

YOM HASHOAH; REMEMBERING
THE HOLOCAUST**HON. WALTER H. CAPPS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 1, 1997

Mr. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, this Sunday, May 4 is Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day. This solemn day caps off a week in which memorial events have been held in every corner of our Nation, including the city of Santa Barbara, which I am proud to represent.

Some may ask why, more than half a century after the Holocaust, we need to continue these commemorations? My response is that it is our sacred duty. Fifty years after World War II, or 500 years later, it will be incumbent upon us to do all that we can to learn the lessons of this terrible era and teach them to future generations so that such a catastrophe will never befall the Jewish people—or any people—again.

Nothing we can ever do will bring the 6 million who were murdered back to life. Nothing we can do or say will ever heal the searing wounds of those who survived. For them, the numbers burned into their arms and their other physical and emotional scars are a daily painful reminder of their suffering. But we can endow the sacrifices of the victims, living and dead, with everlasting significance if we undertake remembrance events in our community.

In my district, I was honored to participate in the opening of a remarkable exhibition in Santa Barbara featuring the art and sculpture of Theresienstadt. This breathtaking exhibit is sponsored by the Hillel Foundation of UCSB, the Jewish Community Relations Committee of the Santa Barbara Jewish Federation, the Santa Barbara County Arts Commission, the College of Creative Studies at UCSB, and the Austrian Cultural Institute of New York.

This event was particularly enlightening because it reminds us of the remarkable power of the visual arts to teach, to inspire, to move us.

I've joined my friends and neighbors in Santa Barbara at Yom Hashoah commemorations for many years, but this time was the first that I stood before them as their Congressman, with new obligations and new opportunities.

As a Congressman, I will be able to represent my community at the annual Yom Hashoah event in the Rotunda of our Nation's Capital on May 8.

As a Congressman, I saw the need to respond to the unwise and outrageous comments of one of my colleagues who criticized the airing of "Schindler's List" as "polluting the minds of our children" by organizing my own letter, signed by 40 Members, in support of this historic broadcast.

As a Congressman, I will proudly support the continuing Federal funding of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, which has helped fulfill our obligation to teach the lessons of the Holocaust to millions.

As a Congressman, I am supporting legislation to unlock, once and for all, the secret files on Nazi war criminals still being shielded by certain agencies of the U.S. Government because of outdated cold war national security concerns.

And as a Congressman, and particularly as a member of the Committee on International

Relations, I will vote and speak up for continued U.S. assistance for the Jewish State, Israel, a state literally created out of the ashes of the Holocaust. Whatever the ups and downs of its internal political machinations, it is a moral, strategic and diplomatic imperative for the U.S. to support Israel and advance the cause of peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Speaker, before I came to Congress, I was a professor of religion. For many years, I taught my students the extraordinary book "Night" by Elie Wiesel, America's voice of conscience. Among Professor Weisel's most incisive observations is that when an event, like the Holocaust is unspeakable, it takes a while to learn the right words.

We will never learn all the right words to describe and explain the Holocaust. Yet by taking time each year to remember the dead, honor the living, and absorb the lessons of the Nazi era, will we add meaning to our own lives and those of future generations.

TRIBUTE TO GENE RAGAN: MAN
OF THE YEAR IN ALABAMA AG-
RICULTURE**HON. TERRY EVERETT**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 1, 1997

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to an outstanding figure in southern agriculture and a dear friend, Gene Ragan. Progressive Farmer magazine has recently selected Gene as its Man of the Year in Alabama agriculture. This is a prestigious honor only bestowed to agriculture's best and I can think of no one more suited to receive it than Gene.

Gene Ragan is an institution in the southern farming community, regularly hosting what many believe to be the Nation's longest running local television farm show. For viewers of WTVY-TV 4 in Dothan, AL, Gene has been a friend and an agriculture advocate for 38 years on his "Noon Farm Report." As Progressive Farmer notes: "Ragan has served with distinction as the voice of agriculture for many who no longer have day-to-day ties to farming." His audience today is considerably more urban than in 1959.

Gene's ties to agriculture actually extended back 50 years, beginning his career as an extension agent in Grady County, GA, in 1946. In addition to farm broadcasting, Gene Ragan has ably served as farm consultant to Southtrust Bank in Dothan, and has used his expertise to organize the annual agriculture leadership conference which draws hundreds from across the Southeast.

A friend and ambassador for the family farm, Gene Ragan is a genuine lover of the land and this country. No one I know is a more credible advocate for environmental stewardship than Gene Ragan. His efforts on behalf of land grant colleges and research programs are also well known.

Always looking to the future, Gene is a consistent supporter of youth in agriculture, namely 4-H and FAA programs in the Tri-state region of southeast Alabama, southwest Georgia, and northwest Florida.

I am personally indebted to and will never forget the help that Gene Ragan gave this young newspaper reporter many years ago.

Gene Ragan is agriculture in the Wiregrass, and I congratulate him on his award and his continuing remarkable career in service to the farmer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF PRESIDENT
CLINTON'S "AMERICA READS
CHALLENGE ACT OF 1997"**HON. WILLIAM (BILL) CLAY**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 1, 1997

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the America Reads Challenge Act of 1997, on behalf of President Clinton. This Act will help mobilize trained volunteers reading tutors and skilled reading specialists to ensure that every student can read by the end of the 3d grade. Over 5 years, the bill commits over \$2.75 billion to local communities for after-school, summer, and weekend tutoring in reading.

Specifically, this Act would fund 25,000 reading specialists and tutor coordinators to mobilize one million volunteer reading tutors. The program will serve areas with a high number or percentage of low income families, or areas with the greatest need for reading assistance. The program will be coordinated with existing early childhood and family literacy programs, such as Even Start and Head Start.

The program is designed to build on and support in-school reading programs, with a special emphasis on strong parental involvement. The bill provides for the Parents as First Teachers Challenge Grants that would provide \$300 million to help parents help their children read well.

It is well documented that children who cannot read well by the end of third grade are more likely to drop out, and are less likely to succeed in school. Some 40 percent of our fourth graders scored below the basic level on recent national tests. The America Reads Challenge Act of 1997 will allow communities to create well-designed tutoring programs that will significantly improve student reading skills.

H.R. 1515 EPHIC LEGISLATION TO
MAKE HEALTH INSURANCE AF-
FORDABLE FOR SMALL BUSI-
NESS WORKERS AND THEIR
SPOUSES AND CHILDREN**HON. HARRIS W. FAWELL**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday May 1, 1997

Mr. FAWELL. Mr. Speaker, WILLIAM F. GOODLING, Majority Leader RICHARD K. ARMEY, Representative J. DENNIS HASTERT, Representative SUSAN MOLINARI, Representative JAMES A. LEACH, Representative OWEN PICKETT, Representative JAMES P. MORAN, Representative WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI, Representative GLENN POSHARD, JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR., and Representative GARY A. CONDIT, are among the 113 cosponsors who are joining me today in introducing the Expanded Portability and Health Insurance Coverage Act [EPHIC].

Similar legislation is also being introduced in the Senate by TIM HUTCHINSON, and others.

The bipartisan EPHIC legislation will make health coverage more affordable and accessible to millions of small business workers and their spouses and children. EPHIC will help make insurance more affordable, by expanding coverage and lowering costs; more accessible, by removing barriers and increasing choice through association plans; and more secure, by improving continuity of coverage and consumer protections.

The problem of the uninsured, both children and adults, is a problem of small businesses lacking access to affordable health coverage. Over 80 percent of the 40 million uninsured Americans live in families with an employed worker who is likely to work for a small employer or be self-employed. Over 80 percent of all uninsured children are in families with working parents. Nearly two-thirds of these parents work for small businesses.

To address the affordability problem of the uninsured, EPHIC would give franchise networks, union collectively bargained plans, bona-fide trade, business and professional associations i.e., retailers, wholesalers, printers, agricultural workers, grocers, and churches—and organizations such as chambers of commerce and the National Federation of Independent Business [NFIB] the ability to form regional and national group health plans. These Association Health Plans would enjoy the economies-of-scale allowing them to fully insure or self-insure the workers, spouses, and children of America's small businesses, just as large- and mid-sized businesses have been able to do for 23 years under ERISA.

The pooling allowed under EPHIC will bring to America's small businesses immensely increased economies-of-scale to effectively bargain with providers and insurers, uniformity of plans, freedom from costly State mandated benefits, and significantly lower overhead costs. It is estimated that employers could save as much as 30 percent in overhead costs and that up to one-half of the 40 million uninsured would find accessible and affordable health care in the private market.

The newly formed Association Health Plans will be able to replicate for small- and medium-sized employers the recent success large employers have had in limiting health cost increases to less than the rate of inflation. EPHIC would thus expand coverage and do so through the private market without new taxes or costly mandates.

In summary, EPHIC will help millions of employees, especially those who work for small businesses, to obtain health insurance. Mandates have driven costs up and, if expanded, will further discourage employers from providing health insurance to their workers. In contrast, this legislation will lower costs and increase choice to make it easier for employees to purchase affordable health coverage.

PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS

HON. NEWT GINGRICH

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 1, 1997.

Mr. GINGRICH. Mr. Speaker, the persecution of Christians is one of today's overlooked tragedies. On April 29, 1997, columnist A.M. Rosenthal of the New York Times addressed the torture of Christians in Asia, Africa and the

Middle East. I enter Mr. Rosenthal's valuable insights into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD

[From the New York Times, Apr. 29, 1997]

THE WELL POISONERS

(By A. M. Rosenthal)

They are outsiders among us. They use their foreign religion to poison our wells, and destroy our belief in ourselves and the God we must follow.

Throughout the persecution of Jews, that has been the accusation and justification: an evil religion of the evil outsider.

In their terror and helplessness, sometimes victims pleaded that the charge of foreignness was not true—look at us, we are like you—almost as if being different made their persecution at least explicable to the human mind.

Now foreignness is the weapon used by persecutors of Christians in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Islamicist inquisitors use the weapon in the name of heavenly righteousness, the Chinese political police in the name of their frightened, last-ditch nationalism.

Both types of persecutors of Christians benefit from a peculiar protection—the attitude of many Western Christians that Christianity is indeed foreign to Asia and Africa, a valuable export certainly, but not really, well, indigenous, to the soil. So they see far-away Christianity as separate from themselves. This profits persecutors, by preventing the persecuted from getting the succor they need, and due them.

The aloofness of Christians to their distant persecuted is a denial of the reality that Christianity was not only born in the Middle East but spread wide and deep in Asia and Africa long before Islam or Western Christian missionaries arrived.

By now, according to David B. Barrett's Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission, 1996, there are 300 million church-affiliated Christians in Asia, the same number in Africa—and 200 million in all of North America.

Americans are waking up to the persecution of Christians in Communist China. Their own Government, however, gives it zero priority compared with Washington's lust for the bizarre privilege of trade with China granted by Beijing: to buy eight times more from China than China does from America.

But how many Americans know or care about the increasing persecution of Mideast Christians, like the 10 million Copts of Egypt—the largest Christian community in the region? Copts are vilified as outsiders, though they have lived in Egypt since the seventh century.

In February and March, 25 Copts were shot to death in Islamicist attacks on a church and a school. The attacks were part of the worst outbreak of Christian-killing in 25 years. And Islamic fundamentalists have been allowed to carry out year-round harassment of Copts, including destruction of churches that Copts then are not allowed to rebuild.

In early April Mustapha Mashour, "general guide" of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, a fountain of Mideast terrorism for 50 years, announced a new goal: to bar Copts from the army, police and senior government positions on the grounds that they were a fifth column. He also demanded that a "protection tax" be imposed on Christians, as in the time of the Prophet.

Elsewhere in the Mideast, persecution includes the Sudan's trade in Christian slaves. But the Egyptian Government boasts of fighting extremists and has received praise and billions from America.

In the U.S., a coalition of 60 human rights and ethnic organizations watches out for persecution of minorities under

"Islamization." The coalition's definition is a political and cultural process to establish Islamic law, the Sharia, as the ruling principle of all society, to which all must conform.

This is what the Very Rev. Keith Roderick, an Episcopal priest, who is secretary general of the coalition, reports about Egypt:

"The government has created an atmosphere of bigotry and hatred toward the Coptic minority, allowing the Copts to become human safety valves for Islamic militants. . . . A significant reduction in [U.S. foreign aid] for Egypt would send a strong signal that the U.S. has adopted a serious priority objective in its foreign policy to eliminate Christian persecution."

Ignorance of the history or huge number of Christian worshipers in faraway countries tends to make American Christians, and Jews too, passive about the persecution of Christians. As long as passivity lasts, so long will persecution continue. It has always been so.

PROGRESS REPORT ON WOMEN'S HEALTH

SPEECH OF

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 29, 1997

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to speak about the Reconstructive Breast Surgery Benefits Act of 1997 H.R. 164 and S. 609.

I am proud to be the original House sponsor of this critical legislation which will end the short-sighted insurance practice of denying coverage for post-mastectomy breast reconstruction based on the false assumption that the surgery is merely a "cosmetic" procedure. When in reality, reconstructive surgery is often an integral part of the mental and physical recovery of a woman who undergoes a traumatic amputation of her breast.

Specifically, the Reconstructive Breast Surgery Benefits Act requires health insurance companies that provide coverage for mastectomies to also cover reconstructive breast surgery resulting from those mastectomies (including surgery to establish symmetry between breasts).

Approximately 85,000 American women undergo a mastectomy each year as part of their treatment for breast cancer. While this is a life-saving procedure, it's also a horribly disfiguring operation. Studies have demonstrated that many women say that fear of losing a breast is a leading reason why they do not participate in early breast cancer detection programs. More than 25,000 mastectomy patients each year elect to undergo breast reconstruction.

Since I began my work on this bill, I've heard daily from so many who have relayed their own individual experiences to me. Karen Ingalls, for example—a breast cancer survivor from San Mateo, CA—read about my legislation and asked her coworkers to write to me if they support it. In just 4 hours, she collected signatures and comments from 120 people. Karen herself wrote, "I feel denial of coverage is just one more assault on [a] women's psyche. Something must be done to prevent this."

I sometimes hear from critics who ask why "all-of-a-sudden" there seems to be a congressional rush toward breast cancer legislation as opposed to other serious health care