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"IMMIGRANTS ARE NEW YORK CITY'S GREATEST ASSET"

HON. PETER T. KING

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 21, 1997

Mr. KING. Mr. Speaker, throughout his years as U.S. Congressman, mayor of the city of New York and as mayor for life of the city of New York, Ed Koch has secured for himself the title "The Voice of Reason." Mayor Koch has a unique capacity to find common sense solutions for the problems that plague our society. Even more importantly, he is not afraid to be controversial. He is a true New Yorker who knows how to get to the heart of the problem. This quality was most recently typified in his recent column entitled "Immigrants are New York City's Greatest Asset" which appeared in the New York Post on January 17. I commend this column to my colleagues because it touches so meaningfully on the issue of immigration which is being exploited and demagogued by too many politicians today.

IMMIGRANTS ARE NEW YORK CITY'S GREATEST ASSET

(By Ed Koch)

Ellis Island is holy ground: My parents landed there separately in the early 1890s. Before 1924, there were no limits on the number of people permitted to enter this country. If you survived the voyage in steerage and did not suffer from a contagious disease, you gained entry.

My parents and millions of others came here looking for a better life. They sought economic opportunity and freedom from anti-Semitism. They did not believe the streets were paved with gold. But, like millions of others, they did believe America would be free of the daily cursing they endured from their non-Jewish neighbors in Poland. And they believed America would offer them and their children a future denied them elsewhere.

Several years before my father's death, my sister and her son Jared sat down with him and taped some of his early memories. She asked, "Daddy, what did you do for fun in the winter?" He replied, "Mostly we went inside to get warm."

My mother's home in Poland was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. I recall asking her, when I was quite young, "Mama, why do you always refer to Kaiser Franz Joseph as the 'good Kaiser Franz Joseph?'" She replied "Sonny, because he didn't kill the Jews."

For years, I always wondered if she was right. After her death, I read that Kaiser

Franz Joseph issued a decree that there was to be no Jew-bashing in his domain. Mama was always right.

I've visited Ellis Island a number of times, both before and after its renovation and designation as a federal museum. Like many others whose parents or grandparents came through the Great Hall, I was elated when given an opportunity by the new museum to mark my parents' passage with metal markers.

Now, when I go to the island, I visit those markers. I touch my lips with my finger-tips in a symbolic kiss and then touch my parents' names inscribed on the metal plates.

My parents, who were marvelous people with very few worldly goods and a very limited education, nevertheless made it, raising three children—my brother, Harold, the eldest; my sister, Pat, the youngest; and me—and becoming part of America's middle class.

My mother died at age 62, my father at age 87. Mother lingered in excruciating pain before her death, an experience that has made me believe in physician-assisted suicide. I will never forget her screams of unending pain as she pleaded with me, "Eddie, please let me die." And I, in tears, replied "Mother, you're getting well," when I knew that she was not.

My father, a gentle and beloved man with an enormous number of friends, died easily, quickly and painlessly. We thanked God for allowing him to pass over to the next world in such peace. We were not so appreciative of the painful passage of our mother.

I've always been bewildered by the Catholic acceptance of pain in the onset of death. If I understand the concept correctly, the pain of one dying individual is in some mystical way a great benefit for humanity and provides enormous good for others.

Two princes of the Catholic Church—Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, whom I met briefly and admired, and Terence Cardinal Cooke, with whom I had a warm friendship—both embraced death and pain.

My mother told me early on, "Ed, don't mix in someone else's religion." So I won't. While I do not fear death, having had a full life, I do ask God to allow me to pass over without pain when the time to go arrives.

Why am I dwelling on the lives of my parents? Because recently there has been a spate of stories on immigrants, particularly those who came to New York in the last 10 years.

The City Planning Commission issued a report entitled "Annual Immigrant Tape Files, 1990-94, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service Population Division." I won't list its many conclusions—all favorable—concerning the impact of legal immigrants on the City of New York. But these conclusions reinforce the need to fight the mean-spirited efforts by Congress to punish immigrants.

It isn't wrong to require sponsors of immigrants to fulfill their legal obligations to support those they brought here who otherwise would become public charges, as the new law mandates.

But it is wrong to deny legal immigrants who arrived before this law went into effect the SSI coverage and welfare benefits they'd been receiving. The new laws stripping legal immigrants of welfare inclusion should have been prospective and not retroactive.

Recently I read the comments of Massachusetts Gov. William Weld, a Boston Brahmin, on the value to our country of the immigrant: "I have long said that in the 1920's and 1930's the best Americans were Europeans, and principally European Jews who had reason to know what made this country special. In the 80's, the best Americans were Asians, for the same reason." I silently cheered.

According to the City Planning Commission report, legal immigrants are coming to

the U.S. in even larger numbers, and increasing percentages of the total number of these immigrants hail from parts of the world that did not participate in large-scale immigration when my parents came here, including Africa, Asia and Latin America.

These immigrants, like their predecessors—my parents among them—add to the richness of this country. They give us the benefit of their intelligence, their labor and their children. In the words of Martha Stewart, "It's a good thing."

My father never learned to write anything besides his name in English, although he could read. He worked hard all of his life, generally holding two jobs to support his family. He retired from his small fur coat manufacturing business at 75, but, bored, he went to work for Bloomingdale's fur coat storage six months later.

When elegant ladies asked him to store their coats, he would ask them to write their name and address on a ticket. He would invariably look at the ticket and say, "I see by your address that my son is your congressman."

It made no difference if these women lived in Brooklyn or Jersey City. My father saw me as representing the entire United States.

We should acknowledge the enormous contributions of immigrants, embrace them and warmly welcome them. Immigrants are New York City's greatest asset, today and for the future.

Updating the philosophy of the good Kaiser Franz Joseph, "Let there be no immigrant-bashing in the U.S."

HONORING ROSALIE KUNTZ OF PASADENA, TX

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 21, 1997

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor one of my constituents, Rosalie Kuntz of Pasadena, who is a civic leader in her community and a pioneer for women in the insurance industry. Mrs. Kuntz is active in a wide range of community activities and served as the first female president of the Texas Association of Life Underwriters. The following article from the January 8, 1997, Houston Chronicle describes her many accomplishments and honors:

HER JOY IS IN THE JOURNEY—ROSALIE KUNTZ
REVERED BY PASADENA COMMUNITY

(By Pat Swanson)

Willingness and commitment have not only earned Rosalie Kuntz success, but respect in her profession and in the Pasadena community she calls home.

Kuntz is celebrating 41 years in the insurance business. And, at age 72, she continues to be heavily involved in civic activities for the Pasadena-area community.

Kuntz and her husband Gerald (Jerry), a retired surveyor for Shell Oil Co., have lived in Pasadena 48 years. The couple are owners of the Kuntz Insurance Agency. Their children, Rita, Linda and Kyle have given them eight grandchildren. The Kuntz' are longtime members of St. Pius V Catholic Church.

Scott Loomis, an insurance man who has known Rosalie Kuntz for 30 years, said, "Rosalie is one person who could handle herself in a man's world before it was fashionable. While some men were intimidated by Rosalie, others wanted her on a project because they knew she would do a good job."

Parker Williams, president of San Jacinto College South, said, "Rosalie is known by

her actions. She is the type of person that doesn't demand respect, but people respect her. She is one smart cookie. She has a bright mind and a deep faith.

"Rosalie is the type of person who believes you can do anything you want to do if you want to do it badly enough. You know she is always there if you need her. She gives back to the community what she takes out."

Kuntz was the first female president in the 59 year history of the Texas Association of Life Underwriters that has a membership of 8,300.

She served in that capacity for the 1984-1985 term. During that term, Kuntz received national honors at the National Life Underwriters Conventions for Public Service and Membership achievements for the State of Texas and Pasadena Association of Life Underwriters.

Prior to her presidency in the organization, Kuntz served as T.A.L.U. Vice-Chairman of Public Service and Public Service Chairman.

She is a life member of the Texas Leaders Round Table and a charter member of its Lone Star Leaders. Kuntz has served in all offices of the Pasadena Association of Life Underwriters, including president.

One of Kuntz's most memorable experiences was in 1983. As past president of Women Life Underwriters Conference, Kuntz was one of 50 women invited to be a luncheon guest of President Reagan in the White House.

Kuntz was born in Houston. After she and Jerry moved to Pasadena in 1948, Rosalie assumed the position of assistant manager at the Pasadena Bowling Center working for Charles (Monty) Manoshagen.

"Monty left the bowling center to go into the insurance business, and was also responsible for getting me into it. He and his wife came over to the house one night in 1956 with a bunch of books. He threw the books on the coffee table and said, 'Rosalie, you're going into the insurance business.' I told him I didn't know a thing about insurance. He said, 'I'll teach you.' And, he did. I will finish my 41st year in the business today, Jan. 8, 1997," Kuntz said.

"When I went into the business, there weren't many women in the insurance business. It was very difficult at first because women were not accepted in the insurance field, just like the real estate business.

"Now, women are building up in the real estate business and also in the insurance business," Kuntz said.

"I had some good friends and good teachers to teach me the business, and I went on from there. One doesn't do anything by themselves. They always have someone that will help them.

"I was very fortunate in having Mr. Manoshagen to be around to help me along. He kept up with me as long as he lived. (He died about four or five years ago.) He would always call me each year and say, 'What is your goal for next year?' And every goal I told him I had set, I made throughout the years.

"It is a great profession for women. And, it is the greatest career anyone could ever get into, any type of insurance business really, but specifically life and health," Kuntz said.

Jerry and Rosalie's secretary, Jannie Pugh, get much of the credit from Kuntz.

"Jerry helps me an awful lot. So does my secretary, Jannie, who has been with me almost 20 years. She is just like a member of the family. They are behind the scenes, but they sure do help a lot," said Kuntz.

"We have worked together so long, we are more like friends," said Pugh.

For her services to the community, Kuntz was chosen Pasadena Citizen of the Year in

1968. She was elected to the Pasadena Hall of Fame in 1988 for the same reason.

According to Stella Walters, owner of Bruco, Inc., "Rosalie and I have been involved with a lot of the same organizations for 30 years. We also are good personal friends. We have worked together on everything, including the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce, Optimists, Red Cross, YMCA, American Heart Association, to name a few.

"She has more energy in her, for her age, than anyone else I know. She and Jerry have been married 48 years. She is a good mother. I doubt there is anyone in business in Pasadena who does not know her. She is just amazing."

As a member of the San Jacinto Day Foundation, Kuntz chaired the first Strawberry Festival in Pasadena in 1974. She served as an advisory board member in 1986.

She was presented the 1992 Lone Star Award for volunteer service in the community. She was a director of the South Houston Chamber of Commerce from 1978 until 1980.

Kuntz has been Director and Membership Chairman of the Deer Park Chamber of Commerce since 1991 and is the immediate past president of the organization.

Kuntz was the first woman to be elected president of the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce, and currently serves as a member of the organization's Cultural Affairs, Voice of the Chamber and Governmental Affairs Committees.

She also was chairman of the Pasadena Chamber's New Member Orientation Committee during the 1990-1991 and 1992-1993 years.

From 1968 to 1996, Kuntz has been a director of the American Heart Association, Pasadena Unit. She served as chairman of the Heart Business Drive for 12 years, and was chosen Volunteer of the Year in 1987, with a grant named in her honor.

She was appointed to serve on the Advisory Board of the Battleship Texas from 1983 to 1989, by Texas Governor Mark White.

Kuntz is past president of the Soroptimist International of Pasadena, and has served on the advisory board of The Rose, a Texas-based, non-profit organization dedicated to breast cancer screening since 1987. She also has served as a member of the Rehabilitation Foundation since 1984.

Additionally, Kuntz has been a director of the former Barbour's Cut Seaman's Center since 1991. The facility is now the Lou Lawler Seaman's Center.

She is past director of the Texas Society of the Prevention of Blindness; the recipient of the 1975 Distinguished Service Award from the Pasadena Jaycees; 1969 chairman of the Pasadena Drug Abuse Committee; vice-chairman of the Committee for the National Olympic Girls Volleyball Team and past vice-chairman and member of the Pasadena City Beautification Commission.

As a longtime member of St. Pius V Catholic Church, Kuntz is a past secretary of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston Board of Education; the St. Pius Finance Committee and past member of the St. Pius V Church Parish Council.

For 25 years, Kuntz also served as a volunteer coach for the St. Pius V Catholic girls softball and volleyball teams.

According to Bud Osborne, former owner of Osborne-Apple Ford, "Rosalie is a vibrant get-up-and-go person. She always bought cars from us and insures our whole family. We like to kid her and tell her we sent all her kids to college. She comes by at least once a month to talk to us. She is just a wonderful person. We think a lot of Jerry, too."

"Rosalie is my dear friend," Nina Osborne said. "When she was inducted as president of the Deer Park Chamber of Commerce, she arranged to have us seated with her family. She is just like family to us, too."

Billie Fife, former Civil Defense Director for the City of Pasadena and administrative assistant to past Pasadena Mayor Clyde Doyle, said of her friend, "Her interest in you continues long after you take out a policy. There is no monetary reward.

"She is just there for her clients. She is there for your needs no matter when she last saw you—a couple of days ago or 15 years ago. She is just like that little rabbit with the battery. I believe her joy is in the journey. She will never retire."

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BELLEVIEW

HON. C.W. BILL YOUNG

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 21, 1997

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, one of the great privileges of serving from the 10th Congressional District of Florida is to represent one of our Nation's landmark hotels, the Belleview of Belleair, FL, which celebrates its 100th anniversary later this month. Not only is it world renowned as a tourist destination, but it is listed on our National Registry of Historic Places.

Henry B. Plant, the railroad magnate who became known as one of Florida's greatest developers, opened the doors to his elegant hotel named the Belleview on January 15, 1897. Built on a bluff that overlooks Clearwater Harbor, the original 145-room hotel quickly became recognized as a favored winter retreat.

Later, as golf courses and swimming pools were added, the hotel became uniquely modern for its time. In addition to serving its guests, the hotel was also the location for the Belleair post office and fire station. While the hotel ownership changed and the railroad cars left the siding, the importance of the Belleview to the area did not wane. In fact, during World War II, the hotel was leased to the U.S. Army Air Corps to serve as the auxiliary barracks for MacDill and Drew Fields in Tampa.

Several years later, the hotel, now with more than 500 rooms, reopened as a resort and began a new chapter that led to its being qualified for a listing in the National Register of Historic Places on March 7, 1980. I was privileged to have been a part of that program, and it is a special honor for me to be able to salute the Belleview Hotel—now the Belleview Mido—on this its 100th anniversary.

The Belleview has always been known for its hospitality and its graciousness. It has hosted countless numbers of dignitaries, conventioners, and others who wish to enjoy its golf course, its pools and sunshine, its cuisine, and its spa and fitness center. Today its guests are no less important than those who were greeted by Henry B. Plant, and as we look to the new year and the 21st century, I congratulate the Belleview Mido on its 100th anniversary and I thank the management and staff for their work in preserving this magnificent structure, its history, and contributions to the Town of Belleair and to Pinellas County.