

OLYMPIC GOLD FOR REFUGEES OF DARFUR: THANK YOU JOEY CHEEK!

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to applaud an Olympic Champion Gold Medal winner speed-skater Joey Cheek. Joey Cheek won the Olympic Gold Medal in the men's 500-meter speed skating race in Turin, Italy on February 13, 2006. Minutes after he won the race while millions of Americans and almost a billion listeners from around the world were focused solely on him, Cheek used his "fifteen minutes of fame" to announce he was donating his prize money to child refugees from Darfur. Cheek, citing the U.S. government finding of genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan, said he wanted to sponsor programs for 60,000 children of Darfur forced into refugee camps in Chad.

For Joey Cheek, competing in the Olympics was a blessing and his way of saying thanks for his opportunity, was to help others. Before answering any questions about his winning race, Cheek announced he would talk to and challenge all Olympic sponsors and participants to match his gift.

When Mr. Cheek won the Silver Medal in the 1000 meter he donated his \$15,000 prize money. By the end of the Olympics, Mr. Cheek donated his total money from the US Olympic Committee, \$40,000, to victims of genocide in Darfur. By the end of the Olympic Games, ABC's announcer, Bob Costas reported that Cheek's challenge had brought in donations of \$300,000 for the refugees from Darfur.

Joey Cheek is an Olympic champion, but he is more; he is a citizen champion: a person who demonstrated the true American values of his country: generosity, compassion, kindness and goodness of heart. Mr. Cheek is not a rich man; he is 27 years old. He had already announced the 2006 games would be his last Olympics. In donating what might have been his one and only time to bask in triumph before a world-wide audience for his skating skills, Joey Cheek revealed his heart. He demonstrated something I believe lives in the hearts of all the compassionate people of this country; altruism, a pure selfless gift to men, women and children who, without our help, are destined to die.

UNICEF's website says 1.4 million Sudanese children, including 500,000 age five or younger, have been displaced from the Darfur region by militia groups, including the Janjaweed militia, that have destroyed villages, brutally killed men and children and raped women as the means of annihilating an entire people because they are non-Arab, black Africans. The Government in Khartoum has been complicit in these mass murders and slow starvation of at least 300,000 people. Two and one-half million people of Darfur have been displaced, their villages burned, their crops destroyed and their well water poisoned with the bodies of their children, spouses, brothers, sisters, fathers and mothers.

In February of this year, I signed a bipartisan letter to the President along with 80 of my colleagues, Democrat and Republican, in

the House of Representatives asking Mr. Bush to exercise badly needed leadership to stop the genocide in Darfur. This is the first genocide that can be stopped. The 7000 African Union (AU) peacekeepers protecting the people in Darfur are good, but they are not enough to save the tribes of Darfur. They need help. According to the experts, the genocide could be stopped, it would cease, if there were 20,000 peacekeepers to provide genuine security. My colleagues and I wrote the letter in February because for 28 days the United States was the President of the United Nations Security Council. We hoped the President would seize this moment to do what no other President has done: stop genocide. Although we are not now the President of the UN Security Council, it does not mean we cannot act to stop the genocide.

Not one other winner of any medal did a deed as great as Joey Cheek's. I am proud of every American Olympian who worked so hard and made us proud by winning gold, silver and bronze medals at the Olympics, but I believe what Mr. Cheek did is worthy of special recognition and celebration; he set an example, a standard for the people of America. He is one person who made a huge difference to children, many of whom are orphans, victims of genocide by the government of Sudan in Khartoum.

Joey Cheek told the media that he wants to help Darfur refugee children to live but he also hopes they will be able to learn and play sports. If more citizens would follow Mr. Cheek's example, his vision of the children of Darfur being children not victims, would not be out of reach.

There is a teaching from the Talmud: "He who saves one life has saved the world." Joey Cheek started what I hope will be a beginning for many who want to express their moral values as Mr. Cheek has done. Every citizen may not be able to give money for Darfur, but he or she can ask his pastor, priest, imam or rabbi to speak out at every service and remind their congregations that genocide is happening. It is a long slow genocide that has gone on for three years. Each citizen can also call on the Administration to stop the genocide now. It is within the power of this greatest country on earth to end the horrific suffering of people who are being murdered, starved, raped and mutilated because they are non-Arab Africans. Each person can do something to save a life in Darfur and to save the world.

REMEMBRANCE OF MARVALYNE HENRY: A REMARKABLE WOMAN

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2006

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay belated tribute to one of our community's unsung leaders, the late Marvalyne W. Henry, whose life was remembered and celebrated on January 9, 2006 at the Range Memorial Chapel in Miami-Dade County, Florida.

Ms. Henry left a wonderful legacy for all of us, and she will be sorely missed, especially by those who looked up to her as a model of utmost benevolence and caring. I want to take this opportunity to honor her faithful stewardship over those who came to her for guidance

and understanding. The hallmark of her life's excellence and commitment was defined by her compassion, which evoked the ever-enduring presence of God in her life.

Born to the late J.C. Woodson and Margaret "Maggie" Williams on August 16, 1937 in Smithville, Georgia, Ms. Henry demonstrated an immense love and compassion for others, especially the less fortunate and the down-trodden. Despite the problems she had had with her health, her faith was unshakable and served her well in ministering to those who needed her help.

Her nurturing spirit transformed her home into an oasis of love and encouragement—not only for the immediate members of her family, but also for countless others who came to seek much-needed comfort and solace from her. Indeed, the genuine kindness she extended to others transformed a rather sad occasion into a celebration of her life when they could take comfort in memorializing the magnificent example of a life so nobly lived. Despite the sobering challenges of her health problems, Ms. Henry managed to exude a great soul and a beautiful spirit that evoked an unshakable belief rarely shown and tested amidst so much trial and tribulation.

Ms. Henry is survived by her children: Nedra Henry, Lynnette Mathis (Larry), Tammie Coney (Michael), Gidget McLean (Charleston), Tameka Benbow, Derrick Henry (Alisia), Gary Mays, and Sherman Henry; sister, Wendie Williams; brothers, Samuel Williams (Mary), Richard Williams (Vanessa), and Leon Williams (Ann); two aunts: Loraine Humphries, and Doll Calbert of Detroit, Michigan; a host of grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Buttressed by her unflinching faith, Ms. Henry's life has indeed been bountifully blessed. This is the celebration of a remarkable woman, and I know that my colleagues join me in honoring her.

REMEMBERING THE LIFE OF ELEANOR SLATER

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2006

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay my respects to Eleanor Slater, a great friend who recently passed away. Known as the grande dame of Rhode Island Democratic politics, Eleanor blazed trails for women in our state and will be greatly missed.

She began her distinguished political career in 1958 when she was elected to the Rhode Island House of Representatives where she served four terms. She then ran successfully for the Rhode Island Senate. While in the Senate, she championed what is believed to be the first Fair Housing Act in the country. Eleanor was also vocal on mental health and gerontology issues, and in 1969 became the chief of the former Division on Aging.

After 18 years in public service, Eleanor decided to pursue other interests, which included receiving a degree in political science from the University of Rhode Island at the age of 70. She remained instrumental in the Democratic Party and was a fixture at numerous Democratic National Conventions as a delegate.

Always thinking of the next generation, she was a great advisor for many former and current politicians, including myself. She had the

foresight and belief that I could run for Secretary of State and win that race—which I did. She served as an honorary chair on many of my campaigns and taught me valuable lessons that I still use today.

While her dedication to the Democratic Party and the state of Rhode Island was great, Eleanor was above all dedicated to her family, and my thoughts and prayers are with her two sons, William and Thomas; her brother Robert Boland; her sister, Dorothy Merrill; her four grandchildren; and her five great grandchildren.

While I am sad to say goodbye to such a wonderful woman, at 97 years old, we should celebrate Eleanor's long, distinguished life. Eleanor, you made a difference.

CHILDREN'S SAFETY AND VIOLENT CRIME REDUCTION ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 8, 2006

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island. Mr. Speaker, I am voting in favor of passing H.R. 4472, The Children's Safety and Violent Crime Reduction Act of 2006. However, I want to make clear the serious concerns I have regarding some of the content of this legislation and the manner in which it is being considered by the House of Representatives.

I ultimately support this legislation, primarily because it incorporates the core content contained in H.R. 3132, The Children's Safety Act of 2005, which was previously passed by the House of Representatives on September 14, 2005. H.R. 3132—and by extension H.R. 4472—provides for vital improvements to strengthen the ability of our justice system to protect children from sex offenders. This legislation helps to develop a comprehensive national approach to prevent sex offenders from preying on our children, as it creates a national sex offender registry and increases penalties for sex crimes against children. Like everyone else, I have been horrified by the recent cases of abductions and murders of children by sex offenders, and am determined to do everything in my power as a public official to prevent such tragedies from ever occurring again.

I am also supportive of the main provisions of H.R. 1751, The Secure Access to Justice and Court Protection Action of 2005, which are included in H.R. 4472. These provisions would increase federal penalties for the assault, murder, or kidnapping of judges and court employees and make it a federal crime to kill or assault public safety officers or other court personnel.

However, H.R. 4472 also contains the core content of additional legislation, H.R. 1279, The Gang Deterrence and Community Protection Act of 2005, which I voted against last year on May 11, 2005. H.R. 1279—and by extension H.R. 4472—creates new federal criminal penalties and mandatory minimums for crimes committed by gang members, yet it loosely defines the definition of gang membership. Further, it redefines "crimes of violence" to include drug-trafficking crimes, and authorizes the Attorney General to charge a juvenile

as an adult for certain crimes. I believe this aspect of the legislation has many flaws, one of which is the ability to penalize even non-violent drug dealing and some misdemeanors as "crimes of violence." I am opposed to prosecuting youth as adults and imposing mandatory minimum sentences.

We already incarcerate two million people, about half for non-violent drug crimes, and I believe that we need to emphasize more prevention and early intervention programs geared towards at-risk youth. This legislation seriously errs in its lack of focus on prevention and early intervention, which time after time has proven to be the most effective way to prevent juvenile, and ultimately, adult crime.

I also think it is yet another abuse of the procedures of the House by the majority to bring up this bill on the suspension calendar. The suspension calendar, which does not permit amendments, is intended for non-controversial bills for which there is broad consensus. For the reasons described above and others, many Members of this body have reservations about H.R. 4472. Undoubtedly, a number of Members would have offered improving amendments if given the opportunity. Perhaps those amendments would have been rejected by a majority of the House, and would have failed. Perhaps they would have been approved unanimously. Bringing this legislation up on the suspension calendar subverts the democratic process. Particularly given that the House has already passed the entire contents of H.R. 4472, it is patently obvious that the sole purpose of bringing up H.R. 4472 without an ability to amend it is to play politics.

In conclusion, my vote in favor of passing H.R. 4472 comes despite my reservations regarding these controversial provisions, and is driven by my overriding concern for the safety of our nation's most valuable asset—our children. I continue to have major concerns about some elements of the legislation, and particularly the manner in which it has been brought up. Protecting our nation's children should be our overriding priority, and worth real debate and attention from the House.

IN RECOGNITION OF FIFTY YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE FOR THE TUNISIAN REPUBLIC AND U.S.-TUNISIAN RELATIONS

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2006

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the people of the Tunisian Republic and extend my congratulations to President Ben Ali as his nation celebrates fifty years of independence on March 20, 2006.

The United States and Tunisia have a strong relationship that promotes cooperation on important bilateral and regional issues. The engagement between our two countries on economic, security and cultural matters is vibrant and reflects a commitment to enhancing and strengthening our bilateral relationship for the future. In this regard, both our nations should have more desire than ever before to strengthen our ties and build even stronger bridges between our countries. The strength of our friendship also allows our two nations to

openly discuss issues in which common perspectives are not shared. In this regard we must continue to work together to find common ground that reflects the respective values and hopes of the American and Tunisian people.

Tunisia has a critically important stabilizing role in both Africa and the Middle East. We should clearly recognize Tunisia as a diplomatic and political force for moderation and shared security in the Maghreb region. I thank the Tunisian government for its cooperation with the United States in combating terrorism and for its commitment to continue this positive partnership. At a time when extremists in various parts of the world are promoting violence and intolerance, Tunisia's moderate role is vital to promoting security, as well as peace.

One area of great interest to me is the status of women and girls around the world. Over the past fifty years, Tunisia has been an example of a nation willing to raise the status of women by promoting opportunities for women and girls to achieve their potential and contribute their skills to society. Today, schools and universities are filled with girls and women preparing themselves to help lead Tunisia into the future. This, for me, is a very exciting prospect indeed.

Mr. Speaker, let us extend our warmest regards to the people of Tunisia, officials of the Tunisian Republic and President Ben Ali on their celebration of fifty years of independence. Their friendship and decades of cooperation with the people of the United States is truly valuable and a relationship that I intend to work to both maintain as well as strengthen.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2006

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, on March 15, 2006, I was unable to cast my floor vote on rollcall 43. The vote I missed was an amendment to H.R. 4939.

Had I been present for the vote, I would have voted "no" on rollcall 43.

CANADIAN BORDER PARTNERSHIP

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 16, 2006

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, as a Member of the House International Relations Committee, I would like to congratulate our neighbors to the north on their recent Parliamentary elections and the swearing in of Stephen Harper, the 22nd Prime Minister of Canada on February 6, 2006. Prime Minister Harper ran a successful campaign focused on a conservative agenda and creating a smaller, more effective government.

Our two countries have had and will continue to have friendly diplomatic relations. The United States and Canada are each other's largest trading partners with \$1.3 billion of trade crossing our shared border every day. It is my sincere desire that our American and the newly formed Canadian Government are