

group of Americans. His office wall was decorated with an enormous Hmong tapestry given in appreciation. And, on occasion, his inner and outer offices were lined with former Hmong soldiers in fatigues using his phones and desks to plan their lobbying assault on Washington.

After years of persistent advocacy by Vento and others, the bill easing citizenship requirements of Hmong veterans was passed by both Houses and signed into law in 2000 by President Clinton.

Lee Pao Xiong, a Hmong member of the Metropolitan Council, called Vento's decision to leave Congress at the end of his 12th term "a great loss to our community. Bruce Vento was a strong advocate for the Hmong community, always willing to bear our concerns."

The advocacy of the latest immigrant group by a man who was himself the descendant of immigrants was in the tradition of St. Paul, said Garrison Keillor, Minnesota's homegrown humorist. He said at the testimonial dinner that Vento never seemed like a slick Washington pol. "Bruce is like St. Paul," he said, later describing Vento as a man of "modesty and courage and passion."

PERSONAL LIFE

Vento's final year in Washington was not filled with funereal sentiment. In August he married a fellow educator, Susan Lynch of Chatfield, Minn.

It was the first wedding for Lynch but not for Vento, who has three adult sons from his first marriage, Michael, Peter and John.

A week before the nuptials, Vento, smiling but wan, attended the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles, appearing with former Vice President Mondale and Minneapolis Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton as the Minnesota delegation cast its ballots for Vento's friend from their first days together in the House, Vice President Al Gore.

Vento's energy astonished his colleagues. After his cancer was diagnosed in February, he underwent surgery at the Mayo Clinic for removal of his left lung and diaphragm. He lost 25 pounds and some of his hair as he completed a draining regimen of chemotherapy and radiation treatment.

"I'm looking forward to fishing," Vento told reporters and supporters who asked what he planned to do next. "That's the ulterior motive in all the environmental protections I've fought for."

His longtime colleague and partner in liberal Democratic legislative ventures, Sabo, seemed stunned by Vento's news, saying over and over, "I can't imagine this place without Bruce around."

In the weeks after Vento announced his illness and his plans to retire, Republicans—from former Rep. Vin Weber to Sen. Rod Grams—acknowledged his 24 years of service.

"Put the partisan differences aside," said St. Paul Mayor Norm Coleman. "He delivered a lot for this community, and his passion will be missed."

[From the St. Paul Pioneer Press, Oct. 10, 2000]

U.S. REP. VENTO DIES
(By Tom Webb)

U.S. Rep. Bruce Vento, St. Paul's unwavering voice in Congress for 24 years, died Tuesday morning at his home in St. Paul after a long bout with cancer. He was 60.

A native of St. Paul's East Side, Vento was famed as a champion for wilderness, consumers, working people and the homeless, who never forgot the everyday struggles of average folks fighting to build a better life.

Vento died at 11:20 a.m., with his family at his bedside, his staff announced.

Vento was elected to Congress in 1976 from the Fourth Congressional District, covering Ramsey County and a sliver of Dakota County. He was the longest serving of a trio of notable DFLers who for a half-century have served the Fourth District in Congress, a group including Eugene McCarthy and Joseph Karth.

He was suffering from mesothelioma, a form of cancer usually linked with exposure to asbestos.

He is survived by his wife, Susan Lynch; his three sons, John, Peter and Michael; their spouses, four grandchildren; his parents, Frank and Anne Vento; and seven brothers and sisters and their families.

Funeral arrangements are pending.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, BRUCE was elected to the State legislature in 1970 and to the House of Representatives in 1977. Before that, he had been a science teacher on the lower east side of St. Paul. He is a true product of the lower east side.

His family is wonderful. Sheila and I have had the chance to spend a lot of time with his family. It is a wonderful, caring, Italian Catholic family. I believe Frank and Annie had eight children; BRUCE was the second oldest.

I want to say two or three things if I may. One, I want to say to BRUCE's family and to his wife Sue: Sue, you have been a gift from Heaven for BRUCE and his family.

I talked to BRUCE Saturday. He turned 60. Today he passed away. When he passed away, all of his family were with him. All of them said: You can let go.

What a beautiful, caring, loving, wonderful family. And what a beautiful, loving, caring man. BRUCE has done so much for so many people. He was so committed to public service. But most important of all, to me, he was a friend whom I will miss.

I remember once he was going to come over to our home in St. Paul to talk about a big dispute over the Boundary Water Wilderness Area. We were supposed to meet early in the morning, but there was a huge snowstorm and all the weather reports were that all the schools were closed. People weren't going to be able to go to work. Everything was shut down. It was impossible to get around. We were supposed to meet at 8 o'clock in the morning. At 5 minutes to 8 o'clock, there was a knock on the door. There was BRUCE. He was in seventh heaven. This was like the outdoors, this was snow, this was Minnesota, and he was there. He loved the environment and did so much for our State and our country.

I say to BRUCE's family, what a great Congressman. It is easy to say that when someone has passed away, but he truly was. People in Minnesota loved this man. They always will. They will never forget him, will never forget all he has done for our Fourth Congressional District and for our State. Sheila and I will never forget BRUCE.

BRUCE is like my friend, Mike Epstein, about whom I spoke. Mike was here for all these years, so committed to public service. Two men, they died too young, from the horrible disease of

cancer, two men who were so committed to public service, so committed to people.

From this day on, my belief is I have two friends who are looking down from heaven. I will be talking to them every day. I know BRUCE's children and grandchildren will be talking to him every day.

I yield the floor.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I certainly commend the Senator on his moving tribute to BRUCE VENTO. Certainly we can tell how emotionally attached the Senator was to that gentleman.

I knew him also. I served with him on the Resource Committee in the House. Certainly he was a fine gentleman. The Senator has described him well. We are all very sad at this loss.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming

THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I wanted to go back to the remarks of the Senator from North Dakota as he talked about some of the issues that all of us are concerned about, issues such as pharmaceuticals—how we make that work; issues such as Medicare—which needs, after these years, some real examination, some changes so over time we can ensure provision of health services to all who are beneficiaries. No one argues with that.

He also mentioned the Patients' Bill of Rights, which is interesting. I do not know of anyone in the Senate or the other body who is not for some form of the bill of rights. The unfortunate part is that there are some defining issues within that subject, defining issues that mean a lot in terms of where it goes in the future. The Senator failed to mention that. This is sort of the technique of those who favor more government. That is to simply talk about the title without talking about what is involved.

We have had in the Senate for a good long time—the Presiding Officer has participated—in a conference report, language designed to bring out a Patients' Bill of Rights that we could pass. Frankly, the Senator from North Dakota and others have opposed that.

One of the questions that is very important is whether or not it is going to be a bill of rights for patients or whether it is going to be a bill of rights for tort lawyers. If you have to go to court whenever there is a controversy, that is, of course, not what we seek to do.

So I want to make the point that you can talk in general terms about many issues. Everyone embraces those issues. But when you talk about the kinds of things that are important, within those issues, to implement them in a manner in keeping with the philosophy that you have over time, then that becomes quite a different matter. Of course, that is why we find ourselves at some loggerheads from time to time.

I have spoken before, and will again, about the amount of effort we have seen from the other side of the aisle to put obstacles in front of these issues and to, really, be more interested in making an issue rather than a solution. I am sorry for that. We are, of course, down now to the end, and we need to do something.

Let me talk for a moment or two about some of the things I think we face, not only in this body right now but that we will face in the future, we will face in this election. We need to make decisions as to where we are going. The key to those decisions in my view, regardless almost of what the decisions are—whether they are business decisions, whether they are personal decisions, whether they are political decisions—is to get some idea of what we want the result to be and where we are going to go over a period of time, and then measure whether or not what we are doing in the interim leads us to the accomplishment of those goals. It seems to me that is one of the most important things we can do.

So we are going to find ourselves, I think—I half hope, maybe—with some different philosophies from this past year, and we are going to have to choose.

I just returned from my State. I am going to get back, I hope, pretty soon and spend some time in schools with a voting program to get kids involved in politics, involved in elections; to talk about the issues and begin to get some feel about what it means to have a government of the people and by the people and for the people. I am excited about that because there are differences in philosophy.

Sometimes we find it difficult to define them, as we have these debates, as we will have tomorrow night. It is true; politicians have a little affinity for making things a little bit blurred. But it is up to us, then, as voters, to really separate those things and decide where we want to go; do we want more Federal Government in our lives or do we want less? It is up to us to define what we think the role of the Federal Government is and how it impacts us as citizens. What is the role of local and State governments? What is the role, then, really of individuals? That is what it is all about: individual freedom—opportunities for success.

We talk about taxes. Do we want more taxes and more Government? Do we want less Government so people can keep more of the money they earn? The real issue, of course, is Federal control down into communities, down into counties, down into schools. Or, indeed, do we want county commissioners and school boards and State legislators to make decisions that fit the decisions made by the people who have to live with them. There is a great deal of difference between the needs we have for the delivery of services in Philadelphia and in Greybull, WY. So those are the kinds of things that are taken into account.

We have talked about a surplus. There are reports of a surplus, certainly. I might say, it is more difficult to control the size of Government when you have a surplus than it is when you do not because, regardless of what the issues are, why, where we have a surplus we ought to spend the money. The other side of that, of course, is if we have a surplus there are certain priority things we ought to do but maybe we ought to put some of those surpluses back with the people who own them. They will be very important there.

We have different plans to deal with them. One of the plans that is out there takes about half of those surpluses and puts them into Social Security. One of the real issues before us is young people who are in their first jobs and pay 12.5 percent of their income, along with their employer, into the Social Security fund. In 40 years, are they going to have any benefits accruing to them? Not unless we make some changes.

The options are just to continue what we are doing and take more tax money to put into it, or to make some changes—for instance, to give some opportunities, based on the choice of the recipient, to put some of that money into the private sector, to get the return on that investment up from 2.5 to 3 percent, up to 4 percent or 5 percent or 6 percent, which certainly would make it more likely that those benefits are going to be there when their benefits are earned and ready to serve them.

When the Senator from North Dakota talked about tax cuts for the top 1 percent, that is not what is being proposed. Indeed, regarding the proposal that is out there that has caused all the 1 percent talk, the people who make the 1 percent, who make the most money in this country, will have a higher proportion of taxes on them than they have had before. Those taxes are for everyone who pays taxes. I think that is an excellent way to do that, to have marginal cuts and double the tax credits. Let's get rid of the estate tax. That doesn't do away with tax on the value, by the way, because that will be taxed when that asset is sold with the capital gains tax. But why should death cause you to have to sell the farm to pay the taxes? It should not.

These are some of the decisions that are out there to be made. Certainly they are important ones. I will not argue about what is right. We hear a lot of this: Let's do the right thing.

That depends on about whom you are speaking, what the right thing is, of course. So there are choices we have to make, legitimate choices. I hope all of us have a chance in this election to sort those out for ourselves and be able to do something with them.

Medicare is another one. I mentioned that before. You know, what we have is a Medicare program that, unless it is changed, cannot continue either.

There is something on which all of us can agree: We want to continue. If that is the goal, what do we have to do in the interim to ensure that happens?

One of the things we have to do is give people some choices. The way it is now, when you are 62, 63, 65, you have to take what is there, and that is the only choice.

There are people who have supplementary policies. My mother has a supplementary policy that provides pharmaceuticals. She is perfectly happy with that and wants to continue with that. There are people who do not have supplementary policies. They cannot afford them. They ought to have pharmaceutical coverage, and there ought to be choices in the way that is done. That is very possible. People ought to be able to choose. The alternative to what we suggested has no choice.

Education: It has been a very long time since we have been able to do something quite different on elementary and secondary education. We talked about it. We have had 5 weeks of discussion in this Congress on education. Again, everyone is for education. I do not know anyone who does not want to make education more effective, who does not want to make it better for everyone. What holds it up is who makes the decisions.

This administration has insisted on those dollars that go from the Federal Government to the States, regardless of what the needs are in a particular school district, that they either be for 100,000 more teachers or they be for buildings. Both of those are legitimate needs, but there are school districts that do not need more teachers and the school buildings are in pretty good shape. What they need is high-tech equipment, for example, and they should have an opportunity to spend that money as their needs dictate. That is the debate.

Sometimes it is a little hard to cut through: "Those guys are against education." That is not so. These are the choices and these are the choices of how we get around to resolving the problems. I hope we will soon.

There are always going to be differences of view. That is why we vote. The problem is we have not been able to bring those things to the floor, and every time we bring up education, someone brings up one of the issues on which we have already voted three or four times—gun control, minimum wage, whatever—to make sure that what we are focusing on does not happen.

Here we are now 1 week past our dedicated time to adjourn. Frankly, I am one who thinks that if we have business to do here, we ought to be here until we get it done. That is our job. We ought to get the bills out here, vote on them, move them on up. If the President wants to veto them, if he wants to try to use leverage to threaten and shut down the Government, let him do that, but he is the one who is going to shut down the Government. That is where we are.

It is an interesting time, an important time. I am confident we will move more quickly to resolve these items this week than perhaps we have over the last couple of weeks.

ACCESS TO NATIONAL PARKS

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I want to express my views on a more parochial issue—not entirely parochial, as a matter of fact; it has to do with access to national parks. I have served over the last 6 years as chairman of the National Parks Subcommittee. We have been very involved with where we are going and have hopefully some idea where we want to be with parks.

Everybody recognizes the value of the national assets. It is one of the neat things. In the United States, we have 379 national parks that work in conjunction, of course, with State parks and local parks. The reasons for having a park, it seems to me, are, No. 1, to preserve the resource, of course, and, No. 2, to allow that resource to be enjoyed by the people who own it—the taxpayers.

We have a little difficulty from time to time with both of those things. We passed a bill, Parks 2020, last year which puts more emphasis on inventory, taking care of the resources. We need to put more effort into that, and we are working on that.

We have had a lot of talk about infrastructure in some of the larger parks and the things that need to be done, the money that needs to be spent for preserving the resource, such as on sewers. In the last budget that came from this administration, there was more money for acquisition of new parks than there was for maintenance of the parks we have. To me that is a problem.

If you want to enjoy it, you have to have access. One of the things that is controversial in our part of the world—in Yellowstone, Teton Park—which is equally true in New England and other places, is access for snow machines. For 3 years we have had an ongoing study in Yellowstone Park prompted by a lawsuit. Today they are coming out with their report on the environmental study and their recommendations as to what we should do. It is out for public comment for 30 days. I am going to ask that the 30 days be extended to 60 so people have an opportunity to review it.

There are difficulties with snow machines. There is difficulty with the noise. There is some difficulty with the pollution. The problem is the Park Service for 20 years has not sought to manage that growing industry and has simply avoided doing anything with it. Then suddenly there is a lawsuit filed against them, and there are some things that need to be changed. Instead of seeking to manage it, instead of seeking to find some remedies, instead of seeking to make some changes, they simply want to eliminate it. That is a mistake. There are ways the Park

Service can manage those things. They can separate cross-country skiers from snowmobilers. They can limit the number if there are too many. But the EPA and the Park Service have never looked toward establishing standards for these machines.

I have visited a number of times with the manufacturers, and they are willing to change those machines. They did some experimental work in Jackson Hole, WY, last year and had machines that are only as loud as normal voices. Of course, no one is going to invest in those unless they have some idea that there are standards, and if they comply with them, they will be useful.

I hope we can change the idea of either nothing or no management and give some time to move toward the adjustments that can be made, toward some management in the parks so people can continue to enjoy them.

I see my friend from Kansas. I yield to the Senator from Kansas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Kansas.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 20 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING AND VIOLENCE PROTECTION ACT OF 2000

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I appreciate my colleague from Wyoming allowing me to speak on a topic that we will be taking up fully tomorrow. Tomorrow this body will take up the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000. That will be the business of the day. Tomorrow we will vote on two bills associated therewith. The development of this legislation has been in progress for most of this year, and there are several pieces in this bill.

What I will do today is discuss with my colleagues what is in this bill, why it is important, why it passed the House of Representatives 371-1, and why it is important that we address this important issue at this particular time.

Senator WELLSTONE and I have been working on this legislation for this past year. It is the companion piece to a bill that passed in the House, sponsored by CHRIS SMITH and SAM GEJDENSON. The House bill is known as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.

Our antitrafficking bill is the first complete legislation to address the growing practice of international trafficking worldwide. This is one of the largest manifestations of modern-day slavery internationally. Notably, this legislation is the most significant human rights bill of the 106th Congress if it is passed tomorrow as is expected. This is also the largest anti-slavery bill the United States has adopted, arguably, since 1865 and the demise of slav-

ery at the end of the Civil War. Therefore, I greatly anticipate this vote tomorrow in the Senate on this very important legislation.

Senator WELLSTONE's and my trafficking bill, which passed in the Senate on July 27 of this year, was confereed to reconcile the differences with the House bill. The conference report was filed on October 5, Thursday of last week. The final conference package contains four additional pieces of legislation which are substantially appropriate to our bill.

Most significant among those bill amendments is the Violence Against Women Act, which is part of this overall conference report—it is known as VAWA—which provides relief and assistance to those who suffer domestic violence in America. It is an important part of the package. It is a key piece of legislation that this body has previously passed. I am glad that it is part of this package. And it will pass as well with this overall package so we can help people caught in domestic violence.

Thus, the overall four bills included in this conference report are: The sex trafficking bill that I mentioned at the outset; VAWA, the Violence Against Women Act; Aimee's law, which provides for interstate compensation for the costs of the incarceration of early-released sex offenders who commit another sex crime in a second State. The 21st Amendment Enforcement Act is also in this overall conference report. It allows for State attorneys general to enforce their State alcohol control laws in Federal court, including laws prohibiting sales to minors, which strengthens the grant of authority to States under the 21st amendment to the Constitution. The final piece of legislation in this conference report is the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act, which authorizes the payment of foreign seized assets to victims of international terrorism.

The last step to adopting this legislative package rests with the Senate tomorrow. As I stated previously, it cleared the House on Friday by a vote of 371-1.

This legislation is our best opportunity to challenge the largest manifestation of current slavery worldwide, known as trafficking. I want to describe that term and what this bill does to get at what is taking place in the form of trafficking.

This practice of trafficking involves the coercive transportation of persons into slavery-like conditions, primarily involving forced prostitution, among other forms of slavery-like conditions.

Trafficking is the new slavery of the world. These victims are routinely forced against their will into the sex trade, transported across international borders, and left defenseless in a foreign country.

This bill also addresses the insidious practice known as "debt bondage," wherein a person can be enslaved to the money lender for an entire lifetime because of a \$50 debt taken by the family