

and Cooperation in Europe, will mark its 80th anniversary. The Turkish Government, led by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, is working hard toward membership in the European Union. The accession of Turkey to the Union would recognize the important reforms that have already been adopted and accelerate the reform process.

The various constitutional reform packages in recent years have addressed, or begun to address, many longstanding human rights concerns. As Chairman of the Helsinki Commission I am pleased to note that much needed change is beginning to take place. For example, the crucial issue of torture is finally receiving the attention necessary to prevent such abuse and address the legacy of this endemic scourge. Perpetrators of torture are facing punishment by a new generation of state prosecutors. For the first time, police who have committed acts of torture are being brought to justice. However the ongoing use of torture in southeast Turkey in the guise of anti-terrorism is an outrage that Turkey must bring to a halt. It is not enough to pass these reforms or to hold a few show trials. No, all transgressors must be arrested and tried. There must be a zero tolerance policy in place on torture.

Other issues of concern have also benefited from the reform package process. For example, religious communities with "foundation" status may now acquire real property, as well as construct new churches and mosques and other structures for religious use. However, there is a considerable gap between the law and its application.

Also, while the problem of allowing the return of internally displaced persons who fled the internal conflict with the PKK terrorist organization remains. Renewed efforts to address this problem are promising, such as inviting the UN Rapporteur on IDPs to visit and the possibility that Turkey may host an international conference on internally displaced persons. While Turkey still has a long way to go to successfully eradicate human trafficking in its borders, the government has taken some positive steps. While I am pleased Turkey has expanded its cooperation with source countries to improve its victim protection efforts, I want to encourage continued improvement to wipe out this modern day slavery.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, other serious concerns remain.

While Turkey works to bring its laws and regulations into conformity with the Copenhagen criteria for EU accession and works toward fulfilling human rights commitments as an OSCE participating State, actions taken by police and other government authorities raise doubts as to the sincerity of these reforms.

The imprisonment this month of Nurcihan and Nurulhak Saatcioglu for attending demonstrations four years ago protesting the prohibition against head scarves in public institutions, is deeply troubling. The fact that the government denies women who choose this religious expression the ability to attend state-run universities and work in public buildings, including schools and hospitals, is counter-productive and an encroachment of their right to freedom of expression. Similarly, authorities severely curb the public sharing of religious belief by either Muslims or Christians with the intent to persuade the listener to another point of view. These limitations on religious clothing and speech stifle freedom of religion and ex-

pression and are contrary to Turkey's OSCE commitments.

At a fundamental level, the inability of religious groups to maintain property holdings is problematic, as the Office of Foundations has closed and seized properties of non-Muslim religious groups for contrived and spurious reasons. Groups most affected by this policy are the Syrian Orthodox, Armenian Apostolic and Greek Orthodox churches, which have also experienced problems when seeking to repair and maintain existing buildings or purchase new ones. I hope the application of the aforementioned reforms will rectify this problem.

The most notable property issue concerns the continued closure of the Orthodox Theological School of Halki on the island of Heybeli in the Sea of Marmara. Considering the reportedly promising conversations between the church and government, I urge Turkey to return full control to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and allow religious training to resume, in keeping with relevant OSCE commitments.

Furthermore, religious groups not envisioned by the Lausanne Treaty have no legal route for purchasing property and building facilities, since the new legal provisions affect only communities with the official status of a "foundation." As no process exists for these other groups to obtain foundation status, they are forced to meet in private apartments. This lack of official status has real consequences, since provincial governorships and the Ministry of Interior have initiated efforts to close these meeting places, leaving the smaller Protestant groups and Jehovah's Witnesses without any options. Churches and their leaders in Diyarbakir, Mersin, Iskenderun and other towns all face troubling government prosecutions and threats of closure. I urge Turkey to create a transparent and straightforward process to grant religious groups so desiring official recognition, so that they too can enjoy the right to establish and freely maintain accessible places of worship of assembly.

The continued incarceration of four Kurdish former parliamentarians: Leyla Zana, Hatip Dicle, Orhan Dogan and Selim Sadak is particularly disturbing. Convicted in 1994, they have won their appeal to the European Court of Human Rights and were granted a retrial under recent Government of Turkey legal reforms. The retrial began March 28, and at each of the eight sessions, most recently October 17, the court has refused to release the defendants. Their continued imprisonment is an outrage.

Mr. Speaker, on the 80th anniversary of the Turkish Republic, the initial legal reforms put in place by the government display Turkey's—or at least the legislators in Ankara's—apparent willingness to address much needed reforms in human rights practices. But actions speak louder than words. We need to see implementation of these reforms seriously carried out before we can rest assured that Turkey has met minimal OSCE human rights commitments. As Turkey strives to enter the European Union, I applaud the efforts that have been made to date and urge Ankara to intensify the reform process.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO JOE SKUFCA

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 30, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the contributions of a fine citizen from my district, Joe Skufca of Pueblo, Colorado. Joe is a man who has dedicated his life to the betterment of his country and community. As a decorated war veteran, and the devoted owner of what has been called "Pueblo's friendliest grocery store," Joe is certainly a shining example for all of us.

Upon graduating from high school, Joe answered his country's call to duty and entered the United States Army during World War II. The day before Joe was to take part in the invasion of Ie Shima, he was injured aboard his ship by a Japanese missile attack. Despite being injured, Joe bravely took part in the invasion the next day. This was not Joe's only act of personal sacrifice during the war. After the fall of Okinawa, Joe contracted malaria. After three months in the hospital, the Army told Joe it was time for him to go home, but he refused and stayed with his company for the invasion of Japan. This extraordinary bravery and dedication to his country did not go unnoticed, and Joe was awarded two bronze stars for his service.

Upon his honorable discharge, Joe returned to his home in Pueblo to begin a new life. He went to work at the Star Grocery Mart and began a career which has served him well for many years. Fifty-six years ago, Joe became the owner of Star Mart, which he still owns to this day. Joe is widely known as Pueblo's "friendliest grocer."

Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor to pay tribute to Joe Skufca before this body of Congress and this great nation. After bravely fighting and sacrificing for his country, Joe returned to my district where he has maintained a successful business, spreading joy to his customers, family, and friends. It is with great pride that I echo the praises Joe has received from his country and the Pueblo community. Thanks, Joe, for your service.

THE "DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION, EDUCATION AND AWARENESS ACT"

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 30, 2003

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a piece of legislation I believe will help empower women who are victims of domestic violence to seek help in ending and recovering from its effects.

With the United States becoming increasingly multicultural, we need to ensure all women, regardless of language, culture or income are aware and are able to access the services they are entitled to. In order to carry this out, it is imperative we are culturally sensitive, attentive and pro-active to effectively reach out to all communities. There have been major gains by advocates, researchers and practitioners to end domestic violence, but

there continues to be a lack of focus on a culturally specific domestic violence outlook. Studies have found that minority and immigrant communities face additional barriers to seek help, such as cultural beliefs and lack of resources in agencies like translators and bilingual materials.

The "Domestic Violence Prevention, Education and Awareness Act" would amend the Violence Against Women Act to provide grants and develop informational public media campaigns specifically targeting racial and ethnic minority and immigrant communities. This will bring much needed attention to racial and ethnic minority and immigrant communities, communities that are often overlooked and underserved.

While there are services out there designed to help women combat domestic violence, how do these services help those women who are not able to communicate with the counselors at these services, are afraid of being discriminated against for accessing these services, or who don't know what services are available to them?

It is so important in this fight against domestic violence to offer these women all the support we possibly can. We need to create the avenues necessary to increase the number of survivors of domestic violence and make sure they are able to move on and rebuild their lives.

ARNOLD SAAVEDRA

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 30, 2003

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an extraordinary educator and patriot, Arnold Saavedra. The product of a strong family, he was raised with his three siblings to understand the importance of education.

His parents taught their children that teachers have a mighty impact on the lives of the students they teach. His father taught in a one-room schoolhouse in Duval County. The lessons of his family were not lost on any of the children; each one became a teacher, on a mission to make the lives of children better through education.

One day when he was in the 7th grade, Mr. Saavedra glanced out the classroom window and saw the football coach out in the field with the players. At that moment, he knew he wanted to be a coach and teacher.

He taught and coached at a number of Corpus Christi Independent School District schools from 1973 through this year. In July 2003, he moved to the Adult Learning Center as the Lead Administrator to apply lessons in learning to adults.

In those years when he taught classes and coached young athletes on fields of play, he taught the same lesson he'd learned in his parents' home . . . the key to success in life begins with an education. For 30 years he has shared those lessons with the young people of Corpus Christi. His legacy is in the success of his students.

While at Texas A&I College, Mr. Saavedra met and married his college sweetheart, Ida Ortega Saavedra, and she has been his most constant source of support. They have two children, Tricia Dunlap and Arnold Andrew

Saavedra, and a granddaughter, Sage Elizabeth Dunlap.

Mr. Saavedra will retire on November 25, 2003, after more than 30 years with the Corpus Christi Independent School District. I ask my colleagues to join me in commending him for his life's work.

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO MEMBERS OF THE U.S. ARMED FORCES DEPLOYED IN OPERATION RESTORE HOPE IN SOMALIA IN 1993

SPEECH OF

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 28, 2003

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I voted in favor of this legislation because I do believe it is important to express our gratitude to our armed forces, and particularly to remember those who lost their lives in Somalia in Operation Restore Hope. Indeed, members of our armed forces have been asked to make extraordinary sacrifices in this post Cold War era, as US military presence across the globe has, despite what many of us hoped, increased significantly and military deployments into hostile situations have also increased.

Mr. Speaker, while I do want to join those praising members of our armed forces, I must point out that legislation like H. Con. Res. 291 is dishonest and actually disrespectful to our military. It is obvious that praising the soldiers is only one small part of this legislation. Under cover of this praise is an attempt to re-write history and to praise a foreign policy that sends our military into useless and meaningless battle zones, like Somalia, where they are asked to fight and die for a cause completely unrelated to the US national interest. It is shameful for legislators to wrap themselves in the sacrifice of our troops in praise of a policy that does not serve the United States and ends up getting these same troops killed and maimed.

The legislation states, falsely, that our failed Somali nation-building fiasco was somehow related to the war against terrorism. This attempt at revisionist history is more than dishonest: it is likely interventions like these actually increased resentment of the US and may have even led to more recruits to terrorist organizations.

This legislation expresses gratitude for our troops' "provid[ing] humanitarian assistance to the people of Somalia in 1993." I see nowhere in our Constitution a provision that allows the United States armed forces to be used for the purpose of "provid[ing] humanitarian assistance" to any foreign country or people. Our armed forces are to be used in defense of our homeland. Period. So I am deeply disturbed by legislation such as this. Yes, we must honor troops, but we cannot honor a foreign policy that sends them into harm's way for "nation-building" or "humanitarian assistance" or any other reason not directly related to the defense of the United States. I hope the next time we see legislation congratulating the brave service of our armed forces it is more honest. Our servicemembers deserve at least this, do they not?

PAYING TRIBUTE TO SUSY ELLISON

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 30, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to pay tribute to the adventurous spirit of a citizen from my district. Susy Ellison of Carbondale, Colorado has begun her journey to Antarctica with a group of teachers and research scientists, charged with studying a unique seal population found exclusively in that region. As Susy braves the extreme climate of Antarctica, I would like to recognize her courage and commitment to science and education before this body of Congress today.

Susy is a high school teacher at Yampah Mountain High School in Glenwood Springs, Colorado and has experience working with the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service. The program with which she will travel to Antarctica is called Teachers Experiencing Antarctica and the Arctic, or TEA. TEA allows teachers an opportunity to gain experience and knowledge that can be applied in the classroom when they return. Susy will be in the field in Antarctica for approximately eight weeks, braving the elements in the name of science.

When Susy returns to the classroom, I am certain her students will be filled with wonder and excitement as she recounts her experiences from the far off land of Antarctica. I commend Susy on her adventurous spirit and wish her the best for a safe and successful journey.

THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURTS ASSISTANCE ACT

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 30, 2003

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in an effort to help end the cycle of violence against women.

I have introduced the "Domestic Violence Courts Assistance Act" because it is important to recognize the prevalence of domestic violence in our community and take the necessary steps to eradicate this problem. A study released earlier this year estimated that nearly half of the adult population in my home state of California reported knowing a victim of domestic violence. In the United States, nearly 2 million women are victims of domestic violence. While there have been great strides to build upon and improve domestic violence legislation, the high rate of domestic violence victims is evidence for the continuing need for attention to this problem.

This bill will help provide grant money from the Violence Against Women Act to be used to establish domestic violence courts. Because many local court systems are overwhelmed with the number of cases that come before them everyday, many domestic violence cases are not given the attention and time sensitivity that is crucial in raising the conviction rate of offenders. The bill also makes clear that funds can be used for translation and interpretation services, which is critical for domestic violence victims who are limited English proficient.