

RESIGNATION FROM THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

The Speaker pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation from the House of Representatives:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, November 15, 2001.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Office of the Speaker,
Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR DENNY: I am writing to inform you that February 15, 2002 has been set in Oklahoma as the date for my resignation from Congress. I am pleased to report that the Oklahoma legislature recently passed a law that will ensure that Oklahoma's 1st Congressional District will not go unrepresented as I make the transition to a full-time campaign for governor. The law required that I make my intent to resign irrevocable, which I have communicated to Oklahoma's Secretary of State.

Serving in the House of Representatives has been one of the greatest honors and challenges of my life. I want to thank you for your leadership, your steadfastness in the pursuit of our ideals, and for your friendship during the past few years. While I will miss working alongside my colleagues in Congress, I am eager to fight for the principles our party stands for as the next governor of Oklahoma.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or my chief of staff, Mike Willis, if you have any questions regarding this transition.

Sincerely,

STEVE LARGENT,
Member of Congress.

Enclosure.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 26, 2001.

Hon. MIKE HUNTER,
Oklahoma Secretary of State,
Oklahoma City, OK.

DEAR SECRETARY HUNTER: Pursuant to enrolled Senate Bill Number 7X, enacted and signed by the Governor this week during the first extraordinary session of the 48th Legislature, please accept this letter as official notice of my resignation as Congressman of the First District of Oklahoma. This resignation is irrevocable and shall become effective on February 15, 2002.

My decision to leave was made after much prayer and consideration for the constituents I now serve. It has been an honor and a privilege to have served as the Representative for the people of the First District.

Sincerely,

STEVE LARGENT,
Member of Congress.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair announces that she will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after debate has concluded on motions to suspend the rules, but not before 6:30 p.m. today.

Any record vote, if ordered, on a concurrent resolution expressing the gratitude of the House of Representatives to the General Accounting Office and its employees will be taken tomorrow.

AFGHAN WOMEN AND CHILDREN
RELIEF ACT OF 2001

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 1573) to authorize the provision of educational and health care assistance to the women and children of Afghanistan.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 1573

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Afghan Women and Children Relief Act of 2001".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) In Afghanistan, Taliban restrictions on women's participation in society make it nearly impossible for women to exercise their basic human rights. The Taliban restrictions on Afghan women's freedom of expression, association, and movement deny women full participation in society and, consequently, from effectively securing basic access to work, education, and health care.

(2) Afghanistan has one of the highest infant (165 of 1000) and child (257 of 1000) mortality rates in the world.

(3) Only 5 percent of rural and 39 percent of urban Afghans have access to safe drinking water.

(4) It is estimated that 42 percent of all deaths in Afghanistan are due to diarrheal diseases caused by contaminated food and water.

(5) Over one-third of Afghan children under 5 years of age suffer from malnutrition, 85,000 of whom die annually.

(6) Seventy percent of the health care system in Afghanistan is dependent on foreign assistance.

(7) As of May 1998, only 20 percent of hospital medical and surgical beds dedicated to adults were available for women, and thousands of Afghan women and girls are routinely denied health care.

(8) Women are forbidden to leave their homes without being escorted by a male relative. This prevents many women from seeking basic necessities like health care and food for their children. Doctors, virtually all of whom are male, are also not permitted to provide certain types of care not deemed appropriate by the Taliban.

(9) Before the Taliban took control of Kabul, schools were coeducational, with women accounting for 70 percent of the teaching force. Women represented about 50 percent of the civil service corps, and 40 percent of the city's physicians were women. Today, the Taliban prohibits women from working as teachers, doctors, and in any other occupation.

(10) The Taliban prohibit girls and women from attending school. In 1998, the Taliban ordered the closing of more than 100 privately funded schools where thousands of young women and girls were receiving education and training in skills that would have helped them support themselves and their families.

(11) Of the many tens of thousands of war widows in Afghanistan, many are forced to beg for food and to sell their possessions because they are not allowed to work.

(12) Resistance movements courageously continue to educate Afghan girls in secrecy and in foreign countries against Taliban law.

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b), the President is authorized, on such terms and conditions as the President may determine, to provide educational and health care

assistance for the women and children living in Afghanistan and as refugees in neighboring countries.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—(1) In providing assistance under subsection (a), the President shall ensure that such assistance is provided in a manner that protects and promotes the human rights of all people in Afghanistan, utilizing indigenous institutions and non-governmental organizations, especially women's organizations, to the extent possible.

(2) Beginning 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, and at least annually for the 2 years thereafter, the Secretary of State shall submit a report to the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives describing the activities carried out under this Act and otherwise describing the condition and status of women and children in Afghanistan and the persons in refugee camps while United States aid is given to displaced Afghans.

(c) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Funds made available under the 2001 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Recovery from and Response to Terrorist Attacks on the United States (Public Law 107-38), shall be available to carry out this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the Senate bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, as Chair of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, and as an original cosponsor of the House companion, I rise in support of the Afghan Women and Children Relief Act of 2001.

In 1996, a heavy shroud was placed on the people of Afghanistan when the Taliban captured Kabul. From that moment onward, the Taliban took the peaceful and sacred scriptures of the Holy Koran and distorted them into a rulebook of terror.

Through their creation of the Department for Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, the Taliban enforced a perverse rendition of Islam which gruesomely joined prayer with the barbaric practices of beatings, torture, rape, and executions.

But the Taliban's brutality and blatant disregard for the lives and well-being of the Afghan people was perhaps most clearly evident among half of its population, the women of Afghanistan, who bear the deepest scars.

Made widows and orphans by the will of the Taliban, the same women who