

Avid world travelers, Alan and Joan have a wonderful zest for life and have always demonstrated incredible generosity, friendship and love of family.

Mr. Speaker, as a longtime friend, I wish to extend my congratulations to Alan and Joan and wish them many more years of love and happiness.

INTRODUCTION OF A PRIVATE
BILL FOR THE RELIEF OF MALIK
JARNO

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 28, 2005

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a private bill to make Malik Jarno a permanent resident of the United States and to end the protracted ordeal of immigration removal proceedings that have spanned almost one-quarter of this young man's life.

Malik is a mentally disabled teenage orphan from Guinea whose compelling plight has attracted the concern and involvement of more than 70 members of Congress, countless citizens, the international media and dozens of national, state and local organizations working with the mentally disabled, children and immigrants and refugees.

Deporting Malik to Guinea to face life-threatening circumstances would run contrary to the standard of human rights and decency this country maintains. Members of Malik's family were killed and his home was destroyed in the midst of ethnically and politically motivated violence in Guinea. Immigration authorities have received overwhelming evidence of Malik's shattered life and the serious risk of harm he faces, given his father's status as a prominent political dissident, at the hands of Guinean authorities. The heightened threat associated with Malik's deportation places a special responsibility on this country to consider the well-being and livelihood of this young man.

In addition, as a mentally disabled homeless orphan the potential risks of a life in Guinea are aggravated. With no known family or friends to care for Malik, he faces the reality of being relegated to the fringes of a society that has no infrastructure or services to support this young man's special needs. According to information from USAID, UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO and other agencies, there are no government or non-profit programs or legal protections for mentally disabled individuals in Guinea. Given his disability, he will face ostracism and severe discrimination and be extremely vulnerable to physical abuse, oppressive conditions and hostile treatment.

In an act of desperation, family friends that were looking after Malik put him on a plane bound for the United States. Upon his arrival at Dulles International Airport in 2001, Malik was detained by immigration officials and held in adult jails, where his special needs as a mentally disabled child were neglected in the company of adult convicts, for eight months, before he was allowed to appear before a judge to apply for asylum. Only after another two years of detention was Malik transferred from a maximum security prison to a refugee shelter in York, Pennsylvania.

On December 29, 2004, despite strong evidence supporting Malik, an immigration judge

denied Malik asylum. An appeal was filed with the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) on January 28, 2005. DHS possesses a travel document for Malik's removal to Guinea which can be used as soon as the BIA dismisses his appeal.

This ordeal has dragged on for too many years and the perpetual uncertainty has left Malik anxious and unsettled. He continues to study, make friends, and go to school in York, Pennsylvania, but with the constant threat of being torn away from his life in the United States. Malik has a promising future in the United States and this bill will provide Malik with a permanent immigration status and the path to becoming a productive and contributing citizen.

In these troubled times, where our reputation as a beacon for human rights has been challenged by the situation in Iraq, the United States has a heightened responsibility to guarantee justice and humane treatment to the most vulnerable in society instead of relegating a mentally disabled orphan to such a horrific fate.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF BECKY STICH, COMAL ELE-
MENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER OF
THE YEAR

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 28, 2005

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the outstanding dedication of Becky Stich, Comal Elementary School Teacher of the Year.

After earning a Bachelor's degree from Texas State University in San Marcos, Becky Stich began a committed career in helping children. She has been teaching special education in Comal ISD for 14 years. Currently, she is a Behavior Resource teacher for all grades, kindergarten through 6th grade, at the Comal Elementary School.

As a Behavior Resource teacher, Stich helps manage behavioral problems at school and provides a safe nurturing environment for the children. She also helps the administration identify and implement appropriate behavior management ideas at school.

She summarizes her teaching philosophy this way: "One belief that I now hold is that teaching (and behavioral management) requires doing things with kids, and not to them." Stich understands that students need to have a voice in their own education. As an educator, she realizes the importance in watching, observing, and taking cues directly from the children. It is this philosophy that has allowed Becky Stich to become such a welcoming and great resource for children and educators alike.

Her attitude and dedication to children is an inspiration to the rest of the community. I am honored today to have had the opportunity to recognize her many contributions as an educator in the Comal ISD.

NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE
PREVENTION MONTH

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 28, 2005

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, as National Child Abuse Prevention Month draws to a close, I would like to recognize the organizations and individuals who work so hard to break the cycle of violence within families. I urge my colleagues to continue to make eradicating child abuse a top priority, not just during the month of April, but all year long.

Throughout this month we have had many reminders of the tragic events that occur daily in the lives of children throughout the nation. We've heard speeches with startling statistics, stories about families torn apart by unthinkable violence, and we've worn blue ribbons to remember victims.

Sadly, child abuse continues throughout the year, and we all must recognize that child abuse and neglect is not just a family problem—it is a societal problem that requires the attention and efforts of each of our communities.

Effective child abuse programs succeed because of partnerships between social service agencies, schools, faith communities, civic organizations, law enforcements agencies, government, and the business community.

The Exchange Club of Yonkers and the Westchester Child Abuse Prevention Center in my district are just two examples of groups that are making a difference both locally and nationally to eliminate the abuse of children. Both of these organizations work with families in a variety of ways to help break the cycle of abuse and educate the public about ways to help children who are victims of abuse.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to work with organizations nationally and locally to show children that they are a priority and to take a stand against the tragedy of child abuse and neglect.

COMMEMORATING THE 90TH ANNI-
VERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN
GENOCIDE

HON. JOHN F. TIERNEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 28, 2005

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise with my fellow members of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues to commemorate the Armenian Genocide. Today, I stand with them and with Armenian-Americans in the 6th District of Massachusetts as we rightfully recognize and renounce the unpardonable horror that occurred 90 years ago.

What began in 1915 when Ottoman Empire officials forcibly led Armenians to their brutal death lasted until 1923. Those 8 long years saw the deaths of 1.5 million innocent victims, who were unsuspectingly led from their homes, their schools, their places of work and worship only to be systematically slaughtered at the hands of Turkish guards.

All the while, the world stood silent, failing to act despite the fact the number of unmarked graves multiplied exponentially throughout Armenia. The tremendous magnitude of this