

(January 16, 2008) Lipinski Introduces Bill to Prevent Deportation of Corina Turcinovic

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Legislation Would Correct Problem Caused by Bureaucratic Red Tape

[Washington D.C.] Today, Congressman Dan Lipinski introduced a Private Immigration Bill on behalf of Corina Turcinovic who was denied permanent legal status in the United States after bureaucratic red tape prevented her now-deceased husband from gaining American citizenship which he was seeking when he died. If signed into law, Rep. Lipinski's legislation would grant Mrs. Turcinovic permanent legal resident status in the United States. Rep. Lipinski is also working with the Office of Detention and Removal Operations (DRO) in order to prevent the deportation of Corina as she awaits congressional action.

"I do not condone the breaking of U.S. immigration law, but I believe that Mrs. Turcinovic's special situation merits reconsideration," said Rep. Lipinski. "We should not let a bureaucratic mistake get in the way of doing what is right."

Mrs. Turcinovic entered the United States legally in 1990 when her then-fiancé, Maro Turcinovic, was paralyzed after being hit by a car in New Jersey. Maro was soon transferred to Chicago for rehabilitation care, and Corina - having been given permission by immigration authorities to stay and care for her injured fiancé - came with him. Over the next 14 years, Corina would spend nearly every hour attending to the health needs of Maro, and in 1996, the couple was married. Maro was pursuing his American citizenship, but due to his paralysis he was unable to visit a U.S. immigration office to have his fingerprints taken. Unfortunately, the bureaucratic red-tape remained unresolved when complications stemming from Maro's injuries claimed his life. Because Maro did not become a citizen prior to his death, Corina could not apply for permanent legal status under the expedited procedures available to spouses and widows of U.S. citizens. As a result, Corina is currently being held in McHenry County Jail awaiting deportation on January 30.

"My office is currently helping hundreds of constituents with immigration issues, and Corina Turcinovic's situation is extremely unique," said Rep. Lipinski. "Corina is facing deportation today simply because a bureaucratic roadblock prevented her husband from becoming a naturalized citizen prior to his death. I will continue to push my legislation as well as work with my colleagues in Congress and immigration officials to reach a just resolution to this situation."

