

Today's immigrants have merely adapted the same disparaging stance toward English that many in our government adopted in the 1960's and 1970's. It is now a serious question whether the children of immigrants should be taught English in America's public schools. California voters were forced to pass an initiative last year in an attempt to force taxpayer-funded public schools to teach immigrant children English.

My Declaration of Official Language Act will restore the place of English in our nation's government and public school system. The legislation I am proposing is not only the right thing to do, it is also the popular thing to do. Opinion poll after opinion poll consistently finds that Americans want English to be America's official language. In fact, most Americans mistakenly believe that official English is already part of the national statutes and are surprised to learn that it is not.

The choice this nation confronts is crystal clear. We can reaffirm our national language or we can continue down the road upon which Canada has preceded us. We can be a one-language country or a Balkanized ruin. I urge my colleagues to support the Declaration of Official Language Act and invite their cosponsorship.

TRIBUTE TO THE HERNDON, VA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. THOMAS M. DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an organization that has helped fuel the economy of Northern Virginia for the past forty years. On January 20, 1999 the Herndon Chamber of Commerce will celebrate its 40th anniversary serving the needs and interests of the businesses of Herndon, VA. The Herndon Chamber of Commerce was founded by Town Attorney Marshall A. Martin, and was officially incorporated on January 20, 1959 with three members. As they approach their 40th anniversary, the Chamber will have been presided over by twenty-four presidents and its membership has grown to over 650 businesses.

Being the instrument of Herndon's commercial interests the Chamber is irrevocably linked to the Town and people they serve. In its early years, the Herndon Chamber was essential in raising money for the first Christmas decorations for downtown and led the fight to keep the W&OD Railroad in operation. Since its humble beginnings the Chamber has been quintessential in spearheading the combined fund-raising efforts for the new golf course and Community Center, helped found the Herndon Historical Society, and led the effort to preserve the Depot, a treasured Herndon landmark.

Over the last decade the Chamber has taken even greater steps to strengthen its relationship with the Herndon community. Most notably, the Chamber has formed a business partnership with Herndon High, developed a nationally recognized, award-winning recycling program at the High School with SAGA, and stages an annual Ethics Seminar for the junior class and the Herndon Middle School. The Chamber has recently lent its support to

Vecinos Unidos—a group dedicated to tutoring Hispanic children in and around Herndon. They also host a Friday Night Live! Series that provides the community with an opportunity to come together and socialize during the summer, while highlighting the downtown area.

The Chamber's résumé of economic development initiatives is extensive. They include a joint project with the Town of Herndon to produce both print and CD versions of The Herndon Advantage as a business relocation marketing tool. In recognition of the telecommunications revolution being led by Northern Virginia, the Herndon Chamber recently participated in the World Congress on Information Technology as an affiliate sponsor. The Chamber was one of the very first in the country to establish and maintain a comprehensive and interactive home page and the second Chamber of Commerce in the State of Virginia to offer a free home page to its members.

From a legislative perspective, the Herndon Chamber has taken an aggressive leadership role to find and present transportation solutions to both the Virginia General Assembly and the U.S. Congress. It has also been supportive of BPOL and zoning ordinance amendments for the growing force of home-based businesses.

Ultimately, and most importantly, the Herndon Chamber of Commerce provides its members with a wide variety of networking opportunities all designed to promote and further the commercial interests of the Town of Herndon. For their four-decades long commitment to the businesses and community of Herndon, VA, it gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the work of the Herndon Chamber of Commerce on the eve of their 40th anniversary.

INTRODUCTION OF THE
SWEEPSTAKES PROTECTION ACT

HON. JAMES E. ROGAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Sweepstakes Protection Act, legislation I introduced today aimed at encouraging accuracy in advertising mail pieces.

Many of my constituents, especially seniors, regularly receive offers for products in the mail that include tantalizing promises of money and other grand prizes. I have in my office literally dozens of such offers received by just one resident of the 27th District. Some of these offers are legitimate, but too many are not.

The envelopes entice recipients with such promises as: "designated entry for cash settlement," "immediate response required, \$3,450,000.00 cash payment pending;" and "you have won." While these promises are shouted in big, bold letters, the real details are hidden in fine print on the bottom of the last page. Expecting to win a prize, trusting consumers respond to offers of products that they do not need by sending money they cannot afford.

The Sweepstakes Protection Act will compel businesses that rely on such offers to identify their advertisements as a game of chance or sweepstakes on the mailing envelope. It will also require mailers to put a clear, legible disclaimer prominently on the first page of their literature.

By implementing these consumer protections, the Postmaster General will have authority to go after those who previously tried to portray marketing schemes as prize offerings.

Mr. Speaker, as we work on issues vital to all Americans, it is crucial that this House pursue policies that protect our senior citizens. Too many of our seniors have been exploited by fraudulent promises of prosperity that have depleted their savings.

With the Sweepstakes Protection Act, we take a step toward limiting the ability of opportunists to misrepresent their products and prey on the unsuspecting. For the sake of our seniors, I urge the House to support the Sweepstakes Protection Act.

DEFEND THE RIGHT TO LIFE

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mrs. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a constitutional amendment for the protection of the right to life. Tragically, this most basic human right has been disregarded, set aside, abused, spurned, and sometimes altogether forgotten. Even more tragically, the United States Government has been a willing partner in this affair, and the sad consequence is the sacrifice of something far more important than just principle.

One of the things that sets America apart from the rest of world is the fact that in this country, everyone is equal before the law. Regardless of race, religion, or background, each person has fundamental rights that are guaranteed by the law. However, we too often overlook the rights of perhaps the most vulnerable among us—the unborn. When abortion is legal and available on demand, then where are the rights of the unborn? When abortion is sanctioned and sometimes paid for by the government, then how do we measure the degree to which life has been cheapened? When an innocent life is taken before its time, then how can one say that this is justice in America?

My amendment would establish beyond a doubt the fundamental right to life. Congress has an obligation to do what it has failed to do for so long, fully protect the unborn. I urge this body to move forward with this legislation to put an end to a most terrible injustice.

INTRODUCTION OF THE
NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRD
CONSERVATION ACT

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce today the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act.

This important conservation measure is modeled after the highly successful programs that Congress created to assist African and Asian elephants, rhinoceroses, and tigers.

Based on the success of the African Elephant Conservation Act, I am confident that this small investment of Federal funds will provide the lifeline that neotropical migratory birds need to survive in the wild.

Neotropical birds, like bluebirds, robins, orioles, and goldfinches, travel across international borders and depend upon thousands of miles of suitable habitat. In fact, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, neotropical migratory birds typically spend five months of the year at Caribbean/Latin American wintering sites, four months in North American breeding areas, and three months traveling to these sites during spring and autumn migrations.

Sadly, there are 90 North American bird species that are listed as either threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act and an additional 124 birds that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has identified on its list of Migratory Nongame Birds of Management Concern.

In North America, an estimated 70 percent of prairie birds are declining. The Government of Mexico lists approximately 390 birds species as endangered, threatened, vulnerable, or rare. What is lacking, however, is a strategic plan for bird conservation, money for on-the-ground projects, public awareness, and any real coordination among the various nations where neotropical migratory birds reside.

While the full extent of the problems facing neotropical migratory birds is unclear, there is no debate over the fact that both bird populations and critical habitat declined significantly in the 1990's. We must act now before more of these species become endangered or extinct. This bill will contribute to the recovery and conservation of migratory birds, without violating private property rights.

There are 60 million adult Americans who enjoy watching and feeding birds at their homes. In fact, these activities generate some \$20 billion in economic activity each year. In addition, healthy bird populations are an invaluable asset for farmers and timber interests. By consuming detrimental insects, these birds prevent the loss of millions of dollars each year.

Under the terms of this legislation, an individual or an organization would be able to submit a project proposal to the Secretary of the Interior. While the bill does not limit the type of projects, I would expect that efforts to determine the condition of neotropical migratory bird habitat, implement new or improved conservation plans, undertake population studies, educate the public, and reduce the destruction of essential habitat would be forthcoming. Since these birds migrate between the Caribbean, Latin America, and North America, comprehensive plans must be developed. It does little good if we are successful in conserving suitable habitat in only a portion of their range.

During the previous Congress, I introduced a similar bill to assist neotropical migratory birds. In fact, that bill was the subject of a public hearing on September 17, 1998. At that time, the Administration testified that "H.R. 4517 goes a long way in promoting the effective conservation and management of neotropical migratory birds by supporting conservation programs and providing financial resources. We applaud this important and timely initiative." In addition, representatives from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the National Audubon Society testified in strong support of my legislation.

I am confident that a Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund would provide much-needed support for projects designed to con-

serve critical habitat for declining migratory bird species in an innovative and cost-effective way.

I urge my colleagues to support the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN MEAT
LABELING ACT

HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce my original cosponsorship of the Country of Origin Meat Labeling Act of 1999. I am looking forward to working in a bipartisan manner with my colleague, Representative CHENOWETH of Idaho, on this important legislation for America's ranchers, farmers, and consumers.

The Country of Origin Meat Labeling Act of 1999 is designed to provide American consumers with the right to know where the meat products they are feeding their families are produced. As we all know, American consumers can easily determine which country their automobiles are from and which country their shoes, shirts, and trousers are from, but they have no idea where the meat and meat products they feed their families originate.

Throughout my service in the House of Representatives, I have been a strong supporter of country of origin labeling—especially for meat and meat products—because of its common-sense nature, its benefits to ranchers and consumers, and its cost-free benefit to taxpayers. During the 105th Congress, I joined Representative CHENOWETH as an original cosponsor of H.R. 1371, the Country of Origin Meat Labeling Act of 1997. I was pleased that the Senate adopted an amendment identical to H.R. 1371 by unanimous consent during consideration of the FY 1999 Agriculture Appropriations bill.

Unfortunately, the special interests prevailed during the Agriculture Appropriations Conference Committee and the meat labeling provision was dropped from the report. Instead, Congress directed the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to conduct another study to determine the empirical impacts of country of origin labeling for consumers, packers, and producers. Basically, the study provides the packing industry with yet more time to delay this important, consumer-friendly legislation.

Mr. Speaker, America's livestock industry is in dire straits. Livestock prices are near record lows while at the same time packers' profits are at near record highs. America's ranchers and farmers have invested heavily in genetic research and nutrients to produce the most cost-effective and nutritious products in the world. But, unfortunately, without country of origin labeling, consumers have no idea where the meat products they purchase originate, leaving American cattlemen's efforts for naught.

I look forward to working with my colleagues from both sides of the aisle, the National Farmers Union, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the American Sheep Industry Association, and the National Consumers League in the passage of this important legislation.

HEALTH INSURANCE TAX
DEDUCTIBILITY ACT

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I am reintroducing the Health Insurance Tax Deductibility Act of 1998. This bill is the same simple, common sense solution to a very complex and destructive problem in our society.

Since I came to Congress in 1992, we have debated health care reform and considered a wide range of proposals—all designed to insure a greater number of Americans. When President Clinton signed the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) into law in 1996, everyone said Congress had taken the first step towards ensuring access to health insurance to more individuals and families.

Unfortunately, a study completed last year by the General Accounting Office shows us this goal has not been achieved. Although HIPAA did expand access to health insurance, it did nothing to ensure that Americans can afford health insurance. And as the GAO study recognized, affordability has become the major hurdle for the American family to clear.

In the past, Congress has passed initiatives to encourage and assist people to get health insurance. We allow employers who sponsor health insurance for their employees to deduct the employer's share of the premium as a business expense. We allow self employed people to deduct a percentage of the health insurance premium they purchase. Yet we provide no assistance or incentive for individuals whose employers do not provide health insurance.

The Health Insurance Tax Deductibility Act of 1999 will do just this. Under this legislation, individuals will be able to deduct a portion—linked to the deduction for the self insured—of the money they pay for health and long-term care insurance. This proposal will make health insurance more affordable for individuals and their families, which in turn, will give American families greater peace of mind.

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND DR.
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to honor the legacy of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose birthday we will be commemorating later this month. It is now over 30 years that his life was senselessly snuffed out by an assassin in Memphis, TN.

Following his death, I joined my colleagues in calling for the establishment of the third Monday in January to be a national holiday in honor of Rev. King. While this holiday is not ingrained in the American fabric of life, many of us are bittersweet regarding the message the holiday conveys. Too many Americans view Martin Luther King day as a holiday just for black people. Rev. King himself would be the first person to repudiate that attitude, for his message was for all people, of all races,