

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, today is World Press Freedom Day, a time set aside to honor the work and sacrifice of journalists around the world. I believe that freedom of the press is vital to American national security and to our democracy here at home.

Today, my colleague from Indiana, Mr. PENCE, and Senators CHRIS DODD and RICHARD LUGAR joined me in launching a new bipartisan, bicameral caucus aimed at advancing press freedom around the world. The Congressional Caucus for Freedom of the Press creates a forum where the United States Congress can work to combat and condemn media censorship and the persecution of journalists around the world. The launch of this new caucus sends a strong message that Congress will defend democratic values and human rights wherever they are threatened.

This evening, Mr. PENCE and I hosted an event here in the Capitol to celebrate World Press Freedom Day. We were honored by the presence of Musa Klebnikov, the widow of murdered American journalist Paul Klebnikov, the editor of Forbes Russia who was gunned down on a Moscow street in July of 2004. A Moscow court is due to hand down a verdict against the alleged triggermen tomorrow, and Mrs. Klebnikov spoke movingly about continuing her late husband's work of helping the Russian people by working with them to build an independent press.

In launching this new caucus, we have been encouraged by the wide range of organizations and individuals such as Reporters without Borders, Freedom House, and the Committee to Protect Journalists, which have all enthusiastically endorsed this effort. But I was most gratified to receive a letter of support this morning from Walter Cronkite, the longtime CBS News anchor who is not only an American icon but a living symbol of the positive force that journalists can have in shaping our lives.

Freedom of the press is so central to our democracy that the Framers enshrined it in the first amendment of our Constitution. At the time, there was little in the way of journalistic ethics; and newspapers were filled with scurrilous allegations leveled at public figures. Even so, our Founders understood its importance to advancing our experiment in democracy.

Throughout our history, journalists have jealously guarded their rights and American courts have, in the main, carved out broad protections for the press. In the United States, the press operates almost as a fourth branch of government, the Fourth Estate, as it is called, independent of the other three and positioned as watchdogs of our freedom.

The United States, as the world's oldest democracy and its greatest champion, has a special obligation to defend the rights of journalists wherever and whenever they are threatened. A free press is one of the most powerful forces for advancing democracy, human rights, and economic development, so our commitment to these larger objectives requires active engagement in the protection and the promotion of this freedom.

These are difficult and dangerous days for reporters around the world. According to the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists, 47 journalists were killed in 2005, most of whom were murdered to silence or punish them. While last year's death toll was lower than the 57 deaths in 2004, they were well above the yearly average over the last two decades. But too many have paid the ultimate price just for doing their jobs.

Daniel Pearl was the Wall Street Journal's South Asia bureau chief and was on his way to an interview with a supposed terrorist leader when, on January 23, 2002, he was kidnapped by a militant group that claimed that he was a spy. For weeks, speculation persisted about his fate, until his decapitated body was found in a shallow grave outside Karachi in late February.

In Algeria, Mr. Mohamed Boualem Benchicou, the former editor of *Le Matin*, was given a 2-year prison sentence for being too outspoken.

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He has been held in El Harrach prison for the past year as his health deteriorates and members of his newspaper staff are routinely subject to interrogation by Algerian authorities and also to judicial harassment.

Raul Rivero Castaneda is one of Cuba's best known dissident journalists. Over the years, Mr. Rivero has paid dearly for his commitment to providing Cuban citizens with independent, unbiased information. In March 2003, Rivero was arrested and charged with "acting against Cuban independence and attempting to divide Cuban territorial integrity," writing "against the government," organizing "subversive meetings," and collaborating with U.S. diplomats. Sentenced to 20 years in jail, he served 8 months before being allowed to seek asylum in Spain in April 2005.

These are just some of the journalists that our caucus will highlight and profile to bring attention to those brave, committed members of the press around the world who are fighting for the freedom of all of us and to highlight those countries where press freedom is under attack. We welcome all of your membership in this caucus.

THE INVASION OF AMERICA—
TEXAS SPEAKS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOHMERT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I have received numerous correspondence in the last 24 hours regarding the unlawful invasion into the United States. Here is what some Texans are saying.

Heather Pritchett in Humble, Texas, says: "Illegal immigrants should be sent home and required to follow the same immigration laws as legal immigrants have faced. It is wrong to give illegal immigrants legal status, even with several requirements such as learning English, essentially it says it is okay to ignore the law. An open door immigration policy is one of the wonderful things about this country and it should continue, but please close the windows."

Jeffrey Kendrick of Spring, Texas, writes: "Why do we allow illegals to choose what laws are okay to disregard? As an American citizen who served our country for over 10 years in active military duty, this makes my blood boil. Why aren't we enforcing the laws that are already on the books? Are there other laws that are okay to break? Why should our representatives in Washington allow our country to be overrun with people who have no regard for the law? Stand up for our country. I have always respected your record and valued your opinion. Don't let the country be sold out to whining liberals who are afraid of what illegal aliens may think of them. Who cares what they think? Go after companies that employ them illegally, enforce the law, preserve the American way of life."

Robert Arnold in Atascocita, Texas, writes: "It is amazing to see so many people mock our government while breaking the American law. As a citizen, as a veteran, I would like to know what plan is on the drawing board to stop the inflow of illegal activities at the borders. At the very least, make those people pay taxes. I don't even care about the \$3 a gallon gasoline, but work to get this immigration issue under control."

Zine Strong of Humble, Texas, writes: "I am appalled at what is happening in our country where it appears that illegal immigrants have more rights than American citizens. I see daily on television the plight of those who live at the border. Their properties are vandalized, their lives are threatened by those crossing the border illegally. Our school and health systems are stretched to the limit and the jails are filled with people who have no right to be here in the first place.

"I am an immigrant myself who was blessed to have the privilege of becoming an American citizen. I came to this country legally many years ago with my two small daughters. As soon as we arrived, my daughters were enrolled in a school so they could learn English and we spoke only English at home. My sister, who had sponsored us, took us to McDonald's and told my daughters they could not be Americans unless they ate hamburgers and drank Coca-Cola. Five years later we became American citizens.

"We are Brazilian by birth and Americans by choice, but we did it legally. We never demanded any rights because we didn't have any until we became U.S. citizens. We pay our taxes. We obey the law. We love America with its traditions and all it stands for, and we do not wish to see it destroyed or changed.

"It is with horror that I see thousands of illegals take to the streets and shout for their rights. Their sense of entitlement is offensive, and politicians in Washington who write legislation protecting them are saying to American young people that laws are to be broken and you will be rewarded if you do break the law.

"The American people have had enough. For me, the last insult was to see our National anthem being not only translated into Spanish, but having our words changed to serve someone else's interests. The anthem is sacred. Can you imagine if immigrants in France did the same thing with the French anthem? They probably would be shot.

"I urge you to protect our borders. Do whatever is needed to stop the invasion. Yes, we are a nation of immigrants, but the immigrants who built our Nation came here legally. Furthermore, they came to give to this country. They learned the language, followed the laws and were assimilated into the United States. The people who are coming now want to change the country. To begin with, they don't even learn the language.

"In 2004, I had to go to the emergency room at a local hospital. I was there 7½ hours because the waiting room was full of illegals who, according to the law, have to be taken care of. I pay taxes, they don't. Where are my rights? The civil rights of American people are being violated to protect illegals.

"To the politicians who say we are a generous people who should help those who come here looking for a better way of life, I say, well, where does that end? The Mexicans are no more deserving than other people. What about the Africans, the Haitians and all other nationalities? Should we open our borders to accommodate the whole world? If those folks want a let better life, let them demonstrate against the Mexican government and fight for their rights in their own country. Otherwise, if we make an exception for them, then in the name of fairness we will have to do it for all nations. What I see now on the borders is anarchy."

Lastly, Milton Chance of Nederland, Texas, briefly states: "I am against illegal immigration. We need to secure the borders. My son-in-law is Mexican and I have two wonderful grandchildren so I am not prejudiced at all. This statement by a former President of the United States sums up the way I feel. 'In the first place, we should insist that an immigrant who comes here in good faith and becomes an American and assimilates himself to us, he shall be treated with the exact equality as

everyone else. It is an outrage to discriminate against any person because of creed, or birthplace, or origin. But this is predicated upon the person's becoming in every facet an American and nothing but an American. There can be no divided allegiance here. Any man who says he is an American but does something else isn't an American at all. We have room but for one flag, the American flag. We have room but for one language, and that is the English language. We have room for but one sole loyalty, and that is the loyalty to the American people." Signed Teddy Roosevelt, 1907.

Mr. Speaker, I hope Congress is listening to the people of this country. And that's just the way it is.

ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL TRADE AGREEMENTS DON'T WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, does anyone here or watching at home wear one-size-fits-all clothing? It never fits right. It never looks good. What works for one person doesn't work for another. When it comes to trade agreements, a one-size-fits-all approach does not work either.

So then why are we negotiating trade agreements that take a one-size-fits-all approach to very different countries? Electronic comparison of the labor chapter in CAFTA versus the same chapter in Oman and Peru FTAs shows that Peru's FTA text is word-for-word identical to CAFTA. The Oman text contains only four syntax changes that do not alter the underlying meaning.

The labor chapter simply requires that each country enforce its existing labor laws. It does nothing to require countries to improve their laws to reflect fairness to working people.

There are also no safeguards in the agreement to prevent countries from weakening their labor laws. This is the same failed CAFTA approach: Squeeze it into one-size-fits-all clothing and slap it on to two different countries, Peru and Oman.

In Peru, the United States State Department has indicated that child labor remains a serious problem. It is estimated that 2.3 million children between the ages of 6 and 17-years-old are engaged in work. In Oman, the revised 2003 law remains in serious violation of the International Labor Organization's most important and fundamental rights, the freedom of association and the right to organize and bargain collectively.

The Sultan of Oman allows for no independent unions in the country. Whatever worker representative committees exist in the country, they are also subject to the government's approval. Such committees may not discuss wages, hours or conditions of employment. Needless to say, these are flawed agreements. They borrow weak

labor rules from CAFTA and apply them to the countries that are in dire need of better labor standards for their workers. They do nothing to improve the lives of the work or the working conditions of these people. And, make no mistake, what is bad for them is also bad for us here in the United States.

Any vote for the Oman or Peru FTA must take into account the broader economic reality that we are facing here today. Our trade deficit hit a record shattering \$726 billion last year. We have lost more than 3 million manufacturing jobs since 1998. Average wages have not kept pace with inflation this year, despite healthy productivity growth. The number of people in poverty continues to grow, and the real median family income continues to fall.

Offshore outsourcing for white collar jobs is increasingly impacting highly educated, highly skilled workers. RECORD trade and budget deficits, unsustainable levels of consumer debt, stagnant wages, all paint a picture of an economy living beyond its means, dangerously unstable in a volatile global environment.

These trade deals are not working for us. They aren't working for this country or for the countries we trade with either.

I urge all Members of the House to send our new United States Trade Representative an important message: All future agreements must make a real departure from a failed NAFTA and CAFTA model in order to succeed.

American workers are willing to support increased trade if the rules that govern are fair, if they stimulate growth, create jobs and protect fundamental rights, both in America and abroad. I am committed to fighting for better trade policies that benefit U.S. workers and the U.S. economy as a whole.

We simply cannot afford more of the same, one-size-fits-all clothing, because what you will get is a wolf in sheep's clothing.

THE PROBLEM OF AMERICANS WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to raise awareness of a problem that is plaguing our health care system, and that is the number of uninsured Americans. It has been estimated that more than 45 million lack health insurance. However, it is important for us to understand better who the individuals are that make up that 45 million.

A census taken in 2003 reveals that almost one-third of the uninsured, 15 million, live in households with annual incomes above \$50,000. 7.6 million of these individuals live in households with incomes of more than \$75,000.