

CONGRATULATING THE VALLEY
SPORTS AMERICAN LITTLE
LEAGUE BASEBALL TEAM

(Mrs. NORTHUP asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. NORTHUP. Mr. Speaker, the Valley Sports American Little League Team from Louisville won not only the World Series in this country, but the International World Series. This is a group of 11-year-old youngsters that not only played terrific games all the way through the playoffs, but conducted themselves with such sportsmanship and were such gracious winners that they captured the hearts not only of people in Louisville, Kentucky, but people all across this country.

They were totally unknown, went into the tournament with all the confidence and all the toughness that we would expect a group of 11-year-olds to have. They won the series in this country on Saturday night, and then won the International World Series on Sunday night.

They had the wonderful opportunity of meeting the President of the United States when he was in Louisville last week, and have been greeted with applause all across our community and all across this country. I just rise to recognize them.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FILNER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

BANKRUPTCY REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening grievously concerned about the direction this House may be going as it considers the bankruptcy conference report.

G.K. Chesterton once said, the reformer is always right about what is wrong, and he is generally wrong about what is right. But we in this House

may have the opportunity to do the work of reformers and the obligation to do what is right this week.

The bankruptcy reform bill has languished in Congress, Mr. Speaker, since before many of us were Members, including me. Many Members of both houses labored tirelessly to reform the old law. I honor them for their outstanding work.

I especially respect those from this House who worked so diligently and faithfully as conferees. They did produce a bill that will eliminate many of the abuses in the current system, encourage personal responsibility, reduce bogus filings, and will put spouses and children in a favored position in collecting obligations owed them by those who seek to hide behind our country's bankruptcy laws.

Mr. Speaker, I heard from my friends from finance and in retailing. They tell me that the bankruptcy reform accomplishes many good things. I cannot nor do I want to disagree with them. Yet, Mr. Speaker, and I say this advisedly, if this House sends this bankruptcy conference report to the President, without question we will have reformed the system, but we will not have done the right thing. We will have been wrong about what is right.

Mr. Speaker, as we all well know, there is language in this conference report that could deny the protection of bankruptcy laws to nonviolent protesters active in the right to life; not violent bomb-throwers or those who physically assault women at abortion clinics, as has been reported. No, as a just and peaceful society, we cannot support private violence for any cause. Mr. Speaker, we are talking about the quiet, dignified men and women who do no more than pray, sing hymns, or hold placards outside abortion clinics, men and women who are doing no more than what the first amendment of the Constitution provides, which every single one of us in this House swore an oath to uphold.

Mr. Speaker, even if we disagree with every fiber of our being, every one of us should be opposed to those laws and tactics that squelch legitimate speech and scare people from expressing their opinions. The bankruptcy law provides the tools to chill not only our first amendment rights of free speech, but our very soul as a Nation. Using the force of law to squelch dissent is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, this law, which was crafted so carefully to permit some protests but crush others, will have just that result. The wealthy and powerful will turn their lawyers loose on quiet, peaceful protesters for no reason other than that they dislike the content of the speech. The powerful law firms for abortion rights interests will see to it that peaceful protesters are hauled into the justice system, are forced into settlement that forever forecloses dissent, or into the risk of threats to take their homes, property, and businesses as long as they live.

We will have done the right thing in reforming the bankruptcy code if we pass this report, but, Mr. Speaker, we will have injured the first amendment. We will have set the precedent that the powerful can use the force of law to stamp out disagreeable speech, and we will have cruelly laid the foundation for a permanent debtors' class. This is a legacy I am not prepared to leave my country.

Mr. Speaker, as I think about the blessing that is America, and as I remember those who sacrificed so that I might exercise the right to disagree with my colleagues this evening, I cannot escape the haunting, simple words of the prophet Micah who says, "He has shown you what is good, to do justice, to love kindness, to walk humbly with your God."

With all the respect and honor that is in me to my colleagues, and especially my colleagues who labored so long on this bankruptcy bill, I believe it is incumbent upon us to remove the offending language and send it back to the other body to honor and protect our Constitution, and not miss this calling to do justice to peaceful Americans who would express their dissent in this, the most troubling issue facing our Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONGRESSIONAL CUBAN POLITICAL
PRISONERS INITIATIVE:
MAYDA BARBARA JORDAN
CONTRERAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to a courageous struggle that is taking place on the island of Cuba. While Fidel Castro maintains his stranglehold on freedom of expression, association, and assembly, a growing number of nonviolent dissidents are speaking out to demand civil liberties and basic human rights for Cuba's 11 million citizens.

However, being brave enough to stand up to the regime can come at great personal cost. Opponents of the state are subject to punishments ranging from harassment and loss of employment to beatings and imprisonment. According to the best estimates of human rights groups, Cuban democracy groups, government and non-government organizations, there are over 400 political dissidents now languishing in Cuban jails. No other country of Cuba's size has held so many political prisoners for so long and under such cruel circumstances.

I am proud, Mr. Speaker, to be a member of Cuba Libertad's Congressional Cuban Prisoners Initiative. The