

Second Annual Hometown Heroes Awards breakfast.

The Chicago Red Cross Hometown Heroes Awards are presented to individuals "whose actions went beyond the call of duty, and whose leadership and commitment made a significant difference to a person, cause or community." This year's special Humanitarian Award is being awarded for the "critical support" provided by Mr. Rauner and the Rauner Family Foundation "for Chicago's education, health and youth development organizations." I applaud the Red Cross for its excellent selection of Bruce Rauner, one of Chicago's finest citizens, and a shining example of leadership and commitment to public service in our city.

Bruce Rauner's philanthropy benefits the entire Chicagoland area. In addition to supporting the Red Cross, Mr. Rauner has dedicated his time and resources to many other local non-profit organizations. Among them include his service on the board of The Chicago Public Education Fund, The Teacher's Academy of Mathematics and Science, The Ravinia Festival, The Golden Apple Foundation, The Academy for Urban School Leadership and the YMCA. The Rauner Family Foundation has also made generous contributions, to the YMCA of Metro Chicago and Pilsen, and the Chicago Public Education Fund.

Earlier this year, the Rauner Family Foundation donated \$3 million for the construction of the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago's new state-of-the-art command center, which is designed to enhance disaster response capabilities for the entire state of Illinois. The new Rauner Center houses local Red Cross offices and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency to coordinate response in the event of a major disaster. The Rauner Foundation's generous contribution will go a long way toward helping establish this center as the model for the country of effective and life-saving disaster response.

Professionally, Mr. Rauner continues to be one of the leaders of Chicago's financial center. He currently serves as the Chairman of GTCR Golder Rauner, LLC, a \$6 billion private equity and venture capitol firm in Chicago. Mr. Rauner joined GTCR in 1981 after working in strategic consulting with Bain and Company and in econometric analysis with Data Resources, Inc.

Before his impressive career was launched, Mr. Rauner graduated with top honors—from Dartmouth College Summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa and from Harvard Business School. He and his wife Diana live in Winnetka and are the parents of Elizabeth, Stephanie, Eric, Margaret, Matthew, and Katherine.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of the Fifth Congressional District of Illinois and indeed all of Chicago, I am privileged to congratulate Bruce V. Rauner and the Rauner Family Foundation for this impressive honor, and I applaud the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago for bestowing this celebrated award on such deserving recipients.

ON THE OCCASION OF MEMORIAL DAY

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 1, 2004

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, this Memorial Day we pay tribute to those who have given their lives in defense of our great Nation. The freedoms we enjoy here at home do not come cheap. They are paid for with the blood and treasure of true American heroes.

Today we reaffirm our commitment to the liberties they fought to defend. And we pledge never to forget their sacrifice.

This year, Memorial Day has a special poignancy. Here in Washington, veterans of the Second World War finally received the monument they so richly deserved. The World War Two Memorial dedicated on the National Mall provides a fitting tribute to a generation of young men and women who defended the United States against the specter of a tyranny as horrible as any the world has known. The 400,000 Americans who gave their lives in the European and Pacific theaters will never be forgotten.

In addition, this Memorial Day is special because it affords us an opportunity to honor the young men and women who are currently engaged in the War on Terror. Halfway around the world, a new generation has been called to battle. And like those that defeated our enemies in the 1940s, this new generation of Americans has faced the enemy with strength and determination. Almost 1,000 men and women have lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan. Those of us who enjoy the freedom they have sacrificed to defend should be immensely proud and eternally grateful.

This weekend, as we take a moment away from our normal routines, let us say a prayer and remember both those who have gone before us and those who continue to defend freedom from oppression. Our thoughts should be with those families that have lost loved ones in battle. And our thanks should go to all those who honor us by taking up arms to defend the United States.

God bless our men and women in uniform. And God Bless America.

STATEMENT OF ERIC ROSENTHAL, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES (USCID) AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MENTAL DISABILITY RIGHTS INTERNATIONAL, ON "INTERNATIONAL DISABILITY RIGHTS: THE PROPOSED UN CONVENTION"

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 2, 2004

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on March 30th, the Congressional Human Rights Caucus held a groundbreaking Members' Briefing entitled, "International Disability Rights: The Proposed UN Convention." This discussion of the global situation of people with disabilities was intended to help establish disability rights issues

as an integral part of the general human rights discourse. The briefing brought together the human rights community and the disability rights community, and it raised awareness in Congress of the need to protect disability rights under international law to the same extent as other human rights through a binding UN convention on the rights of people with disabilities.

Our expert witnesses included Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Mark P. Lagon; the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ecuador to the United Nations, Ambassador Luis Gallegos; the United Nations Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Johan Schölvinck; the distinguished former Attorney General of the United States, former Under-Secretary General of the United Nations and former Governor of Pennsylvania, the Honorable Dick Thornburgh; the President of the National Organization on Disability (NOD), Alan A. Reich; Kathy Martinez, a member of the National Council on Disabilities (NCD); and a representative of the United States International Council on Disabilities (USCID) and Executive Director of Mental Disability Rights International, Eric Rosenthal.

As I had announced earlier, I intend to place the important statements of our witnesses in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, so that all of my colleagues may profit from their expertise, and I ask that the statement of Eric Rosenthal be placed at this point in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

THE U.S. CONGRESSIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CAUCUS: MEMBERS' BRIEFING ON THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

It is a great pleasure to be here for this historic occasion. I would like to thank Representative Lantos, the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, and the Disability Rights Caucus for making this possible.

I'm a member of the board of the U.S. International Council on Disability (USCID) and executive director of Mental Disability Rights International (MDRI). I have spent more than ten years in the field doing international human rights work for people with disabilities—documenting human rights abuses and training activists. There has been little recognition of the vast worldwide pattern of human rights abuses against people with disabilities that exists in the world today—either by the U.S. government or the United Nations. Thus, it is a great step forward to bring these concerns to public attention today. This hearing provides an invaluable opportunity to discuss what practical next steps the U.S. Government can take to bring long over-due attention to the rights of people with disabilities worldwide.

The most important leadership by a U.S. Agency, to date, has been the work of the U.S. National Council on Disability (NCD). Over the last few years, NCD has made an invaluable contribution to advancing discussion and action on international disability issues by convening International Watch, a group of experts and leaders in the U.S. disability community involved in international activities. In addition, NCD has brought attention to this issue by commissioning two important reports. In 2002, NCD commissioned Janet Lord of the Landmine Survivors Network to write a detailed legal and policy analysis of the need for a new UN disability rights convention. I recommend that report as essential background to today's discussion about the need for a UN convention.