

Moreover, our bill would establish the position of Citizenship Advocate at each military entry processing station to provide information on the naturalization process to members of the armed forces.

Finally, we would also require the Government Accountability Office, GAO, to study the implementation of this act, including an evaluation of how technology may be used to improve the efficiency of the naturalization process for members of the armed forces. The GAO would then report to Congress its findings and recommendations.

Our bill emphasizes common sense over bureaucratic thinking and clarity over confusion, to establish a naturalization process that is more soldier-friendly and efficient.

Given the life-or-death battles soldiers like Specialist Kendell Frederick routinely face on foreign soil; let us never forget they need not battle red tape here at home. Support our troops by supporting this legislation.

TAX RELIEF EXTENSION RECONCILIATION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose the Republican tax bill.

As we approach the end of the year, I wonder 'How will this year be remembered?' For the deepening quagmire in Iraq? Will we remember 2005 as a year of hardships? For Katrina, for Rita?

Certainly this has been a year of great economic difficulties for low and middle income families. The poorest residents of the gulf coast were most affected by the devastating hurricanes, and the poorest Americans have shouldered a disproportionate share of the burden in Iraq.

The Republican tax bill is just another example of the disdain the Majority in Congress has for its low and middle income citizens. Recently, this Congress cut Food Stamps, student loans, child support and Medicaid.

Now the Administration is rewarding the rich. In the proposed tax cuts, over 50% of the Capital Gains and Dividends Rate Cut will benefit people who make more than one million dollars. The 55% of American households that make less than \$40,000 will get a tax break of only \$7 while the households that make more than \$1 million will receive an average tax break of \$32,000.

I support responsible spending, and balancing the budget, but this tax cut and the budget cuts of last month accomplish neither of these goals. In fact, these bills will actually increase the deficit by \$16 billion. And at what benefit? So that some of our wealthiest citizens can save a few extra dollars?

President Bush has gone on the offensive. He is touting an improved economy by pointing to job statistics from this most recent quarter. But the economy is not improving where we need it to. Middle class Americans are worse off than they were 4 years ago. The average two-earner family needs to work more to pay for health care, housing, college, and transportation than they did in 2001.

Middle class families are forced to work more and save less. This means less time to

spend with family and less money to put away for retirement.

This is not how I want to remember 2005. I don't want to remember 2005 as a year that the government heaped unnecessary burdens upon American families. Stealing from the poor and middle class and giving to the rich, while increasing the deficit, is hardly responsible. I urge you to vote no on the Republican tax cuts.

ESTABLISHING A MEMORIAL WITHIN KALAUPAPA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

HON. NEIL ABERCROMBIE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2005

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a bill introduced by my colleague, Representative ED CASE. His bill to establish a memorial within Kalaupapa National Historical Park would serve to honor and perpetuate the memory of those individuals who were forcibly relocated to the Kalaupapa Peninsula from 1866–1969.

The sad history of Kalaupapa is well known within the State of Hawaii. Two tragedies occurred on the Kalaupapa Peninsula on the north shore of the island of Moloka'i. The first is the removal of indigenous people in 1865 and 1895. The removal of Hawaiians from where they had lived for 900 years cut the cultural ties and associations of generations of people from the 'aina (land).

The second tragedy is the forced isolation of sick people to this remote place from 1866 until 1969. The establishment of an isolation settlement, first at Kalawao and then at Kalaupapa, tore apart Hawaiian society as the Kingdom of Hawaii, and subsequently the territory of Hawai'i, tried to control the feared disease of leprosy, now known as Hansen's disease. The impact of broken connections with the 'aina and of family members "lost" to Kalaupapa are still felt in Hawai'i today.

Kalaupapa National Historical Park, established in 1980, contains the physical setting for these stories. Within its boundaries are the historic Hansen's disease settlements of Kalaupapa and Kalawao. The community of Kalaupapa, on the leeward side of Kalaupapa Peninsula, is still home for many surviving Hansen's disease patients, whose memories and experiences are cherished values. In Kalawao on the windward side of the peninsula are the churches of Siloama, established in 1866, and Saint Philomena, associated with the work of Father Damien (Joseph De Veuster), a great humanitarian who gave his life to minister to the physical and spiritual needs of those banished to the settlement.

Kalaupapa retains the memories and spirit of all those who lived there. Someday, the last Hansen's disease patient living in Kalaupapa will pass away. A memorial will be a permanent tribute to the brave souls who called Kalaupapa home. I support this legislation and hope my colleagues will also extend their support.

ROMANIA'S BAN ON INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTIONS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2005

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, last month I introduced a resolution, H. Res. 578, expressing disappointment that the Government of Romania has instituted a virtual ban on intercountry adoptions that has very serious implications for the welfare and well-being of orphaned or abandoned children in Romania. As Co-Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (the Helsinki Commission), I am pleased to be joined as original cosponsors by the Commission's Ranking House Member, Representative CARDIN, fellow Commissioners Representative PITTS and PENCE as well as Chairman of the International Relations Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere Representative BURTON, and Representative NORTHUP, COSTELLO, JO ANN DAVIS, TIAHRT, BRADLEY and FRANK.

Mr. Speaker, the children of Romania, and all children, deserve to be raised in permanent families. Timely adoption of H. Res. 578 will put the Congress on record:

Supporting the desire of the Government of Romania to improve the standard of care and well-being of children in Romania;

Urging the Government of Romania to complete the processing of the intercountry adoption cases which were pending when Law 273/2004 was enacted;

Urging the Government of Romania to amend its child welfare and adoption laws to decrease barriers to adoption, both domestically and intercountry, including by allowing intercountry adoption by persons other than biological grandparents;

Urging the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to work collaboratively with the Government of Romania to achieve these ends; and

Requesting that the European Union and its member States not impede the Government of Romania's efforts to place orphaned or abandoned children in permanent homes in a manner that is consistent with Romania's obligations under the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.

In 1989, the world watched in horror as images emerged from Romania of more than 100,000 underfed, neglected children living in hundreds of squalid and inhumane institutions throughout that country. Six weeks after the end of the dictatorial regime of Nicolae Ceausescu, I visited Romania and witnessed the misery and suffering of these institutionalized children. They were the smallest victims of Ceausescu's policies which undermined the family and fostered the belief that children were often better cared for in an institution than by their families.

Americans responded to this humanitarian nightmare with an outpouring of compassion. For years now, Americans have volunteered their labor and donated money and goods to help Romania improve conditions in these institutions. Many families in the United States also opened their hearts to Romania's children through adoption. Between 1990 and 2004, more than 8,000 children found permanent