

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN HONOR OF MARY A. PTASZEK

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 6, 2000

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Mary Ptaszek, a woman who committed her life to serving her community and improving the lives of those who lived in it.

A dedicated servant to her community Mrs. Ptaszek served as precinct committeewoman for three different wards, and on the Democratic Executive Committee. A native of Cleveland, Mrs. Ptaszek committed her life to helping others. A devoted wife and sibling, Mrs. Ptaszek was a lifelong member of St. Barbara Catholic Church where she sang in the choir. When her mother passed away Mrs. Ptaszek became her family's matriarch, hosting large family gatherings at her home. Mrs. Ptaszek's caring touch was extended not only to her family but to the greater community as well. Her devotion to her community was evident as, even her final years, she would drive fellow seniors to their medical appointments or to the shopping centers.

Through politics Mrs. Ptaszek looked to better the lives of those around her. A kind-hearted, community minded woman Mrs. Ptaszek sought to use politics as a tool of good to create better communities.

Mrs. Ptaszek was a kind, dedicated, passionate woman who selflessly gave of herself to help others. Mr. Speaker, I ask my fellow colleagues to join me in celebrating the life and tremendous accomplishments of this truly remarkable woman who worked tirelessly on behalf of others.

IN HONOR OF EII, INC., AT THE INFENIUM LINDEN BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER, FOR RECEIVING APPROVAL FROM OSHA TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STAR VOLUNTARY PROTECTION PROGRAMS (VPP)

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 6, 2000

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor EII, Inc., at the Linden Business and Technology Center, located in Linden, New Jersey, for its exceptional employee safety and health programs.

EII, Inc.'s recent approval for participation in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) is a testament to a company that puts the well-being of its employees above the careless and irresponsible desire to increase profits at all costs—rare behavior at a time when profits often seem more important than people.

EII, Inc. is an electrical contractor providing maintenance and process support at the

Infenium Linden Business and Technology Center. EII, Inc.'s employees, all represented by their respective trade unions, include electricians, pipefitters, millwrights, and carpenters. Each employee has been incremental in OSHA's evaluation and approval of EII, Inc.

OSHA's recognition of EII, Inc. is the result of a special relationship that has developed between management and employees, a relationship established by the management's commitment to the safety and health of the hard working men and women at EII, Inc.

In addition, EII, Inc. is the only electrical contractor to receive VPP approval, with less than 20 construction companies participating nation-wide—only two of which are in New Jersey.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me as I honor EII, Inc., a company that truly understands the safety needs of its employees, and a company that puts people before profits.

IN MEMORY OF GINETTA SAGIN—
PIONEER HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 6, 2000

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I wish to call the attention of my colleagues in the House to the passing of a dear, dear personal friend and a true giant in the struggle for human rights. Just a few days ago, on Friday, August 25, Ginetta Sagan died of cancer at the age of 75.

I know that all of my colleagues who had the good fortune to know and work with her, and I know there are many here today who share my tremendous feeling of loss for not only a stalwart defender for human rights and humanity around the world, but also a true and wonderful personal friend and outstanding human being.

Mr. Speaker, the President of the United States appropriately honored the lifetime achievements of this remarkable woman when he awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1994, the highest civilian honor our nation can bestow. Throughout her life, she has brought healing, justice, and mercy to the oppressed and has helped to change the thinking of those who are in positions of power and authority.

Born in Milan, Italy, to a Jewish mother and Catholic father, Ginetta Sagan first worked against the fascists at the early age of 17, bringing clothes and food coupons to Jews in hiding. Her mother and father were arrested by Mussolini's Black Brigade in 1943 and did not survive the war. In 1943, Ginetta—and she almost always went only by her first name—worked as a courier for the Italian resistance, using her nickname Topolino, or "Little Mouse." Ginetta was only 5 feet tall, but she had the energy and the power of a giant. She helped to transport more than 300 fugitives and thousands of pamphlets through the

Italian Alps, before she was betrayed and arrested in early 1945.

Mr. Speaker, for over a month and a half, she was beaten, burned, electrically shocked and raped. On April 23, 1945—the very day scheduled for her execution—she managed to escape with the help of the Italian Resistance and two friendly German officers. In the deep dungeons of her Fascist torturers, where all hope is lost and only pain and fear live, Ginetta Sagan found her deep and unshakable commitment to human rights. It was there that she found her incredible strength to work tirelessly on behalf of the downtrodden. When a guard tossed her a loaf of bread, she found a matchbox with a slip of paper hidden inside. Inscribed on this piece of paper was only one word, which epitomizes her whole life: the Italian word Coraggio—Courage. Ginetta later named the first newsletter for Amnesty International Matchbox, reflecting this very moving experience.

After the war, Mr. Speaker, Ginetta attended the prestigious Sorbonne University in Paris. She continued her study of child development in 1951 at the University of Chicago, where she met and married Leonard Sagan, a medical student who later became a public health physician. After living in Washington, DC., Boston and Japan, the Sagens moved to my home state of California in 1968. Leonard Sagan died in 1977.

While living in Washington, DC., Ginetta began her lifelong work with Amnesty International, the London-based human rights organization. Ginetta helped found the United States chapter of this world-wide organization and, as its honorary chairwoman, worked tirelessly for its goals.

Mr. Speaker, Amnesty International annually awards a prize named in Ginetta's honor in recognition of her outstanding service and leadership on behalf of women and children's rights. Not surprisingly, as soon as she reached the Bay Area in California, she gathered like-minded activists and founded Amnesty International's Western Regional Office. In addition, Ginetta created the Aurora Foundation in order to investigate and campaign actively against torture in postwar Vietnam. The Foundation continues to play a crucial role in supporting human rights activists around the world.

Ginetta also actively campaigned against human rights abuses in Chile, Greece, Algeria, Poland, the Philippines and South Africa. In 1971, Ginetta organized a concert in Berkeley to raise funds for political prisoners in Greece. The concert, which featured her friend, folk singer Joan Baez, and Greek entertainer Melina Mercouri, drew some 10,000 people.

Mr. Speaker, the San Francisco Chronicle, in its obituary of her published on August 29, quotes Julianne Cartwright Taylor, chair of Amnesty International USA Board of Directors: "Her [Ginetta's] legacy is a constant reminder that our role is vital, and that without the work of human rights defenders, thousands upon thousands of individuals would be affected for the worst."

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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