

and forty-five minutes in the depths of the Atlantic Ocean a mile north of Puerto Rico. Roberto lived 38 years, 4 months and 13 days. That's how long it took him to become a Hall of Famer, a better person and a legend.

IN HONOR OF SAINT WENDELIN  
PARISH

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 3, 2003*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the parish community of Saint Wendelin Church, as they celebrate one hundred years of healing and hope in Cleveland's Ohio City neighborhood. Throughout the past century, Saint Wendelin's has served as a spiritual refuge, opening its doors to any soul in search of guidance and peace.

The ministry of Saint Wendelin's began in 1903, originally serving the Slovak community of Cleveland's near west side. On May 3rd of that same year, the community received permission to found Saint Wendelin Parish. A small church was soon constructed and on December 6, 1903, Father Koudelka celebrated Saint Wendelin's first mass. Not long after, the Sisters of Notre Dame established Saint Wendelin's School. The order would continue to provide quality Catholic education for the next seventy years.

In 1925, the current church and school complex was dedicated. Always reaching outward, Saint Wendelin's welcomes all believers to join in worship. It is a testament to the Saint Wendelin ministry that Catholics from all corners of the city heed the call to celebrate at the little church on Columbus Avenue.

Cleveland's vital tradition of Catholic education is reflected at Saint Wendelin's with their active participation in the Urban Community School. Saint Wendelin's facilities serve as a second home to over three hundred students of Urban Community School.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in honor and recognition of every member of Saint Wendelin Church, and its leaders—Pastor Jerome Lajack and Deacon James J. Armstrong, as they celebrate mass with Bishop Anthony Pilla in commemoration of one hundred years of service to God and community. Saint Wendelin parish continues its dedication to social justice and spiritual healing—within the neighborhoods of Ohio City, and the world community beyond.

PASSENGER VAN SAFETY ACT OF  
2003

**HON. MARK UDALL**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 3, 2003*

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the Passenger Van Safety Act of 2003, legislation to enhance the safety of large passenger vans, which are highly susceptible to rollovers and have been associated with more than 500 fatalities since 1990.

In the last Congress, I introduced the School Bus Safety Act which had been designed to prevent schools from taking advan-

tage of a loophole that allowed them to purchase used 15-passenger vans even though it was illegal for them to purchase new 15-passenger vans because of safety issues. The bill I am introducing today goes farther and addresses the safety of these vehicles.

I became alarmingly aware of the safety problems of these vehicles when a church group from Westminster, Colorado rolled the 15-passenger van they were driving 2½ times en route to a religious retreat. This tragedy resulted in four people dying. I found out later that these vans were notorious for getting out of the drivers control and were highly susceptible to rolling. These kinds of accidents seem to be symptomatic to these kinds of vehicles. Early last summer another one of these vans, full of firefighters, rolled over numerous times killing four of the passengers in western Colorado. Accidents will happen, but I believe if these people had been in different vehicles their deaths may have been avoided.

When these vans are fully loaded they become highly prone to rollovers. In 2001, the National Highway Traffic Administration (NHTSA) conducted a study that demonstrated the dramatic increase in rollovers when these vehicles carry increasingly larger loads. A fully loaded van has a rollover risk that is six times higher than if there are only five people in the van.

The bill I am introducing today would require NHTSA to include 15-passenger vans in their Dynamic Rollover Testing Program required by the Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability, and Documentation (TREAD) Act, which currently does not include these vehicles. It does not make a lot of sense to me to exempt them from the same safety standards that NHTSA will apply to other passenger cars and sport utility vehicles. This information will give drivers information they need in order to safely operate certain vehicles under different conditions.

This legislation would also require 15-passenger vans to be included in NHTSA's New Car Assessment Program (NCAP). NCAP provides consumers information on how different vehicles withstand crashes, and was recently expanded to include the risk of rollover. Currently, NCAP does not do rollover testing for vehicles that carry more than 10 people.

In addition, the bill requires NHTSA to work with van manufacturers to evaluate and test the potential of new technologies to help drivers maintain control of their vans. Specifically, NHTSA would look at Electronic Stability Control (ESC) systems that some SUVs are already equipped with and rear-view mirror-based rollover warning systems. These kinds of innovative technologies could significantly reduce rollovers and save lives.

"Fifteen-passenger" vans were initially designed to carry cargo, not people. But now these vans are widely used by airports, hotels, and other commercial interests to transport customers from one location to another. People using these vans may not realize that the Federal Motor Carrier Administration (FMCA) has not completed rulemaking on Federal motor carrier safety regulations for 15-passenger vans that are used for commercial purposes. This bill would require the FMCA to complete their rulemaking, which began in 1999, to ensure that commercial passengers get to their destinations safely.

This bill was built on the foundation of my School Bus Safety Act of 2001 and it still ad-

resses the van loophole created in 1974 when organizations were banned from purchasing new 15-passenger vans to transport school age children but were allowed to purchase the vans used.

This legislation removes this nearly 30-year-old loophole in the Federal regulations and extends the ban to include leasing, renting, and buying of these vans, thereby making the buyers accountable, as well as the seller. These changes will insure that the intent of the 1974 law is finally realized. The bill would also strengthen the penalties on those who violate this important safety provision.

The legislation raises the prescribed penalty for breaking this law from "not more than \$1000" to "not more than \$25,000," thereby giving the enforcement agencies something to make it worth their while to pursue. This provision is important because from 1974 until 1997, NHTSA, which had responsibility for administering the law, did not initiate a single enforcement proceeding in the entire country.

Safety transcends party lines. Senator SNOWE and I have had tragic events take place in our states that have unfortunately made us very aware of the dangers of 15-passenger vans. Last year there was a tragic accident in the State of Maine that cost the lives of 14 forestry workers who were killed when their 15-passenger van rolled off of a bridge, killing all but one. This was the single worst motor vehicle accident in Maine's history. So we are introducing identical bills in the House and the Senate. With bipartisan support we hope to end these kinds of needlessly tragic accidents.

Mr. Speaker, one of the government's roles is to ensure the safety of its citizens. This legislation gives consumers the information they need to know about the safety of these vans and it eliminates a loophole that allows people to get around a child safety law. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this common sense legislation.

TRIBUTE TO THE SAN FERNANDO  
CATHEDRAL

**HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, April 3, 2003*

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, last week the San Fernando Cathedral celebrated the completion of its renovation. Today I am introducing a resolution honoring the San Fernando Cathedral—the oldest cathedral in the United States and the oldest standing structure in my district of San Antonio, Texas. I and my fellow colleague from San Antonio, CIRO RODRIGUEZ, want to pay tribute to this exquisite building, and the great history and culture that it embodies.

San Fernando Cathedral is both literally and figuratively the geographic centerpoint of San Antonio. This cathedral is not only revered by the people of San Antonio, but by all the people of this Nation, who remember the strength and sacrifice of those who built this country. As I mentioned before, just last week, the renovation of this magnificent building was completed. I stand here today to mark this achievement.

The San Fernando Cathedral is a grand structure, rich in its history and meaning. Like