

FISA AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 20, 2008

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I regret that due to the unexpected last-minute appearance of this measure on the legislative calendar this week, a prior commitment has prevented me from voting on the FISA amendments. I have strongly opposed every previous FISA overhaul attempt, and I certainly would have voted against this one as well.

The main reason I oppose this latest version is that it still clearly violates the Fourth Amendment by allowing the Federal Government to engage in the bulk collection of American citizens' communications without a search warrant. That U.S. citizens can have their private communication intercepted by the government without a search warrant is anti-American, deeply disturbing, and completely unacceptable.

In addition to gutting the Fourth Amendment, this measure will deprive Americans who have had their rights violated by telecommunication companies involved in the Administration's illegal wiretapping program the right to seek redress in the courts for the wrongs committed against them. Worse, this measure provides for retroactive immunity, whereby individuals or organizations that broke the law as it existed are granted immunity for prior illegal actions once the law has been changed. Ex post facto laws have long been considered anathema in free societies under rule of law. Our Founding Fathers recognized this, including in Article I section 9 of the Constitution that "No bill of attainder or ex post facto Law shall be passed." How is this FISA bill not a variation of ex post facto? That alone should give pause to supporters of this measure.

Madam Speaker, we should understand that decimating the protections that our Constitution provides us against the government is far more dangerous to the future of this country than whatever external threats may exist. We can protect this country without violating the Constitution and I urge my colleagues to reconsider their support for this measure.

**INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTION
CALLING ON EGYPT TO RESPECT
AND UPHOLD RELIGIOUS FREE-
DOM FOR ALL ITS CITIZENS**

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 24, 2008

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a resolution calling on the Government of Egypt to respect and uphold religious freedom for all of its citizens. In the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom's 2008 report, Egypt remains on the watch list of countries that seriously violate freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief.

Members of the Coptic Orthodox Church, the largest non-Muslim minority in Egypt, have a very difficult time. In the last several years there has been an upsurge of attacks targeting Copts. Such attacks include arson of churches, destruction of Coptic-owned property and businesses and physical assaults.

While authorities often arrest suspects in these cases, formal charges are rarely pursued.

The Baha'i religion has been banned since 1960 due to a presidential decree. Members of the Baha'i faith have difficulties obtaining civil documents such as official ID cards, birth certificates, passports, and marriage licenses.

Material vilifying Jews regularly appears in state-controlled and semi-official media, including anti-Semitic cartoons aimed at influencing the opinions of Egyptian youth. The Jehovah's Witnesses cannot congregate in numbers greater than five without facing harassment by government security services.

This resolution is modeled after a similar measure recently passed by the European Union Parliament. The United States was founded upon the principle that all men are endowed with certain unalienable rights, including religious freedom. Ronald Reagan once said that the Constitution is "a kind of covenant. It is a covenant we've made not only with ourselves but with all of mankind."

The United States Congress has a responsibility to speak out for these religious minorities. I encourage all my colleagues, who care about persecuted believers of all faiths, to cosponsor this resolution and add the House's voice to that of the EU Parliament in calling on the Government of Egypt to fully implement and protect the rights of religious minorities as full citizens.

**RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE
OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS**

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 24, 2008

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on the importance of early childhood education and development programs. The 110th Congress has shown strong commitment to improving education for students of all ages. Notably, we reauthorized Head Start, the premier early childhood program that prepares low income children for school. Now, we must start earlier to prepare our youngest citizens for school. To this end, the Committee on Education and Labor recently passed H.R. 2343, the Education Begins at Home Act, which will improve child well-being, school readiness, and parent involvement in their children's lives.

The Education Begins at Home Act provides the first dedicated funding stream for home visiting programs. Home visiting involves voluntary meetings between specialists in child development and parents and children in their home. The home visitors help develop parenting skills, foster positive child development, and offer support. These programs reduce the stress associated with parenting, assist parents in understanding the educational and developmental needs of their children, and promote healthy parent-child relationships. At least 37 States have these types of programs in place; however, they lack a stable funding stream to ensure effective, long-term services. This bill also targets English language learners and military families. These groups often lack natural support systems that the programs help develop.

Education can never begin too early; the earliest years of brain development are most important, as shown through studies such as those by the National Research Council. High

quality early education programs have helped improve school performance and lower high school drop-out rates. They also have helped reduce the rates of child abuse and identify developmental delays early in life. These programs share common components that contribute to their success—teachers who are knowledgeable about the development of young children, strong staff development and training, and activities that stimulate cognitive as well as social skills. It is these aspects that have brought success time and time again.

Investment in early childhood is sound policy and cost effective as well. A study done by economist Robert G. Lynch in 2007 showed that high-quality programs would save both state and the federal government billions of dollars over decades. According to the study, the total annual benefits of a universal program would begin to pay for itself within nine years by growing a margin each year. According to Lynch, a universal early education program would generate \$191 billion in benefits for the federal government by the year 2050. This result is achieved by creating many more productive members of society and decreasing the number of and associated costs related to incarcerated citizens.

These particular benefits are only a few of the multitude that result from early childhood education programs. Learning is a lifelong activity and children especially deserve the best, beginning with the first day of their life. I urge my colleagues and Congress to continue this investment in early childhood during the remainder of the 110th Congress and in subsequent sessions.

**IN TRIBUTE TO COUNCIL MEMBER
BILL WARD**

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 24, 2008

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Hayward, California City Council Member Bill Ward, who will be retiring from office at the end of his term on July 8, 2008. Bill was elected to the Hayward City Council in 1984 and has dedicated 24 years of exemplary service to the city of Hayward during his tenure.

Bill has been a Hayward resident since 1975. He and his wife, Gail, have two adult children. He received his Bachelor of Architecture degree from Howard University in Washington, DC and a Master's degree in City Planning from the University of California, Berkeley.

During his tenure as a member of the Hayward City Council, Bill served on many of the Council's Committees, including the Downtown Committee, Commercial Center Improvement Committee, Technology Application Committee and was the Council Liaison to the Economic Development Committee. He has been instrumental in the initiation and development of many significant projects in Hayward.

He has served on the city of Hayward's Planning Commission, the Board of Zoning Adjustments, and the Citizens Advisory Commission. He is also a former member of the St. Rose Hospital Foundation.