

JOURNEY IN FAITH: WORKING FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL IN AMERICA

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of speaking at the First Annual Summit Meeting of Journey in Faith, a non-profit organization dedicated to the moral and spiritual revitalization of America in the New Millennium. The mission of Journey in Faith is to equip the future leaders of America to be moral and spiritual strongholds for the next generation. It was an honor to open the first annual summit of this worthwhile organization. I submit the full text of my remarks at this point in the RECORD:

Thank you for your kind introduction. President Bradley, ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure to be with you this morning—to welcome you to Capitol Hill, and to our International Relations Committee room.

I was reading some of the background material that Gene Bradley sent to me, and I noted that among the dangers we confront as we close out the 20th Century is the continuing violence worldwide: terrorism in the Middle East, tribal-based massacres of people in Africa, the conflict in Kosovo, and the narco-guerrillas in Latin America.

I couldn't help but wonder whether it is just a coincidence that we are meeting in the room of the one Committee of the House of Representatives whose responsibilities includes concern for these events and their impact—not only on America—but throughout the world.

I'm especially pleased that Gene invited me to address you as you open your conference, because he and I go back a long way—to when our hair was darker, and we had more of it.

We have shared an interest in bringing government and business together in the planning and conduct of our Nation's foreign policies.

Gene Bradley founded "Journey in Faith" as a non-profit organization in the conviction that leadership by men and women of strong religious faith is needed now more than ever, as we stand on the brink of a new millennium.

The 20th Century was perhaps the most paradoxical in recorded history.

It saw the greatest advances ever in human progress, as recorded in material terms: expansion of personal liberty and freedom, advances in medicine, improvements in the physical quality of life, to mention just a few.

The 20th Century also recorded the greatest slaughter of human beings ever. Beyond the two World Wars, we have seen government sponsored genocide efforts—deliberately and brutally eliminating millions of innocent men, women and children, as never before.

The 20th Century also marked the emergence of our Nation to stand as a colossus on the world stage. Yet, as we look to the 21st Century, our Nation also stands at a cross-roads.

On the one hand, we are the world's leading superpower. We are perceived as a symbol of strength and of integrity. We are the "city on a hill,"—to be an inspiration to other nations.

Founded as a nation rooted in the Scriptures, enriched by our Judeo-Christian traditions of law, morality and the intrinsic worth of every human being—we are poised for a new era of leadership.

On the other hand, our Nation is beset by an assault on moral values—on our homes, families and neighborhoods—as never before. It is both overt and subtle and takes many forms.

We need a resurgence of the moral values that have made our Nation strong—the values that built our Nation; that enabled us to succeed in a revolution, to go through the fires of a Civil War, to survive two World Wars, and to emerge stronger than ever.

We need a resurgence of moral values so that America can beat back the assaults that threaten us, and I believe that no challenge facing us is more serious than drugs, which are flooding into our country from abroad at an unprecedented rate.

Drugs are destroying our children, destroying families, destroying schools and communities. Drugs cost our economy billions in lost wages and salaries, in health care costs, in welfare costs and the burdens on our judiciary and corrections systems, not to mention the tragic loss of life.

Each year, there are more than 16,000 drug-related deaths and 500,000 drug-related injuries. There are 12 million drug-related property crimes. Drugs play a role in most of the violent crime that afflicts our cities and towns.

New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani recently informed our Committee that 70 percent of all prisoners are incarcerated for drug-related crimes.

The cost of caring for each new born crack baby is estimated to be \$100,000. It is also estimated that one-third of all new AIDS cases in the United States are drug-related.

Those statistics reflect a trend that began during the 1960s and 70s, when opposition to the Vietnam War helped to glamorize drugs, sex and even violence.

Drugs were further glamorized through such media events as that famous Woodstock festival—and in movies such as "Easy Rider."

Even today, elites of Hollywood and the entertainment world—and in some political circles—still consider drugs as a form of recreation. There are even widespread efforts to legalize drugs.

Yet, without question, drugs are a prescription for despair. For the addict, and for the addict's family and loved ones—there often must be a turning to a higher power if the deadly clutches of drugs are to be escaped.

Where ever drugs gain a foothold, crime, destruction and chaos follow. Yet, where we see these scourges, we also see the possibility of hope.

Even as drug use is rising among some segments of our population, there has also been a resurgence in religious affiliation.

In the midst of danger, there is opportunity, and Journey in Faith reflects recognition of that opportunity. Our nation is in a struggle to defeat the scourge of drugs.

It is a struggle that can, and must, be won, and I would like to welcome all of you as partners in a revitalization of American culture by making it drug free and by making international narcotics trafficking a top foreign policy priority.

You are launching "Journey in Faith" at an historic moment when we are poised to enter the new millennium. It promises to be a dramatic turning point in human history. The question is whether it will be a millennium marked by darkness or light.

If America succumbs to the scourge of narcotics, then the forces of darkness will have won, and the light that makes America the world's shining city on the hill will have been extinguished.

Working together, we can defeat those forces of darkness by applying a sense of moral values in our foreign policy as we

reach out to try to make this a safer and more peaceful world for all men and women.

HONORING SENATOR SAM ROBERTS**HON. BOB BARR**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 1999

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a truly courageous citizen of Georgia's Seventh Congressional District, state Senator Sam Roberts.

Unlike the U.S. House of Representatives, in Georgia we have a true, part-time citizens' legislature. The Georgia General Assembly meets once a year for 40 days, conducts the peoples' business, and adjourns. Needless to say, the need to accomplish a year's work in a few months makes for late nights and long days. The pressure is only increased by the many commitments members have to families, businesses, and employers.

However, during the most recent legislative session, no Member faced a tougher battle than Senator Sam Roberts of Douglasville. A few weeks before the session began, Sam was diagnosed with a malignant tumor in one lung. He immediately began chemotherapy and radiation treatment, which has resulted in remission of the tumor. All indications are that Sam has won his battle with cancer.

Even more amazingly, throughout his treatment, Sam did not miss a single legislative day. He sat at his desk drinking orange juice and water as his doctor ordered, and kept moving full speed ahead. In the process, he set a standard for public servants everywhere, and serves as a shining example for everyone who has ever confronted a life-threatening disease. I commend Sam for his courage, and I also salute his wife Sue, and his children Sherrie, Beau, Amber, who have been right there with Senator Sam throughout his journey.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN TAX ACT

HON. TONY HALL

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 1999

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleague from New York, Mr. HOUGHTON, to introduce legislation to amend the Internal Revenue Code to make it easier for businesses and farmers to donate food to food banks.

It can be expensive to provide food for the poor. The food must be collected, packaged, perhaps refrigerated or frozen, and transported, before it can be distributed to food banks, soup kitchens, homeless shelters and other organizations that serve the hungry. Because of this, it could make more economic sense for the businesses to discard unsold but edible food than to donate it. Indeed, billions of pounds of food are thrown away each year.

To encourage greater charitable contributions, we believe that businesses and farmers who donate food ought to receive the same types of tax incentives as do businesses who donate other types of inventory. This is not always the case.

The Good Samaritan Tax Act would do two things. First, it would equalize tax treatment of donations of food and other inventory. Secondly, all businesses, not just corporations, would be eligible for this favorable tax treatment if they donate food.

This bill has been endorsed by both industry and charitable organizations that deal with food including Second Harvest, National Council of Chain Restaurants, National Farmers Union and Food Chain.

The text of the bill follows:

H.R. —

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Good Samaritan Tax Act".

SEC. 2. CHARITABLE DEDUCTION FOR CONTRIBUTIONS OF FOOD INVENTORY.

(a) **GENERAL.**—Subsection (e) of section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to certain contributions of ordinary income and capital gain property) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(7) SPECIAL RULE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS OF FOOD INVENTORY.—

"(A) CONTRIBUTIONS BY NON-CORPORATE TAXPAYERS.—In the case of a charitable contribution of food, paragraph (3) shall be applied without regard to whether or not the contribution is made by a corporation.

"(B) DETERMINATION OF FAIR MARKET VALUE.—For purposes of this section, in the case of a charitable contribution of food which is a qualified contribution (within the meaning of paragraph (3), as modified by subparagraph (A) of this paragraph) and which, solely by reason of internal standards of the taxpayer, lack of market, or similar circumstances, cannot or will not be sold, the fair market value of such contribution shall be determined—

"(i) without regard to such internal standards, such lack of market, or such circumstances, and

"(ii) if applicable, by taking into account the price at which the same or similar food items are sold by the taxpayer at the time of the contribution (or, if not so sold at such time, in the recent past)."

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 1999.

REPETITIVE FLOOD LOSS REDUCTION ACT OF 1999

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 1999

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Repetitive Flood Loss Reduction Act of 1999. Mr. Speaker, every year in the United States many of our constituents suffer the devastating loss of their home from rampaging flood waters. I am introducing the Repetitive Flood Loss Reduction Act to correct a serious flaw in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by improving pre-disaster mitigation and facilitating voluntary buyouts of repetitively flooded properties. Specifically, my legislation will:

Provide \$90 million to the Director of the Federal Emergency management Agency (FEMA) to purchase homes insured by the NFIP that have flooded at least three times

and have received cumulative flood insurance payments of at least 125 percent of the value of the structure.

Provide \$10 million in grants to states to seek non-structural alternatives to protect flood-prone communities.

Create new incentives for home owners to comply with post-FIRM building standards. If a buyout offer is refused by the NFIP policy holder, their yearly premium will automatically increase by 150 percent and their deductible will rise by \$5,000. For every future flood incident when the structure is substantially damaged the premium and deductible will rise again by the aforementioned amount.

Grant more discretion to local flood officials to determine how best to use this program. State or local flood plain administrators will provide the Director with a list of priority structures that should be targeted for participation in the buyout program.

I am hopeful that these steps will lead to a more effective pre-disaster mitigation and buyout program that will both reduce costs to taxpayers and better protect residents of flood-prone areas. I have drafted this legislation in consultation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Harris County, Texas, Flood Control District, one of the Nation's most experienced and innovative flood control districts. However, I want to emphasize that I consider this legislation to be a starting point to begin the debate, and I look forward to input from my colleagues, my constituents, and other interested parties.

Some ideas in this bill will be considered controversial and may need to be changed. By introducing this bill, I am not endorsing each provision, but rather, the idea that some action needs to be taken to reform the National Flood Insurance Program. In fact, it is my hope that the public will review the contents of the bill and make their specific support and objections known, so we can develop consensus legislation.

The need for this legislation was underscored by a report sponsored by the National Wildlife Federation, that the National Flood Insurance Program has made flood insurance payments exceeding the values of the properties involved to thousands of repetitively flooded properties around the Nation. This report, entitled Higher Ground, found that from 1978 to 1995, 5,629 repetitively flooded homes had received \$416 million in payments, far in excess of their market value of \$307 million. My state of Texas led the Nation in volume of such payments, with more than \$144 million, or \$44 million more than the market value, paid to 1,305 repetitively flooded homes. The Houston/Harris County area, which I represent, had 132 of the 200 properties that generated the largest flood insurance payments beyond their actual value.

This included one property in South Houston that received a total of \$929,680 in flood insurance payments from 17 flooding incidents, and another property near the San Jacinto river that received \$806,591 for 16 flooding incidents, about 7 times the actual value of the home.

Other areas around the country have also had the same incidents occur. Altogether, according to the National Wildlife Federation report, although repetitive flood loss properties represent only 2 percent of all properties insured by the National Flood Insurance Program, they claim 40 percent of all NFIP payments during the period studied.

Since its creation in 1968, the NFIP has filled an essential need in offering low-cost flood insurance to homeowners who live inside 100-year flood plains. The program has helped to limit the exposure of taxpayers to disaster costs associated with flooding. However, the recent report clearly points out the need to improve the NFIP to address the problem of repetitive loss property.

Furthermore continued losses to the NFIP has increased the call by some of my colleagues to increase premiums and reduce the Federal subsidy for all Federal homeowners in the flood plain, not those who suffer from repetitive flooding loss, in order to reduce Federal budget outlays.

Without long-term comprehensive reform of the NFIP, I am concerned that in the future, Congress may follow through with proposals to double or triple flood insurance premiums for all flood-prone homeowners, as was proposed in 1995 and 1996. Many of us, myself included, fought vigorously to oppose these increases, but our victory will be short-lived if we do not make changes in the program.

These repetitive loss properties represent an enormous cost for taxpayers. They are also a tremendous burden to residents whose lives are disrupted every time there is a flood. In many cases, these residents want to move but cannot afford to do so. By repeatedly compensating them for flood damage, current Federal law makes it easier for them to continue living where they are, rather than moving to higher ground.

TRIBUTE TO OSCAR FENDLER

HON. MARION BERRY

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 25, 1999

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a man from the 1st Congressional District of Arkansas who will celebrate his 90th birthday in Blytheville, Arkansas this weekend. Mr. Fendler is one of Arkansas' foremost lawyers and has practiced law since 1933 in Blytheville except for four years from 1941-45 when he was on active duty with the U.S. Navy.

Born in Blytheville and raised in Manila, Mr. Fendler has received many honors during his 65 years of law practice. He is the former president of the Arkansas Bar Association and a fellow in the American College of Trust and Estate Council; a fellow of the American Bar Foundation; chairman of the Section of General Practice of the American Bar Association; a member of the House of Delegates of the American Bar Association, the ABA's governing body; and a member of the American Judicature Society, among other honors.

Mr. Fendler also had an interest in journalism. He is the former chief editorial writer for the Arkansas Traveler, the student newspaper at the University of Arkansas and while attending Harvard Law, he free-lanced as a reporter for the St. Louis Post Dispatch.

Oscar Fendler has been a leader and advocate for Mississippi County and Northeast Arkansas for his entire life. He is a living history of that area. Mr. Fendler has been a strong voice in Arkansas law and I wish him the best on his 90th birthday and congratulate him on his 65 years of service in our state.