

a cap of \$50,000 on the amount of credit which may be taken for a principal residence.

The Historic Homeownership Assistance Act will make ownership of a rehabilitated older home more affordable for homeowners of modest incomes. It will encourage more affluent families to claim a stake in older towns and neighborhoods. It affords fiscally stressed cities and towns a way to put abandoned buildings back on the tax rolls, while strengthening their income and sales tax bases. It offers developers, realtors, and homebuilders a new realm of economic opportunity in revitalizing decaying buildings.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is no panacea. Although its goals are great, its reach will be modest. But it can make a difference, and an importance difference. In communities large and small all across this nation. The American dream of owning one's home is a powerful force. This bill can help it come true for those who are prepared to make a personal commitment to join in the rescue of our priceless heritage. By their actions they can help to revitalize decaying resources of historic importance, create jobs and stimulate economic development, and restore to our older towns and cities a lost sense of purpose and community.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill and an explanation of its provisions be printed in the RECORD.

"HISTORIC HOMEOWNERSHIP ASSISTANCE ACT"

Legislation to create a 20 percent tax credit for the rehabilitation of a historic structure occupied by the taxpayer as his principal residence was sponsored last Congress by Representatives Clay Shaw (R-FL) and Barbara Kennelly (D-CT) in the House, and by Senators John Chafee (R-RI) and Bob Graham (D-FL) in the Senate. Although this legislation did not become law, it received considerable support in Congress and we are planning for reintroduction next session and an active campaign to secure its passage.

GOALS OF THE HISTORIC HOMEOWNERSHIP ASSISTANCE ACT

Expand homeownership opportunities for low- and middle-income individuals and families;

Stimulate the revival of declining neighborhoods and communities;

Enlarge and stabilize the tax base of cities and small towns;

Preserve and protect historic homes.

MAJOR PROVISIONS OF THE HISTORIC HOMEOWNERSHIP ASSISTANCE ACT

Rate of Credit, Eligible buildings: The rate of credit is 20 percent of qualified rehabilitation expenditures. Eligible buildings include those listed on national or federally-certified state and local historic registers, and buildings which are located in national or federally-certified state and local historic districts. Eligible buildings (or a portion) must be owned and occupied by the tax payer as his principal residence. Condominiums and cooperatives would be eligible for the tax credit. Rehabilitation would have to be performed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation.

Maximum Credit, Minimum Expenditures: The maximum credit allowable would be \$50,000 for each principal residence, subject to Alternative Minimum Tax provisions. Rehabilitation must be substantial—the greater of \$5,000 or the adjusted basis of the building—with an exception for buildings in census tracts targeted as distressed for Mortgage Revenue Bond purposes under I.R.C. Sec. 143(j)(1) and Enterprise and Empowerment Zones, where the minimum

expenditure must be \$5,000. At least 5 percent of the qualified rehabilitation expenditures would have to be spent on the exterior of the building.

Mortgage Credit Certificate Provision for Low and Moderate Income Homeowners: Taxpayers who do not have sufficient federal income tax liability to make use of the credit could elect to receive, in lieu of the credit, an Historic Rehabilitation Mortgage Credit Certificate in the face amount of the credit to which the taxpayer is entitled. The taxpayer would then transfer the certificate to the mortgage lender in exchange for a reduced interest rate on the home mortgage loan. The mortgage lender would be permitted to reduce its own federal income tax liability by the face amount of the certificate.

Targeted Flexibility for Historic Rehabilitation Standards: For buildings in census tracts targeted as distressed or located within an Enterprise and Empowerment Zone, the Secretary would be required to give consideration to: (1) the feasibility of preserving existing architectural or design elements of the interior of such building; (2) the risk of further deterioration or demolition of such building in the event that certification is denied because of the failure to preserve such interior elements; and, (3) the effects of such deterioration or demolition on neighboring historic properties.

No Passive Activity Rules, No Income Cap on Eligibility: Passive activity rules would not apply because by occupying and rehabilitating a qualifying residence, the individual is not an investor but utilizing the property as his primary residence. There would be no income cap because the proposed legislation is intended not only to foster homeownership and encourage rehabilitation of deteriorated buildings, but also to promote economic diversity within neighborhoods and increased local ad valorem real property, income and sales tax revenues.

Process for Certifying Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures: Maintains the certification process for the existing rehab credit, but authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to enter into cooperative agreements allowing the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) and Certified Local Governments (CLGs) to certify projects within their respective jurisdictions. The SHPOs would have the authority to levy fees for processing applications for certification, provided that the proceeds of such fees are used only to defray expenses associated with the processing of the application.

Revenue Loss Estimate: The Congressional Joint Committee on Taxation has estimated the revenue loss of the Historic Homeownership Assistance Act to be \$368 million over a seven year period.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN KOSOVA

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 19, 1997

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call attention to the situation in Kosova. As my colleagues are aware, Kosova is a region in the former Yugoslavia which is populated by 92 percent ethnic Albanians, but ruled by Serbia.

Since unilaterally withdrawing Kosova's autonomy, Belgrade has carried out a harsh campaign of violations of human and political rights against the Kosovans.

Dr. Alush A. Gashi, M.D., Ph.D., is a member of the Kosova Council for the Defense of

Human Rights and Freedoms and is an expert on the situation in Kosova. On February 6, 1997, he addressed the Congressional Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

I am inserting Dr. Gashi's statement to the Commission at this point in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

STATEMENT BY ALUSH A. GASHI,

I

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for this opportunity to speak with CSCE on the timely and critical subject of repression of human rights and freedoms in the Republic of Kosova.

It was almost three years ago—on May 9, 1994—that I last appeared before the CSCE. Then as now, I just arrived from Prishtina, the capital of the Republic of Kosova. Then as now, I sadly reported that the human rights situation in Kosova had degenerated. Then as now, I must regrettably tell you that repression, violence and terrorism directed at Albanians has escalated. Then as now, I reaffirmed our commitment to peaceful resistance under the leadership of President Rugova and his government.

It has been said that the more things change, the more they stay the same. In Kosova, things have gotten much worse.

Although I speak to you as a human rights activist, I also speak as a citizen of the Republic of Kosova who has experienced firsthand the terrible repression of the Belgrade regime.

II

Perhaps the U.S. State Department annual human rights report described the human rights crisis in Kosova most accurately. In that report issued a week ago on January 30, 1997, the U.S. said: "The human rights record continued to be poor. The police committed numerous, serious abuses including extrajudicial killings, torture, brutal beatings, and arbitrary arrests. Police repression continued to be directed against . . . particularly the Albanians of Kosova . . . and was also increasingly directed against any citizens who protested against the government."

The State Department reported that Serbian authorities killed 14 Albanians in 1996. Torture and cruel forms of punishment were directed against Albanians. Serbian police frequently extracted "confessions" during interrogations that routinely included beating of suspects' feet, hands, genital areas and heads." The police use their fists, nightsticks, and occasionally electric shocks," the report said, adding that the police "often beat persons in front of their families" as a means of intimidating other innocent citizens.

The report told of an incident last July in which "several ethnic Albanian vendors in an open market near Prishtina were beaten by Serbian financial police, who accused them of not having their vendor's licenses in order. According to the victims, the police stole all the merchandise from the vendors without even looking at their papers, and then left the scene."

Albanian children were not spared. The Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms documented between January and June 1996 over 200 cases of mistreatment of children at the hands of Serb authorities.

And the documentation goes on. Police in Kosova use arbitrary arrest and detention. Trials are delayed. There is no justice. Freedom of speech and the press are non-existent. Peaceful assembly and association are unknown under the Belgrade regime. Freedom of movement within Kosova as well as foreign travel, and emigration which are tightly controlled while repatriation, in effect, is prohibited.

Just last Sunday, The Washington Times reported that death came for a 34-year-old Albanian school teacher with a knock on the door that has become a trademark of the Serbian police state system of terror that has gripped Kosova. Nearly 30 Serbian police circled the teacher's house at 6 in the morning before entering.

The police grabbed the teacher's wife by the neck and demanded she direct them to her husband and "a hidden gun," according to family members. The teacher's father reported that the police found the teacher in his bedroom, handcuffed him, and took him away.

Two days later, the family discovered their son's body, beaten and bruised, in a state hospital. A Serbian doctor and two Albanian colleagues said he died from trauma, with evident bruises and lacerations on his legs and genitals.

In short, in Kosova we have the full denial of human and national rights of Albanians imposed by the Serbian regime which has forcefully colonized Kosova and imposed apartheid.

III

While the state of Serbian terrorism has not relented in Kosova, there are important developments in Belgrade that confirm not everything remains the same. Foremost among these are opposition protest marches and rallies in Belgrade.

While all of us in Kosova welcome movement toward democracy in Serbia, the last Communist state in Europe, and sincerely support the right of the Serbian opposition to peacefully protest and demonstrate for democratization of Serbia, our people are asking: Where was the Serbian opposition while we were protesting against the Belgrade regime?

Under the leadership of President Rugova, Albanians in Kosova for almost a decade have peacefully protested against the Belgrade regime. Unfortunately, almost ten years later, the Serbian opposition has not distanced themselves from the Belgrade tyranny or supported stopping violence against Albanians.

They have not protested or distanced themselves, even when Serbian authorities killed peaceful Albanian demonstrators in various parts of Kosova. The Serbian opposition did not protest when the Serbian regime beat Albanian physicians in front of their patients in Kosova's hospitals, or when Serbian police beat Albanian teachers, killed Albanian parents who were protecting their children in the Albanian education system.

They did not protest when the Belgrade regime held political trials of Albanians who established the Kosova parliament. Neither did they protest when Serbian authorities arbitrarily dismissed Albanians from their jobs, closed down all mass media in Albanian language, and achieved quiet ethnic cleansing in Kosova through police interrogation and torture.

Neither did they protest when Serbian apartheid endangered the health and lives of Albanian people in Kosova, which is a crime against humanity, or when the Serbian regime expelled Albanians from their apartments and replaced them with Serb colonizers from other parts of former Yugoslavia.

Unfortunately, Serbian opposition did not protest and is not protesting now, against the Serbian regime for not letting the parliament and government of Kosova function.

Serbian opposition rightfully is asking for recognition of their vote, but at the same time is denying the democratic election in which Albanians citizens of the Republic of Kosova voted for their legitimate representatives in the Kosova leadership and gave them a mandate to represent them.

When we voted in 1992, instead of getting support from the Serbian opposition, some of them were asking to cut off our hands with which we cast our vote, and to cut off our fingers with which we made the "V" for victory sign.

Now, we understand Serbian frustrations at not achieving their aspirations for a greater Serbia. We understand that they may want to distance themselves from the crimes. But we all respect their right to demonstrate and achieve seats in their parliament.

We have to see their program. They have not yet revealed their policy toward Kosova. We hope and we wish that they can recognize the new reality in Kosova. We hope that the Serbian opposition understands that they cannot live under a double standard. To ask respect of their vote and political will in Serbia and at the same time deny the political will of Albanians in the Republic of Kosova is unacceptable.

Albanians of Kosova are against violence. They do support the rights of Serbia to demonstrate, and they condemn any use of force against them. After one decade of peaceful protests, Albanians of Kosova once again are inviting the Serbian opposition, which has protested for several months, to join Albanians of Kosova in their demand for full freedom and democracy based on the political will of Albanians in Kosova which has been confirmed by referendum, as well as parliamentary and presidential elections.

Kosova wants to see a democratic neighbor in Serbia which will end colonization of Kosova. But until that happens, we are in danger of the possibility of transferring the conflict from Belgrade to Kosova.

The United States attitude toward the Belgrade regime has changed since I last met with you. While the Dayton Accords could not have been achieved without the support of Belgrade, the world has witnessed again the duplicity, dishonest and disdain which the tyrant demonstrates toward agreements with which they disagree.

Now, just over a year since the Dayton agreement was reached, and the outer wall of sanctions was established, the U.S. has made it clear that it opposes Communist government in Belgrade and supports the opposition protests in Belgrade.

We were encouraged by State Department statements Monday in which the spokesman, Nicholas Burns, said: "We have always said that we believe in enhancement of the political rights of the Kosovars."

The U.S. should continue to increase its pressure on the Belgrade regime, as it has done in recent days. While this increase of pressure is certainly appropriate, it has resulted along with the success of the opposition protests in convincing the Belgrade Communist regime to once again to play "the Kosova card."

Isn't it ironic. The beginning of the end of former Yugoslavia began in Kosova. And now, as the beginning of the end of Serbia-Montenegro unfolds, the focus has again shifted to Kosova. In recent days, the Belgrade regime has attempted to stir nationalist passions against the Albanians in Kosova, just as it did at the start of the Balkans calamity in 1989.

Then as now, Belgrade regime has turned from rhetoric to rampage. As Nicholas Burns reported Monday: "Let me give you a little bit more information about Kosova because we're very concerned by it. We understand that three ethnic Albanians were killed by Serbian police on Friday. Over 100 ethnic Albanians have been arrested by Serbian police in what appears to be a coordinated police round-up in Kosova itself. Forty are still in custody. There is a basic denial of human and political rights to the Albanian popu-

lation which will remain . . . a great concern of the United States." This insanity must be stopped.

In Kosova, we have organized our society, our institutions, so we urge the international community to help us by ensuring that Serbia will leave us alone in our state of Republic of Kosova.

We are part of the solution. We are committed to the peaceful resolution of the crisis and achieving recognition for our right of self-determination. But structural repression against Albanians in Kosova has become unbearable and still, under the leadership of President Rugova, Albanians are continuing their peaceful attempt to decolonize Kosova and establish an internationally recognized independent state of Kosova on the basis of the referendum held on September 26, 1991, as the best way to protect human and national rights of all the population of the Republic of Kosova.

The independent Kosova will play an important role in establishing friendly relations between the Albanians and the Serbs in the Balkans and also in directly influencing long-term stability in the region. Kosova will become a bridge between the state of Albania and the Serbia. This implies special relations and open borders between Kosova and Serbia as well as between Kosova and Albania.

As Yugoslavia disintegrates, the new reality is that Kosova is an emerging state in the Balkans.

It would be tragic if a decision over the future of Kosova would be made against the political will of the people of Kosova. That would be tragic for the ideals of freedom but also definitely unacceptable for Kosova.

IV.

We are asking the United States of America to continue its policy of protecting Kosova. We hope that we have learned from the tragedy of Bosnia that we should not react too late.

With all the problems, the United States engagement in Bosnia succeeded in stopping the war and mass killings, rapes, prison camps, and the worst misery the world has seen since the Holocaust.

We are asking the U.S. leadership for a peaceful resolution of the question of Kosova and the total Albanian question in general. Maintaining the "outer wall" of sanctions until a final, acceptable peaceful solution for Kosova is reached is essential.

We are asking the USCSCE to exercise its influence on the Belgrade regime to accept the political reality that exists in Kosova.

Kosova is a question of international stability. Therefore, we ask the USCSCE for the return of OSCE monitors and a permanent OSCE presence in Kosova.

Other democratic nations should follow the example of the U.S. which directly engaged in Kosova through its permanent USIS office, and that of many NGOs as well. We wish to see more of such activity.

Tuesday night, President Clinton said in his State of the Union address that America must build for the next century. We as well are seeking to establish our future and that of our children in the next century.

How can we accept living under occupation and colonization, fear and violence which Serbia has imposed on Kosova? We are directed toward global goals of the 21st century, while Serbia wants to move us back to the dark ages. Kosova may be the last example of classical colonization. We are asking for support for peaceful decolonization of Kosova. We are asking for democratic support for the destruction of apartheid in Kosova.

In every crisis of European stability in this century, the United States was the country

that brought the solution and stability. We hope that the U.S. will not surrender the Balkans to the people who unjustly drew the maps with artificial borders in the Congress of Berlin in the last century. They have placed a time bomb in the Balkans which brought tragedy after tragedy for a hundred years.

As President Clinton said in the State of Union address, the enemy of our time is inaction. We are asking for U.S. action in protecting Kosova as well as the South Balkans.

We in Kosova were encouraged by President Clinton's statement: "Our first task is to help build for the first time an undivided, democratic Europe," he said. We are encouraged by this statement because in a democratic Europe, abolition of colonization and apartheid in Kosova will take place.

So finally, we ask USCSCE and all other U.S. institutions and the international community to support the peaceful policy of Kosova Albanians through dialog and under U.S. leadership with international guarantees.

We are counting on the only force in the world that has the will to stop it. We are counting on the United States of America.

THE GRIM STATISTICS OF HUMAN RIGHTS
VIOLATIONS IN KOSOVA

Over 150 Albanians, mostly young people, have been killed by the Serbian police and army since 1989. In 1996 alone, 14 were killed.

66 young Albanian soldiers have been killed while serving in the army under very dubious and suspicious circumstances since 1981.

During the first six months of 1996, some 3,657 ethnic Albanians were mistreated, severely beaten and tortured. By the end of the year there were more than 5000.

In the beginning of 1997, five Albanians were killed by Serbian police and at least 100 Albanians were arrested without reason within a period of one week. The majority of them are still being held in Serbian custody.

Between 1981 and 1993, over 3,200 Albanians were sentenced for one to 20 years in prison for political reasons; 30,000 received 60-day sentences; and over 800,000 were detained by police.

147,300 Albanians, almost 80 percent of all employed Albanians, have been fired by the Serbian government.

450 enterprises were placed under "emergency administration".

4,000 small businesses were shut down for from six months to one year.

Over one million Albanians have no means of subsistence.

Over 80 percent of health care facilities are under "special measures;" dozens of walk-in clinics have been shut down in villages.

Over 2,400 Albanian medical personnel have been dismissed, 157 of them from the teaching staff of the Faculty of Medicine in Prishtina.

70,000 Albanian high school students have been barred from their school buildings.

22,000 teachers have been teaching for seven years without pay.

837 professors and assistants have been dismissed from the university, representing 95 percent of the teaching and administrative staff.