Home ownership promotes economic independence for our citizens and provides stability for our neighborhoods.

The United States is the first country in the world to make owning a home a reality for a vast majority of its families; however, more than one-third of the families in this country are not homeowners. A disproportionate percentage of non-homeowning families are low-income families. Owning a home is like owning a piece of the rock. If we all join together, we can help ensure that this nation becomes a nation of homeowners.

Last year, Congress passed House Resolution 147, which encourages all members to participate in and support activities to provide homes for low-income families. So far, 361 members of Congress have agreed to participate in the House that Congress Built, to make the American dream of homeownership a reality for low-income families. When we voted on this resolution last year, I thought it was a good idea. After participating in the world-record breaking build on Friday, I'm convinced that this is one of the greatest events I've ever had the privilege to be part of since becoming a member of Congress. I urge all of you to join Habitat for Humanity in building homes in your districts. I promise you that if you participate in a habitat for Humanity build, it will be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life.

I also urge my colleagues to ensure that this effort does not end with one symbolic house in each congressional district. Our goal is to eliminate poverty housing across the United States. This has to be the beginning of the fulfillment of the American dream for each and every American.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I yield back the balance of my time.

SUPPORT THE CHILD CUSTODY PROTECTION ACT

(Mr. SMITH of New Jersey asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I urge support for the legislation of the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN), the Child Custody Protection Act.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues may recall that when the partial-birth abortion ban became an issue, many pro-abortion organizations, including Planned Parenthood Federation of America and their research arm, the Guttmacher Institute wrote a letter saying there are 500 partial-birth abortions every year in the entire country. That statement, just like other statements that they made, turned out to be bogus, turned out to be a lie.

It was a New Jersey newspaper that broke the story that just one clinic in my State, the Metropolitan Medical Associates in Englewood, did about 1,500 partial-birth abortions each and every year, many of them on teenagers.

Now we find that the Metropolitan Medical Associates and other abortion mills in the State of New Jersey advertise and market their business in Pennsylvania and elsewhere and use the fact that New Jersey does not have a parental consent or parental notice statute as a way of luring young girls to that clinic and to other clinics. If we look at this ad, it stresses that pregnancies are terminated up to 24 weeks without parental knowledge or consent.

These ads are telling teens ''Hey, we can end your pregnancy and your baby's life and your parents don't have to know.'' But if a teenager's secret abortion leads to complications, what happens then? Where is it written that the person driving the frightened and vulnerable 13 or 14-year-old to an abortion mill is responsible? No, her parents will be responsible for and involved in her care after the abortion—when the disaster hit. They should have had the chance to be involved at the beginning—and they would have if the state law had not been evaded.

We need to say that the law does matter. We need to say that parents matter. And we need to help those vulnerable children who are being carried across state lines and pushed into abortion clinics by relative strangers who, in most cases, have their own reasons for making sure that these girls get abortions.

Support the Child Custody Protection Act.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

(Mr. CONYERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CALLING FOR REAL REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I think, as we were engaged in this very important and maybe life-changing debate on the question of campaign finance reform, returning the government back to the people, it might have been some confusion on a group that I wish to pay tribute tonight and that is, of course, the lawyers' committee for civil rights under law. That is not a political advocacy group, nor is it a PAC that secures and solicits money to fund candidates for any kind of election. This is a 35th year, an anniversary of this great and historic body. Its theme is answering the call for equal justice.

On June 21, 1963, President John F. Kennedy summoned 250 of America's most prominent lawyers to the White House to enlist their leadership in helping to resolve the civil rights crisis which gripped the Nation. In the preceding weeks Americans had witnessed the bombing of black churches, the number of civil rights, the murder of civil rights activist Medgar Evers and the defiance of Alabama governor George Wallace who sought to block the admission of black students to the State university. Establishment of the lawyers' committee sought to fulfill the expectation of America's leaders that the private bar become an active force in the continuing struggle for equal opportunity and racial equality.

In saying that, Mr. Speaker, let me also acknowledge that we are not talking about taking the opportunities away from various advocacy groups to participate in the political process, and to raise money, and to speak and to utilize the first amendment. My colleagues know on the other side of the aisle in debate of this issue that you can organize a PAC and be actively involved in both fund-raising and speaking your views. So I would not want the great work of the lawyers' committee on civil rights to be associated with a PAC or an advocacy group. They are a justice group.

In keeping that in mind, Mr. Speaker, let me also say that we can see in our campaign process the influence of big money. Just this week the other body, of course, has not spoken to the issue that the American people want them to speak to, and that is the issue of reforming and changing the laws as it relates to the sale of tobacco. Four thousand youngsters every day start smoking, and 1,000 of them will die. Now that is why the Congressional Children's Caucus on Wednesday, June 24 will convene a hearing so that the world can hear our children speak out against the violence of tobacco use, how they are besieged with advertisement and encouragement to use it. We will listen to their voices. We will listen to physicians tell us how cigarette smoke, secondhand smoke, impacts children every day.

It is important that we relieve ourselves of the whole influence of negative influences on this concept of government and democracy. I certainly think that actions this week speak of negative influences. For most of the American public, when told the truth, want a reform of the way tobacco is utilized in this country and how it is projected toward our youth.

We could have had a strong tobacco reform bill. We could have had a bill that provides for the health care of Americans at the same time that we are protecting our children against advertisement that would encourage them to smoke. But yet influence has brought that bill to a halt.

I am here to call on this House to move forward and to bring about real reform as it relates to tobacco. I am here to ask this House to listen to these children as they come to the United States capital to present their case. And lastly, Mr. Speaker, I am here to make sure that we give attention and respect to an organization that deserves such; that is, the lawyers' committee for civil rights under the law, and maybe in its 35th year, as

it fought for civil rights and justice, maybe we will stand in this body and also answer the call for equal justice. We will pass real campaign finance reform, and we will have a tobacco bill that will protect our children. I hope that their call is not in vain and that it will not be silenced by the pondering of our voices and by the overwhelming special interests that try to strangle democracy in this House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. SCARBOROUGH addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. METCALF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

U.S. SUPPORT FOR PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE CAUCASUS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday two of my colleagues, Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts and Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island and I met with Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbot and other top State Department officials to discuss the resolution of the conflict in Nagorno Karabagh, a state in the southern Caucasus region of the former Soviet Union. Our goal was to try to develop some new ideas on how we can work to promote greater cooperation and stability in this strategically-located region.

Although the State Department clearly considers Nagorno Karabagh to be of the utmost importance, my colleagues and I are concerned the U.S. diplomatic efforts have either stalled or are going in the wrong direction. We are concerned that our diplomatic priorities are being eclipsed by commercial interests in the region and that the traditional American mission of promoting democracy is being diverted by the desire to develop oil resources.

Secretary Talbot and his colleagues from the Department of State who met with us were most gracious, I should say, but there are differences between the State Department and those of us in this Congress who are staunch supporters of Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I have mentioned in this House on several occasions, the people of Nagorno Karabagh fought and won a war of independence from Azerbaijan. A tenuous ceasefire has been in place since 1994, but a more lasting settlement has been elusive. The United States has been involved in a major way in the negotiations intended to produce a just and lasting peace. Our country is a co-chair along with France and Russia of the international negotiating group commonly known as the Minsk group formed to seek a solution to the Nagorno Karaagh conflict. Pro Armenian Members of this House welcome the high profile U.S. role in this process. As I have indicated, we have some substantive differences.

Unfortunately the State Department is most reluctant to drop its support for Azerbaijan's claim of so-called territorial integrity despite the fact that Nagorno Karabagh has been inhabited by Armenians for centuries.

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I would say, Mr. Speaker, it is time for the U.S. and our Minsk Group partners to forget about the idea of Azerbaijan's so-called ''territorial integrity'' as the foundation for peacefully resolving this conflict.

In the first place, given Nagorno Karabagh's autonomous status in the old Soviet system, there is no reason why they must be considered part of Azerbaijan. But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, the people of Nagorno Karabagh do not consider themselves to be a part of Azerbaijani society. And, considering the horrible treatment visited upon the people of Karabagh and the Armenian community in Azerbaijan proper, it is apparent to me that Azerbaijan really has no use for the people of Karabagh.

The State Department officials that we met with yesterday seemed to be open to new ideas coming from the parties to the conflict, and that created a certain amount of optimism. They stressed that if Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabagh all agreed on a status for Nagorno Karabagh that left it free of Azeri suzerainty, the United States would go along. There was a clear understanding on the part of the State Department that the earlier Minsk Group proposal that did not address the status issue was no longer acceptable to Armenia or Nagorno Karabagh.

Mr. Chairman, as we stressed at yesterday's meeting, our top priority should be to push for direct negotiations, involving Nagorno Karabagh and Azerbaijan, without preconditions. And I should add that any proposal that starts with the premise that the map of Azerbaijan must include Nagorno Karabagh is a big precondition.

As a first step, Mr. Speaker, I would stress the importance of strengthening the current, shaky cease-fire as a priority for the Minsk Group. Making a priority of securing the cease-fire would help end the violence, stop the continuing casualties, and help build confidence for further agreements between the parties.

I believe we should also consider the idea of ''horizontal links,'' a federation between Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabagh among equals. This model has been used in resolving the Bosnia war and in the current negotiations aimed at resolving the Cyprus conflict.

Another key is the need for security guarantees for Karabaugh. As I mentioned, Karabagh won the war and holds the strategic advantage. But it is unrealistic and unfair to except Karabagh to give up its gains on the battlefield for vague promises at the negotiating table by the United States or the other Minsk Group cochairs.

Finally, let me say, Mr. Speaker, that America's role should be that of a nonbiased mediator. It is a role that we have played honorably and with great success in conflicts raging from the Middle East to Bosnia and to Northern Ireland, and there should be no difference here in the case of Karabagh.

POSSIBLE CURES FOR ABUSES IN MANAGED CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HAYWORTH). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, it has been a long day here in the House with a lot of debate about campaign finance reform, and as our colleagues on the other side of the Capitol have been debating for almost 4 weeks until it ended yesterday, a debate on tobacco legislation, which appears to be at least significantly set back. We have a debate going on on campaign finance reform which is much needed, and it appears as if we may have a 3 or 4 week debate on that as well. I hope that the outcome comes out better than that.

But I want to speak tonight about another issue that has been bottled up in Congress for a couple of years that has broad bipartisan support, something that is very important to our constituents back home and to every American, and that is the issue of abuses in managed care and whether we ought to have some minimum standards, Federal safety standards for managed care.

I frequently hear my colleagues who oppose this saying, well, let us not legislate by anecdote. I mean, heaven forbid that we should ever in this body legislate by anecdote. The problem is that these anecdotes are real people, and they are all over the country, and