

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.

Jeremy Rathburn, a graduate of Washington Elementary. He enjoys basketball, soccer, rollerblading, and trading cards, just as all kids his age do.

What sets him apart is something most kids, as well as adults, would not do.

It is so unique, in fact, that his aunt contacted our office. She said, "Jeremy is a real good boy and I'm proud of him. I thought he should be recognized." And indeed he should. Jeremy turned in \$250 that he found on the floor of McDonald's.

The Greensburg Police Department returned the money to the rightful owner and recognized Jeremy's honesty in front of his classmates.

Jeremy also received a reward from the owner of the money, a certificate from Mayor Shel Smith, and McDonald's gift certificates.

Today, we only hear about the problems surrounding the youth of society—drugs, crime, violence.

It is truly comforting to hear stories of honesty, integrity, and good deed.

Children are taught the difference between right and wrong.

Jeremy Rathburn recognized that difference and I am pleased to recognize him for his virtuous behavior. That, Mr. Speaker, concludes my report from Indiana.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind Members that we are trying to accommodate the gentleman from New York; however, 5-minute requests have precedence over longer special orders and within the bounds of the rules of the House, all matters are able to be discussed.

THE VANISHING AMERICAN DREAM

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

Mr. MASCARA. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to talk about the vanishing American dream and what we need to do to restore that vision of hope once widely held by hard-working Americans.

It is no secret that American families today are upset and afraid of what their tomorrow's may hold. Each one of us hears their concern every time we talk with constituents back home.

Back in the 1950's and 1960's, the road to a middle-class life was clearly marked. You made your way through high school, got a job in the local mill or plant, and in 5 or 10 years, you were well on your way to a secure future for yourself and your children.

Unfortunately, that comfort level does not exist today. Despite our growing national economy, low unemployment, and increasing productivity, Americans are no longer secure in their jobs and lives.

Recent polling shows they are very afraid the ax may fall tomorrow and any day they could be handed a pink slip, losing their job, their savings, their home, their hope for tomorrow.

A recent poll I took of my own constituents puts this issue into even sharper focus. When I asked what are the top five issues facing the country and our local area, the most frequent answers from nearly 8,000 respondents were too much unemployment, a lack of fair wages, and a need for more jobs.

It is no secret that working Americans blame big corporations for many of their woes. They greatly resent the incredible salaries paid to some top executives and firmly believe that workers have lost their jobs to pay for the CEO's golden parachute.

They will tell you that being loyal to a firm and working hard no longer counts. Tomorrow you could still be out the door.

Workers know the world is not going to go back to the way things operated in the 1950's. They understand global competition and the need for American firms and workers to face the reality of the new economic order.

All they are asking for is a return to fairness, a renewal of respect for the value of hard work, and a restoration of policies that ensure workers share in the financial success of their employers.

They especially want those of us serving in Congress to hear their plea and to take action to make life better for their families.

Members on my side of the aisle recently unveiled the families first agenda which includes a variety of realistic, moderate, achievable proposals for turning this situation around.

At the top of our list of legislative proposals are several that would provide security for working families by helping to ensure they are paid fair wages, have health care coverage for their children, and are afforded greater access to portable pension plans.

We also intend to open up educational and economic opportunities by proposing tax deductions for vocational and college educations and increasing efforts to help small businesses prosper.

While corporations have been downsizing, since the late 1980's, small businesses have created millions of new jobs. Many American families dream about operating their own small businesses. We need to give them the chance to succeed.

The last major component of this plank is called responsibility. Democrats believe the Government must be responsible and balance its budget. We acknowledge individuals must be responsible and there is a need for welfare reform, and a need for increased enforcement of child support orders, and a need to prevent teen pregnancies. Importantly, we also seek corporate responsibility, ensuring pensions and the environment are protected while offering incentives to encourage businesses to be more family and worker friendly.

One portion of this agenda which I personally recommend to my leadership was a section urging development of State infrastructure banks. Millions

of miles of roads and water systems in our country are near total collapse. Every day, millions of dollars in commerce and productivity are lost forever because goods cannot be transported on our highways. Countless cities and towns across this country face a major crisis as aging water and sewer systems—many well over 100 years old—simply fail.

Before coming to Congress, I served as chair of the board of Washington County, PA commissioners for 15 years. My major focus in life was, and continues to be, economic development for southwestern Pennsylvania.

My district lost hundreds of thousands of jobs in the 1970's and 1980's as mines and steel mills closed. Several of the counties I represent are among the poorest in Pennsylvania.

So it should be no surprise that during my years as a county commissioner I worked day and night to attract new businesses to my region. Through a variety of innovative financing methods and working cooperatively with business operators, I was successful in bringing 12,000 new jobs to the county.

Since coming to Congress, I have continued to work hard for my district, promoting a number of economic development projects including construction of the Mon-Fayette Expressway, a major thoroughfare that would bring economic renewal to many areas of my district.

My point this evening is to urge that we all listen to hardworking families. We must begin to bring some of those innovative economic development tools used at the local level here to Congress.

I think if we do, we can begin to restore the faith of American workers and the American dream which should still be a reality for each and every American.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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

[Mr. MICA addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

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

[Mr. WISE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

WEST MICHIGAN HAS LOW-COST, QUALITY HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I take the floor today to highlight two studies