

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

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

THE LIBERTY LIST ACT

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, when he presented the 2003 State Department human rights report, Secretary of State Colin Powell declared, "We join in solidarity with courageous men and women all over the world who strive to advance human rights and democratic values within their own countries and throughout the international community."

Today, joined by the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), I am introducing legislation that will build upon the foundation of the State Department's annual human rights report and the annual report on religious freedom. The Liberty List Act will reinforce the special significance of the central pillars of American foreign policy: freedom, democracy, and human rights.

The Liberty List will be an independent annual report issued by the State Department. It will highlight the work of individuals and organizations, including the media, that promote the development of liberty, democracy, and respect for human rights.

In addition to honoring these individuals and organizations for their important contributions to society, the Liberty List will draw attention to the conditions against which these honorees struggle and will offer some protection for honorees by identifying them to the national community.

A few individuals and groups, such as Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy, are known around the world for their struggle. Yet for every individual who is known to the international community, there are many other heroes who deserve recognition and support as they risk their lives for the improvement of others.

How many of us in this body have heard of Shirin Ebedi before she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003 for her work on behalf of Iran's women and children? There are Aung San Suu Kyis and Shirin Ebedis working in

countless places around the world. Their struggle is our struggle; and they deserve our attention, our admiration, and support.

The Liberty List is fundamentally different from the existing State Department report on international religious freedom and the annual country reports on human rights practices. Current reports focus on the human rights records of national governments. They deal with the imposition of State power. The Liberty List in contrast will spotlight individuals and organizations who are working against that power to build freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights.

For example, a group of courageous women called Women of Zimbabwe Arise have been struggling against the cruelty of the dictatorship of Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe. Despite facing arrest, rape and force, these brave women have continued a peaceful struggle for a better life for all Zimbabweans.

In Uzbekistan, Ruslan Sharipov, an independent human rights activist and journalist, was sentenced to 5½ years in prison last summer. Sharipov has been a fearless critic of police corruption and human rights abuses in Uzbekistan, a nation whose human rights record has been so dismal, the United States cut off aid earlier this month.

These leaders and others like them who struggle for freedom and democracy around the world deserve recognition for their sacrifices and their struggles. It is too easy to forget that the advancement of human rights, democracy, and religious liberty is the product of individuals and small groups of people who fight to improve the lives of their family, friends, and neighbors.

The Liberty List Act will allow the United States to honor these men and women as they strive to make the world a better, safer place for themselves, their children, and ultimately for all of us.

I urge my colleagues to join as co-sponsors of the Liberty List Act.

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

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

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

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

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

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

NATIVE AMERICAN HEALTH

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 tonight to talk about the health care crisis that continues to affect Native Americans in this country. For far too long, Native Americans have suffered from a lack of access to quality health services, resulting in increasing amounts of Native Americans that suffer from a wide range of diseases and illnesses.

Mr. Speaker, language from a report commissioned by the Federal Government in 1928, 75 years ago, to study the health status of Native Americans is just as true today as it was then. And the language states, "The health of the Indians as compared with that of the general population is bad. The existing evidence warrants the statement that both the general death rates and the infant mortality rates are high. The prevailing living conditions among the great majority of the Indians are conducive to the development and spread of disease. With comparatively few exceptions, the diet of the Indians is bad. The housing conditions are likewise conducive to bad health. The inadequacy of appropriations has prevented the development of an adequate system of public health administration and medical relief work for the Indians."

Mr. Speaker, this excerpt is from a report commissioned by the Federal Government in 1928, over 75 years ago; but to my disbelief and to the disbelief of millions of Native Americans, not much has changed. Indeed, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights just came out with a draft report studying the current status of the Native American health care system that cites similar trends from a 1928 report. The main reason why there has been such limited success in improving the health status of Native Americans is that the Federal Government has failed miserably to live up to its trust obligation to provide quality health services to American Indians.

Mr. Speaker, the United States Government has a moral and legal obligation to provide for the health of Native Americans. This Federal obligation is the result of Native Americans ceding over 400 million acres of tribal land to