

Today, if you open up a bank account, apply for a loan, buy insurance, get a credit card, sign up for telephone service or electric or gas utility service, you are almost invariably asked to provide a merchant with your Social Security number. Over the years, this number has become a key to verifying a person's identity. As a result, it has become increasingly clear that there are growing and serious privacy risks being created by unrestricted commerce in Social Security numbers, and resulting abuses of this number, that require immediate legislative action.

The risks and abuses associated with misuse of the Social Security number are only being magnified by the rapid growth of electronic commerce. Right now, only \$5 billion of the \$860 billion in annual retail sales currently occur over the Internet. But that figure will continue to grow exponentially in the future. So, the question we must ask is how are we going to adjust our laws to deal with this new medium? How will we animate the New Economy with our old values—such as our cherished right to privacy?

Today, the real privacy challenge we are facing isn't Big Brother; it's Big Browser. If you buy anything over the Internet, that information can be linked up to other personal identifiers to create disturbingly detailed digital dossiers that can profile your lifestyle, your interests, your hobbies, or your habits. We also know that the Social Security number is a critically important personal identifier that many online and offline businesses wish to obtain about consumers. Consumers who value their family's privacy, however, have a compelling interest in not allowing this number to be used to tie together bits and pieces of information in various databases into an integrated electronic profile of their interests and behavior that can be zapped around the world in a nanosecond to anyone who is willing to pay the price.

If you do a simple Internet search in which you enter the words "Social Security Numbers," you will turn up links to dozens of web sites that offer to provide you, for a fee, with social security numbers for other citizens, or to link a social security number that you might have with a name, address and telephone number. Where are the data mining firms and private detective agencies that offer these services obtaining these numbers? In all likelihood, they are accessing information from the databases of credit bureaus, financial services companies or other commercial firms.

If someone actually obtains a Social Security number from one of these sites, they have a critically important piece of information that can be used to locate the individual, get access to information about the individual's personal finances, or engage in a variety of illegal activities. By bringing a halt to unregulated commerce in Social Security numbers, the bill I am introducing today will help reduce the incidence of pretexting crimes, identity thefts and other frauds or crimes involving misuse of a person's Social Security number.

We need to take this action now if we are going to fully protect the public's right to privacy by preventing sales of Social Security numbers. That is why I am pleased today to be introducing legislation which would outlaw this practice. My bill would make it criminal for a person to sell or purchase Social Security numbers. Under the bill, the FTC would be given rulemaking authority to restrict the sale of Social Security numbers, determine appro-

priate exemptions, and to enforce civil compliance with the bill's restrictions. The bill would also authorize the states to enforce compliance, and provide for appropriate penalties.

I look forward to working with my House colleagues to enact this important privacy protection proposal into law.

HONORING STEVE COFFMAN

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 18, 2002

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend, Steve Coffman, who is retiring on April 19, 2002, from the Alexandria Police Department after 33½ years of dedicated public service to the City of Alexandria.

A lifelong Alexandria City resident, Steve's dream of serving his community was realized on October 10th, 1968, when he was sworn in as Alexandria's first auxiliary police officer. Steve started his law enforcement career during a tumultuous time in our nation's history. In 1971, the Alexandria City Council voted to integrate T.C. Williams High School, a decision that was criticized by many in the community. In addition, we were in the midst of the Vietnam War, and on the domestic front, racial relations were strained and unstable. In Alexandria, it was very important for our law enforcement agents to keep the peace and restore community relations during this time.

Steve has served the law enforcement community in several capacities, most recently as one of two Polygraph Operators for Alexandria City. He has also served as a Street Patrol officer and Identification Technician.

During Steve's long and distinguished law enforcement career, he has received many accolades, including the Police Officer of the Year award, one of the Police Department's highest honors.

I join Steve's family, including his wife Patty, daughters Angie and Valerie, as well as the City of Alexandria, in congratulating and thanking Steve for his dedication to improving the lives of others and serving the needs of our community.

ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 18, 2002

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, this week we celebrate Israel Independence Day, paying tribute to the shared values and goals that are the cement of strong U.S.-Israel relations. We demonstrate our unwavering support for our staunchest ally in the Middle East. We express our solidarity with the people of Israel whose vibrant democracy and brave military stand beside us on the front lines of the war against terrorism.

But even as we celebrate the miraculous achievements since the establishment of the Jewish State 54 years ago, we must recognize that Israel is still engaged in a fight for its survival.

Since Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat rejected the tremendous proposals put forward

at Camp David and unleashed the current Intifada, more than 460 Israelis have been murdered and more than 3,000 wounded by vicious terrorist attacks. Proportional to our own population, that figure is staggeringly more than three times the number of those killed in the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Daily life in Israel has been torn apart by the uncertainty of when another suicide bomber will strike against innocent civilians at a pizza store, a café, a grocery store, a disco, or on a bus. Families have been shattered by Palestinian terrorists who have targeted Bat-mitzvah guests and mothers walking their children to synagogue.

The reason there is no cease-fire is that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat supports the violence. He was unwilling to stop Hamas and Islamic Jihad and the documents seized by the Israeli army from Arafat's headquarters and other Palestinian Authority offices demonstrate that he actively endorses and funds the terrorist activities of his Fatah militias—the Tanzim, Force 17, and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, which was recently added to the U.S. list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations.

The root cause of Palestinian terrorism is not settlements. It is the exhortation by the Palestinian leadership for its youth to sacrifice their own dreams of statehood to Arafat's quest for martyrdom.

The underlying source of Palestinian hatred is not Israel's acts of self defense. It is anti-Semitism indoctrinated by Palestinian textbooks and television shows that glorify murder and exalt suicide bombers.

It is shocking to me that those in Europe and at the United Nations who so harshly judge Israel have no sympathy for Israel as the victim of daily terrorism.

The war between Israelis and Palestinians is not about Arafat and Sharon. It is about the refusal of a democratic society to reward terrorism with territory. It is about a civilized society unwilling to legitimize suicide attacks as a form of political negotiation.

If Arafat can succeed, then Bin Laden can succeed. Not because they share the same goals, but because they share the same tactics.

That is why it is so critical that the United States stand with Israel in this time of crisis, strong in our resolve against those who support and justify terrorism. Israel as a sovereign nation has the right to take all measures necessary to defend its citizens, and it is in the interest of the United States to support its ability to do so.

Although President Bush has dispatched CIA Director Tenet, Senator Mitchell, General Zinni, Vice President CHENEY, and now Secretary Powell to try and restore security and stability, it is clear that no one will succeed unless Chairman Arafat renounces terrorism and starts preparing the Palestinian people for peace instead of war.

At a time when synagogues are burning in France, Saudi newspapers are launching 21st century blood libels, and a Passover Seder in Netanya can become the target of terrorist bloodshed, the existence of the State of Israel is more important now than ever.