

The walls today stand between the people of Cuba and freedom and were built by Castro. Those walls must come down. America must tear them down. If the United States has to stand alone against Cuba's violent dictatorship, then so be it.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION
CONDEMNING DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST ASIAN AND PACIFIC IS-
LANDER AMERICANS

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, November 8, 1997

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that all prejudice against Asian and Pacific Islander-Americans in the United States should be condemned, and that Congress should support the political and civic participation of these Americans through the United States.

I am introducing the resolution at this time when Congress is conducting investigations into possible campaign fundraising violations during the 1996 campaigns. No one disagrees that investigations into legitimate campaign fundraising problems should be conducted or that any individual or party that may have participated in illegal activities should be prosecuted regardless of ethnicity. However, I'm concerned that the tone set by the congressional investigations into possible campaign finance violations may increase biased treatment of Asian and Pacific Islander-Americans.

Media coverage of the figures being questioned, who are of Asian descent, and of alleged contributions by Asian nations has created a perception that Asian and Pacific Islander-Americans as a group should be blamed for the problems of campaign fundraising arising from prohibited from owning property. Under the Alien Land Act passed in California, aliens ineligible to citizenship were prevented from owning land. Other States followed suit and enacted similar laws.

Perhaps the most egregious civil rights violation against Asian or Pacific Islander-Americans was the internment of over 120,000 people of Japanese descent during World War II. Two-thirds of them were American citizens. They were denied their constitutional rights, forced from their homes, incarcerated in internment camps, surrounded by barbed wire, and placed under surveillance of armed guards. Their allegiance to the United States was questioned only because they were of Japanese descent. Not until 1988, when former Representative Norm Mineta introduced legislation to right this historic injustice, was an apology made by the U.S. Government to those interned during the Second World War.

Although anti-immigrant laws were later repealed, those interned received a formal apology, and significant gains have been made by the Asian and Pacific Islander community in the United States, there is still much work to be done to fight discrimination against these citizens.

Asian and Pacific Islander-Americans continue to face racially motivated bigotry and violence, just as they did when their ancestors arrived in this country over 150 years ago.

The 1992 report: Civil Rights Issues Facing Asian Americans in the 1990's by U.S. Commission on Civil Rights recounts numerous incidents of bigotry and violence over the last two decades. The National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium's 1996 Audit of Violence Against Asian the 1996 elections. Reporters contacted donors of Asian descent simply because they were Asian when the story of possible contributions from Asian nations broke. The media has also used offensive racial stereotypes to depict the fundraising violation problem. For instance, the March 24, 1997, cover of the National Review depicted the President, Vice President, and the First Lady in Asian dress and stereotypically racist physical features.

I am also disturbed by stories of congressional activities possibly driven by racial stereotypes. For instance, by colleague, Representative MORAN, described on the floor last week the story of a constituent who received a subpoena for the telephone records of his wife from the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight just because she has a Chinese surname.

The United States has a long, sordid history of discrimination against Asian and Pacific Islander-Americans. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 limited the number of Chinese immigrants admitted into the United States. It was the first and only immigration law in American history that targeted a specific nationality and was passed due to growing anti-Chinese sentiment created by white laborers competing for jobs. It wasn't repealed until 1943.

The Gentlemen's Agreement of 1908 prohibited Japanese immigration, and the National Origins Quota System limited the number of immigrants from Asian nations.

At the beginning of our Nation, the Founders limited the eligibility for citizenship to free white persons only. In the early 1900's, laws restricting citizenship led to Asian immigrants being Pacific Americans found an increase of 17 percent of anti-Asian incidents reported for 1996 from the previous year. This is particularly disturbing since violent crimes on the whole for 1996 decreased by 7 percent.

In recent months, we have seen incidents of racially motivated violence and harassment toward Asian and Pacific Islander-Americans to discourage their political participation. Students on a University of California campus protesting the anti-affirmative initiative, proposition 209, received chilling hate calls. Asian or Pacific Islander-Americans running for political offices in California, Ohio, and Washington reported their campaign materials vandalized with racial slurs.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution I am introducing reaffirms the rights of the Pacific Islander-American community and underscores the need to protect and advance the civil and constitutional rights of all Americans. I urge my colleagues to do the same and support this resolution.

WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES

HON. JUANITA MILLENDER-McDONALD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, November 8, 1997

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce that today my col-

league, SUE KELLY, and I introduced an important resolution which recognizes important findings and makes recommendations on ways to assist women-owned businesses obtain more Federal procurement opportunities.

On September 25 of this year, we cochaired an unprecedented bipartisan forum addressing the vast growth of women-owned firms and the contrasting poor rate of procurement to these firms. This was a historic day for women business owners, for it was the first time that women business owners have ever convened on Capitol Hill to share their stories with members of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues.

On that historic day, the problems contributing to the dismal Federal procurement rate of 1.8 percent to women-owned firms became painfully clear. Despite the 5 percent Federal procurement rate goal which Congress established in 1994, the procurement rate remains low because of the lack of access to the Federal contracting process, the bundling of contracts frequently excluding small women-owned businesses, the ineffective outreach to women business owners, the poor and often incomplete feedback which is provided to businesses when their bid is not accepted, and the need for one certification for all women-owned businesses.

The sense of Congress resolution we have introduced today is the first step in our plan to address these problems and ensure that there is indeed a level and fair playing field for all business owners. I am fully committed to ensuring that this goal is met and that women-owned businesses are given equal opportunity to obtain a piece of the more than \$200 billion annual procurement pie. Women-owned businesses are growing at nearly twice the rate of all other U.S. firms, employ 18.5 million people, and produce \$2.38 trillion in revenues to the U.S. economy every year. We simply cannot allow this discrepancy to continue.

There is a wealth of knowledge and skills steeped within these women-owned businesses that we as an economic leader in the global marketplace cannot afford to ignore. Today, we take this first step to recognize the contributions the more than 8 million women-owned businesses are making to strengthen our economy. In the coming months, I will continue to recognize these achievements and take concrete actions to ensure equality of opportunity in obtaining Federal contracts.

ELECTRONIC FINANCIAL SERVICES
EFFICIENCY ACT OF 1997

HON. RICHARD H. BAKER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, November 8, 1997

Mr. BAKER. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Electronic Financial Services Efficiency Act of 1997. This bill is designed to provide a uniform nationwide framework to encourage the use and validity of electronic authentication.

New forms of electronic communication are being utilized as an alternative to paper-based documentation and correspondence. Computers are now routinely used to initiate and execute a substantial and growing number of personal, business, and financial transactions. As a result, the problem of authenticating the

identity and the signature of parties using computers has become a major concern. Unless a reliable alternative to written signatures is acknowledged, the promise of electronic commerce will not be fully realized.

State legislatures have recognized this need. At the present time 30 States have enacted or have introduced some form of digital authentication law. Unfortunately, these State statutes lack uniformity both in scope and application. Electronic communications and commerce take place on the Internet or elsewhere in cyberspace. Therefore, State boundaries have little relevance and conflicting State electronic authentication laws may ultimately inhibit the development of electronic commerce.

The bill I am introducing today is designed to address the issue of conflicting and confusing developments under current and proposed State law. The purpose of the Electronic Financial Services Efficiency Act of 1997 is threefold: First, to provide for the recognition of digital and other forms of authentication as an alternative to existing paper-based methods, second, to improve the efficiency and soundness of the Nation's capital markets and payment system, and third, to harmonize the practices, customs and uses applicable to electronic authentication on a uniform, nationwide basis.

The first goal is accomplished by explicitly recognizing that all forms of electronic commerce that comport with specific, basic statutory standards shall have parity with written signatures. As a result, they will be considered valid for all communications with Federal agencies, U.S. Courts and other instrumentalities of the U.S. Government.

In order to minimize confusion and encourage uniform national treatment, unless the laws of a State otherwise expressly provide, all forms of electronic authentication that comport with the Federal statutory standards shall have the same standing as written signatures for all legal purposes.

The second goal is met by the establishment of the National Association of Certification Authorities [NACA]. Any person or group that wishes to provide electronic authentication services in the United States must be a registered NACA member. The NACA may admit any person or group to membership, provided they are licensed and provide electronic authentication services consistent with the standards set forth in this act.

The third goal is met by the creation of an Electronic Authentication Standards Review Committee within the NACA. Overseen by the Secretary of the Treasury, the Standards Review Committee shall establish, develop, and refine criteria to be applied to new electronic authentication methods, consistent with the specific standards set forth in the Electronic Financial Services Efficiency Act of 1997.

Recognizing that digital authentication will be used in retail transactions, this legislation requires that consumers be notified of the fact that an electronic communication or transaction has been digitally authenticated. Furthermore, the act states that any rights currently afforded to consumers in underlying

transactions are not in any manner impaired or weakened. Additionally, the Standards Review Committee has the authority to address consumer protection by exercising its rule-making and enforcement powers.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this legislation will authorize and validate the use of electronic authentication. It will also encourage innovation and stimulate competition in the design and use of reliable state-of-the-art digital technology.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF ALICE PETROSSIAN

HON. JAMES E. ROGAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, November 8, 1997

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a woman who had dedicated her career to serving students throughout California and our Nation—Alice Petrossian. Now more than ever, we must encourage our teachers to be their best, push our students to work hard and set goals, and invest in strengthening our education system. Recently, this dear friend and educator was awarded the Professional of the Year award by the Armenian Professional Society for her ongoing commitment as an educator.

Alice began her career at California State University Los Angeles, earning both her bachelor's and master's degree before heading to California State University Hayward to pursue her teaching credential. Her work toward excellence in education was recognized early on as she received the Most Outstanding Graduate award at both schools.

Alice then moved back to southern California where she became actively involved with the Glendale Unified School District serving recently as the director of special projects and intercultural programs. She has received much recognition for her service, and her talents have been called upon by each of the last three Governors of California.

Alice has served on the California Community College Board, the California Post Secondary Education Board, and has worked with the Commission for the Establishment of Academic Content and Standards to ensure that quality curricula are united with well-prepared teachers offering our children the tools necessary for the future.

Alice's most important work goes beyond any committee or board on which she might serve. Since her arrival in Glendale, she has reached out to students of all backgrounds. Alice has put faith in at-risk students, and those that might slip through the cracks. Her efforts to provide quality education for all students have distinguished her as a friend of education.

Alice has gone above and beyond the call of duty by establishing scholarship funds, promoting mentoring programs, and working to benefit all students. The greatest honor she can receive, and the greatest thanks we can

offer is by witnessing the change in the lives of every student she has touched. In recognition of her commitment to education, and to the students of California and our Nation, I ask my colleagues to join me today in saluting the service of Alice Petrossian.

TRIBUTE TO IRSHAD-UI-HAQUE

HON. JAMES E. ROGAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Saturday, November 8, 1997

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a man who has exemplified the spirit and determination of what makes American great—Irshad-Ui-Haque. Irshad has built a career as a devoted family man, successful entrepreneur, and compassionate community leader. He has cleared many hurdles in life, and always come out with a compassion for his fellow man and a personal commitment to make a difference.

In 1960, Irshad came to the United States from Pakistan with very little money and speaking very little English. However, he was not deterred. He labored exhaustingly long hours in a sweatshop for a paltry \$1.00 per hour. With an eye on his future, he dedicated himself to learning English, pursuing an academic career, and working to make the most of his future.

Irshad attended classes when not working, and moved on from Pasadena City College to the University of Southern California, where he earned a degree in business. Following graduation, Irshad spent over 10 years working for the Xerox Corp. where his talent was quickly recognized.

In 1972, Irshad and his wife took a gamble. They opened Bantam Associates and eventually turned a family-owned property management company into the parent of one of the largest storage and archive management firms in the Nation. He will quickly shy away from claiming too much success for his achievements, the biggest credit he will pay to his wife and his daughters.

Irshad leads by example, and has been deeply involved in many philanthropic organizations. He has dedicated his time and resources to the Los Angeles Police Department, the Boy Scouts of America, various chambers of commerce and service organizations, and to health care agencies serving the elderly and poor. Because of his many acts of service, Irshad was awarded the Glendale Man of Achievement Award last week by the Glendale News Press.

Irshad Haque has taken his thread of knowledge, determination, and compassion and woven it into a shining example of what makes our country whole. In recognition of his selection for the Man of Achievement honor, and in gratitude for his service to his community, I ask my colleagues here today to join me in thanking and congratulating a great American, Irshad-Ui-Haque.