

Syria would begin to lose its grip so quickly on the people of Lebanon?

We must do more to show that the United States is on the side of those who want peaceful change toward democracy and fundamental freedoms, and we must devise new ways to work with our friends around the globe to fan the embers of freedom.

That is what our new bill seeks to do. We are starting by proposing reforms to the State Department and other parts of the U.S. Government so that promoting democracy is a fundamental and central component of our foreign policy. This legislation:

Declares that it is the policy of the United States to promote freedom and democracy as a fundamental component of U.S. foreign policy, to see an end to dictatorial and other non-democratic forms of government, and to strengthen alliances with other democratic countries to better promote and defend shared values and ideals.

Establishes in statute the Under Secretary for Global Affairs with a strong mandate to promote democracy and fundamental freedoms; expands the duties of the Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor to specifically include democracy promotion; and enhances the Human Rights and Democracy Fund controlled by that Bureau.

Establishes a new Office of Democracy Movements and Transitions and separate Regional Democracy Hubs to be points of contact for democracy movements and to promote democratic transitions and democratic consolidation, and creates a Democracy Promotion Advisory Board to provide outside expertise to the Department of State on democracy promotion and to conduct a study on the efficiency and effectiveness of current U.S. democracy assistance.

Requires the Secretary of State to prepare an annual report on democracy that will include a specific action plan, developed in consultation with local organizations, individuals and movements, to promote and achieve transition to democracy in non-democratic countries.

Provides for U.S. embassies to be "islands of freedom" and encourages U.S. ambassadors to promote democracy in non-democratic countries, including by meeting with representatives of democracy movements and speaking out on democracy and human rights in such countries, particularly at universities.

Provides training for State Department personnel on democracy promotion and links promotion and performance awards to effective advocacy and promotion of democracy, particularly in non-democratic countries.

Establishes a Congressional Democracy Award for U.S. government officials who have made an extraordinary effort to promote democracy.

Provides for increased efforts to work with other democratic countries to promote democracy including bilaterally, with the UN and related organizations, the Community of Democracies, and the new Democracy Transition Center being established by European countries in Hungary.

Requires translation of the annual report on democracy, the country reports on human rights practices, the Annual Report on International Religious Freedom, and the annual Trafficking in Persons Report, and requires the creation of a democracy and human rights Internet web site collecting these and other

materials related to the promotion of democracy and human rights.

Let me be clear—there are many fine members of the Foreign Service at the Department of State and many dedicated civil servants that are relentless on issues of promoting democracy and protecting human rights, but we can do better. We hope that this legislation will change the Department's culture into one that focuses on freedom, not feel good relationships, and will give a framework and direction to our diplomats as they pursue the promotion of democracy around the world.

Mr. Speaker, in 1956, Hungary was in the midst of a national uprising. The Hungarian people had a real hope of freedom from the yoke of Soviet-installed communism. Then the West stood by while the Soviet Union invaded and extinguished the sparks of revolution in one aggressive wave.

In 1989, we did not make that mistake. The United States and our democratic friends and allies stood with the Hungarian people and helped them and others confront their communist masters and achieve freedom.

The central question of today is whether we will stand with the reformers, as we did in 1989, or stand by as the oppressors take action against them. This legislation will help ensure that we make the right choice and stand with the reformers.

Make no mistake, the achievement of universal democracy is not an easy task, and we have no illusions about that. But as the only remaining superpower and the beacon of hope for so many people around the globe even now, the United States must find a way to promote democracy in this complex world. It in our own interest, it is consistent with our principles and our history, and it is the right thing to do.

“RAILROAD MAN” RETIRES

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2005

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and wish well in retirement Warren Weber of Sacramento, California. Mr. Weber served with the California Department of Transportation for over forty years, and eight as the Chief of Caltrans Division of Rail.

Warren graduated from California State University, Los Angeles, and pursued his Master's Degree in Public Administration at California State University, Sacramento. He began his career in the Urban Planning Department, at the Division of Highways. He moved through the ranks at the California Department of Transportation and served as a Supervising Transportation System Analyst, Chief of Rail Planning and Corridor Studies, Assistant Director of Legislative and local government affairs, and finally Chief of the Division of Rail.

Throughout the years Warren was responsible for various activities. Before he became chief of Caltrans Rail, he served for over five years as Caltrans' Assistant Director for Legislative and Local Government Affairs where he was responsible for development of Caltrans' State legislative program. As the chief of the California Department of Transportation's Division of Rail he is responsible for the program management, administration, and marketing of State-supported Amtrak service in California.

To enhance his busy career, Warren also serves on various committees. He is a member of the Transportation Research Board Committee, Local and Regional Rail Freight Transport; Transportation Research Board Committee, Intercity Rail Passenger Systems; National Research Council Committee, Assessment of Federal High-Speed Ground Transportation R & D; and the Board of Directors for the California State Railroad Museum Foundation.

In conjunction with being an active member of several Transportation Research Board committees, Warren has received the AASHTO's President's Modal Award for Rail Transportation and a special recognition award from the American Short Line Railroad Association. He also received the finalist award for State Employee of the Year from the California Film Commission.

Ever the busy character, Warren has authored several papers on multi-modal transportation improvements for intercity corridors.

His time and dedication to the development and implementation of rail programs are to be lauded. Warren has truly been an instrumental player in the transportation sector, and while his retirement will be celebrated, he will also be missed by his many colleagues.

PEACE CORPS CELEBRATES 44TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 3, 2005

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, on March 1st, the Peace Corps celebrated its 44th anniversary. It is especially fitting in these troubled times that we recognize the quiet dedication of the men and women of the Peace Corps. Since the inception of the Peace Corps in 1961, more than 178,000 Peace Corps volunteers have served in 138 countries, promoting the Peace Corps' mission of world peace and friendship. Today, the program remains phenomenally successful. The Peace Corps has 7,700 volunteers currently in the field, the highest number in 29 years; 5 of those hard working volunteers hail from our 9th District of Ohio.

The Peace Corps is a cross section of our population; recent college graduates work next to retired citizens. Individuals of all races and ethnicities devote their time and dedication, giving of themselves to help people who are less fortunate.

The Peace Corps operates in 72 countries. Just recently Peace Corps volunteers volunteered in Mexico for the first time, and another 20 countries have expressed interest in working with the Peace Corps. Peace Corps volunteers serve as teachers, business advisors, information technology consultants, health and HIV/AIDS educators and youth and agriculture workers. These volunteers serve as ambassadors to the world, promoting international understanding.

During National Peace Corps Week we honor all the volunteers past and present who have brought help and hope to people in need. Peace Corps volunteers serve from Belize to Ghana, Armenia, Mongolia, East Timor and beyond. We honor their service and compassion. I especially would like to thank