
(May 8, 2008) Lipinski Bill for Turcinovic Passed by Immigration Subcommittee

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Bill Would Correct Bureaucratic Error and Allow Corina Turcinovic to Stay in U.S.

[Washington, D.C.] Today, the House Subcommittee on Immigration unanimously approved H.R. 5030, a bill introduced by Rep. Dan Lipinski that would allow Corina Turcinovic to remain in the United States and apply for permanent legal residency. The legislation is now cleared for consideration by the full House Committee on the Judiciary.

"The bipartisan and unanimous agreement on this bill reflects the unique circumstances surrounding Corina's case," said Rep. Lipinski. "If it had not been for mistakes made by the government, Corina would have been a legal resident long ago and none of this would have been necessary. Today's action represents a significant step towards correcting those mistakes and I thank Chairwoman Lofgren (CA) and Ranking Member Steve King (IA) and all the members of the Immigration Subcommittee for passing this legislation."

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 going through the process of becoming a naturalized citizen, but mistakes by the government prevented the process from being completed before 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.

To help correct this government mistake, Rep. Lipinski introduced a bill on Corina's behalf on January 16, 2008. On January 22, last minute efforts of Rep. Lipinski as well as Chairwoman Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) played a critical role in stopping Corina's deportation as she was being driven to O'Hare Airport by immigration officials.