father's Day. Our businesses and their customers should be able to talk to each other without sending money to the Federal Government because of it. Telephone service in America today is a basic necessity, a part of daily life.

Congress knows the phone tax is an unreasonable tax. It started out as a war tax many, many decades ago. Maybe it made sense at the time, but it doesn't any more. Congress knows this is a dumb tax, and that's why Congress has voted to repeal it several times before. Congress enacted a law that established a schedule for this tax to expire in the 1970's. But the Federal Government later wanted more revenue so it changed the law and kept the tax. In the 1980's, Congress again passed a law that provided for this tax to expire, and again thereafter changed the law because the Federal Government wanted more revenue. Yet again, Congress passed a law scheduling this tax to expire in the 1990's, but then changed the law to keep the tax. Congress knows this is a bad tax—that's why it has voted to repeal this tax so many times, just to let it live when a quick fix of revenue was needed to float a huge deficit.

It is time to bury this phone tax once and for all. By repealing this tax, we put the money of Americans back into the pockets of Americans—every American who uses a telephone. We eliminate a highly regressive tax that hits lower-income people proportionately harder than others.

For every American who uses a telephone, this legislation cuts your taxes and cuts your phone bill.

I urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

THE VETERANS BURIALS RIGHTS ACT OF 1998

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, America has a sacred trust to honor the sacrifices made by our veterans—the men and women whose military service, both in wartime and in times of peace, has kept us free and strong. One of the most important and symbolic ways our country has historically recognized honorable military service is by providing military honors at veterans' funerals.

Traditionally, the Department of Defense (DOD) has provided the honor guard details. Unfortunately, DOD has determined that, because of the downsizing of America's Armed Forces, this type of assistance can no longer be provided. I believe this is a mistake and that, in the zeal to cut costs and squeeze savings at every possible opportunity, appreciation has been lost for the significance and meaning associated with paying final tribute to a veteran's military service.

Those who have attended a funeral with full military honors remember it as a uniquely profound and moving experience—an experience that vividly expresses our nation's gratitude to those whose sacrifices have protected and preserved our liberty and freedom. I have also been told by the loved ones of deceased veterans that the beauty and solemnity of the military funeral, the report of the rifle salute, the haunting sound of Taps, provided them extraordinary comfort and consolation. A military funeral also reinforces a principle that is important for all Americans; that our nation must never forget our veterans' service, sacrifice, and love of country. As we strive to recruit and retain motivated men and women for military service, it is important that we remind our society that duty and sacrifice must always be remembered and honored. Because of the symbolic importance of military funerals, many of the Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) have attempted to provide honor guards, and we should all commend and thank them for their dedication and commitment. However, in spite of their efforts, limited resources have made it impossible for them to fulfill the requests for their services. Additionally, many VSO members have told me that they simply cannot perform the ceremonies with the military bearing of military service personnel.

I believe that our nation can—and must—do better. Our military must recognize and honor the sacrifices made by our citizen-soldiers. Accordingly, I am today introducing the Veterans Burials Rights Act of 1998, legislation that requires DOD, upon request, to provide military honor guards for veterans' funerals. Additionally, my bill would require that the honor guards include no fewer than five members of the armed forces, including a bugler.

Representative SUE KELLY from New York is the principal co-sponsor of my legislation, which is the companion bill to S. 1825, introduced on March 25, 1998 by Senator PATTY MURRAY. Senator MURRAY has been a true leader on veterans' issues and has shown great commitment in pushing for recognition of their accomplishments and needs. She should be applauded for her authorship of the legislation as well as her work to bring this issue to the attention of our nation.

I hope we will act quickly on this legislation so that we can once again properly honor the sacrifice and service of our deceased veterans. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in sponsoring this important effort.

HONORING CHIEF OF POLICE FRANK ALCALA

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, at a time when crime concerns are on every citizen's mind, those who have dedicated their lives to law enforcement are to be commended. It is my distinct pleasure to call to your attention an outstanding law enforcement official, Chief of the East Chicago Police Department, Frank Alcala, on his receipt of Twin City Community Services' 9th Annual ''East Chicagoan of the Year'' Award. The Twin City Community Services Board of Directors will bestow this award upon Chief Alcala at a benefit which will take place tomorrow, April 2, 1998, at the Knights of Columbus Hall in East Chicago, Indiana.

Frank Alcala began his distinguished law enforcement career in 1970, upon his graduation from the police academy at Indiana University in Bloomington. His initial position, as Patrolman, was the beginning of his 27-year career with the East Chicago Police Department. He served the department in this capacity until 1975, at which time he was promoted to Traffic Investigator. In 1981, he became Sergeant in the Patrol Division, where he served until he was promoted in 1990, to Traffic Sergeant. In 1991, he was promoted to Lieutenant in the Service Division, and, in 1994, he was appointed Chief of Police by East Chicago Mayor Robert Pastrick.

During his four years as Chief of Police, Frank has made numerous contributions to law enforcement in the City of East Chicago. In 1994, he hired 12 community police officers, one full-time Drug Awareness Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) officer, and provided police security to East Chicago Central High School. Also in 1994, he established a Special Operations Section Team, a unit comprised of volunteers from different areas of the police department, which trains in the handling of raids and hostage situations. In addition, Chief Alcala implemented the first ever K–9 unit in East Chicago in 1995, and provided an extra division of Gang and Narcotics Officers to the police department in 1997. Also under Frank's supervision, a Cadet Program, which will afford graduating high school seniors an opportunity to work for the East Chicago Police Department while enrolling in criminal justice courses at a local university, will be implemented this year. Chief Alcala's strong commitment to crime prevention is exemplified by his significant expansion of the police force. In 1994, there were 105 officers with the East Chicago Police Department; today there are 135.

In addition to his many law enforcement efforts within the City of East Chicago, Chief Alcala participates in numerous law enforcement and community service organizations throughout Northwest Indiana. He currently serves on the Executive Board of the Lake County Drug Task Force and the Executive Committee of the Lake County High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) and Estella Smith Memorial Crime Prevention Foundation. Some of the community service organizations he assists include: the East Chicago Exchange Club, an organization devoted to a variety of youth and community service programs; Christmas in April, a program that provides volunteers for the building of homes for low-income families; and the St. Catherine's Hospital Foundation Annual Support Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commending Frank Alcala on his receipt of the East Chicagoan of the Year Award. His wife, Suzanne, and their children, Doug, Frank Jr., and Brian, can be proud of his devoted service to the citizens of East Chicago and Indiana's First Congressional District.

CONGRATULATING THE ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. THOMAS W. EWING

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my congratulations to the Illinois State University Men's basketball team for a truly memorable season. Coach Kevin Stallings and his group of young men epitomized all that is good in college athletics. Led by seniors Rob Gibbons, Dan Muller, Jamar Smiley, LeRoy Watkins, Steve Hansell, Skipp Shaefbauer and the outstanding junior Rico Hill, the 1998 Redbirds won 16 Missouri Valley Conference Games on their way to a second consecutive Missouri Valley Conference Championship. The Redbirds went on to win the Missouri Valley Conference Tournament. They advanced to the NCAA Tournament where they beat a quality Tennessee squad in overtime in the first round. While the defending national champion Arizona Wildcats eventually ended their season, the Redbirds played tough for the entire 40 minutes and should be proud of their remarkable season. In addition to the extraordinary accomplishments of the Redbird team, the ISU program was the recipient of a number of Missouri Valley Conference individual awards. Rico Hill was named Missouri Valley Conference Player of the Year. Senior Dan Muller was named to his third consecutive Missouri Valley All-Academic Team with a grade point average of 3.77 in business management. Muller was joined by Skipp Shaefbauer who earned a 3.29 in Sports Management. The Missouri Valley Conference Coach of the Year was ISU's own Kevin Stallings. The 1998 Redbird season adds another string of accomplishments to the already impressive career of Coach Stallings, solidifying him as truly one of the best young coaches in America. While I am sure other schools will try and lure him away, all of his fans join me in hoping this native Illinoisan will choose to stay at Illinois State University. Mr. Speaker, the Illinois State Redbirds deserve the recognition