

SENATE SHOULD PASS RELIGIOUS LIBERTY PROTECTION ACT

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, recently, this House passed H.R. 1691, the Religious Liberty Protection Act. The bill is currently in committee in the Senate and I would like to take this opportunity to urge our colleagues in the other house to pass this bill as soon as possible.

America is a secular democracy, a country where the religious rights of every citizen are protected by the Constitution. In many other countries, including some that call themselves secular and democratic, people do not enjoy these freedoms. We must do whatever we can to protect religious freedom for every American.

The Sikh religion requires Sikhs to have five symbols known as the "five Ks." The five Ks are unshorn hair (Kes), a comb (Kanga), a bracelet (Kara), a kind of shorts (Kachha), and a ceremonial sword (Kirpan). These are required by the religion.

In a recent incident in Mentor, Ohio, outside Cleveland, a 69-year-old Sikh named Gurbachan Singh Bhatia was involved in a minor traffic accident. When the police arrived at the scene, a policeman saw Mr. Bhatia's kirpan (ceremonial sword). He was arrested for carrying a concealed weapon. The case is scheduled to be heard in December. In a case in Cincinnati involving similar circumstances, the judge, the Honorable Mark Painter wrote, "To be a Sikh is to wear a kirpan—it is that simple. It is a religious symbol and in no way a weapon."

Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, has been working to get the Religious Liberty Protection Act to protect the rights of Mr. Bhatia and all religious people of all faiths in America. No person should be harassed for his religious faith. He has written to Senator HATCH, who chairs the Judiciary Committee over there, and all members of the committee in support of this bill.

I call on the local authorities in Mentor to drop all charges against Mr. Bhatia and I also call on my colleagues over in the Senate to pass H.R. 1691, the Religious Liberty Protection Act.

I submit Dr. Aulakh's letter to Senator HATCH into the RECORD for the information of my colleagues.

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN,
Washington, DC, October 7, 1999.

Hon. ORRN HATCH,
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee,
Washington, DC.

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO EXPEDITE PASSAGE OF
H.R. 1691 TO PROTECT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

DEAR SENATOR HATCH: On behalf of over 500,000 Sikhs, I am writing to you in support of H.R. 1691, the Religious Liberty Protection Act.

The Council of Khalistan represents the interests of the Sikh Nation in this country and worldwide. It was constituted by the Panthic Committee to represent the Sikh struggle for freedom. We have worked for the last 12 years in pursuit of this objective.

It is vitally important that the Religious Liberty Protection Act be reported out of committee and passed as soon as possible.

Charan Singh Kalsi of New Jersey was fired by the New York Transit Authority. The Transit Authority tried to force him to wear a hard hat instead of his turban, which he is required to wear as a symbol of his Sikh religion.

When a Sikh is baptized, he or she is required to have five symbols called the five Ks. They are unshorn hair (Kes), a comb (Kanga), a bracelet (Kara), a kind of shorts (Kachha), and a ceremonial sword (Kirpan). These are required by the religion.

Recently in Mentor, Ohio, Gurbachan Singh Bhatia, a 69-year-old Sikh, was involved in a minor traffic accident. The police were called to the scene of the accident. When the policeman saw Mr. Bhatia's kirpan (ceremonial sword), he was arrested for carrying a concealed weapon. He is currently scheduled to go to trial in December. In a similar case in Cincinnati, Judge Mark Painter wrote, "To be a Sikh is to wear a kirpan—it is that simple. It is a religious symbol and in no way a weapon."

Mr. Bhatia and Mr. Kalsi are exercising their freedom of religion. The U.S. Constitution guarantees religious freedom to everyone. The Religious Liberty Protection Act will protect individuals like Gurbachan Singh Bhatia and Charan Singh Kalsi from being prosecuted and denied jobs for exercising their religious freedom. That is why this bill is so important.

On behalf of the Sikhs in America, I urge you to report the Religious Liberty Protection Act out so that it can be passed and become law as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

DR. GURMIT SINGH AULAKH,
President, Council of Khalistan.

HONORING JUDGE MYRON DONOVAN CROCKER

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Judge Myron Donovan Crocker for his outstanding contributions to the community.

As long as there has been an Eastern District of California, there has been a Judge Myron Donovan Crocker. Judge Crocker was born in Pasadena on September 4, 1915 and was raised in Fresno. He attended Fresno schools and graduated from Fresno High School in 1933 and Fresno State College in 1937. He received his law degree from the University of California, Boalt Hall, in May of 1940. His first job was with the FBI in New York, first in Albany and then in New York City during World War II handling counter-espionage matters. Judge Crocker and his wife Elaine were married in New York while he was stationed there.

After the war ended, the FBI granted Crocker's request for a transfer closer to home and he was assigned to Los Angeles. In 1946, he entered private practice in Chowchilla and worked as Deputy District Attorney for Madera County. In 1951, he became Judge of the Chowchilla Justice Court, while continuing his private practice. He was appointed Superior Court Judge of Madera County in 1958, and remained there for only 1 year before his appointment to the Federal Bench.

Upon Judge Crocker's appointment to the Federal Bench on September 21, 1959, he

spent most of his time in Los Angeles and San Diego. At that time, the Federal court in Fresno was part of the Southern District of California. With redistricting in September, 1966, Judge Crocker became the Chief Judge of the Eastern District of California, and was the sole Federal judge in the Fresno district. His duties as Chief Judge included overseeing the completion of the Federal Courthouse in Fresno. Judge Crocker stepped down as Chief Judge in June 1967.

Although the caseload in Fresno grew quickly after redistricting, Judge Crocker still traveled frequently to sit on cases throughout the United States, including being in Washington, D.C. in 1968 when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. Judge Crocker remained the sole Federal judge in Fresno until 1979, when an additional judgeship was approved and Judge Edward D. Price was appointed. In 1981, Judge Crocker took Senior status and Judge Robert E. Coyle was appointed in his place. As a senior judge, Judge Crocker has continued to take cases and has made himself available for high profile cases outside his district.

Judge Crocker is held in highest esteem by his peers, staff and the legal community for his legal ability, demeanor, kindness, and fairness. As a colleague stated, "He is held in universal affectionate esteem."

Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Judge Myron Donovan Crocker for his service to Fresno and the Eastern District of California on his 40th anniversary of service. I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing Judge Crocker many more years of continued success and happiness.

RECOGNIZING MARPLE NEWTOWN CARING COALITION

HON. CURT WELDON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to stand before you today to recognize the tireless and exemplary efforts of the Marple Newtown Caring Coalition. This organization brings together schools and the community as partners in order to work side-by-side for substance abuse prevention education.

During the week of October 23–27, the Marple Newtown Caring Coalition alongside numerous schools and community programs across the country will be participating in Red Ribbon Week. The goal behind Red Ribbon Week is to educate students of all ages from kindergarten through high school on the grave dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. The Red Ribbon Campaign first originated in 1985 after the tragic death of Special Agent Enrique Camarena of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration in the battle against drugs. Red Ribbons are worn by school students as a symbol of intolerance against drug use and a commitment to a drug-free lifestyle.

On October 25th, Marple Newtown Caring Coalition will proudly host the Red Ribbon Week Celebration in my Congressional District. The presentation will bring representatives from over 10 elementary and high schools together to promote substance abuse prevention. This gathering of students of all

ages and different schools works to facilitate a bond between students and adults to achieve better communications for safe schools and communities.

I applaud Marple Newtown Caring Coalition's endeavors to educate the entire community on the necessity of drug prevention education not only for the future of our community, but also for the future of our children. The Coalition stands behind a proactive approach by bringing parents, teachers, students, law enforcement officers and community leaders together to strive toward a healthy, drug-free atmosphere in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I feel it is imperative we support and encourage students and adults working together to end the destruction of drug abuse and move towards a reality dominated by drug-free and alcohol-free students. I would like to ask my colleagues to support their local Red Ribbon weeks at schools within their districts. With organizations like the Marple Newtown Caring Coalition and our local schools around the nation, we can strike a serious blow in the fight against drugs.

**ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF
MATTHEW SHEPARD**

HON. CYNTHIA A. MCKINNEY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, the tragic death of Matthew Shepard should have marked a turning point * * * but tragically it didn't.

The hatred and the violence against gays and lesbians still exists today. These days it seems that anyone, whether they're gay or merely perceived to be, runs the risk of becoming the victim of a hate crime. That is why we must expand federal hate crime laws to include offenses based on sexual orientation.

Nationwide, scores of beatings and bashings of gays and lesbians have occurred, regularly reported by the gay press, but often ignored by the mass media.

Some of you probably haven't heard of a California gay couple who was murdered in their home this summer or the shooting of a gay man in Michigan earlier this year.

In a recent speech, Matthew's mom, Judy Shepard said: "For all who ask what they can do for Matthew and other victims, my answer is to educate and bring understanding where you see hate and ignorance, bring light where you see darkness, bring freedom where there is fear and begin to heal."

That is the message we should take to heart on this anniversary of Matthew Shepard's murder.

TRIBUTE TO THE ARC-SOUTH BAY

HON. STEVEN T. KUYKENDALL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Mr. KUYKENDALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a very special organization in my district, The ARC-South Bay. For forty years, the staff and volunteers of The ARC-South Bay have provided an invaluable service to the developmentally disabled.

The Southwest Association for Retarded Children (SWARC), now known as The ARC-South Bay, was founded on November 3, 1959. One of the organization's original purposes was to provide a wide variety of recreational and social programs for mentally retarded youngsters and adults in the South Bay area.

The mission of The ARC-South Bay has continued to broaden throughout the years. The organization now provides support to the families of individuals with mental retardation. They also set out to facilitate equal access to society for individuals with mental retardation.

The ARC-South Bay is a pioneer organization within the developmentally disabled community. They strive to enhance opportunities for growth and independence.

I commend the staff and volunteers of The ARC-South Bay for their efforts in improving the quality of life for individuals with mental retardation. Congratulations on this milestone, and I wish you continued success. The South Bay is grateful for your services.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, as is reflected in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, I was granted an official leave of absence for Tuesday, October 12, 1999.

Had I been present, I would have voted as follows:

Rollcall vote 493—H.R. 493 to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended the Hillary J. Farias Date-Rape Prevention Drug Act—I would have voted "yes"; rollcall vote 492—S. 800 to Suspend the Rules and Pass the Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act—I would have voted "yes"; rollcall vote 491—H. Res. 303 on Motion to Suspend the Rules and agree, as Amended, Expressing the Sense of the House of Representatives urging that 95% of Federal education dollars be spent in the classroom—I would have voted "yes."

**COMMENDING THE PENNSYLVANIA
FAMILY INSTITUTE**

HON. JOSEPH R. PITTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to commend the Pennsylvania Family Institute as it celebrates its Tenth Anniversary tonight. In those 10 years, the Institute has grown to be a strong and respected voice for the family in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The spirit of principled involvement that the Pennsylvania Family Institute encourages and engenders in Pennsylvania is to be applauded. Congratulations to the directors, staff and supporters of the Pennsylvania Family Institute for their work in service to Pennsylvania's families.

During my service in the Pennsylvania General Assembly, I had many occasions to work closely with the Institute's president, Michael

Geer, on issues of prime concern to Pennsylvania's families. From its very first days, the Pennsylvania Family Institute has taken effective stands in support of the sanctity of life, in defense of marriage, for academic excellence in our schools, and for the promotion of a more civil society. And its recent leadership against the expansion of gambling in Pennsylvania has helped protect many children and families from the addiction and devastation wrought by casino gambling.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. James Dobson, the guest of honor at tonight's Pennsylvania Family Institute 10th Anniversary Banquet, is an ideal man to speak, as Dr. Dobson has been a beacon of wisdom and insight for families around the world through his many books and his ministry at Focus on the Family. Here in Congress, I have had the opportunity to work with Dr. Dobson on a number of family issues. His energy, principle and dedication are nearly unmatched.

Today, I also want to join the Pennsylvania Family Institute in remembrance of a true hero, William Bentley Ball, Esquire. We all owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Ball for his exemplary dedication to the principles of liberty, fidelity to the Constitution and the defense of human life. Mr. Ball stood tall in defense of religious liberty and the right of parents to direct the upbringing and education of their children in a time when both were under great attack.

Again, my deep congratulations and best wishes to the Pennsylvania Family Institute for a terrific 10 years. I look forward to working with them in the years to come.

**EARTH SCIENCE WEEK—OCTOBER
10–16, 1999**

HON. BARBARA CUBIN

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, very soon an extraordinary individual, earth scientist, and mentor of many who followed in his field, Dr. J. David Love, born and raised in my home state of Wyoming, will receive the "Legendary Geologist Award" from the American Geological Institute, a federation of 34 earth-science societies with a collective membership exceeding more than 100,000 persons.

Some of Dr. Love's accomplishments include creating the modern geologic map of my home state of Wyoming, and the geologic map of Grand Teton National Park. My home state of Wyoming is rich in geologic wonders, and the people of Wyoming have a great appreciation the importance these maps and their value with regard to identifying geologic treasures, providing for the prudent use of our natural resources, hazard mitigation, and the expansion of our economy.

With this in mind, I introduced legislation earlier this year that will reauthorize the National Geological Mapping Act (NGMA), which established a highly successful cooperative program between the U.S. Geological Survey and Geological Surveys of the 50 states and U.S. Territories. The maps produced under NGMA auspices provide society with information useful for the abatement of natural hazards such as floods, earthquakes, landslides and volcanic eruptions; the broad delineation of mineral potential, including groundwater resources, and candidate areas for waste burial