

Act, would cut off United States development aid to India until basic human rights are respected, and House Concurrent Resolution 32 calls for a plebiscite in India under international supervision to let the Sikh nation have a free and fair vote on its political future. The sooner we pass these bills, the sooner the people of South Asia can live in freedom, security, and dignity. I call upon my colleagues to pass these bills as soon as possible.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND INDIA

This report is an introduction to Amnesty International and its concerns in India. It answers basic questions about Amnesty International: its role as a non-governmental international human rights organization; its worldwide membership, its mandate for action, its campaigning methods; and its work and membership in India.

The bulk of the report deals with human rights violations that Amnesty International has documented in India over several decades. It shows that violations such as torture, including rape, and deaths in custody remain endemic, and that political prisoners continue to face unfair trials. It highlights a legal and judicial system that facilitates these and many other abuses, often allowing the perpetrators to act with impunity. Even the safeguards that do exist are regularly disregarded. The report also summarizes human rights abuses committed by armed opposition groups.

Human rights violations affect most sections of Indian society, with people from some groups, particularly the socially or economically disadvantaged, being especially vulnerable. In a complex society of approximately 920 million people, speaking dozens of languages and dialects, living in 25 states and seven union territories, not everyone has equal access to justice or an equal chance to be allowed to live in safety and with dignity.

TRIBUTE TO KIM PUTENS

HON. JAMES A. HAYES

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 1996

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my appreciation publicly for the excellent job that Kim Putens has done the last 3 years as executive director of the National Wetlands Coalition. Kim departed her position on March 15 to move to the next exciting professional chapter in her life.

The National Wetlands Coalition was formed in September 1989 by a broad cross-section of trade associations, companies, public entities, and individuals that are directly affected by the Federal Wetlands Regulatory Program, either because they own or live on land that is considered Federal jurisdictional wetlands or because they undertake economic activities that encounter wetlands. The group was formed to participate in the anticipated debate over how to achieve President Bush's goal of no overall net loss of wetlands. Longstanding concerns about the program, coupled with issuance of the 1989 manual that greatly broadened the description of lands that are Federal jurisdictional wetlands, expanded the debate to one over the entire wetlands permitting program under section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

Mr. Speaker, this House, on May 16, 1995, by a vote of 240 to 185, adopted a number of

reforms that are very similar to those that have been advocated by the National Wetlands Coalition since 1990. In fact, this was the first time since 1977 that either the House of Congress has adopted a comprehensive set of reforms of the section 404 program.

Kim Putens made a major contribution to the wetlands regulatory reform victory in the House. We all know that no victory on a major issue in the House of Representatives is achieved easily and without an enormous amount of work. There are 435 of us and our staffs to educate on the issues; there are innumerable inquiries to which to respond; there are press inquiries and the need to keep private sector coalition participants informed and coordinated in their activities. Obviously, Kim did all of these tasks successfully and for the first time in 18 years, a House of Congress took action on this controversial regulatory program.

Mr. Speaker, again I thank Kim for her efforts and wish her the best in her future endeavors.

LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE  
SERVICE DELIVERY TO VETERANS

HON. G.V. (SONNY) MONTGOMERY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 1996

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing legislation to enable VA to provide health care to Medicare-eligible veterans who cannot now gain access to VA care.

The VA's health care system serves a veteran population made up almost exclusively of veterans whose eligibility for care is based either on their income or on their service-incurred disability. Under tight budgets that for years have not fully kept pace with rising health-care delivery costs, most VA facilities have shut their doors to veterans with income exceeding VA's means test—approximately \$21,000 in the case of a veteran without dependents. While eligible for VA care, these veterans have neither an entitlement to care nor sufficient priority to assure them access. Many, however, are former VA patients, locked out of a system on which they once depended. VA now provides care to only a small number of these individuals. In all, only 2 percent of VA's patients are higher income veterans.

While large numbers of veterans who routinely receive VA care are also Medicare-eligible, VA is barred under existing law from receiving Medicare reimbursement for their care. Veterans' advocates have, understandably, long bristled at what appears to be VA subsidization of the Medicare trust fund. This has prompted calls for legislation to reimburse VA for care provided Medicare-eligible non-service-connected veterans.

This bill provides for Medicare payments to VA only for higher income, Medicare-eligible veterans who are largely shut out of the VA system today. The bill would further limit the circumstances under which VA could receive Medicare payments—to covered veterans who enroll in a VA managed-care plan. My legislation would provide a long-sought avenue for former VA patients to regain access to VA care. At the same time, it could actually lower Medicare costs, as proposed in pending Medi-

care reforms, by encouraging numbers of Medicare beneficiaries to abandon the traditional fee-for-service Medicare Program in favor of enrollment in a lower cost managed-care plan administered by VA.

REMEMBERING THE TRAGEDY OF  
THE "LEOPOLDVILLE"

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 1996

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to pay tribute to 802 brave American soldiers who lost their lives while defending freedom during World War II. Until recently, the tragic story of the 66th Infantry Division remained untold in U.S. history. These men made the ultimate sacrifice for their country and are worthy of a much greater tribute than the statistics or the footnotes in history books that have already been granted to them. As the worst troopship loss in World War II, and the third worst naval disaster in U.S. history, the story of the sinking of the *Leopoldville* deserves full recognition.

On Christmas Eve, 1944, 2,235 American soldiers were crossing the English Channel as reinforcements to fight in the Battle of the Bulge, when their Belgian troopship, the *Leopoldville*, was torpedoed and sunk 5½ miles from Cherbourg, France. The result was a tremendous loss of lives—almost one-third of the division was killed. There were 493 bodies that were never recovered from the English Channel. Most of the soldiers who lost their lives were young boys, from 18 to 20 years old, barely out of high school. They represented 46 out of the 48 States that were part of the Union at the time.

However, the most tragic and troubling part of this story is the American public's general ignorance of the facts. All of us, and particularly the family members of the lost soldiers, should be told the full story of their loved ones' valiant efforts in their fight to preserve democracy.

Therefore, I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering and honoring those that gave their lives in protecting the ideals that all Americans cherish. I would also like to remind my colleagues that this story should hold a special place in ever State's history. Simply put, the 802 soldiers that lost their lives deserve the proper respect and remembrance for their sacrifice, and those that survived need to be recognized for their valor.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF  
FREDERICK MCKINNEY

HON. GLENN POSHARD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 1996

Mr. POSHARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of Mr. Frederick McKinney, who died on March 2 in Decatur, IL, at the age of 66. Frederick lived a full life, giving not only to his family and friends, but to his country and community. I would like to send my condolences to his wife, Louise, as well as to his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchild, and let them know that the city of Decatur has lost a dear friend.

Originally from Chicago, Frederick served in numerous capacities, beginning with the Army during the Korean conflict from 1951 to 1952. He worked for A.E. Staley Manufacturing Co. as a draftsman for 25 years, retiring in 1992. His dedication to Decatur society was vigorous, including over 3 years as president of the Decatur Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP], in which time he pushed hard for increased minority hiring by the Decatur School Board and was a tireless proponent of affirmative action. Frederick was an integral part of St. Peter's African Methodist/Episcopal Church, where he sang in the senior and male choirs, served as secretary of the trustees department, was in charge of black history, and participated in the official board of the church.

Mr. Speaker, Frederick touched lives in his various roles, and it is obvious that he cared a great deal not only for his immediate circle of acquaintances, but tried to spread good works to all he could. This kind of love and commitment to community is not as prevalent as it should be, and I am grateful that Decatur had such a role model as Frederick for so many years. Frederick has been described as "effective and forceful" without being loud and antagonistic." I would ask that we all try to emulate his example. I am proud to have represented Frederick in the U.S. Congress, and I will remember the way he represented the city of Decatur.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION  
OF H.R. 2202, IMMIGRATION IN  
THE NATIONAL INTEREST ACT  
OF 1995

SPEECH OF

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 19, 1996*

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, I am offering an amendment to H.R. 2202, the Immigration in the National Interest Act, as part of this en bloc amendment to correct an injustice done to the Polish community during the 1995 diversity visa process.

During the visa lottery, the State Department committed an error which resulted in 49,895 Poles being notified that they were eligible for visas. These individuals were not told that a maximum of 3,850 visas were available, or how many of their countrymen they were competing against. Thousands sent in the \$130 fee, only to be denied a visa.

For all other nationalities, approximately two to four times as many applicants were notified as there were visas distributed. More than 12 times as many Poles were notified than the quantity of visas designated for this nationality.

The State Department's error was completely preventable and never should have occurred. Therefore, my amendment would require the Department of State to refund the \$130 fee paid by the thousands of Polish applicants who did not receive a visa. In addition, the Department would be required to review and revise its procedures to ensure that this type of situation does not happen again—to Poles or anyone else.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in pursuing justice for the thousands of Poles who were the victims of this bureau-

cratic bungle. I urge a vote in support of this en bloc amendment.

TRIBUTE TO TRINITY ASSEMBLY  
CHURCH

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 20, 1996*

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Trinity Assembly Church in Algood, TN, on recent completion of their new Sanctuary Complex. In the life of a church and a community, this is a monumental event. It is a testament to the years of hard work and dedication of this congregation.

The completion of the new sanctuary complex is not only of great benefit to the congregation at Trinity Assembly, but to the entire community of Algood. This new facility greatly enhances the ability of Trinity to conduct community outreach. This complex will allow Trinity to provide greater counseling and help to those in need.

Trinity Assembly was established in 1966 by Rev. W.F. Carlile. In 1983 there were 40 parishioners. Now, only 13 years later, there are over 1,200 parishioners at Trinity Assembly. The current pastor of Trinity, Eddie Turner, has displayed an expertise in leadership that is to be commended. His hard work and devotion has been instrumental in the growth and prosperity of this church. It is a credit to the entire community that this church has experienced such phenomenal success.

I offer my best wishes for many more years of growth to the congregation of Trinity Assembly.

AMERICAN RED CROSS: MEETING  
THE TEST OF A TOUGH WINTER  
IN RHODE ISLAND

HON. JACK REED

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 20, 1996*

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to let my colleagues know about the outstanding work of the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Red Cross during the terrible winter of 1995-96.

Even though spring is now officially here, it will be a long time before Rhode Islanders forget this past winter.

The harsh weather shattered all previous records for Rhode Island winters. We had the heaviest cumulative snowfall in recorded Rhode Island history, 93.2 inches; 75.6 inches was the previous record. Starting with last November 13, Rhode Island had 37 days of snowfall, with 11 major snowstorms rolling through our State.

In addition to the harsh weather, this past winter has also brought terrible environmental and human tragedy to Rhode Island.

On January 19, the oil barge *North Cape* ran aground on a southern Rhode Island beach, spilling over 800,000 gallons of home heating oil into our State's pristine coastal environment. Once this disaster began, it set into motion an emergency response and cleanup

process that lasted days and involved over 1,000 Federal, State and local officials, private contractors, and U.S. Coast Guard personnel.

In terms of human tragedy, this past winter has been a season of terrible home fires in Rhode Island. According to the office of Rhode Island's Fire Marshal, the winter of 1995-96 was a time when the loss of life and destruction of property in Rhode Island due to fire showed a marked increase over previous years.

The one constant throughout all of Rhode Island's winter hardship was the hard work of the staff and volunteers of the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Red Cross.

The Red Cross was there during all the winter storms. When a snow plow hit an electrical transformer, knocking out power to a Bristol nursing home, the Red Cross helped evacuate the nursing home residents. When Pawtucket snow removal crews working round-the-clock needed cots to rest on before going back out on the road, the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Red Cross got it done.

The Red Cross was also there during the *North Cape* oilspill. Throughout the cleanup, 110 Rhode Island Red Cross Chapter volunteers were on the scene providing over 8,500 meals, enabling work crews to stay at their jobs from sunup to sundown.

And the Red Cross was there for all of Rhode Island's tragic winter fires. From last November until the end of winter, the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Red Cross helped an estimated 400 Rhode Islanders get back on their feet after a total of 125 fires.

It is in the aftermath of a fire that Rhode Island's Red Cross Chapter provides perhaps its most valuable ongoing service to our State. Last year, 26 Rhode Islanders died as a result of fire. When this tragedy does occur, the Red Cross is there with counseling for survivors and for emergency response crews. The volunteers and staff of the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Red Cross also provide food, shelter, and clothing—often in the middle of the night—for Rhode Islanders whose homes have been destroyed by fire.

The Rhode Island Chapter of American Red Cross performs all these tasks, with a small staff, a very limited budget and an army of dedicated volunteers. I commend the chairman of the board of the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Red Cross, Richard Moore, its executive director, Barbara G. DeCesare, and the entire staff of the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Red Cross, for all their hard work. Most of all, I would like to thank all of Rhode Island's Red Cross volunteers, for helping our State make it through a difficult winter.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION  
OF H.R. 2202, IMMIGRATION IN  
THE NATIONAL INTEREST ACT  
OF 1995

SPEECH OF

HON. BRIAN P. BILBRAY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 19, 1996*

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, as the House of Representatives begins debate on our comprehensive immigration bill today, I would like to focus on the human costs of our current immigration policy to highlight our most compelling argument for reform.