

19th consecutive win. The championship victory marked the first state championship in a team sport for Argyle High School.

This victory was a combined effort by many extremely talented athletes, and would not have been possible if it was not for the incredible sense of teamwork put forth by all athletes.

I extend my sincere congratulations to Steve Schmidt, head coach as well as Miss Chelsea Cook, Ms. Brooke Shepherd, Ms. Ally Clardy, Ms. Yvonne Glass, Ms. Kristie Krueger, Ms. Kinzie Ellis, Ms. Emma Forrer, Ms. Bailey Slough, Ms. Meagan Gonzales, Ms. Teacup Gorman and Ms. Alex Marshall, the members of the State Champion Argyle Girls Basketball Team.

TRIBUTE TO RED CROSS
VOLUNTEERS

HON. BOB BEAUPREZ

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2006

Mr. BEAUPREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the thousands of Americans who proudly call themselves Red Cross volunteers. I stand to show my support for their service to this country, their sacrifice in leaving their homes and loved ones to rush to the aid of fellow Americans in their own community, or another community hundreds, even thousands of miles away.

When you talk about the American Red Cross, you must never forget that you are talking about volunteers. More than 95% of Red Cross workers are volunteers. They are on no government payroll. They have no secret motives or hidden agendas. They are citizens in voluntary service of their fellow citizens.

March is Red Cross Month. We take the time to honor the compassion of the volunteer spirit.

In my own district, these good people are at work daily, teaching CPR, helping to collect lifesaving blood, teaching someone how to swim, and responding in the middle of the night to comfort one of their neighbors whose house has burned down. It is simply impossible to imagine our community without the Red Cross.

There is a reason why every president since Franklin Roosevelt has declared March to be Red Cross Month. This is an organization that mimics American's tendencies to help a neighbor in need, and provides an essential safety net affecting millions of lives. It has earned the right to be called a national treasure.

No one is more interested in building the best possible Red Cross than the people of the Red Cross themselves. Their only desire is to fulfill their mission of compassion and humanity—a mission they have upheld with honor for 125 years. Let us take care to guard this well-earned reputation, aiding and supporting them as they have aided and supported America.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CSRS RETIREMENT REPAYMENT TECHNICAL CORRECTION ACT OF 2006

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2006

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the CSRS Retirement Repayment Technical Correction Act of 2006. This bill would correct an unintended consequence that followed the enactment of the Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-508) on November 5, 1990, and provide relief for federal employees who were adversely affected by that enactment.

The Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1990 made retroactive changes to the rules related to separating federal employees. While the rules were made retroactive to October 1, 1990, the implementing regulations were not promulgated until February 1991. This four month period between the enactment of the law and the promulgation of the implementing regulations has adversely affected any federal employee who withdrew their retirement contributions during this period.

This matter was brought to my attention by Sandra Schatz Landis, my constituent who was on maternity leave from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), a former bureau of the Department of Justice at the time in question. On November 5, 1990, Ms. Landis withdrew \$24,439.00 in retirement contributions and was advised that if she later re-entered federal service, she could re-deposit the withdrawal without paying interest and not suffer any adverse consequences.

Unbeknownst to Ms. Landis and the personnel specialists at INS who were advising her, because of the enactment of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 that occurred on that very same day, November 5, 1990, employees who withdrew their retirement contributions as far back as October 1, 1990 were suddenly required to repay their withdrawn contributions with interest in order to have the prior service included in their annuity calculation. What is unfair about this is that employees had no warning that the rules under which they were making major financial decisions were changing. If Ms. Landis were to make this repayment today, she would have to refund over \$58,000 of which \$34,000 is interest. This is just one example of an unintended injustice that must be corrected.

The CSRS Retirement Repayment Technical Correction Act of 2006 will provide relief to those who withdrew their retirement contributions between Oct 1, 1990, when the Omnibus Reconciliation Act was enacted, and February 1991, when implementing regulations were promulgated. It is fair and reasonable legislation that needs to be enacted into law.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION SHOULD FULLY PROTECT THE FREEDOMS OF ALL RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES WITHOUT DISTINCTION

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 16, 2006

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 190, expressing the sense of the Congress that the Russian Federation should fully protect the freedoms of all religious communities without distinction, whether registered and unregistered, as stipulated by the Russian Constitution and international standards.

This resolution is an essential demonstration of our continued commitment to protecting religious freedom for all human beings throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker, this nation was built by those who escaped persecution in their own homelands. Today we continue to see people throughout the world who still can not freely practice their faith.

It is vital in order to protect the principles of freedom that this nation was founded on, that we protect the ability of each person in the United States to freely observe their religious practices. This also means that we as a nation must push other countries throughout the world to meet this same ideal standard on religious freedom.

Religious freedom is a fundamental human right as affirmed by numerous international declarations and covenants, as well as by the United Nations General Assembly. I remain hopeful that we will continue with further efforts to fight religious intolerance.

I applaud today's measure with enthusiasm and reverence.

HONORING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF
KUR KUR AND SIMON GARANG

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 2006

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the achievements of two young men for whom I have the utmost respect and admiration. Mr. Kur Kur and Mr. Simon Garang, currently of Boulder, Colorado, will graduate with degrees from the University of Colorado at Boulder in May, 2006, closing one remarkable chapter in their lives and beginning another. For these two men, obtaining their degrees was more than a matter of attending classes and passing tests; it was a stunning journey from the impoverished and war-torn deserts of East Africa to the mountains of Colorado and the classrooms of CU-Boulder.

Mr. Kur and Mr. Garang were born in different parts of southern Sudan and were forced to flee to Ethiopia at the age of eight to evade Islamic militants that were driving men, women, and children from their homes. Separated from their families, the boys walked the long journey to Ethiopia seeking refuge.