

In closing, I leave you with this thought, it is not a question of whether we can afford to protect the environment, rather it is a question of whether we can afford not to.

EXPOSING RACISM

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 1999

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, in my continuing efforts to document and expose racism in America, I submit the following articles into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

[From the New York Times, Feb. 24, 1999]

47 PERCENT IN POLL VIEW LEGAL SYSTEM AS UNFAIR TO POOR AND MINORITIES

(By Linda Greenhouse)

WASHINGTON—Despite having only a minimal knowledge of the legal system, nearly half of the public thinks it treats minorities and the poor unfairly, a survey conducted for the American Bar Association indicates.

In the months before William H. Rehnquist raised his public profile by presiding over the Senate impeachment trial, only 17 percent could identify him as Chief Justice of the United States. More than one-third of those responding held the mistaken belief that in a criminal trial, it is up to the defendant to prove his innocence.

But a surprising 96 percent knew that a criminal defendant who is found not guilty can still be sued in a civil trial. The survey report, made public by the bar association today, speculated that widespread knowledge of this "relatively obscure concept" might be attributed to the intense coverage of O.J. Simpson's consecutive criminal and civil trials.

While most people believe that "the justice system needs a complete overhaul" and that "we would be better off with fewer lawyers," the public still agrees by a strong majority, 8 out of 10, that "in spite of its problems, the American justice system is still the best in the world," according to the survey.

But of the 1,000 adults polled by telephone in August, 47 percent said they believed that the courts did not "treat all ethnic and racial groups the same." Thirty-nine percent said there was equitable treatment of minorities and 14 percent had no opinion. Also, 90 percent of respondents said affluent people and corporations had an unfair advantage in court.

The bar group's president, Philip S. Anderson, who commissioned the survey, said in a statement that while he was cheered by the results showing public confidence in the system, he was disturbed by the indication that substantial numbers of people discerned racial unfairness in the behavior of courts and law-enforcement authorities.

"We are concerned that the current perception of bias will eventually erode confidence in our system of justice," Anderson said in remarks prepared for delivery on Wednesday at the National Press Club.

The results of the nationwide telephone survey are to be presented and discussed at a bar association symposium here later this week on "public understanding and perceptions of the American justice system."

An independent research firm in Chicago, M/A/R/C Research, conducted the survey, which had a margin of sampling error of plus or minus three percentage points.

The news media fared badly in public confidence, in fact worse than any other institu-

tion. Eight percent of the people had strong confidence in the news media, while 60 percent expressed slight or no confidence. The Supreme Court, by contrast, was at the top of the list, with 50 percent of the people expressing strong confidence in it. Compared with a similar survey conducted in 1978, public confidence in all levels of the judicial system has increased, while confidence in doctors, organized religion, public schools and Congress, as well as the news media, has declined. A majority rejected the statement that "the courts are just puppets of the political system."

Anderson, the bar group's president, urged the Supreme Court to enhance public understanding of the law by allowing television cameras into its argument sessions.

"One television camera in the Supreme court will educate more people more effectively in one morning than the traditional methods can reach in one year," he said.

Some of the survey's results appeared certain to warm the hearts of the American Bar Association's 400,000 members. Of people who had used a lawyer within the past five years, three-quarters were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the quality of service, with 53 percent in the "very satisfied" category.

Most people agreed that "it would be easy to get a lawyer if I needed one," while at the same time expressing the view that "it costs too much to go to court" and "it takes courts too long" to do their job.

THOMPSON DOESN'T CONDONE COUNCILMAN'S ACTIONS

JACKSON, MS.—U.S. Congressman Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., says he doesn't condone the actions of former City Council President Louis Armstrong, but he warns people not to condemn his longtime friend.

Armstrong pleaded guilty last week in U.S. District Court to charges of conspiracy to commit extortion and accepting part of a \$25,000 bribe to influence a council vote on rezoning a topless bar. He is scheduled to be sentenced May 7.

Artie Armstrong, 30, his eldest son, faces trial March 1 on bribery, extortion and conspiracy charges in the same case.

"Nobody really supports individuals doing wrong. As long as the pursuit of the wrongdoers is within the confines of the laws and on balance, then the general public will support it. And I don't know any people that I talk to who support people doing wrong," Thompson said.

"People sympathize with people who make mistakes. And those people who are Christian hope that the people who do wrong will see the error of their ways and seek some opportunities for redemption."

Former state senator Henry J. Kirksey says FBI investigations into alleged corruption by black Jackson City officials and business leaders, like Armstrong and his son, are not based on race.

The veteran lawmaker who has been active in state and local politics criticized those who are labeling recent FBI investigations as selective prosecution of minorities.

Kirksey says last week's guilty plea by Armstrong, who is black, to bribery and extortion charges reflects the mentality of some politicians who have risen to power and subsequently abused it in search of the dollar.

"They are teaching that to their children—'You get it anyway you can'—and that's why the jails and detention centers are loaded with blacks," Kirksey said. "The problem is there is something wrong at City Hall, and it's not all just Louis Armstrong, either."

Councilmen Kenneth Stokes and Robert Williams testified during the December trial

of two businessmen charged in the FBI cable investigation that they were never offered any money in exchange for their votes.

The councilmen have not been charged with wrongdoing. Car salesman Robert Williams, 50, and snack food distributor Roy Dixon, 56, were convicted Dec. 11 of conspiring to extort \$150,000 from Time Warner Cable in an attempt to influence the city council's vote on the franchise renewal.

On Friday, U.S. District Judge Tom S. Lee gave Williams 21 months in prison and two years supervised probation.

U.S. Attorney Brad Pigott said the FBI's investigations centered only on criminal actions of suspects, not their race. He pointed to the guilty pleas of Armstrong and Clinton Moses Jr., a confessed bank robber who on Friday admitted he firebombed the Jackson Advocate and accused Armstrong of hiring him.

"From the fact that both of them have every reason to expect to go to prison for having confessed under oath for their criminal conduct, I certainly don't see where the room is to see that they're both just lying so that they can have the chance to go prison," Pigott said.

Moses, who worked in Armstrong's 1997 reelection campaign, told authorities that Armstrong paid him \$500 to burn the black weekly newspaper.

Pigott won't say whether Armstrong will be charged in the Advocate's firebombing.

SCHOOL OFFICIALS SAY RACIAL TENSION A PROBLEM AMONG STUDENTS

FARMINGTON HILLS, MI.—School officials in several Detroit area schools find themselves investigating incidents linked to racial tension—and they're searching for ways to head off violence within school walls.

Kim Kennedy, who is black, never thought her son, Jeffrey, would have to face the kind of racial attacks she felt growing up in Detroit. Her son attends Walled Lake Western High School, where in January he was involved in a racially motivated fight.

"I never thought my children would have to experience what happened to us in the 1960s," Ms. Kennedy, 38, of Farmington Hills told The Detroit News for a Thursday story. "Sometimes, I question whether we made the right decision moving here."

Other recent racial incidents in area schools include: Dearborn Edsel Ford High School. On Dec. 2, an altercation between several Arab and non-Arab students escalated into a food fight.

West Bloomfield High School. Last week, tempers flared between groups of Chaldean-American and African-American students in the school's cafeteria.

Saline High School. Three white students were charged with felony ethnic intimidation in connection with a Dec. 17, 1998, hallway fight with two black students. A preliminary examination is scheduled for March 23.

Experts say schools can and should take responsibility for helping to solve ethnic and racial tensions—even though the conflict usually begins outside the schools.

"Schools must be on top of what is creating the tension, and be proactive, rather than waiting for something to happen," University of Michigan education professor Percy Bates said.

In Walled Lake, about 25 parents attended a "racial summit" for parents a week after the Jan. 21 incident involving Kennedy, 14, and several other students. Many of the students—including Kennedy—were suspended and one was expelled.

"We promised parents that the administration would meet with them to discuss their concerns and to invite them to participate in

our initiatives," Walled Lake Western High Principal Gary Bredahl told the News.

"I hope the African-American students here can sense that we are reaching out to them to create a comfort zone to get them involved in school activities."

Experts say students often pick up their parents' feelings about other races, said Juanetta Guthrie of Wayne State University's Center for Peace and Conflict Studies.

"We are not born with the mechanism to hate. It's learned, and it can be unlearned," Ms. Guthrie said.

West Bloomfield senior Brad Fayer agrees that parents play a big role in raising their children to be free of biases and bigotry.

"If you have open-minded parents they can teach their kids to also be open-minded and fair," he said. "They can also teach equality."

So school districts are taking up the challenge to help combat conflicts.

In Dearborn, fights between Arab and non-Arab students have led to the creation of the Dearborn Community Alliance to establish clearer communication between members of the community.

"I see more dialogue," Edsel Ford Principal Jeremy Hughes said. "At one time, the Arab students all sat along one wall in the cafeteria, but now I see more interaction."

But Alex Shami, the only Arab American on the Dearborn public school board, said the district still has a long way to go.

"I've lived in Dearborn for 24 years," Shami said. "There was tension between Arabs and non-Arabs in the late 1970s and then it went down in the 1980s, but it is worse than ever now. I don't like what I see because people seem to be investing more on their prejudices than ever and I am frustrated."

In West Bloomfield, school officials say implementing ethnic diversity programs is the key to heading off potential problems.

"We have ongoing programs that get several kids from different backgrounds in dialogue," said Sharkey Haddad, the district's multicultural program director. "If you don't already have a program in place, then it's merely a reaction to the problem."

MISSISSIPPIANS TO GET CHANCE TO TELL HISTORY

(By Gina Holland)

JACKSON, MISS. (AP)—Mississippi history will be told through personal accounts of everyday residents as part of a project approved by the Legislature just in time for the turn of the century.

A bill passed by the House Wednesday would put \$150,000 into a pilot project to collect interviews from residents in five areas of the state. The Senate has already approved the funding.

The University of Southern Mississippi, which has an oral history department, and the Mississippi Humanities Council would team up with community leaders on the work.

Residents will be interviewed about stories of their communities, government and civic life, and historical events.

Still pending in the Legislature is a request for \$30,000 in continuation funding for an oral history program focusing on the civil rights era.

Elbert Hilliard, executive director of the Department of Archives and History, said the project will fill gaps in historical archives.

"Most of the existing oral history collections are interviews with prominent persons, political leaders, people who have been involved in significant events," he said. "It will expand the scope of these interviews to have a comprehensive approach."

Hilliard, who expect some of the interviews to involve civil rights events, said he is hopeful the Legislature will also provide money for the civil rights project at USM.

Under the proposal approved Wednesday, one site will be chosen in each of Mississippi's congressional districts for a pilot program. People will be taught how to conduct interviews. The material will be archived and be made available on the Internet and it could be displayed in the communities.

Rep. Leonard Morris, D-Batesville, said his two teen-age children. "have no knowledge of what happened in the 1960s and 1970s."

"You don't want to dwell too much upon the negative part of it, but you also want to be able to do research on what happened and have an accurate documented source," said Morris. "How can you know where you're going if you don't have a good idea of the past?"

Sen John Horhn, D-Jackson, said he would like to see more work on the civil rights history.

"A number of the people who were involved in the movement have passed away, many of them are getting older. It's important we capture their stories," said Horhn.

The funding bill goes to the governor.

84TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 21, 1999

Mr. LARSON. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the lives of 1.5 million Armenians who perished during the brutal genocide that took place on April 24, 1915. However, I also rise to celebrate the lives of those who have survived. We honor their spirit and the legacy they have provided. For it is this legacy that encourages their children and grandchildren, friends and neighbors, to remind people throughout the world of this horrific action. An action that tragically marked the century's first genocide.

According to the Archives of the Nuremberg Proceedings, Hitler instructed his SS units at a meeting in 1939 "to kill, without pity, men, women, and children" in their march against Poland, as such activities would have no long term repercussions. Who, he said, "remember now the massacres of the Armenians?"

As a Member of Congress I say with force and I say with compassion: We remember. We remember horrible violence that sent 1.5 million Armenian leaders, intellectuals, and clergy to their deaths and forever changed the lives of generations of families.

Tomorrow I will carry that same message from the floor of the House of Representatives to the Connecticut State Capitol where I will address a group of survivors and children of survivors of the Armenian genocide. Every year these Connecticut residents make a commitment to come to Hartford to remind their friends, their community leaders, and their neighbors of the solemn anniversary that is marked throughout the country on April 24.

The most disturbing part of this anniversary is that 84 years later genocide remains a part of our vocabulary. From Rwanda to Bosnia to the present day horrors of Kosovo, entire populations are being killed simply because of

their ethnicity. It has been said that we can best plan for the future by learning from the lessons of the past. Unfortunately, it appears that too many nations are trying to find their path to the future by ignoring the past.

As we commemorate this 84th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, I urge my House and Senate colleagues to work toward this goal: that an entire generation never experiences the horrors of genocide, either by living through it or by feeling the pain of people half way around the world.

I send my deepest prayers and thoughts to this country's Armenian-American community.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NATIONAL GEOLOGIC MAPPING ACT

HON. BARBARA CUBIN

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 1999

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, on Earth Day, to introduce a bill to reauthorize the National Geologic Mapping Act, a cooperative program between the states and the federal government to prioritize efforts to delineate the bedrock and surficial geology of the country on a broad scale, sufficient for land-use planning, natural hazards abatement and mitigation, and mineral resource endowment estimates. This bill's antecedents are the National Geologic Mapping Act of 1992, and its reauthorization and amendment in 1997.

Mr. Speaker, my home state of Wyoming is rich in geologic wonders, thus I am well aware of the importance of having accurate geologic information in order to manage and appreciate the land around us. Geologic information in the form of maps, both as traditional hard copies as well as digital data for manipulation by computer, aid society in prudent land-use planning, waste disposal, mitigation of geologic hazards, and management of natural resources. Funding for the program is incorporated in the budget of the U.S. Geological Survey as a subset of its annual appropriation.

The main components of this bill remain the same as its precursors—with a State geologic mapping component, whose objectives are to determine the geologic framework of areas that the State geological surveys determine to be vital to the economic, social, or scientific welfare of individual States. Mapping priorities will be determined by multi-representational State panels, and shall be integrated with national priorities. Federal funding for the State components shall be matched on a one-to-one basis with non-Federal funds.

An educational component of the act is designed to train the next generation of geologic mappers—by providing for broad education in geologic mapping and field analysis through support of field studies; and to develop the academic programs that teach earth-science students the fundamental principles of geologic mapping and field analysis, and knowledge of the solid earth. These mapping investigations will be integrated into the other State geologic mapping components of the program. The reauthorization of the National Geologic Mapping Act shines as a sterling example of a cooperative partnership between the Federal government and the individual states for the benefit of society.

Mr. Speaker, geologists like to say that for them "every day is Earth Day." What better