

In the last Congress, the bill went from introduction to mark-up in less than a year even though most observers were surprised that it even got a hearing! But what most observers did not count with the perseverance of Congressman Lantos, Congresswoman Morella, Chairman Horn, then-ranking member Kucinich, and all of their incredibly dedicated and hard-working staffs. The observers did not count on the fact that there were many others ready and willing to add their names and prestige to this effort for truth and justice—so many more than 100 House members became co-sponsors in less than a year! Many observers underestimated the tenacity and perseverance of amazing people like Adriana Portillo-Bartow, Jennifer Harbury, Sister Dianna Ortiz, Meredith Larson, Dr. Leo Valladares Lanza, and so many others.

Washington conventional wisdom, continuing to insist that true intelligence reform is destined to oblivion, did not count on the fact that the yearning for truth and justice is a million times greater than the strongest bureaucratic inertia, that the search for truth will always overpower obfuscation and stonewalling, and that the American people and its elected representatives know and are committed to truly putting people first, to truly strengthening families, to truly fighting crime.

And so, thanks to tens of thousands of voices from Hawaii to Florida, and Maine to Alaska, we hear the message: pass the Human Rights Information Act. This message is supported by organizations like the Latin America Working Group, the Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA, the Washington Office on Latin America, the Religious Task Force on Central America and Mexico. I could go on and on!

So we begin anew our quest for the truth, our quest for justice, with the knowledge that both republicans and Democrats, Chairs and Ranking members, have shown and are showing their support for a bill that could rend the web of secrecy and lies that keep the public from finding out what it is entitled to know, that keep family members from healing and reaching closure, that keep criminals, mass murderers, torturers, and assorted thugs on the streets, well, we gotta stop that and we will change the law. This law is for you, Dianna. This law is for you, Jennifer. This law is for you, Adriana. This law is for you, Anne [Larson, mother of human rights worker Meredith Larson who survived a stabbing attack in Guatemala City in 1989]. Indeed, this law is for all of us, for a better tomorrow, for a more just today.

IN HONOR OF FRANK VICKERS

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of the USWA's most respected leaders, Frank Vickers. Over the past 30 years, Frank Vickers has dedicated his life to work extremely hard for the Steel Workers of Ohio. He joined the USWA in 1957, and since that time he has served as Local 5684 President, District 30 Organizing Coordinator, Ohio Legislative Coordinator and the Ohio Legislative Representative.

Frank has chaired USWA negotiations with LTV Steel, Timken, American Steel Foundries, Amsted Industries, Armco, Inc. and Republic Engineered Steels. Frank has also served as Vice President of the Cincinnati AFL-CIO Central Labor Council.

Frank Vickers has been a dedicated USWA worker for the last 30 years. In that time he has made tremendous strides in improving the productivity of the USWA. Through his efforts the USWA has expanded their influence all over the country in order to benefit the steel workers.

Frank has not only been a successful advocate for steelworkers but has also been a dedicated family man. His efforts are greatly appreciated by all the members of the USWA. He is not only a hard worker, but a good friend to all.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in honoring this dedicated man, Frank Vickers, for 30 years of serving the Steelworkers. I would like to wish Frank the best of luck and good fortune in the future.

A FAVORITE SON GOES TO
WASHINGTON

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 16, 1999

Mr. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I commend to my colleagues the following article about one of our very own, Congressman GEORGE MILLER of California, who this year marks his 25th year of service in Congress.

This article poignantly captures GEORGE's commitment to public service and his unwavering belief in our system of government. As GEORGE says in this article, being a Member of Congress "is a privilege. It's what makes me get up in the morning and go to work, knowing in one fashion or another you're going to get to be a participant in our Democratic system. It sounds really corny, except it's really energizing."

This article also presents comments from the people who do not share GEORGE's views but who bestow upon him their respect for his integrity, his candor, and his unrelenting pursuit of what he believes to be right for this country.

[From the Contra Costa Times, June 6, 1999];

A FAVORITE SON GOES TO WASHINGTON—
REPEATEDLY

By Daniel Borenstein

WASHINGTON—Despite George Miller's limp from his surgery, the 6-foot-4-inch congressman sets the brisk pace as he and fellow liberal Rep. John Tierney of Massachusetts cross the Capitol grounds.

The pair lament the high prescription drug prices Americans without health insurance are forced to pay. To Miller, it's a political weapon to embarrass Republicans with ties to drug companies.

And it's a wrong that could be righted—if the Democrats were in the majority. "It sure would be fun if we could get this place back," he says.

Meet George Miller, ambivalent congressman.

On the one hand, he loves throwing political grenades across the aisle and watching Republicans squirm. On the other, he longs for days before the 1994 elections when Democrats ruled the House of Representatives.

Those were days when he wrote landmark legislation on water subsidies, nutritional aid for poor pregnant women, foster care and offshore oil drilling. These days, he tries to defeat Republican bills.

Miller, D-Martinez, was first elected to the House a quarter-century ago, at age 29. Today he is 54. Of the 435 House members, only 17 have been there longer.

He came to Washington with the Watergate class of 1974, one of 75 new Democrats elected to the House three months after President Nixon resigned. Only six remain in the House.

Although most of the players have changed, the game continues. And Miller, who played linebacker in school and belongs to the minority party in Congress, is once again playing defense.

"On offense, you've got control of the game, you know when the ball is going to be hiked, you know what the play is," he says. "On defense, you've got to try to anticipate, you've got to think about it. You've got to stop things from happening."

A mischievous smile spreads under his white mustache. "Sometimes," he says, "it's more fun."

Miller's time on the floor is up, but he won't stop talking.

Rep. William Goodling, R-Penn., chairman of the Education Committee, raps the gavel repeatedly. Finally, he slams it down with a thunderous bang that echoes through the cavernous hearing room in the Rayburn House Office Building.

"Oh, bang it again if it will make you feel better," Miller says.

"I'll bang it and I'll bang it on your head," Goodling snaps back, then threatens to have the sergeant at arms remove him.

This is what Miller calls "calculated chaos."

Later, he marches out of Rayburn House, across South Capitol Street, into the Longworth Building—bypassing the metal detectors as members of Congress are entitled to do—and into the elevator. All the time ranting about the Republicans.

He checks the elevator lights to see what floor he's on and realizes the man next to him is watching Miller complain to a reporter.

"Never mind us," Miller says with a smile. "I'm pontificating."

A BIG BARK

Miller is a top Democratic pontificator. With his booming voice, imposing physical presence and quick debating skills, he has become a liberal voice for, and within, the party.

"Nobody out-barks George when he's trying to make a point," says Leon Panetta, former congressman and former White House chief of staff.

Panetta knows Miller well. He served in Congress with him, lived in Miller's row house 2½ blocks from the Capitol for about eight years and played basketball with him in the House gym.

In some ways, Miller is the same on and off the court, Panetta says. "If he felt somebody hit him wrong, he'd tell him, he'd yell at him, and sometimes he'd stomp off, and everybody knew George was pissed." But, "stay out of his way for an hour and you'd be fine."

There was little doubt you'd want him on your team. "When he plants himself under the basket there aren't a hell of a lot of people who are going to go through him."

These days, the Democrats plant Miller on talk shows, at news conferences and on the House floor. He is one of about 15 House Democratic leaders who meet almost daily in a small windowless conference room in the Capitol to plot strategy.

Last month, when, in the wake of the Littleton, Colo., high school shooting, the Senate passed new gun laws, Miller insisted House Democrats push for the same without delay, despite warnings from some Democrats that there could be political fallout from the gun lobby.