

device removed or permanently disabled at the time of purchase. This is a common sense solution would allow businesses to continue to utilize this technology while at the same time it would grant consumers the ability to protect their privacy.

Although I recognize that time is running out in the present session of Congress, it is important that this issue be raised. Congress should act to give our constituents the opportunity to have these tracking devices removed or disabled on articles they purchase, and I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation.

TROPICAL FOREST CONSERVATION ACT REAUTHORIZATION

HON. ROB PORTMAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce that I am joined by TOM LANTOS and 28 of our colleagues in introducing a bill to reauthorize the Tropical Forest Conservation Act (TFCA) through FY 2007. This bipartisan conservation incentive program helps to protect the world's most valuable tropical forests through "debt-for-nature" mechanisms.

This bipartisan reauthorization we are introducing today was developed with the Bush Administration, the Nature Conservancy, the World Wildlife Fund, Conservation International, and the Wildlife Conservation Society. The Administration and these highly respected environmental organizations are to be commended for all of their excellent work on the TFCA and this bill.

In the 105th Congress I, along with our former colleagues Lee Hamilton and John Kasich, introduced the legislation that established the TFCA. It was overwhelmingly approved and enacted in 1998. The TFCA was reauthorized in 2001 through the end of this year.

The TFCA is based on the previous Bush Administration's Enterprise for the Americas Initiative (EAI) that allows the President to restructure debt in exchange for conservation efforts in Latin America. The TFCA expands on the EAI and allows protection of threatened tropical forests worldwide. A conservative estimate of 39.5 million acres of tropical forests will be protected by TFCA agreements since its enactment in 1998.

The United States has a significant national interest in protecting tropical forests in developing countries. Tropical forests provide a wide range of benefits. They harbor 50–90 percent of the earth's terrestrial biodiversity. They act as "carbon sinks," absorbing massive quantities of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, thereby reducing greenhouse gases. They regulate rainfall on which agriculture and coastal resources depend, and they are of great importance to regional and global climate. Furthermore, tropical forests are breeding grounds for new medicines. Twenty-five percent of prescription drugs come from tropical forests. The United States National Cancer Institute has identified over 3000 plants that are active against cancer. Seventy percent of them can be found in rainforests.

Regrettably, tropical forests are rapidly disappearing. It is estimated that 30 million acres (an area larger than the State of Pennsyl-

vania) are lost each year. The heavy debt burden of many countries is a contributing factor because they must resort to exploitation of their natural resources (particularly the extraction of timber, oil, and precious metals) to generate revenue to service their external debt. At the same time, poor governments tend to have few resources available to set aside and protect tropical forests. The TFCA addresses these economic pressures by authorizing the President to allow eligible countries to engage in debt swaps, buybacks or reduction/restructuring in exchange for protecting threatened tropical forests on a sustained basis.

The debt for nature mechanisms in the TFCA have proven to be an effective, market-oriented means to leverage scarce funds available for international conservation. The host country places an amount in its tropical forest fund that typically exceeds the cost to the U.S. government of the debt reduction agreement. Furthermore, because these tropical forest funds have integrity and are broadly supported within the host country, conservation organizations are interested in placing their own money in these tropical forest funds producing additional leverage of Federal conservation dollars.

Seven TFCA agreements have been concluded to date: Bangladesh, El Salvador, Belize, Peru, the Philippines, Panama and Colombia. These agreements have generated more than \$70 million in long-term income commitments for tropical forest conservation. Private donors have contributed more than \$5 million to TFCA swaps, leveraging the U.S. government funds. Active deals are currently being negotiated with Jamaica and Sri Lanka. Several other countries have expressed interest in the program including Guatemala, Ecuador, Paraguay, St. Vincent, Botswana, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, India, Indonesia, Brazil, and Kenya.

This bill will improve the TFCA and reauthorize it at \$20 million in FY 2005, which is included in the President's budget request; \$25 million in FY 2006; and \$30 million in FY 2007.

The Tropical Forest Conservation Act is an excellent program that is working well and worthy of reauthorization. I urge all members to support this important, market-oriented approach to conserving the world's most threatened tropical forests.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION PROHIBITING EXTRAORDINARY RENDITION

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, the prison abuses at Abu Ghraib were a national disgrace and have rightly been the subject of anger and condemnation. But another torture practice continues to go on without any public attention. Under the name "extraordinary rendition", the CIA reportedly sends terrorism suspects, sometimes on the flimsiest of evidence, to foreign countries that are known to employ torture in prisoner interrogation. This practice is against all U.S. and international law and is a moral outrage, and it must be stopped.

The practice of extraordinary rendition, the extra-judicial removal of people in U.S. custody both domestically and abroad to foreign governments that are known to use torture, has received little attention because of the degree of secrecy with which it occurs. Attention was drawn to the practice in September 2002 when Maher Arar, a Canadian citizen, was seized while in transit to Canada through JFK airport, and sent to Jordan and later Syria at the request of the CIA. While in Syria, Arar was tortured and held in a dark, 3-by-6-foot cell for nearly a year. He was ultimately released and detailed his story to the media upon his return to Canada.

Although the more recent numbers have not been made public, outgoing CIA director George Tenet testified to the 9/11 Commission in October 2002 that over 70 people had been subject to rendition before September 11, 2001. Human rights organizations including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Center for Constitutional Rights and the ACLU have detailed numerous other cases and are pursuing litigation in some of them. On June 21, the Canadian government launched an investigation into Arar's case.

My bill directs the State Department to compile a list of countries that commonly practice torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment during detention and interrogation, and prohibits rendition to any nation on this list, unless the Secretary of State certifies that the nation has made significant progress in human rights. It also specifies that written or verbal assurances from a foreign government that a person will not be tortured are not sufficient basis to override this prohibition. The bill explicitly permits legal, treaty-based extradition, in which suspects have the right to appeal in a U.S. court to block the proposed transfer based on the likelihood that they would be subjected to torture or other inhumane treatment.

Extraordinary rendition is outsourcing torture, and it is morally repugnant to allow such a practice to continue. President Bush has asserted that 'the values of this country are such that torture is not a part of our soul and our being.' The legislation I am introducing today is designed to ensure that we not only ban torture conducted by our own forces but we also stop the practice of contracting out torture to other nations. Torture enabled by extraordinary rendition is outrageous and must be stopped.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEDICATION OF THE UKRAINIAN MONUMENT TO TARAS SHEVCHENKO

HON. CURT WELDON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, June 26, 2004, the Ukrainian-American community will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Taras Shevchenko monument in Washington, DC. The monument inspired and united Ukrainians to speak about the cruelty and injustice of the former Soviet Union and attracted international support. Since independence, Ukraine has made significant progress in its transition to a democratic society.

Taras Shevchenko continues to serve as a source of inspiration to Ukrainians almost 200 years after his untimely demise. Born into serfdom, as a child, Shevchenko excelled in painting even though he received no formal training. His talent eventually attracted the attention of the best artists, who bought Shevchenko's freedom. A brilliant artist, Shevchenko turned out to be an even more talented poet, who through his works gave strength and hope to millions of freedom fighters. The intensity of his words have resonated in the hearts of many, igniting the fire of freedom and inspiring a continued struggle for liberation. He led not just by his word, but by personal example as well. Throughout his life, Shevchenko organized and participated in societies promoting the liberation of Ukraine from the Russian Empire, which cost him his freedom on several occasions and ultimately cost him his life. Still his legacy endures and on this day we celebrate Shevchenko's great spirit of love for Ukraine, freedom and equality.

As a longtime supporter of the Ukrainian American community, I welcome the community's efforts to unite and stand strong on the issues that concern it in the United States and Ukraine. More than ever Ukraine needs a strong, unified voice in the United States to highlight Ukraine's achievements and evaluate its current policies. I am glad to see that Ukrainian Americans remain active in political and civic life in the United States and continue to cooperate with the governments of the United States and Ukraine.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 4658,
SERVICEMEMBERS LEGAL PROTECTION ACT OF 2004

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce H.R. 4658, the Servicemembers Legal Protection Act of 2004, legislation to further strengthen the legal and financial rights of military servicemembers, particularly those called up to active duty in Iraq, Afghanistan and other duty stations around the world. This legislation would amend a prior law I sponsored, that President Bush signed last year, the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, Public Law 108-189.

Mr. Speaker, this morning I chaired a hearing of the Veterans' Affairs Committee to examine how well the federal statutes protecting our servicemembers rights were being enforced. Testifying before the Committee were several servicemembers and family members with personal experiences in which their rights were not properly protected under existing laws.

One witness, Ms. Tammy Kimmel whose husband served in the Army at Fort Hood in Texas, told the Committee that when her husband was ordered to a new duty location, her landlord refused to release her from their joint housing lease as required by law. The landlord claimed that the law required the servicemember to be released, but not the spouse.

The legislation I am introducing today would help prevent such misinterpretations as well as strengthen and expand several existing legal and financial protections.

Mr. Speaker, with more than 150,000 Guard and reserve members activated in the continuing war on terrorism, we must ensure that the laws protecting their rights are fully and faithfully executed and enforced. Congress approved the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act last year precisely because of perceived ambiguities and weaknesses in longstanding federal statutes covering military personnel called to active duty or redeployed to new duty locations.

Regrettably, despite sixty years of federal case law, culminating with the passage last year of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, there are still some individuals, businesses, and organizations who cynically refuse to provide all the reliefs required by statute.

We will neither tolerate outright violations nor attempts to distort the clear purposes of the laws Congress has enacted. The evidence from today's hearing is overwhelming and the intention of the law is clear. Those men and women who put their lives on hold and on the line must not suffer economic or legal harm that results from their military service. This Committee and this Congress will continue to do all that can be done to protect the legal and financial rights of all of our servicemembers, whether they are active duty, reserve or Guard.

As introduced, H.R. 4658, the Servicemembers Legal Protection Act, would:

Strengthen the lease termination protections for dependants of servicemembers relocating per military orders;

Expand the definition of court and administrative judgments and rulings covered by the law;

Require that waivers of their rights by servicemembers must be duly executed in separate, clearly written documents;

Extend to plaintiffs the same relief granted to defendants in civil court proceedings;

Extend the housing and automobile lease termination relief to servicemembers relocated from states or territories outside the contiguous United States (e.g., Hawaii, Alaska);

Strengthen the leases termination provisions for servicemembers affected by individual deployments;

Prevent double taxation of servicemembers due to differences in state and local excise, use, or other similar taxes.

Mr. Speaker, the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act that passed last year both restated and expanded the Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act first approved in 1940. This federal statute is designed to help ensure that U.S. military personnel are not disadvantaged when they have been called to active duty and are therefore unable to be present at legal proceedings.

Among the most important protections added by the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act last year were automatic 90-day stays for civil and administrative proceedings, protections for servicemembers and their families from housing evictions, the right of servicemembers and their spouses to terminate housing and automobile leases, and protection from repossession of automobiles.

Enactment of the legislation I am introducing today, H.R. 4658, the Servicemembers Legal Protection Act, would provide an additional level of support for all of the brave men and women defending our nation and our freedom around the world. I urge my colleagues to look at this important legislation and lend their support to protecting the legal and financial rights of all of our servicemen and women.

A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO THE CITY OF WAUSEON, OHIO ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR SESQUICENTENNIAL

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to pay tribute to a special in Ohio's Fifth Congressional District. This year, the community of Wauseon, Ohio will celebrate the sesquicentennial of its founding.

Mr. Speaker, the City of Wauseon was officially recorded as a town in 1854 upon the arrival of the New York Central Railroad. The City earns its name from the long heritage of the Maumee Indian tribe. The last council of the Maumee tribe was held with the United States government 16 years before the founding of the City. It was at this council that Chief Wauseon conveyed all Maumee tribe lands in the Northwest Territory to the United States Government.

From its very beginning, Wauseon had a strong connection with the railroad. Its very creation came as a result of the railroad moving to Northwest Ohio. The first settlement in Wauseon came in anticipation of the arrival of the New York Central Railroad. Wauseon contributed to the prosperity of our young nation, the strength of our economy and the birth of our industrial might. Wauseon has a deep understanding and appreciation of their vibrant culture and long history.

Today, we honor the June 26th Heritage Days event in Wauseon, Ohio. This event will mark the 150th anniversary of the founding of the City of Wauseon. The festival will include a Civil War encampment, Native American pow-wow, and music and food from the 1850's. Pioneer life will be on display throughout the celebration.

As the county seat of Fulton County and its largest city, Wauseon embraces their long and significant heritage and will continue to share this with visitors and members of their community. Building a community mindful of the past and ready for the future speaks to the wisdom and dedication of Wauseon's citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying special tribute to the diligent effort and unwavering spirit of the citizens of Wauseon. I am confident that Wauseon's sesquicentennial will serve as an essential reminder to the past and promise of our great land.

COMMENDING THE PASCO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the Pasco County Sheriff's Office for earning national commendations for its efforts to control crime, make the community safer, and improve the lives of Pasco County residents, many of whom live in my congressional district.