

Mr. Chairman, supporters of school vouchers say that vouchers provide an opportunity to save 2,000 of the District's poor students. But, I ask, "What will happen to the District's other 76,000 students?" Supporters also believe that vouchers will be a shot in the arm for the D.C. Public School System, creating competition that will force them to improve the quality of education offered by the D.C. public schools. I do not believe that will be the case. The school voucher plan in this bill reaches a limited number of students seeking to opt out of the D.C. Public School System. In fact, it is not powerful enough to impact the school system in the way school voucher supporters would like to believe.

Residents of the District of Columbia do not support school vouchers. In fact, 89 percent said so in a referendum on school vouchers. The parents in the District want to rebuild and reform their Public School System. We have no business imposing a voucher program on the District, against its will. Rather, we are morally obligated to ensure that all students in the District of Columbia—and across the Nation—have equal access to quality education. We must not abandon the D.C. public schools. Instead, we must strengthen our commitment to improving them.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly support—and urge my colleagues to join me in supporting—the Moran substitute to H.R. 2607. This substitute is clean and replaces the House provisions with the Senate bill—as reported by the Appropriations Committee. This version has no veto threats and does not include any controversial riders or funding for school vouchers. It also has bipartisan support. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the Moran substitute.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 23, 1997

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, another day has gone by and still no campaign finance reform. As we approach the end of one more week we are inching closer and closer to the end of the 1997 legislative session. If we do not take action before we adjourn, now expected to be November 7, we will not have the chance to fix the campaign finance system before the 1998 election. Next year will be an election year and any chance to change the system during a campaign year is very unlikely.

Today we spent over an hour debating a contested election for Congress. That debate is important, and must take place. However, if this House can find the time to consider the outcome of one election, why can't we take the time to consider legislation that will impact every Congressional election from this day forward. The answer is clear. The leadership of this House has no desire to consider campaign finance reform.

The sad fact is, because of the reluctance of the House leadership to allow a vote, Members are going to be forced to take action on their own. That will happen tomorrow.

Before that happens, I hope the Speaker will reconsider his opposition to allowing a vote on campaign finance reform. I hope the Speaker will give the majority of the public

what they want. They want Congress to get serious about cleaning up our house by passing campaign finance reform.

TRIBUTE TO MID BRONX DESPERADOES

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 23, 1997

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mid Bronx Desperadoes for 22 years of service to our Bronx community.

Mr. Speaker, the Mid Bronx Desperadoes [MBD] was founded in 1974 as a group of volunteers who understood the need to revitalize the Crotona Park East section of Bronx Community District 3 that was devastated by arson, disinvestment, abandonment, and population loss.

First in cooperation with the local police and fire departments, and later with government officials and Community Board 3, the volunteer coalition was able to establish Mid Bronx Desperadoes Community Housing Corporation [MBDCHC] which created over 2,100 housing units with development costs of approximately \$213.5 million within Community District 3. MBD has also helped residents of the South Bronx become homeowners, serving as community sponsor, marketing and sales agents for 328 new homes, including the widely acclaimed Charlotte Street development of 89 single family homes. MBDCHC is a part of the Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program [CCRP].

Throughout its 22 years of service, MBD has been a model of excellence in providing our community with exemplary services through housing development and property management, economic development, and delivery of human services.

With the collaboration of a qualified staff, MBD has expanded its network to include additional services in conjunction with other local organizations and medical centers. Among these are: affordable housing development, marketing and management, Mid Bronx Community Development Federal Credit Union, Family Practice Health Center, Head Start Day Care, Community Crime Prevention, Comprehensive Case Management, Job Training and Placement, and Community Organizing.

The achievements of the Mid Bronx Desperadoes are measured by the people they have served. Thousands of Bronx residents have been employed and benefited from the center's education and training programs. And hundreds of thousands of people, from children to senior citizens, have received quality health care.

Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to honor the family and friends of the Mid Bronx Desperadoes. I ask my colleagues to join in celebrating this milestone and acknowledge this outstanding agency for 22 years of accomplishment and service for the South Bronx community.

SENSE-OF-CONGRESS RESOLUTION

HON. ASA HUTCHINSON

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 24, 1997

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, for more than 200 years, our Nation has prospered as a democracy because we have enjoyed certain freedoms, including freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of association, and freedom of religion. And, as other nations have moved away from more restrictive forms of government toward democracy, those that have made successful transitions have guaranteed their citizens the same.

Mr. Speaker, although the emerging democracy of Russia has made significant strides since the fall of the Soviet Union, it appears that she has taken a step backward in recent days. On September 25, 1997, President Yeltsin signed into law the On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Association Act. This measure, which he vetoed once before, denies legal status to all religious groups except those which were officially registered with the Soviet Government at least 15 years ago. Such denial of legal status would automatically strip a number of religious minorities of fundamental rights, such as the right to rent or own property, employ religious workers, produce or possess religious literature, maintain bank accounts, or conduct organized charitable or educational activities.

This new law violates not only the Russian Constitution but also the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1989 Concluding Document of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. On a more basic level, the intent of the law runs contrary to the very principles that form the foundations of a democratic society. For, if the Russian Federation Government sees fit to discriminate against individuals and organizations according to their religious beliefs, what will prevent those in power from discriminating against those with different political or philosophic affiliations? What is to prevent government officials in outlying provinces, who have historically been oppressors of those of differing political or religious affiliation, from cracking down on religious and political minorities? What recourse is open to an individual who has been denied basic civil rights or who has been substantively injured by a local government official if the government of the nation essentially condones oppressive action?

These questions have already proven to be valid. The new law clearly states that religious organizations have until the end of 1999 to register with the Russian Federation under the new law. And officials from Russia's Ministry of Justice have assured religious organizations and officials in the United States that implementation of this new law will not result in discrimination or oppression of religious organizations in that nation. However, cases have already been reported of churches that have been prohibited from meeting in rented or public facilities as a direct result of this law. This leads me to question how effective the Federation will be in ensuring that the rights and freedoms of religious minorities are protected.

As such, I feel it necessary that we express our concern over the enactment of this law to the Russian Federation, and that we encourage the Federation to embrace all of the

foundational principles of a free and open society. To that end, I am introducing today a resolution that affirms the role of freedom of religion in a democracy and expresses the Sense of Congress that enactment of the On Freedom of Conscience and On Religious Association law violates internationally accepted standards of human rights. In addition, this resolution affirms the action of the House and Senate conferees on the Foreign operations appropriations bill in including language to prohibit the Federation from receiving funding assistance unless the Federation certifies that the new law is not implemented.

Mr. Speaker, Russia has come a long way from its authoritarian Czarist and Soviet roots. Let us encourage her officials and her people to continue on the path toward a free and open society by passing this resolution and condemning a return to regulation of thought and belief that hindered the country's progress for so many centuries.

TRIBUTE TO DR. GEORGE KING

HON. GEORGE P. RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 24, 1997

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to George King for being the U.S. Tennis Association national champion and for his support of California's children. Dr. King exemplifies a champion athletically, socially and professionally.

George King has participated in U.S. Tennis Association events since 1985. Currently, King is a competitor in the 30 and over division and held their the No. 1 ranking in 1992 and 1993. It was during these years that King won his back to back national championships.

Dr. King's accomplishments are not limited to the court. He is committed to his family and to the children of California. Specifically, Dr. King competes annually in the Northern California Pro Am, of which the proceeds benefit junior tennis programs. He also assists with the instruction and teaching of juniors at the Fig Garden Swim and Racquet Club, his home court. Finally, Dr. King is a member of Rotary International and supports their college scholarship and youth exchange programs. Professionally, Dr. King maintains two dentistry practices that serve the communities of Fresno and Livingston. These two offices offer a full range of dental services.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I pay tribute to Dr. George King for his tennis accomplishments and his support of California's children. I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing Dr. King many more years of success.

IN HONOR OF THE 25 ANNIVERSARY OF THE SPANISH SPEAKING PROGRAM OF KEAN UNIVERSITY

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 24, 1997

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding educational program, the Spanish speaking program of

Kean University—which has served the needs of the growing population of adults in the community. On October 25, 1997, the Spanish speaking program of Kean University will celebrate its 25th anniversary with a dinner-dance celebration at Kean University, college center cafeteria in New Jersey.

The Spanish speaking program was founded in 1972 to respond to the needs of Hispanic students who needed to achieve greater proficiency in English to pursue a college education. The program has played a very important role in the academic and personal development of the Hispanic student population and the Hispanic community itself. The Spanish speaking program has provided a clear pathway for students to progress into the regular curriculum.

The Spanish speaking program is administered by a dedicated group of professionals under the guidance of Dr. Ronald L. Applbaum, president, and Dr. Orlando Edreira, director. For two decades, this program has been meeting the needs of limited English proficient Hispanics. This program was the first of its kind in U.S. higher education, and it has provided opportunity and access to more than 5,000 students in its 25-year history. The program provides an environment for the fostering of pride and reward for personal dedication and accomplishment.

It is an honor and a pleasure to be part of this celebration and also be able to recognize the dedication and commitment of the Spanish speaking program. Communication is now more important than ever. Being able to know more than one language is no longer a privilege, but a necessity. I am certain that my colleagues will join me in paying tribute to this remarkable program.

RECOGNIZING THE 300TH ANNIVERSARY OF LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP

HON. MICHAEL PAPPAS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 24, 1997

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a major activity that will occur in a few weeks in the Township of Lawrence, NJ as part of the Township's tricentennial celebration.

Over the past 300 years Lawrence Township has been and continues to be a patriotic town, dedicated to recognizing the events and people of its Township that have made the United States a free country. Some of the community's ancestors are signers of the Declaration of Independence. Other former and present residents have fought in the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, and the World Wars, Korea, Vietnam, and the gulf. The men and women of Lawrence have often given their lives in the service of our Nation.

On November 8 the Lawrence Township Veterans Memorial Committee will join the Township of Lawrence to honor those who served this country. I would like to take this opportunity to commend and thank the citizens of Lawrence for their efforts to help keep this country free. I would also like to congratulate the Township on its 300th anniversary, a milestone deserving of our recognition.

TRIBUTE TO PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW OF CONSTANTINOPLE

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 24, 1997

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople who began his visit to the United States in Washington, DC this week. I welcome Patriarch Bartholomew to the United States on behalf of the Greek Orthodox community in the San Fernando and Conejo Valleys and look forward to his visit to Los Angeles in November.

Patriarch Bartholomew, the 27th successor of the Apostle St. Andrew and the spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians, is a man of extraordinary abilities and achievements who speaks seven languages. My colleagues and I honored His All Holiness with the award of the Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of his contributions to world peace, ecumenism, and the protection of the global environment. Patriarch Bartholomew has met with government and religious leaders in the Balkans, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East in efforts to promote peace and an interfaith dialog. His All Holiness is a champion of religious freedom who has fought against all forms of persecution.

Patriarch Bartholomew is equally committed to the protection and preservation of the Earth's environment for future generations. He has sponsored several international conferences on the environment, including an upcoming summit in Santa Barbara, and has led conservation efforts in the Black Sea. These efforts have earned him the title, "the Green Patriarch."

Mr. Speaker, it is truly an honor to have His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew visit the United States and to have the President bestow upon him the Congressional Gold Medal. He joins only five other religious leaders, including the late Mother Theresa, who have been awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honor of the U.S. Congress.

IN PRAISE OF SANTA MARIA

HON. WALTER H. CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 24, 1997

Mr. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, the vitality of our Nation depends upon the vitality of the towns and cities of which it is made up. One such vital city is Santa Maria, CA, in the district I represent.

Thirty of the citizen leaders of Santa Maria were in the Capital this week. This group represented an extraordinary cross section of entrepreneurs, farmers, government officials, social service providers, educators, and civic activists. As a result of this visit, these Santa Marians know Washington better than before and, perhaps more importantly, Washington has a better understanding of Santa Maria.

Mr. Speaker, we face many challenges in this country while at the same time we are surrounded by immense opportunities. This is the case in Santa Maria. I'm proud that this