

INTRODUCING THE CHURCH INSURANCE PROTECTION ACT OF 1996

The Speaker pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. FILNER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, today my colleague the gentlewoman from Georgia, CYNTHIA MCKINNEY, and I rise in defense of our Nation's sacred houses of worship by introducing H.R. 3830, the Church Insurance Protection Act of 1996.

Our legislation will prohibit insurance companies from canceling, overpricing or refusing to renew fire insurance policies for any house of worship due to the current threat of arson. We are currently joined in our efforts by over 20 of our colleagues, and we are confident that this number will grow as more become familiar with the need for this important legislation.

We cannot allow the insurer's fear of a claim to remove a congregation's ability to adequately protect its house of worship and support buildings. Our churches must be held harmless and not subject to punitive measures from insurance companies.

Last month in a rare unanimous vote this House approved H.R. 3525, the Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996, to deter the epidemic assault on our Nation's houses of worship. It was our obligation to deter the flames of bigotry and ignorance that set these churches ablaze. We could do no less.

Thankfully, few churches have been lost in the weeks since we passed this legislation. However, our work is not complete. America's churches are facing another threat, the loss of insurance coverage. With the embers of the destroyed churches still smoldering, some insurance companies have canceled or have threatened to cancel fire insurance policies for houses of worship because of the perceived increased risk of arson, and more companies are threatening to do the same.

This threat has not been limited to the areas most affected by the church fires. Both predominantly African-American and predominantly white congregations in my own congressional district in San Diego have been threatened with loss of their fire insurance policies, as well. By prohibiting policy cancellations, this Church Insurance Protection Act extinguishes the smoldering embers that will continue to threaten our churches long after the fires are put out.

America's houses for prayer are sacred places. While we continue our efforts to stop this current rash of arson fire and to rebuild these houses of worship, we must also be certain to protect their ability to insure themselves against future violence. Just as the House rose, with one voice, to denounce these hate-driven acts of arson last month, I hope it will unanimously endorse this measure to guarantee insurance protection for our churches.

America's churches cannot wait any longer for passage of this bill. We urge

our colleagues to act promptly to bring this important legislation to the full House before Congress adjourns.

REPORT FROM INDIANA: SHARES, INC.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. MCINTOSH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCINTOSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give my report from Indiana. But before I do, let me digress for 30 seconds and say I was at the hearing at which the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. CLINGER] chaired on the issue of the FBI files, and I share his recollection. I also share his frustration that much of the testimony there seemed incomplete, inaccurate, and perhaps intentionally so. I want to applaud his efforts at being very judicious and thorough in getting to the bottom of this.

When I was at home in my district, several people came up to me and said: This is not a partisan matter. We are Democrats, but we want you to get to the bottom of this because we fear there may have been a grave breach of our civil liberties in this country by those actions. So I think it is something that we should all, on both sides of the aisle, support the effort to get all of the facts on the table as the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. CLINGER] has done in chairing that committee.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from Indiana yield to the gentleman from New York?

Mr. MCINTOSH. Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I thought that it was the ruling of this House that this issue was taken off of the floor so that we could proceed rapidly in other matters. Was that the ruling of the Chair as relates to the matter of the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. CLINGER]?

Mr. MCINTOSH. Reclaiming my time, I have no further remarks about that subject. Let me continue with my report from Indiana.

Mr. Speaker, every weekend I return home with my wife Ruthie to visit wonderful people throughout the State of Indiana. They are the type of people who are contributing to making our community strong, people that I think of as Hoosier heroes. Why do I call them Hoosier heroes? Because they are the type of people who go beyond the ordinary in order to help build stronger communities in our State. We can all be proud to call them our friends and our neighbors.

Today I want to commend the people who operate a company called Shares, Inc., in Shelbyville. It is an operation which employs and helps 300 handicapped, disabled, and mentally retarded individuals. Dick Fero, who is a good friend of mine, brought me to

Shares and toured me through the plant over 3 years ago, and I was impressed with the vast resources made available to help these people who have special needs in Rush and Shelby Counties, everything from transportation, recreation, counseling, adult education, and speech therapy.

The true success of Shares is found in the hearts and souls of the employees, the workers and the volunteer board of directors. Their hearts and souls unconditionally give their time, energy, and love to help these very special people.

People like Judy Weaver, who has worked there as the work manager for 12 years. Judy takes care of these people by making sure that their job on the line—they are performing light assembly and other services—is something that they can do in order to enrich their lives. She is tops at what she does. So is Arnie Petrie, who is another dedicated employee of Shares.

The key thing in Shares, Inc., is that they are willing to put people to work who ordinarily would not be able to receive a job in the marketplace. If you take a tour of Shares, you can see the happiness and the pride in the faces of those people who are working there, because they have a chance to earn a living and take care of themselves.

Success stories are wide and deep. Take 25-year-old Angela Woolen of Shelbyville. She is mildly handicapped, and yet she has been able to get a job at the Pizza Hut and the local library because of her work experience at Shares, Inc. Perhaps her success in the real work environment can be found in her own words: "I am not different from anyone else. I want to get my job done right. Independence is the most important thing to me."

In addition to their services for the handicapped, the folk at Shares provide them with real jobs and training that helps them in their lives. Everyone wins: the staff, the mentally ill, the handicapped workers.

The folks at Shares are doing good things. They see that these people who are less fortunate than the rest of us have a chance and are not forgotten. Indeed, they set an example for the rest of us that we reach out, lend a helping hand, and that we show our love for those people who cannot always care for themselves. Everyone involved with Shares is a Hoosier hero.

Mr. Speaker, that concludes my report from Indiana.

JEREMY RATHBURN

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give my report from Indiana. So often, people share with me amazing stories about their friends and family. Stories about good citizens doing good deeds. These people make our communities a better place.

Those that reside in the 2d Congressional District of Indiana, I have termed "Hoosier Heroes."

Hoosier Heroes because they set examples for us all to live by. Today, I'd like to share with you the story of a 10-year-old Hoosier Hero from Greensburg, IN.