

On September 28, 1998, the people of Eastern Samar will once again observe a date of remembrance and commemorate a victorious past when our forebears, ill-equipped and ill-armed, fought gallantly and won a battle in defense of our country's freedom and independence. And this makes this year very significant as we are celebrating the Centennial of our Philippine Independence.

The reprisal of the United States Army under Col. Jacob Smith need not be recalled in this august chamber when they killed "every Filipino capable of bearing arms and burned Samar and made it a howling wilderness." In fact he said, "the more you kill and burn, the better you will please me". This savagery of unparalleled notoriety had earned him the monicker "Hell Roaring Jake".

Yes, Colonel Smith was court-martialed, reprimanded and cashiered after the U.S. Congress conducted a searching inquiry. But, this is not enough. The Bells of Balangiga, our most symbolic civic treasure, which they carried away must be returned.

Lifeless and motionless, these bells are kept in an Air Force Base in Wyoming, USA. Few Americans attach significance to these relics. These have no value to them. They care less about these bells for very few of them know their importance. In a privilege speech delivered before the House of the U.S. Congress, Guam Representative Underwood, said: "There was a time when the officers of F.E. Warren wanted to get rid of the bells. These brass relics have no relevance for F.E. Warren Air force Base, which is a missile base. Few people seem to know or care about these bells. But, to us, freedom loving Filipinos, these represent not only national pride but also as memorial for the brave men who offered their lives so that others may graciously live under the blessings of independence.

Eight (8) years have passed since our people and our government started making serious efforts to repossess these bells. Filipinos from a broad spectrum composed of legislators, religious, governors, peasants, professionals, business leaders and even the President of the Republic have joined the nationalistic chorus demanding for nothing less than the return of these historic bells.

To us, Eastern Samarens, these bells are not mute for they are capable of making sound; they are not captives for they cannot be imprisoned; neither can they be silenced for they are forever shouting for freedom and yelling the sentiments that every Filipino have been wanting to.

These are enough considerations that should not fall on deaf American ears. Indeed, for so many long years, it has been the dream of every freedom-loving Filipino to have these bells returned to our motherland and hear them toll once more. Representative Underwood can never be more correct when he said: "For almost 100 years, the Philippines has been our closest friend and ally, and in the name of friendship and cooperation it would only be fitting and proper for the United States to share the Bells of Balangiga with the people of the Philippines for their centennial celebrations." Well said; said well. As I have intimated earlier, many have tried and many have failed.

To the mind of my constituents, the return of the Bells of Balangiga could be an opportunity for the Americans to show that they have indeed changed; for the homecoming of these inanimate relics which are symbols of our forebears' blood, flesh and tears, will at the very least, show a screaming message that America is now sensitive to our national freedom, liberty and dignity and is ready to value international comity and goodwill. In short, only when we hear these Bells of Balangiga toll anew, and its sound

reverberates over our land, can we, the Filipino people, say that we are ready to talk about this animal called VFA.

Mr. Speaker, in the name of international understanding, national pride and dignity, I respectfully appeal to my colleagues in this chamber to join me champion this good cause so that the bells of Balangiga shall be returned to its rightful owners the Filipino people. Hence, this representation filed House Resolution No. 145 entitled: A Resolution Demanding from the Government of the United States of America (USA) for the Immediate Return of the Bells of Balangiga to the People of the Republic of the Philippines", co-authored by twenty-seven of my colleagues, I earnestly urge this august chamber for its immediate adoption.

Thank you very much.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPETITION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. RICK LAZIO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 12, 1998

Mr. LAZIO of New York. Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment Subcommittee Chairman TAUZIN and Chairman BLILEY as well as the Ranking Democrats of the full and subcommittee, Mr. DINGELL and Mr. MARKEY for their work in bringing this bipartisan legislation before the House today. I imagine all of us have heard from friends, neighbors, and constituents who have been victims of slamming. I know I have heard from Long Islanders who are so frustrated that somehow, without their knowledge, their long distance carrier has been switched. Trying to get their phone bill corrected and switched back to their desired carrier can be a time-consuming and frustrating experience.

The legislation before us today should accomplish two goals. First, it should reduce the likelihood that consumers will be slammed. The bill therefore encourages carriers to act responsibly by adhering to a new Code of Subscribers Protection Practices. Carriers who do not comply with the Code's consumer protection requirements and then make an error will be subject to FCC civil penalties as well as a possible fine. Second, Congress cannot legislate away human error. If a consumer loses his long distance carrier and has not been slammed, this bill should make it easy for the consumer to rectify quickly the situation. This bill says the consumer will only have to make one call to return to the carrier of his choice. Additionally, to compensate the consumer for his trouble, he will be switched back to his authorized carrier for free and will be credited up to 30 days of service. Because consumers will not have to be obligated to pay for the service they used after they have been slammed, carriers will have every incentive to guard against mistakes. Carriers will no longer be able to profit from slamming.

The bill before the House today also strikes a fair balance because a long distance company has the opportunity to produce their records of a verified sale when faced with a consumer complaint. This is very important legislation that seeks to protect American families and businesses from slamming. I urge its adoption.

RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 14, 1998

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I commend to my colleagues in Congress as well as citizens everywhere an article authored by Michael Kelly, National Journal editor. Mr. Kelly aptly describes how the notion of hate crimes undermines a pillar of a free and just society; that is, equal treatment under the law irrespective of which particular group or groups with whom an individual associates. Ours is a republic based upon the rights of the individual.

PUNISHING 'HATE CRIMES'

(By Michael Kelly)

As one who wholeheartedly supports capital punishment, I have what seems to me a clear-eyed vision of what justice demands in the murder of Matthew Shepard, the 21-year-old Wyoming college student who was, one night last week, robbed, pistol-whipped, tied to a fence and left to die. Bring in the monsters who did this, try 'em, verdict 'em and string 'em up, preferably before an applauding crowd of thousands.

And justice does appear on the way to being served. Two young men—Russell A. Henderson and Aaron J. McKinney—have been arrested and charged with first-degree murder; their girlfriends have been charged as accessories. There does not seem to be a lot of doubt that Henderson and McKinney did commit the acts that caused Shepard's death, nor does it seem at all likely that they will escape punishment.

But this, it is said, is not enough. Because Shepard was gay, and because his killers appear to have been motivated in part by an anti-gay animus (though police say robbery was the primary motive), justice is said to demand more. Specifically, it demands more bad law.

"Hate-crime" laws mandate increased penalties for defendants found guilty of committing crimes inspired by certain categories of prejudice. In 21 states and the District of Columbia, the categories are: race, religion, color, national origin and sexual orientation. Nineteen additional states have hate-crime laws that do not cover sexual orientation. Ten states, including Wyoming, have not passed categorical hate-crime laws. There is also a federal law, which covers race, religion, color and national origin but not sex or sexual orientation.

For Shepard's sake, the cry arises, Wyoming must pass a hate-crime law, and Congress must pass a new, more sweeping, Federal Hate Crimes Protection Act, which would add to the roster of crimes made federal offenses those inspired by bigotry based on sex, disability and sexual orientation. "There is something we can do about this. Congress needs to pass our tough hate crimes legislation," President Clinton declared Monday, the day Shepard died of his injuries.

At least he is consistent. No president has ever been more willing to assault liberty in the pursuit of political happiness than has this one. Clinton is always willing to embrace any new erosion of rights, as long as there is a group of voters or political contributors out there who wish it so. This is one area in which Clinton has been thoroughly bipartisan. In his five years in office, he has joined Republicans in Congress on quite a spree of liberty-bashing. He has signed laws that have stripped habeas corpus to its bones, vastly increased the number of crimes deemed federal offenses, established