

of her home at 10 Tufts Street in the Bunker Hill Housing Projects.

Anne's dedication to the neighborhood of Charlestown is well known throughout the community. Anne's passion for hockey, however, is what allowed her to reach out to her community and her neighbors as someone whose opinions should be respected. As a CYHA coach, president and parent, there was no one more tenacious on the bench or in the boardroom. As tough a competitor as Anne could be at times, people dealing with her knew that she possessed a hockey attitude spurred from a mother's love. This was a passion not limited to just her children but was felt by all the children of Charlestown Youth Hockey. During Anne's tenure with CYHA, her guidance was available to all the athletes regardless of their ability to play or pay. Anne's leadership resulted in the initiation of the Green Team, which allows youth that can not afford the ever-escalating costs of playing hockey to realize a dream. To some of these kids just being able to take the ice as a youth is as big a hockey career to which they aspire.

Charlestown has seen many of its young hockey players move on to compete at the high school and college level. Some are fortunate enough to have enjoyed professional careers. Still others have won Olympic Gold. These exceptional athletes were no more important to Anne than those whose careers peaked at the youth level. Regardless of how far the skills developed at the Charlestown rink took these young athletes, the lessons learned from Anne Considine's wisdom and caring went with them. Rinks and neighborhoods from as far away as Chicago, St. Louis, Lake Placid, Peoria, Florida, Nashville, Cleveland, Plattsburg and Hampton Roads, to name a few, have felt the influence of one woman's love of hockey and her hometown.

Mr. Speaker, I leave here tonight proud to say that the next generation of Considine's can be found mucking it up in the corners at the Charlestown Rink. This is a tribute to Anne's lasting impact on youth hockey in Charlestown. On behalf of all the hockey players in Charlestown—past, present, and future—I want to thank Anne Considine for her years of dedication to the Charlestown Youth Hockey Association.

KYRGYZSTAN'S RELEASE OF  
AZIMBEK BEKNAZAROV

**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 20, 2002*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, yesterday authorities in Kyrgyzstan released Azimbek Beknazarov, a parliamentarian who had been in jail since January 5. The decision was made after disturbances in the Ak-Su District of Jalal-Abad, Mr. Beknazarov's native region in southern Kyrgyzstan. In an unprecedented outburst of violence on March 17, six people were killed and scores wounded when police opened fire on demonstrators. Mr. Beknazarov has pledged not to leave the area and his trial has been postponed indefinitely while the authorities and the public catch their breath and reassess the situation.

The incident and the events leading up to it are alarming—not only for Kyrgyzstan but for

the United States, which is now basing troops in the country and expects to be in the region for the foreseeable future. Despite attempts by some Kyrgyz officials to pin the blame on a mob of demonstrators fired up by alcohol, the real cause of the bloody riot was popular discontent with an unresponsive government reaching the boiling point.

Kyrgyz authorities have accused Mr. Beknazarov of improperly handling a murder case when he was an investigator in a district prosecutor's office years ago. In fact, it is widely believed that Beknazarov's real transgression was to suggest that Kyrgyzstan's parliament discuss the country's border agreement with China, which would transfer some territory from the tiny Central Asian state to its giant neighbor.

This is reflective of Akaev's intensified efforts to consolidate his power while cracking down on dissent and opposition. In February 2000, President Akaev rigged the parliamentary election to keep his main rival—Felix Kulov, who had served as Vice President and in other high-level positions—from winning a seat in the legislature. The observation mission of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) openly questioned the results in Kulov's district, and said the election had fallen far short of international standards. Subsequently, Kulov was arrested and could not participate in the October 2000 presidential election, in which Akaev faced no serious contenders and was easily re-elected.

Kulov is serving a 7-year jail term and now faces new criminal charges. Amnesty International considers him a political prisoner. Last December I chaired a hearing of the Helsinki Commission which focused on the deterioration of human rights in Kyrgyzstan. Mr. Kulov's wife was able to attend the hearing and offered her perspective on the current political climate in her country.

The independent and opposition media in Kyrgyzstan have also been under severe pressure, usually in the form of libel cases which official authorities use to fine newspapers out of existence so they cannot report on corruption. In January 2002, the authorities issued Decree No. 20, which would introduce mandatory official inventory and government registration of all typographical and printing equipment, while imposing stricter controls on its imports. Decree No. 20 would also threaten U.S. Government plans to establish an independent printing press in Kyrgyzstan. Furthermore, the decree will be used against religious groups, both Muslim and Christian, by blocking their ability to produce religious material and by calling for an "auditing" of all religious communities that create publications. While the pretext of the decree is to combat "religious extremists," the decree has clear implications for religious communities out of favor with the government, as well as with opposition groups. The State Department has urged Kyrgyzstan to repeal Decree No. 20 but so far, Bishkek has stubbornly refused.

So when legislator Azimbek Beknazarov was arrested on January 5, his colleagues in parliament, members of opposition parties and human rights activists reacted strongly to the latest step in an ongoing campaign to clamp down on civil society. Since January, hundreds of people, including parliamentarians, have gone on hunger strikes to demand his release. Protests and demonstrations have continued throughout, which the police have

either ignored or roughly dispersed. The U.S. Government, the OSCE and international human rights groups have called for Beknazarov's release, but President Akaev, hiding behind the fig leaf of "executive non-interference in judicial deliberations," contends that the case must be decided by the courts. His position is an absurd pretense in a country where the courts are under state influence, especially in sensitive political cases. More to the point, this stance is simply no longer credible, considering the widespread belief that Beknazarov's imprisonment was politically motivated and the public's lack of confidence in the government's good faith.

Finally, pent-up tensions exploded two days ago, when demonstrators and police clashed, with tragic consequences. Kyrgyz officials have accused organizers of unauthorized pickets and rallies of responsibility for the violence. In an address to the nation, President Akaev described the events as "an apparent plot [in which] a group of people, including prominent politicians, staged unauthorized mass rallies simultaneously." He said the events were "another move in the targeted activities of opposition forces to destabilize the situation in the country. They have been engaged in these activities for the last few years."

Mr. Speaker, I would contend that the riots in Jalal-Abad Region were the predictable outcome of frustration and desperation. Askar Akaev, by falsifying elections and repressing freedom of expression, has made normal politics impossible in Kyrgyzstan. A long-suffering populace, which has seen its living standard plummet while corrupt officials grow rich, has signaled that enough is enough. The authorities have heard the message and now have to make a critical decision: either to try to find a common language with society or to crack down. If they choose the former, Kyrgyzstan may yet realize its promise of the early 1990s; if they choose the latter, more confrontations are likely, with unpredictable ramifications for Kyrgyzstan and its neighbors.

The United States has a real stake in the outcome. We are in Central Asia to make sure terrorists cannot use the region to plan attacks on us or recruit new members. But all the region's states are led by men determined to stay in power indefinitely. This means they cannot allow society to challenge the state, which, in turn, insures that discontented, impoverished people with no other outlets could well be attracted by radical ideologies.

We must make it plain to President Akaev that we are serious when we declare that our war on terrorism has not put democracy and human rights on the back burner. And we must insist that he implement his OSCE commitments, as well as the pledge he made in last month's bilateral Memorandum of Understanding with the United States. That document obligates Kyrgyzstan to "confirm its commitment to continue to take demonstrable measures to strengthen the development of democratic institutions and to respect basic human and civil rights, among which are freedom of speech and of the media, freedom of association and public assembly, and freedom of religion."

The events earlier this week have given us a wake-up call. We had better understand properly all its implications.

AFGHAN GIRLS RETURN TO  
SCHOOL

**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 20, 2002*

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable event that will be taking place this week in Afghanistan. For the first time in five years, Afghan girls will be allowed to enroll in school without fear of the Taliban.

The collapse of the Taliban regime has enabled the Afghan citizens to enjoy new personal freedoms that were once forbidden.

Under the Taliban regime, women and girls were not allowed to go to school to attain a basic education. Many illegal schools were set up in private homes during the repressive regime because women and girls did not want to give up their education. During this time, if any of these underground schools were discovered, these women and girls wound up in jail, were severely beaten, or sometimes even killed.

This week marks a time for celebration. Women and girls will no longer be threatened and harmed from pursuing their right to an education. I celebrate with the Afghan women and girls on their return to school and join my colleagues in celebrating this momentous event in empowering women around the world.

THE HOSPITALIZED VETERANS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2002

**HON. SUSAN DAVIS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 20, 2002*

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, today I have the pleasure to introduce the Hospitalized Veterans Financial Assistance Act of 2002 and thank my Veterans Affairs Committee colleagues, Committee Ranking Member LANE EVANS, Benefits Subcommittee Ranking Member SILVESTRE REYES, and fellow Benefits Subcommittee member CORRINE BROWN who have joined me on this important legislation.

I would also like to thank the authors of the Independent Budget who brought this critical issue to our attention. In short, current law subjects many hospitalized veterans to a financial hardship. Let me explain further.

An inequity exists in current law controlling the beginning date for payment of increased compensation based on periods of incapacity due to hospitalization or convalescence. Hospitalization in excess of 21 days for a service-connected disability entitles the veteran to a temporary total disability rating. This rating is effective the first day of hospitalization and continues to the last day of the month of hospital discharge. Similarly, where surgery for a service-connected disability necessitates at least 1 month's convalescence or causes complications, or where immobilization of a major joint by cast is necessary, a temporary total rating is awarded effective the date of hospital admission or outpatient visit.

While the effective date of the temporary total disability rating corresponds to the begin-

ning date of hospitalization or treatment, under current law (38 U.S.C. §5111) the effective date for payment purposes is delayed until the first day of the month following the effective date of the increased rating.

This provision deprives veterans of any increase in compensation to offset the total disability during the first month in which temporary total disability occurs. This deprivation and consequent delay in the payment of increased compensation often jeopardizes disabled veterans' financial security and unfairly causes them hardships.

The Hospitalized Veterans Financial Assistance Act of 2002 would allow for payment of benefits in all hospitalization and convalescent claims to begin effective the first day of the month in which hospitalization or treatment begins.

Mr. Chairman, once again the nation's soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines are on foreign soil either engaged directly with an enemy or on alert to respond as necessary to assure our citizens' right to live in freedom. Let us in Congress assure these dedicated men and women that we will provide for those who bear today's and tomorrow's battles and not force them to endure a financial hardship.

President Abraham Lincoln said it best, ". . . what is fairly due from us here, in the dispensing of patronage, towards the men who, by fighting our battles, bear the chief burden of saving our country . . . is that, other claims and qualifications being equal, they have the better right; and this is especially applicable to the disabled soldier."

TRIBUTE TO MR. CLIFFORD C.  
LAPLANTE

**HON. NORMAN D. DICKS**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 20, 2002*

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a longtime friend and a great American, Mr. Clifford C. LaPlante. Cliff is about to retire after more than 50 years of dedicated service to our country and to the defense and aerospace community.

Born and raised in upstate New York, Cliff began his most distinguished career in the aeronautical arena with the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. An acquisition specialist, Cliff dedicated himself to ensuring that American forces were equipped with the most capable equipment that American industry could provide. As we hear in the media about the critical roles of Air Force systems such as the C-5 Galaxy and the KC-135 aerial refueling fleet, I would point out to my colleagues that these systems were developed and deployed under the watchful eye of Cliff LaPlante.

As an Air Force legislative affairs officer, Cliff became well known to the members of the Armed Services and Appropriations Committees. He quickly became an asset to members and staff alike for his concise and timely responses to the many questions that arose during consideration of Defense department budget requests. The reputation Cliff developed as a trusted and admired member of the Air Force reflect great credit on himself as well as the U.S. Air Force.

My personal association with Cliff began in 1970 when Cliff decided to forego a much-de-

served promotion to full Colonel in favor of joining The Boeing Company as its first full time liaison representative to the Congress. During his eight years with Boeing, Cliff continued the fine legislative work he had begun with the Air Force and he became involved in many vital defense programs such as the AWACS, the Airborne Command Post and the KC-135 re-engining program.

In 1979, Cliff began the General Electric Company chapter of his career, which has lasted twenty-three years. Cliff continued to build on the legislative work he began during his tenures with the Air Force and Boeing and was at the very center of the major defense issues of the day. Cliff distinguished himself with his role in the KC-135 re-engining program and during "The Great Engine War" where GE competed, and won, a place for its F110 engine on the F-16. American business schools now view "The Great Engine War" as a classic case study on how defense procurement should be done.

Now, after more than 50 years of dedicated service to his country, the Congress and the aerospace community, Cliff is about to retire from GE and will begin what is perhaps his most noble endeavor. Together with his wife, Cecilia, Cliff has established a charitable foundation, "Children Come First," that is dedicated to helping underprivileged children in Peru. Those of us who have worked with Cliff know that he will bring the same spirit and vigor that has exemplified his past undertakings to his foundation and that he will certainly continue to "Bring Good Things to Life" for underprivileged kids.

Mr. Speaker, I know I speak for all my colleagues in the House who have known and worked with Cliff over the years when I say we will miss him but wish him well in the next chapter of his fascinating career.

HONORING OTTERBEIN COLLEGE,  
NCAA MEN'S DIVISION III NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

**HON. PATRICK J. TIBERI**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 20, 2002*

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, while the big school college basketball championship is still to be decided, we in Central Ohio are already celebrating the Otterbein College Cardinals' victory in the NCAA Men's Division III championship game. The Cardinals came from 11 points behind in the second half to crush Elizabethtown 102-83 and bring the national title home to Westerville, Ohio.

The victory topped a spectacular season for Coach Dick Reynolds and his squad. The Cardinals finished first in the tough Ohio Athletic Conference during the regular season, then won the conference tournament en route to an overall 30-3 record. It's a homegrown success story too, with every player coming from the Buckeye State and 11 of them from the Central Ohio area.

Otterbein is no stranger to basketball success. The Cardinals' title came in their third trip to the Final Four in Reynolds' 30 years with the program.

Their games weren't on ESPN and you won't find them on your tournament bracket sheet. But some of the best basketball in the