

and Rick Smith and their seven grandchildren, Lloyd IV and Ryan Bentsen; Skyler, Kendall and Kate Bentsen; and Lori and Richard Smith.

Mr. Speaker, Lloyd Bentsen is a committed public servant with a remarkable record of achievement as Treasury Secretary, Senator, Representative, businessman and decorated war veteran. He is also a devoted husband and a caring father, grandfather, and uncle. He has dedicated his life to public service and his family. He is an example and an inspiration to Texans and Americans, of all that is good in public service. He is truly deserving of the Medal of Freedom, which is awarded by the President and recognizes individuals who have made significant meritorious contributions to the security or national interests of the United States; world peace; cultural or other significant public or private endeavors. Without doubt, Lloyd Bentsen meets this criteria and I salute him for his achievements and receipt of this award.

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
PEPSI SOUTHERN 500

HON. JOHN M. SPRATT, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 5, 1999

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, on September 5th of this year, the Darlington Raceway will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Southern 500 stock car race, now known as the Pepsi Southern 500.

The Darlington Raceway, I'm proud to say, is located in my district. It was built in 1949, and unlike most stock car tracks of its day, it was paved with asphalt, giving the track its name, "The Lady in Black."

Harold Brasington, a native of Darlington, attended the Indianapolis 500 in 1933, and brought home with him a dream, a vision of some day having a race track in his home town, Darlington, South Carolina. Harold Brasington's dream had to wait out the Depression and World War II, but he nurtured it and in 1949 he made it come true.

The first Southern 500 was held on September 1, 1950, and sanctioned by "Big Bill" France and NASCAR, the National Association of Stock Car Auto Racing. STROM THURMOND was the Governor of South Carolina at the time, and he and his lovely wife, Jean, cut the ribbon and christened the race the "Southern 500," to the delight of 25,000 fans, an unexpected overflow crowd.

The Southern 500 was an instant success. It soon grew into the largest sporting event in South Carolina. This Labor Day Weekend, over 100,000 people are expected for the 50th anniversary. Millions more will enjoy the race by television or radio.

The great success of the Darlington Raceway started with the vision and skills of two great entrepreneurs, Harold Brasington and "Big Bill" France, both now gone. But their leadership has been carried forward by Jim Hunter, who has made Darlington Raceway bigger and better than ever, and who has won recognition as South Carolina's "Economic Ambassador." Because of his skills as a manager and sports promoter, the Pepsi Southern 500 and the TranSouth 400 now generate over \$50 million, making the Darlington Race-

way a top source of tourism income for South Carolina.

Other race tracks have been built since 1949, some larger, some more glamorous than Darlington. But the Darlington Raceway remains world famous, and an attraction fans everywhere, because it remains the genuine article.

The Darlington Raceway has never forgotten its roots and the people who helped make it what it is. Every year, the Darlington Raceway makes a substantial contribution to Darlington's schools. It recognizes a Darlington County Teacher of the Year, and awards a scholarship to a Darlington County high school senior; and every year, it cosponsors a gala honoring 1500 county educators.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent the Darlington Raceway. As we approach the 50th Anniversary of the Southern 500, I think commendations are in order for Jim Hunter, President of the Darlington Raceway; for Bill France, Jr., CEO of International Speedway Corporation and President of NASCAR; and for everyone involved in bringing us 50 years of the finest, most exciting stock car racing in the world.

SILK ROAD STRATEGY ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. JOSEPH R. PITTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, August 2, 1999

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1152, the Silk Road Strategy Act. I commend my colleague, Mr. BEREUTER, for championing this important legislation that will greatly benefit countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

The Silk Road Strategy Act is a proactive policy of engagement, which authorizes U.S. assistance to support the economic and political independence of Kazakhstan, Krygyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, after decades of Communist rule, these countries have faced a tough road toward economic development and prosperity, and the cultivation of a democratic society.

With this in mind, the U.S. must actively engage this region to ensure a peaceful post-Soviet era, and to protect our national security. Since being elected to Congress in 1996, I have worked hard to build bridges between the U.S. and Central Asia and the Caucasus. Through regular meetings with Ambassadors from this region and travel to Central Asia, I am keenly aware of the necessity of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, the Great Silk Road, which in ancient times joined the East with the West, by means of trade, cultural-humanitarian, political and economic ties, has a history stretching back several thousand years. The Great Silk Road played the role of a connecting bridge between countries and civilizations. It served as a channel for trade, which became the catalyst for the development of crafts and the active exchange of philosophies and cultures. The spirit of the Great Silk Road is what this bill before us today is about—a new Silk Road—connecting Central Asia and the Caucasus with the United States, in an effort to encourage economic, cultural, and political exchange between our countries.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of this bill and look forward to continuing working with Central Asia and Caucasus states to build prosperous market-oriented economies in the former Soviet Union. Again, I thank my colleague, Mr. BEREUTER, for sponsoring this bill, and I urge my colleagues to support the Silk Road Strategy Act.

HOMES OVER TAX CUTS

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 5, 1999

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I am protesting this rule because it's the first step in ripping off the roof over people's heads.

That's what we are doing when we cut the HUD budget. Some people will argue that cutting the budget is good government. They will argue that we are reducing wasteful government spending. But this isn't just some government program. It's a roof over people's heads. When we cut this program, we are taking away some senior's rent money. We are throwing families out of their homes. We are denying people on fixed and low incomes the safety and security of an affordable home.

One of those government programs is the Section 8 program. HUD has contracted with private landlords to provide affordable apartments to people on fixed and low incomes. Over 500,000 of those apartments will come up for renewal in the next five years. If we don't renew those contracts, landlords will leave the program, raise their rents and evict hundreds of thousands of people on fixed and low incomes.

This is a terrible thing and we know it. Last March, we cut \$350 million from the Section 8 program to pay for non-emergency spending in Kosovo. But both the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee and the Chairman of the VA-HUD Appropriations subcommittee promised to put it back if they could because they know that it is money well spent. If we have the money, we ought to use it to give people a safe home so they can go to work and their children can go to school and they all can be productive citizens.

Well, we can put the \$350 million back if we don't give \$800 billion to wealthy special interest in the form of an irresponsible tax cut. And we should put in an extra \$1 billion that the President has requested because 500,000 households are depending on us.

This money is well spent. It's money for local governments to attract jobs. It's money for services for seniors and persons with disabilities so that they can live their lives with some comfort. It's money for secure families. People deserve this from us and we ought to give it to them. Oppose this rule, because it's the first step in ripping off the roof over people's heads.

FULLY FUND HOUSING AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL LOW INCOME
HOUSING COALITION,

Washington, DC, August 3, 1999.

Hon. JANICE SCHAKOWSKY,
House of Representatives,
Cannon Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE SCHAKOWSKY: This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Housing Act of 1949, in which Congress declared