

want to learn English—I cannot stress that enough. Studies indicate that current immigrants are learning English faster than they did 100 years ago. In California, classes operate 24 hours a day and, in New York, some immigrants must wait up to 18 months to take classes to learn English. In response to that, Republicans in the House passed the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill which cut bilingual education, the program that teaches children information in their language and gradually makes the transition into completely English language classes. The House also cut the adult education program which provides funds for English as a Second Language classes.

The English Plus substitute maintains that services, information, and government protection should not be denied because of limited English proficiency. Among H.R. 123's provisions is the repeal of bilingual voting ballot requirement. It infringes on citizen's ability to receive information about elections and ballots in a language that they are comfortable with and violates the equal protection clause of the Constitution. In 1993, when I served as chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, I authored legislation to broaden the requirements under section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, which apply to bilingual voting ballots, which Congress passed with bipartisan support. Even Presidential hopeful Bob Dole supported it. Under H.R. 123 citizens from American territories like Guam and Puerto Rico—who are born U.S. citizens—would be exempt from the bill only while they live in those jurisdictions. Once they move to the States, as many of my constituents did, they will not be able to receive information or services from the Government in Spanish.

My substitute maintains the belief that our democratic process demands the highest level of speech protection. As Members of Congress, it is essential that we be able to communicate, whether in writing or orally, with constituents, colleagues, and other government officials. It is not uncommon to receive requests for information in other languages. H.R. 123 would literally prohibit representatives from communicating in writing through correspondence, press releases, and newsletters, unless it is in English.

While I think that both our bills aim to strengthen our country, the English Plus substitute empowers by encouraging opportunity and diversity while H.R. 123 imposes divisive and restrictive policies that infringe on constitutional rights. My bill affirms that English is the common language of the United States and encourages citizens to learn it. I urge my colleagues to support the English Plus substitute and if it fails, vote "no" on H.R. 123, the English Language Empowerment Act.

HONORING RAUL S. VARGAS

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 1996

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to pay special tribute to a lifelong friend and colleague, Mr. Raul S. Vargas, director of the University of Southern California Mexican American Alumni Association as we celebrate 25 years of his valuable

service to Hispanic students pursuing a higher level of education.

Born on May 21, 1939 in Lordsburg, NM, to a family of coppermine workers, Mr. Vargas lost his father at the age of 2 in a tragic underground mining accident. His mother remarried and in 1944, his family resettled in a low-income complex in Miami, AZ—the place where he and his five siblings were raised. After his early years of schooling in Miami, his family relocated to San Manuel, AZ, in 1957. While in high school, he played the trombone, served as student body vice president, and was also a star basketball player for the Miami Vandals. After graduating high school, he moved on to Arizona State University where he received a degree in business administration in 1961.

Shortly after graduating from ASU, he served a 3-year tour of duty with the U.S. Army in Berlin. He returned to Arizona State University during 1964 to complete his teaching credentials. He obtained his teaching credentials in 1966 and began a distinguished career teaching in math and Spanish at the junior high school level in Ontario, CA.

In 1970, Mr. Vargas witnessed the Vietnam antiwar demonstrations and the East Los Angeles riots which inspired him to pursue social causes at the community level. His passion for fostering better relations between civic leaders and community members led him to work at the Rio Hondo Area Action Council [RHAAC] where he handled community action programs. However, his yearning to teach and work one-on-one with students led him back to the education sector where in 1971, he joined the faculty and staff of the University of Southern California.

It was at USC where he began working at the department of student affairs and services as director of the USC Mexican American Alumni Association. Mr. Vargas began primarily as an academic adviser providing guidance and counsel to students, who were primarily first-time college graduates of their respective families. He found these college students to be talented and hardworking who were often hampered by the financial constraints of a college education. Recognizing the impact of such constraints, he concluded that this was the source of high college dropout rates for Hispanic students.

Realizing the issue was not being addressed, Mr. Vargas decided to do something about the situation. In 1974, he set up a series of meetings with USC alumni, faculty, business and civic leaders, and students which established the foundation of the USC Mexican American Alumni Association Scholarship Fund. Today, the USC-MAAA Scholarship Fund exceeds \$5.0 million dollars and has assisted over 3,500 students at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Because of his determination and hard work, Mr. Vargas did much more than fulfill his desire to help young students pursuing higher education—he committed his life to it and has changed peoples lives forever.

It was at Arizona State University where I met and shared a room with Mr. Vargas. Gradually, we developed a friendship that has grown and strengthened throughout the years on both a professional and personal level. As a former teacher myself, I commend Mr. Raul Vargas for having the vision to change individual lives, the courage to make his dreams a reality, and the commitment to follow through

with this plan for the past 25 years. I commend Raul Vargas for his hard work, determination, and invaluable contribution to our Nation's youth.

THE ECONOMY IS STRONG AND GROWING

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 1996

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, this morning we were going to hold a hearing of the Joint Economic Committee to hear the July jobs report. It was canceled. And that's a shame—because the President has an economic record any President could be proud of.

After 3½ years of President Clinton, the economy continues to grow stronger and stronger. We've created more than 10 million new jobs—a faster rate of job growth than under any Republican administration since the 1920's. In our global economy, job creating exports have increased by one-third—up \$162 billion. And today's job report, issued by the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that we added 193,000 more jobs in July.

We have the highest rate of new business incorporations since World War II, with the Commerce Department reporting that our Nation's economy grew at an extremely healthy 4.2-percent annual rate from April through June, and with the lowest combined rates of unemployment, inflation, and mortgage rates since the 1960's.

Best of all for both working Americans and our fixed-income retirees under President Clinton we've sustained this growth while keeping inflation stable and low.

Mortgage rates are the lowest they've been in 30 years. The result: Millions of Americans have been able to purchase their first home, giving us the highest homeownership rate in 15 years.

Mr. Speaker, the current issue of Money Magazine reports: "The majority of Americans are better off on most pocketbook issues after 3½ years under [President] Clinton, who's presided over the kind of economic progress any Republican would be proud to post."

Barron's reports "In short, Clinton's economic record is remarkable. Clinton also rightfully boasted that, 'our economy is the healthiest that it has been in 30 years.'"

This record is no mere happenstance. It is the result of tough decisions. Under President Clinton, the deficit has been cut to \$117 billion this year—the lowest deficit as a percentage of GDP of any major economy—and less than half of what it was when he took office.

In fact, were it not for the interest on the debt accumulated during the Reagan and Bush years, we would be running a surplus. Alan Greenspan said earlier this year that the deficit reduction in President Clinton's 1993 Economic Plan was "an unquestioned factor in contributing to the improvement in economic activity that occurred thereafter."

On that other side, some are still talking about hundreds of billions of dollars in tax cuts for the wealthiest. President Clinton has proven that responsible deficit reduction that maintains our investments in research and development, in our cities, our kids, our schools, and infrastructure can work.

I do not believe the American people want a return to the pie-in-the-sky promises that built up this deficit in the first place. Today's jobs report is another indication that the President's economic plan is working.

The question the American people are facing is do we stay the course, or do we go back to the budget-busting policies of the 1980's. I, for one, truly believe the American people are beyond being fooled by false promises. Yes, there is work to be done, but they know we are headed in the right direction.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 3754,
LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1997

SPEECH OF

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 1, 1996

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the conference report today. I want to thank the chairman and the ranking member for their concern about a provision that was of particular concern to me.

This House is obviously undergoing a change in management. As a result, many of our hardworking, loyal, nonlegislative House employees have been through a period of great unrest and unease.

As passed by this House, this bill originally contained language regarding the privatization of certain aspects of the Architect of the Capitol, including the maintenance workers. I am pleased that as a result of the work of the conference, and particularly Mr. SERRANO, that the report before us today now contains language protecting the current employees so that they will not be displaced by an privatization.

The bulk of this work force are older, minority employees who would be hard pressed to find new jobs at this stage in their careers. They have served this institution and its particular needs well. It would have been unfair at this time to proceed with privatization without properly protecting these employees. I am glad that the conference report now contains language providing that important protection.

Furthermore, as the Architect studies further privatization options, which I hope are not proceeded with, I believe it is important that we continue to consider the unique nature of the congressional buildings, the loyalty of the existing work force and the particular needs of our institution. I do not believe all the answers lie in outsourcing these services and will continue to work with the members of the subcommittee and on the House Oversight Committee on which I serve, to ensure fair and reasonable treatment for our hardworking employees.

Mr. Speaker, again, I thank the members of the conference for their sensitivity to these concerns and look forward to continuing to work with them.

TIME FOR CONGRESS TO SPEAK
OUT ABOUT THE PERSECUTION
OF CHRISTIANS

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 2, 1996

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, in many countries of the world today, Christians live in fear. Fear for their lives and fear for their livelihood.

Worldwide persecution and martyrdom of Christians has increased and intensified to such an extent that more Christians have died for their faith in the 20th century than in all prior 19 centuries combined.

In some parts of the world, Christians are forbidden to practice their faith and are victimized by religious apartheid which subjects them to discrimination as well as inhumane and humiliating treatment. In several Islamic countries, converting to Christianity from Islam is punishable by death. In many countries today, Christians are imprisoned, enslaved, tortured, and killed simply because of their faith.

The Government of Sudan is waging a jihad against the Christian southern part of the country, enforcing Sharia—Islamic law—against non-Muslim African Sudanese—torturing, starving, killing, and displacing over 1 million people and enslaving tens of thousands of its women and children. Today in Sudan, a human being can be bought for as little as \$15.

Christians in China have experienced the worst persecution since the pre-Deng period in the 1970's. There are more documented cases of Christians in prison or in some form of detention in China than in any other country. Both Evangelical Protestant house church groups and Roman Catholics have been targeted and named "a principal threat to political stability" by the Central Committee of China's Communist Party. In recent months, in three separate incidents, three Chinese Christian leaders were beaten to death by Chinese authorities simply because of their religious activities.

In Pakistan last year, a 13-year-old boy was forced to flee the country after he was convicted under Pakistan's blasphemy law. His uncle, who was also convicted, was shot dead by someone in the angry mob that swarmed outside the courtroom.

In 1994, three Christians in Iran were kidnapped and murdered during 1994 as part of a crackdown on the Iranian Christian community.

In Vietnam and other countries, Catholic bishops and priests and Protestant pastors are routinely imprisoned, Bibles are confiscated and churches are raided.

There is also severe persecution of Christians in North Korea, Cuba, and some countries in the Middle East.

Leaders of the international Christian community have begun to speak out about this serious and growing problem. Pope John Paul II recently sounded a call against regimes that "practice discrimination against Jews, Christians, and other religious groups, going even so far as to refuse the right to meet in private for prayer," declaring that "this is an intolerable and unjustifiable violation not only of all the norms of current international law, but of the most fundamental human freedom, that of practicing one's faith openly."

The National Association of Evangelicals in January 1996 issued a "Statement of Conscience and Call to Action" subsequently endorsed by the Southern Baptist Convention, the executive council of the Episcopal Church, and the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church, United States of America. It pledged to "do what is in our power to the end that the Government of the United States will take appropriate action to combat the intolerable religious persecution now victimizing fellow believers and those of other faiths."

The World Evangelical Fellowship has declared September 29, 1996, and each annual last Sunday in September, as an international day of prayer on behalf of persecuted Christians. That day will be observed by numerous churches and human rights groups around the world.

Mr. Speaker, its time for Congress to speak out. I am introducing a resolution that would condemn the human rights abuses and denials of religious liberty to Christians around the world; strongly recommend that the President expand and reinvigorate United States international advocacy on behalf of persecuted Christians; encourage a reexamination of all U.S. policies that affect persecuted Christians; encourage the President to appoint a White House special adviser on religious persecution; and applauds the actions of the World Evangelical Fellowship in designating an annual day of prayer on behalf of persecuted Christians.

The United States has forcefully taken up the cause of other persecuted religious minorities. During the cold war, we repeatedly passed resolutions condemning the persecution of the Soviet Jews. In recent years, we have passed resolutions condemning the persecution of people of the Baha'i faith.

We have the ability to intervene in a similar manner for persecuted Christians. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this important resolution.

H. RES. —

Whereas the worldwide persecution and martyrdom of Christians has increased and intensified to such an extent that more Christians have died for their faith in the 20th century than in all prior 19 centuries combined;

Whereas in many places throughout the world, Christians are restricted in or forbidden from practicing their faith, victimized by a "religious apartheid" that subjects them to inhumane, humiliating treatment, and are imprisoned, tortured, enslaved, and killed;

Whereas in some countries proselytism is forbidden, and extremist elements persist unchecked by the government in their campaigns to eradicate Christians and force conversions through intimidation, rape, and forced marriage;

Whereas in several Islamic countries conversion to Christianity from Islam is a crime punishable by death;

Whereas the militant Muslim Government of Sudan is waging a jihad (religious war) against the Christian southern part of the country, enforcing Shari'a (Islamic law) against non-Muslim African Sudanese, torturing, starving, killing, and displacing over 1,000,000 people, and enslaving tens of thousands of women and children. Today in Sudan, a human being can be bought for as little as \$15;

Whereas Christians in China have experienced the worst persecution since the pre-Deng period in the 1970s. There are more documented cases of Christians in prison or in