

CELEBRATING THE 87TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

HON. MATT SALMON

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 9, 1998

Mr. SALMON. Mr. Speaker, I extend my best wishes and greetings to the Republic of China on Taiwan on the 87th anniversary of the founding of their nation.

Under President Lee Teng-hui and Vice President Lien Chan's leadership, the Republic of China continues its excellent record of economic growth and its historic democratization. Since I lived in Taiwan in the 1970's, we have seen a different Republic of China emerge. It is now a major trading nation, and its GNP is one of the world's largest. Its growth in per capita income has improved the lives of the 21 million hardworking men and women of Taiwan. Furthermore, the rapid democratization and constitutional reforms on Taiwan in recent years have made Taiwan a model for many nations.

I also applaud President Lee for resuming bilateral discussions between Taiwan and the Chinese mainland.

Happy Birthday to Taiwan.

HONORING RONALD L. MACE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE FOR AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES

HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 9, 1998

Mr. ETHERIDGE Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the life of Ronald L. Mace, a North Carolinian who worked to make the world a more accessible place for persons with disabilities. Mr. Mace was an architect who envisioned environments that were accessible and comfortable for everyone. He was a pioneer in the fight for the rights of millions of disabled Americans and by removing architectural barriers.

Mr. Mace cannot be recognized enough for his contributions. His innovative ideas about incorporating accessible design into the North Carolina building code eventually became the backbone of many State and Federal accessibility laws, including the Americans With Disabilities Act. Mr. Mace coined the term "universal design" for his concept.

Mr. Mace was a mentor to thousands of persons with disabilities, himself disabled by polio at the age of 9. By his example and through his work, Mr. Mace instilled confidence and purpose and encouraged many to be proud members of the disability community and to contribute to the cause of disability rights. Life, to Mr. Mace, was to be lived with dignity and integrity. He believed that we should celebrate our differences and tear down the artificial barriers that place unnecessary constraints on our interactions with one another.

When Ronald L. Mace passed away on June 29, 1998, North Carolina and the Nation lost a great citizen. As Americans, we owe him a debt of gratitude because disabled and non-disabled alike benefit from his life's work. It is our responsibility to continue to work to-

ward making his vision of a world of accessible and comfortable environments a reality for everyone.

Dr. Carol Grant Potter, a colleague, friend, and protege of Mr. Mace who continues to be inspired by him, offered the following eloquent tribute to Mr. Mace in the Raleigh News and Observer. Dr. Potter, herself remarkable and born with phocomelia (shortening of the extremities), has contributed immeasurably to efforts to remove architectural barriers. She holds a doctoral degree in rehabilitation from Southern Illinois University, has served on the Governor's Study Commission on Architectural Barriers, was appointed by President Carter to serve on the national Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, and is currently a planner with the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities.

I encourage my colleagues to read Dr. Potter's moving tribute.

N.S.'S GIFT TO BARRIER-FREE LIVING

(By Carol Grant Potter)

Raleigh.—For once, the 5-year-old was tall enough to do whatever she wanted to do. She didn't have to stand on tiptoe or be lifted up to the "adult" height, as was usually the case. Some day she will know that the man who played a major role in making that happen was the man she was gazing at in the casket, set on a low-bred stand a foot off the floor.

As the child touched the man's shirt lightly, her mother directed her attention to the side of the casket.

"See his wheelchair, honey. That's how he got around. It's motorized and it can go fast!"

Ronald L. Mace, the Raleigh architect and disability rights leader who died June 29, dreamed of environments that are accessible and comfortable for everyone, regardless of age or ability. He coined the term "universal design" for the concept.

All of us at Ron's funeral could reach his body and share equally in the grief of his death and celebration of his life. We gathered as a community, people who use wheelchairs, guide dogs, interpreters and other means of accommodation, along with just as many folks who have no disabilities.

People came from everywhere to share memories filled with humor, tears, gratitude, respect and love for a man who touched so many lives.

I first met Ron when he consulted with Governor's Study Commission on Architectural Barriers in 1972. We on the commission gained tremendously from his innovative ideas about incorporating accessible design into the North Carolina building code. Who could have known then that his designs would shape the landscape of the entire country? Eventually they became the backbone of many state and federal accessibility laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Personally, Ron taught me a lot about living—really living—with a disability. He encouraged me, by example, to be a proud member of the disability community to contribute my individual strengths, whatever they may be, to the cause of disability rights.

Ron reached out to thousands of people with disabilities, instilling confidence and purpose by sharing his knowledge and expertise with everyone. Being a mentor was second nature to him, although he probably never realized he was "mentoring." He had a way of promoting others rather than himself, a quality that made him a leader in the truest sense of the word.

Ron's life was not about heroism or inspiration. It was about having the courage to be

true to your beliefs and experiences, living with integrity, dignity and respect for everyone, and celebrating differences among us without the constraints of unnecessary, artificial barriers. His life challenges us to continue building community among people with disabilities and our families, and use our collective strength for the common good.

As Ron did, we who are older must share our disability experience, both the struggles and victories, with the next generation who will be tomorrow's disabilities rights leaders. Finally, Ron would expect us to keep the Americans with Disabilities Act strong and meaningful in North Carolina and our nation so that everyone benefits—disabled and non-disabled alike.

At Ron's funeral, parked on the street was a long line of modified, accessible vans, some with wheelchair lifts extended, bringing the community together once again. Like the 5-year-old girl, I also gazed at the man in the casket and felt deeply the blessing of his life. I didn't have to stand on tiptoe or be lifted up to tell him goodbye. That day, the little girl and I could do what we wanted to do.

REMARKS OF UN DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL LOUISE FRÉCHETTE AT RECEPTION MARKING 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 9, 1998

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the signature of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was proclaimed on December 10, 1948, after its adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations without a dissenting vote.

Mr. Speaker, the Universal Declaration sets forth fundamental human rights for women and men everywhere, and it is "a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations." It has become the most widely accepted international statement of fundamental human rights. It is frequently referred to in resolutions and covenants adopted by international organizations, in multilateral and bilateral treaties, and in laws and decrees of many nations.

Earlier this year, this House adopted H. Con. Res. 185, a resolution which I introduced with the support of our colleagues JOHN EDWARD PORTER of Illinois, the co-chairman of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, and CHRISTOPHER SMITH of New Jersey, the Chairman of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights of the House Committee on International Relations. That resolution notes the important 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights this year and recommitments the United States to the principles expressed in the Universal Declaration.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, the distinguished Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, Louise Fréchette, represented the United Nations and spoke at a reception here on Capitol Hill in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The reception was given by the United Nations in cooperation with the Congressional Human Rights Caucus. On that occasion, Mr. Speaker, Mme. Fréchette delivered an excellent statement.

Louise Fréchette has had a distinguished diplomatic career in her native country of Canada. Prior to her appointment as Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, Mme. Fréchette served as the Deputy Defense Minister of Canada and played a particularly important role in Canada's participation in a number of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that Mme. Fréchette's speech be included in the RECORD, and I urge my colleagues to give it careful and thoughtful attention.

DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL STRESSES UNITED NATIONS DUTY TO TRANSLATE INTO PRACTICE ORGANIZATION'S COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS

I would like, at the outset, to extend the appreciation of all of us in the United Nations system for the commendable work of the Human Rights Caucus in focusing the attention of Congress on human rights and violations of those rights around the world.

In this fiftieth anniversary year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that focus has never been more important. The world is changing; modern technology, communications and open borders have led to a movement and exchange of ideas on a scale never seen before. Those nations which fail to uphold basic principles of acceptable behavior can no longer hide behind their borders.

For the United Nations, that makes all the more compelling our duty to translate into practice our commitment to human rights. For decades, the primary focus in human rights was on establishing international norms and standards. That work was largely successful.

In the 1990s, the emphasis has shifted to implementation. Human rights monitors are often attached to peacekeeping operations. We run advisory services to strengthen the judiciary. Special rapporteurs are investigating torture, child labor and child prostitution, religious intolerance and violence against women. I am pleased to report that we now have more staff working on human rights in the field than at Headquarters.

And, of course, the United Nations provides global leadership on human rights in the person of Mary Robinson, who, as High Commissioner for Human Rights, has raised the profile of the issue around the world.

Hand in hand with human rights come issues of democratization and good governance. Increasingly across the world, it has become an established norm that military coups by self-appointed juntas against democratically-elected governments are simply not acceptable. The United Nations is receiving more requests for electoral assistance than ever before. In the past five years, we had no fewer than 80 such requests. The United Nations helps teams of international observers assess the legitimacy of an electoral process and its outcome. We guide, monitor and sometimes run elections in various countries.

The Declaration of Human Rights is not a legally binding document. Yet, it has been a fundamental source of inspiration for national and international efforts to protect and promote human rights and freedoms.

The main principles of the Declaration have inspired the constitutions of many countries which have become independent since it was written. Conceived as a "common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations" the Declaration has become a yardstick by which to measure the respect for, and compliance with, international human rights standards.

The first article of the Declaration is quite simple. Let me quote it to you "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

Nobody personified that spirit of brotherhood better than Raoul Wallenberg. That fact was acknowledged here in Washington 17 years ago yesterday, when Wallenberg became the third foreigner to be given honorary citizenship of this country—thanks to legislation written by you, Congressman [TOM] LANTOS.

Wallenberg's life and achievements highlighted the vital difference an individual can make amidst conflict and suffering. His intervention gave hope to victims, encouraged them to fight and resist, to hang on and bear witness.

Remembering his life should be an inspiration for others to act; for future generations to act; for all of us to act.

Congressman LANTOS, I know that you owe much to Raoul Wallenberg. But I also know we owe much to you, to your indefatigable work in the cause of human rights and in keeping his legacy alive. You, like him, provide an example to us all.

And the work of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus provides an invaluable example of what can be achieved when we join forces to achieve common goals. Such partnerships strengthen immeasurably the work of governments and the United Nations.

For although the United Nations is an association of sovereign States, the rights it exists to uphold and defend belong to people.

It follows that people everywhere have a responsibility to speak up for those rights, whenever they see them threatened, wherever they know them to be violated. For your work in that regard, I thank you all.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 9, 1998

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation that will restore the dream of homeownership to middle-and low-income families.

Mr. Speaker, the sight is all too familiar in urban and rural America: boarded-up homes, abandoned lots, blighted communities. These sights demonstrate that the dream of homeownership is fleeting for some and that these dreams can become nightmares when financial hardship occurs. But what often goes unspoken in discussing this issue is the fact that some of these abandoned properties were purchased under federal mortgage programs intended to help middle-and low-income Americans. This leads us to ask: what improvement can we make to federal mortgage assistance programs so that people can keep their homes and live the American dream?

This is the goal of my legislation, the Homeowners Emergency Mortgage Assistance Act. This bill makes needed changes in the way the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) administers its mortgage guarantee program and will keep the dream of homeownership alive for people facing temporary financial difficulties. Under the bill, property owners who fail to pay their mortgage for two months, due to no

fault of their own, would not be subject to immediate foreclosure. Often, homeowners cannot honor their mortgage payments because of factors beyond their control. For example, the FHA does not require inspections on homes it guarantees. After a home is purchased, serious structural dilapidation may be uncovered. In such cases, the home may be falling apart and the homeowner will not be able to both repair the damage and pay their mortgage. The home becomes unlivable and is foreclosed. This further blights the neighboring area and ends the homeowners's dream.

To resolve this unfortunate situation, my bill would provide temporary mortgage assistance to homeowners in needed for a period no longer than 36 months. The assistance would have to be payed back to the FHA and would not be offered if FHA officials deem that the homeowner would be able to honor their mortgage obligations and pay back the emergency assistance after this time period.

Saving people's homes in this manner is a win-win proposition for the government, for the homeowners, the lenders and for the adjacent communities. As you know, the FHA guarantees 100 percent of mortgage loans provided by private lenders to middle- and low-income families under the National Housing Act. Yes, 100 percent. When a home is foreclosed, the FHA has to pay the lender the entire cost of the mortgage. As you can imagine, this is tremendously costly. It can also be avoided in many cases.

In such cases, temporary assistance can make all the difference for homeowners, allowing homeowners to pay for repairs and honor their mortgages. The FHA saves money because the temporary assistance they provide is far less costly than paying the full cost of the mortgage. In addition, the temporary assistance must be payed back thus recouping additional taxpayers' dollars. The lenders are equally satisfied because they are receiving their monthly assessments. And the community is preserved from blight that would otherwise reduce property values throughout the area. The Homeowners Emergency Mortgage Assistance Act is a solution that restores the dream of homeownership for everyone concerned.

The program has also been "battle-tested." My legislation is based on a very successful program in Pennsylvania. More than 24,000 Pennsylvania families faced with possible foreclosure have received help from the state's Homeowners Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (HEMAP). Pennsylvania's Republican Governor Tom Ridge and Democratic leaders throughout the state have hailed the program as a cost-efficient means to prevent homelessness. In Pennsylvania, 90 percent of assistance payments have been payed back and only eight percent of HEMAP loans have resulted in foreclosure. This record of success should be duplicated at the federal level.

Saving homes, money and neighborhoods is what government programs should work to achieve. The Homeowners Emergency Mortgage Assistance Act will accomplish these vital goals. I urge my colleagues to co-sponsor this legislation and work with me to maintain the dream of homeownership for middle-and low-income Americans.