

Under current law, members of the military who are convicted of offenses under the military justice system do not have the legal right to appeal their cases to the U.S. Supreme Court.

It is unjust to deny the members of our Armed Forces access to our system of justice as they fight for our freedom around the world. They deserve better.

As the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Military Personnel, a long-time advocate for servicemembers, and a representative of San Diego, one of the largest military communities in the nation, I feel an obligation to fight to ensure that the members of our military are treated fairly.

Current law weights the playing field in favor of the government, granting the automatic right to Supreme Court review to the Department of Defense whenever a servicemember wins his or her case, but denying servicemembers that same right when the government wins a conviction against them in almost all situations. This is just unfair.

I believe strongly that it is fundamentally unjust to deny those who serve on behalf of our country in the military one of the basic rights afforded to all other Americans.

I hope that you will stand with me in support of this legislation to attain equal treatment for those who fight for us.

IN HONOR OF 2011 USO GALA

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 6, 2011

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of the 2011 United Service Organizations (USO) Gala, as it honors the Spirit of the USO Award Recipient, Spirit of Hope Award Recipient, heroes from the U.S. Armed Forces, and the volunteers who support them around the world.

The United Service Organizations, in its 70th year of existence, is a non-profit organization which endeavors to offer comfort and hope to the United States armed forces, both at home and abroad. With more than 150 centers worldwide, the USO offers support to millions of Americans.

When it began during World War II, the USO provided support to the troops in a number of different ways, most famously through the entertainment of the troops while away from home. Though initially dissolved in 1947, it was revived during the Korean War and has been an active organization ever since. "Bringing a touch of home to our troops," the USO continues to do good, boosting the morale of our troops at home and abroad, thanks to donations and volunteers.

The legacy of the USO is continuous and expansive. For current service members at home and abroad, veterans and for the families of the fallen, the USO provides millions of men and women with care. Its various programs provide a wide range of services for service members, including games, care packages, the "mobile USO," free phone cards and a program which enables those stationed abroad to record a DVD of themselves for their family members. In addition to all of this, the USO continues its celebrity tours, providing entertainment to the troops.

The 2011 USO Gala, "70 Years Young," will feature entertainers from USO celebrity entertainment tours, and recognize a special volunteer and honorees from each branch of the armed force. This year's Service Member's of the Year include Corporal David J. Bixler of the U.S. Army; Sergeant Lucas J. Chaffins of the U.S. Marine Corps, Senior Airman James A. Barynard of the U.S. Airforce, Aviation Survival Technician Christopher R. Austin of the U.S. Coast Guard, and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician Chad R. Regelin of the U.S. Navy.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor of the USO does for the men and women who risk so much for us.

H.R. 2250 AND H.R. 2681

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 6, 2011

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, the American people can breathe easier—well, perhaps that's the wrong choice of words—the American people should be thankful to the leadership of the House for pursuing the pollution agenda they have clamored for these many months.

After legislative successes that have included begrudgingly passing Continuing Resolutions to fund government operations, the House turned this week to the top national priority of relaxing pollution controls for cement kilns and hamstringing the EPA's ability to crack down on harmful emissions from industrial boilers.

I wonder why it has taken so long to get these critical bills to the floor. In my district on Long Island, I'm often mobbed by constituents demanding more mercury in our air. And clearly economists agree it's the silver bullet we need to jumpstart the economic recovery. Perhaps the majority believes that clean air is choking our recovery and the economy is drowning in drinkable water.

But, in all seriousness, we are pursuing this pollution agenda while failing to deal with the real issues stifling job growth, things like a shortage of credit for small businesses, unfair currency manipulation by China and stagnant consumer demand.

So, Mr. Speaker, how about instead of passing a bill to make it easier for cement kilns to pollute, let's do something real, like put construction workers to work using cement to rebuild our nation's infrastructure.

COMMEMORATING THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE KENYAN CONSTITUTION

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 6, 2011

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, last August we witnessed a flowering of freedom in Eastern Africa. On August 5, 2010, Kenya endorsed a brand new constitution, which guaranteed all Kenyan citizens the rights to security, housing, food, life, freedom from discrimination and the freedom of expression, among others. I rise

today to recognize the recent anniversary of this constitution's adoption, and to congratulate the Republic of Kenya on this remarkable step forward.

Despite being home to the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize—Wangari Maathi, who sadly passed away last month—Kenya had long treated women as second-class citizens. In the past, female candidates for office in that country have had to carry knives and wear extra garments to fend off the possibility of politically-motivated rape.

But the new constitution has dramatically altered the status of women in Kenya. Among the over 40 new reforms is a non-discrimination clause outlawing bias on the basis of sex, pregnancy or marital status. Additionally, women can own and inherit land, and matrimonial property is protected during and after the termination of marriage. Customary law (a traditional practice that has come to be accepted as law), which is inconsistent with the constitution, is now void.

This document does much to protect the rights of women within Kenya. But as anyone who lives in a democracy knows, such constitutional mechanisms must be followed by meaningful actions and constant vigilance to actually become reality.

The nation of Kenya is facing many trials at the moment. The crisis in the Horn of Africa is killing, starving or displacing over 13 million people. Drought conditions have persisted in the region. Food insecurity is affecting 3.75 million people, excluding refugees, in Kenya, and 4.3 million men, women, and children there desperately require humanitarian assistance. At its peak, Kenya and Ethiopia saw nearly 1,000 people a day arrive at refugee camps to escape the famine in Somalia. Sexual violence against women in these already overcrowded refugee camps is on the rise.

There are no easy solutions to this crisis, and we in the United States must step up and do our part to help alleviate this suffering as well. Nonetheless, in face of these adversities, it is heartening to see Kenya's men and women move forward together, as equals and as partners. By empowering Kenyan women and rejecting gender-based discrimination, the new Kenyan constitution has paved the way for a brighter future for the Kenyan people.

IN HONOR OF HIS BEATITUDE PATRIARCH BECHARA PETER RAI, PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH FOR THE MARONITE CATHOLIC CHURCH

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 6, 2011

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of His Beatitude Patriarch Bechara Peter Rai, Patriarch of Antioch for the Maronite Catholic Church, and welcome him to the City of Cleveland on October 11th, 2011.

With more than three million members worldwide, the Maronite Catholic Church is among the largest Eastern-rite sects of the Roman Catholic Church and is especially prominent in Lebanon. The parish of Cleveland's St. Maron Church will be hosting Patriarch Rai as he visits Cleveland next week. St.