

RECOGNITION OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH BIRTHDAY OF JOHN MAGNOTTE

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 22, 1999

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the 100 years of John Magnotte's life. John was born on September 22, 1899, in Detroit Michigan. Today John lives in the beautiful community of St. Clair Shores where he settled in the 1950's.

John married Dorothy Fraquelle in 1927, and raised three children, two sons and a daughter, while working for General Motors for 30 years. Though he has been a widower for the last 10 years, Mr. Magnotte is today surrounded by five generations of children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and even great-great grandchildren.

Mr. Magnotte is still very active in senior groups today, especially the St. Clair Shores Senior Cruisers Club. He is often found playing cards and socializing with the Cruisers, as well as the other senior groups in the area. He is always surrounded by friends and family and takes great pride in showing off the roses in his yard.

Besides his long life, we should recognize the experiences that John has acquired in his 100 years. He has lived through the administration of 18 different U.S. Presidents and the creation of five U.S. States. John went from the days of horse and buggy travel to witness space travel on television. Many of us can only dream of 100 years worth of visions and sights, a 100 years worth of character, a hundred years worth of emotions. John Magnotte's life is fit for framing, and should be cherished as a national treasure. I invite all of you to join me in honoring a true historian of the American Dream and wish John Magnotte a very happy one hundredth birthday.

IN HONOR OF REVEREND ALAN DAVIS

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 22, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the passing of Reverend Alan Davis, an activist who fought in the interests of justice for the poor and the oppressed without counting the costs. Reverend Alan Davis dedicated his life to helping the underprivileged.

Reverend Davis spent more than 23 years serving as a pastor at St. Phillip's Christian Church on E. 30th St. near one of the city's poorest housing projects. He led the church community in providing emergency food supplies and tutoring for area families. During this time he was also the executive director of the City Club where he brought in diverse philosophers and speakers from around the world to discuss issues important to the club. As City Club executive director, and as pastor at St. Phillip's, Reverend Davis devoted much of his time to the Volgograd Forum, a free speech forum similar to the City Club in Volgograd, Russia.

As a veteran of World War II and serving in the signal corps, Reverend Davis dem-

onstrated his commitment to both God and country. From 1953 to 1961, Reverend Davis served at North Royalton Methodist Church and then moved on to Aldersgate Methodist Church in Warrensville until 1968. Since then he spent 23 years serving St. Phillip's Church in Cleveland.

His commitment also extended to serving society and defending the civil rights of all Americans. As a social activist he was associated with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and affiliated with numerous programs to feed and house the poor. Reverend Davis soon went on to Yale University where he graduated with a bachelor's degree and then a graduate's degree from Yale Divinity School in 1953.

My fellow colleagues, join me in recognizing the passing of Reverend Alan Davis, a man who consistently and without pause adhered to the principles and values of God at the price of self-interest. Let us aspire in our own efforts to show such a commitment and passion to truth.

COMMEMORATING THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

HON. JAMES E. ROGAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 22, 1999

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the people of Armenia celebrated the eighth anniversary of their republic—honoring a national referendum in support of a free and democratic Republic of Armenia. Less than 1 month ago, I had the honor and the privilege of visiting this proud nation and would like to share with my colleagues what I learned about this nation whose culture and tradition dates back some three millennia.

Perhaps the most inspirational lesson I brought back concerns a terrible experience endured not only by the Armenian people, but by the world—the atrocities committed at the hands of the Ottoman Turks in the first decades of this century. Despite a cultural and political annihilation—indeed a genocide—the Armenian people have flourished as a defining culture in the Caucasus, in the United States, and on the world stage.

This resilience is evident in the Republic's rise from former captive nation under the Soviet empire state to independent democracy. As I learned on my recent trip, the Armenian people—in the United States and Armenia—have united behind the cause of a prosperous community and a productive nation. Today, Armenia is leading the region in development of infrastructure, technology and education.

As we celebrate this independence, I reflect on my meeting with the President of Armenia, Robert Kocharian. Through his efforts and those of his Azerbaijani colleague, Heidar Aliev, the release of Armenian prisoners of war recently was secured. This is just one example of their work to end decades of bitter feuding in the region. President Kocharian also has guided his nation into a new era of education reform, of artistic rejuvenation and of economic development.

Mr. Speaker, our Nation is built upon a foundation of freedom, democracy, and independence. The Republic of Armenia, I am proud to report, follows this same tradition.

The Armenian people have proven that the triumph of the human spirit—despite decades of war, of genocide, and of oppression—can not stifle the will of a people to make their world a better place to live. I am honored to represent one of the largest populations of ethnic Armenians outside Armenia, and I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have visited their homeland.

As we move toward a new century, and look back on the successes of our past, I would ask my colleagues to join me in saluting the remarkable achievements in the Republic of Armenia. To the Armenian people we send our respect and admiration on the occasion of your nation's eighth anniversary of independence.

BAPTIST CHURCH TARGETED BY AZERBAIJAN AUTHORITIES

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 22, 1999

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, I rise today to highlight a disturbing incident involving governmental harassment of religious believers in Azerbaijan. We have received reports of religious liberty violations perpetrated by governmental authorities. As a participating State of the OSCE, Azerbaijan has committed to insuring the freedom of individuals to profess and practice their religion. These recent governmental actions are a clear violation of Azerbaijan's OSCE commitment to the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief.

On September 5th, government officials in Baku forced their way into a legally-registered church, Baku Baptist Church, and arrested sixty members of the religious group. The pastors of the church as well as a dozen foreigners were among those arrested and interrogated. The arrested Azeri religious believers were detained and asked to sign a statement affirming that they had attended an "illegal meeting" and promising not to attend the religious meetings in the future. Ultimately, two leaders of the church were sentenced to 15 days in prison on charges relating to resisting police. Likewise, then other foreign members of the religious group were charged with "engaging in religious propaganda" and "propagating against the Muslim faith," in violation of an Azeri law that forbids such activity. On September 8th, all ten foreigners were deported and more deportations are likely.

These events are alarming, Mr. Speaker. While there had been reports of governmental harassment in the past, especially of unregistered religious minority groups, these current events are especially problematic because the target of these actions was a legally registered religious group.

Mr. Speaker, these actions are in direct violation to Azerbaijan's OSCE commitments, including section 16 of the 1989 Vienna Concluding Document, which explicitly delineates the wide scope of activities protected, including the right to establish and maintain places of worship and granting them status under law to both profess and practice their faith. In the 1990 Copenhagen Concluding Document Article 9.1, Azerbaijan has reaffirmed "that everyone will have the right to freedom of expression, including the right to communication.

This right will include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers."

The actions by Azerbaijani officials clearly violate these commitments. I truly hope that these government actions are merely an aberration and will be dealt with accordingly and are not the signal of even more repression of religious believers in Azerbaijan.

I would like to commend to my colleagues the work of our Embassy in Baku on religious liberty. Embassy personnel have taken this recent incident very seriously and have followed the situation from the start. I urge those of my colleagues who interact with Azerbaijani Government officials to raise religious liberty issues in their discussions, stressing the essential role that religious liberty—and indeed human rights in general—play in maintaining a free, stable, and democratic civil society.

IN RECOGNITION OF 1999 LAWSUIT ABUSE AWARENESS WEEK IN THE STATE OF OHIO

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 22, 1999

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call attention to an important designation this week in the state of Ohio. The week of Sunday, September 19 through Saturday, September 25, 1999, has been officially designated by Ohio Governor Bob Taft as lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week.

The 1999 Lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week campaign attempts to better educate citizens throughout the state of Ohio about the ongoing concerns of the legal problems in our judicial system. During this campaign, the Ohio Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse (OCALA) has undertaken a public awareness campaign to voice the concerns about lawsuit abuse and draw attention to the impact it has on the state of Ohio. Citizens from across the state have assisted with the campaign to help OCALA spread its message.

Mr. Speaker, the overwhelming rise in lawsuit abuse is not a concern specific to the state of Ohio. Certainly, these problems carry both state and national implications, which affect all Americans. In recent years, our society has become more prone to litigation. In fact, some statistics show the number of lawsuits filed each year approaching 300,000. The sheer number of these lawsuits requires millions of dollars in expenses and thousands of hours from employees. These figures demonstrate that lawsuit abuse is a heavy burden that interferes with our continued economic growth.

As lawsuits continue to climb in number and scope, the impact on our standard of living is evident. Frivolous lawsuits result in higher operating costs for businesses, the withdrawal of products from the marketplace, and the potential decline in growth and overall expansion. Simple economics shows us that these costs are inevitably passed along to consumers and workers in the form of higher prices, lost opportunities, and fewer jobs.

Mr. Speaker, lawsuit abuse is a serious issue facing the United States. As such, it is important for groups like OCALA to be recog-

nized for their efforts in curtailing this abuse. Dedication to change, like that shown by OCALA and other groups, will further the cause to end lawsuit abuse and bring about overall legal reform. I would urge my colleagues to stand and join me in recognizing the week of Sunday, September 19 through Saturday, September 25, 1999, as "Ohio Lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week."

vania. I am proud to have been asked to participate in this event.

This prestigious award has been described by Arthritis Foundation Chairperson Deborah D. Hannon as an honor "presented to an individual who epitomizes the word 'leader' in both their personal and professional life. The recipient is someone who gives back to their community as a way of thanking them for achieving success in their own life."

John Nespoli is the president and chief executive officer of Mercy Health Partners and one of the senior vice presidents of Catholic Healthcare Partners, which makes him responsible for a \$200 million health care system, including a tertiary referral center, community hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health care, physician group practice and managed care operations.

In addition, John serves on a large number of diverse community organizations. A native of Berwick, John is a dedicated professional with strong commitment to our region. He is the husband of the former Geri Kamps and the father of twins.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the Arthritis Foundation for this year's choice for the "Community Leader of the Year" and am pleased to send my year very best wishes to John as he accepts this prestigious honor.

GEORGE NEAVOLL MAKES THOUGHTFUL CONTRIBUTION TO MAINE

HON. JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 22, 1999

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to George Neavoll, who edited the opinion pages of the Portland Press Herald and the Maine Sunday Telegram newspapers from 1991 until his retirement earlier this month. His readers, myself included, know that he leaves behind very large shoes to fill.

In the words of his colleagues, George Neavoll "set an unapologetically upbeat tone for the opinion pages, wrote extensively about the State's environment and worked to create a consciousness among Mainers that they live in the Atlantic Rim region."

During his time as editorial page editor, Mr. Neavoll championed many causes and highlighted problems in need of attention. From management of our fisheries and protection of our air, land, and water, to the return of passenger rail service in Maine and the need for improved East-West travel routes in our State, George Neavoll enhanced public discourse and made us think.

He also opened up the editorial board meetings to the public, and redesigned the editorial pages to provide more space for letters to the editor and more opportunity for local residents to submit columns.

Throughout his 30-year career in the newspaper business, Mr. Neavoll was recognized for his commitment to excellence numerous times. He received awards for writing, particularly in the areas of environmental protection and human rights. He received a Global Media Award from The Population Institute in 1996; a Human Rights Award from the Portland chapter of Amnesty International in 1995; and the first Portland Bias Crime Task Force's Diversity Bridge Building Award in 1995.

JOHN NESPOLI HONORED

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 22, 1999

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. John L. Nespoli, who has been named Community Leaders of the Year by the Arthritis Foundation of Eastern Pennsyl-