

On Racial Equality, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and with such individuals as Martin Luther King, Jr. and James Farmer.

Dedicated to fighting poverty and improving the lives of low-income residents, Bennie worked most of his professional life with the Economic Opportunity Council of San Francisco. For the past thirty-three years, Bennie was employed by this nonprofit group in several different capacities. He organized and raised money for numerous anti-poverty programs in San Francisco and worked to clothe, feed, and find employment for the neediest among us. Known and trusted by everyone, Bennie was regarded as the "eyes and ears" of the community because he was always looking out for those in need.

Mr. Holmes also organized workshops at which tenants learned their rights when dealing with landlords, worked with youth groups, and traveled extensively in Africa, Europe, and the United States.

Well-regarded for his tireless community service, Bennie was also admired for his delicious barbecue ribs. At social and political events, he could always be found behind the grill, serving the community in yet another way.

Bennie Holmes left us much too soon. He worked his entire life for civil rights, equal opportunity, and economic and social justice. He treated everyone with respect, and he was respected for doing so. His passing is a loss to all of our San Francisco community.

My thoughts and prayers are with his mother, Leola Wells Holmes, his children, and his entire family.

HONORING STEVEN R. MAVIGLIO
FOR HIS DEDICATED SERVICE TO
THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2000

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to express my appreciation to, and tremendous respect for, a dedicated public servant that is leaving my staff today, my administrative assistant, Steven R. Maviglio. Steve is leaving Capitol Hill after many years of dedicated service to the U.S. House of Representatives and to the nation.

Steve has been a key policy, political and management advisor to me since my election to Congress nearly two years ago. More than that, he has been a trusted friend. Prior to heading up my office, Steve served as a top aide to California Representative Vic Fazio, as Director of the House Democratic Caucus, and in high-level positions in the Department of Justice and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. Having been an elected official himself, Steve's guidance and counsel have been of tremendous value to me, as a new representative. When it comes to politics, Steve is a seasoned pro, and this institution will miss him. Anyone who has worked with Steve knows that his experience, his passion, and his humor are assets that will be sorely missed.

As my colleagues know, serving in the House of Representatives is a great honor

and an even greater responsibility. Among the real benefits of being here is having the opportunity to work with some of the finest and most decent men and women anywhere in our nation. Steve is one of those talented people who have made my time here memorable and successful.

When the public looks at Congress, it is often easy to miss the dedicated staff that work here, helping Member's to do the people's business. Congressional staffers like Steve are the members of the congressional family who rarely get the attention they deserve. They share our hopes, our dreams, our commitment, our purpose, and our idealism. They are the ones who are in the office when we arrive in the morning and are still there when we leave at night. For my entire first term, Steve's commitment and hard work helped set me on the right course. He helped to oversee and implement all of the pieces that make up a successful Representative's office.

Being the top aide to a Member of Congress isn't an easy job. It's a position that is made up of many roles. Steve has been my adviser, gatekeeper, eyes, ears, and voice. Top aides like Steve act as all of these things and more. They are diplomats and negotiators, fighters and sometimes even scapegoats. When Members look good it is often because of the hard work of people like Steve. When something goes wrong they often shoulder the blame. While staffers are often overlooked, overworked, and under appreciated, I wanted to take this time to let Steve know that he is not. I am grateful for all that he has done for me, for the people of New Jersey and for this great institution.

The Democratic Members of this body and the people of central New Jersey have gained much from Steve Maviglio's years of hard work, his dedication, his friendship and his wise and reasoned counsel. Steve leaves my office today to begin work as the Press Secretary for Gov. Gray Davis of California; he will be missed here by me and his many friends.

I hope all of my colleagues will join me in extending to Steve our appreciation for a job well done and our best wishes for the challenges that lie ahead.

COMMENDING THE INTER-
NATIONAL FINANCE DEPART-
MENT LEGAL DEPARTMENT

HON. TONY P. HALL

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2000

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to your attention the commendable actions of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) Legal Department, the private sector arm of the World Bank.

Since 1994, the IFC Legal Department has been involved in a joint effort with Gospel Rescue Ministries (GRM), a homeless shelter and drug rehabilitation/educational training center for men on the edge of DC's Chinatown neighborhood. This partnership has helped rebuild the lives of numerous formerly homeless individuals.

IFC offers men from Gospel Rescue Ministries the opportunity to work and receive training in the Legal Departments Records

Room. The program allows these men to gain experience in records management while the IFC gains reliable help. Already, 14 men have taken part in the program and several of them have gone on to continue their studies, move to promising jobs with other firms, or take positions with other IFC Departments, while all have laid foundations for more stable lives.

The idea of IFC's involvement came about at a Legal Department retreat, where staff members said they wished they could see development impact locally or at least find ways of reaching out to the community. IFC Deputy General Counsel Jennifer Sullivan knew GRM and knew that it needed jobs for the graduates of its computer training program. Aware of openings in her department paying between \$8 and \$10 an hour, she proposed a partnership. As Ms. Sullivan has told me, it was definitely a win-win situation. These young men are gaining experience and training and IFC gets reliable, low-cost help.

Office manager Viki Betancourt and Records Room manager Michael Cortese closely track the program with GRM. Both were devastated when their first hire reverted to drug use and had to leave both the shelter and his job at IFC. But their eyes shine when they talk about the other men they have hired since.

One participant, who has earned his high school equivalency degree, is attending Strayer College and plans to become a minister. Others have landed jobs in other IFC departments. All feel a great responsibility to reach out to others in the shelter and show them that success is attainable. All have worked very hard and done well, according to Mr. Cortese. Other staff in the Records Room have come to appreciate the enthusiasm and dedication of these individuals.

Dr. Edward Eyring, director of GRM, says that most men who walk into the shelter cannot even conceive of being successful. Dr. Eyring is a friend of mine and an orthopedic surgeon who moved to Washington from Knoxville, Tennessee with his wife Mary Jane to run the privately supported program.

It is very appropriate that there is a sign over the front door of the program's facilities that reads, "If you haven't got a friend in the world, you can find one here. Come in." GRM says it has a 70 percent success rate in helping its men stay free of drugs and alcohol for at least 15 months but really offers more than just drug rehabilitation, aiming to give men support and training so that they can begin life anew. Nothing helps more than a job.

The IFC Legal Department staff is committed to finding ways to reach out to the community. This commitment has gone beyond words to provide employment opportunities that have transformed lives and renewed hope for a brighter future. The IFC deserves our congratulations and thanks for their successful involvement in the fight to combat homelessness in our nation's capital.

SECURING JUSTICE FOR THE
IRANIAN JEWS

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 10, 2000

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my deepest concerns for the ten Iranian Jews who were convicted last week of

sedition crimes and sentenced to extraordinarily long sentences. By now it is well documented that the condemning trial was saturated with false evidence and forced confessions, and was never intended to expose the meaning of true justice. These individuals were small tradesmen, leading a life in the ways consistent with their religion, and it is that for which they are being punished. Religious persecution can never be allowed, but when such injustices are showcased before the international community, it is our responsibility to take a stand and say that this will not be tolerated.

We have seen legal and human rights organizations worldwide affirming that this trial was in fact a sham, and that it is beyond the realm of possibility to believe that such individuals could ever have been capable of committing the crimes for which they are accused.

By staging such a mockery of justice it is apparent that Iran has no comprehension of human or civil rights, and therefore convicted no other than themselves in proving that they remain unfit to enter any exercise of the civilized world.

In a recent meeting between President Clinton and the American relatives of the convicted Iranian Jews, a promise was made to use all possible U.S. government resources to secure the freedom of these individuals. This is a promise in which I would urge President Clinton to keep as I hope my colleagues here in the House would as well.

We must remember that as we speak that there are thousands of Jews remaining in Iran, who can be subjected to identical suppression at any time. We must take a stand here and

now and say behavior such as this will not be tolerated both now and in the future.

Today, in New York the Jewish Community Relations Council and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations organized a solidarity gathering in an effort to show the world community that we will continue to fight for the rights of these individuals until justice is truly served. I would like to commend these organizations for their efforts and would like to offer assistance possible to the rectification of this atrocity.

CHURCH PLAN PARITY AND ENTANGLEMENT PREVENTION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN R. THUNE

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 26, 2000

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for S. 1309. This bill clarifies that church sponsored employer benefit plans are not subject to state insurance laws.

Because church plans are exempt from the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, they do not benefit from the explicit preemption of state insurance regulation that secular self-insured health plans enjoy. Many service providers have been reluctant to do business with church benefit programs for fear that they themselves may violate state insurance rules barring contracts with unlicensed entities. In addition, state regulators occasion-

ally raise questions about the legal status of these benefit programs. These complications have caused churches to contract with numerous service providers in order to comply with recent federal mandates on church plans.

S. 1309 remedies this problem by clarifying that church plans are not insurance companies for state law purposes. Congress has already addressed a similar problem for church sponsored employee benefit plans under federal securities laws, extending the exemptions enjoyed by secular plans and preempting state securities regulation of church plans.

Just this year, my own state of South Dakota enacted an exemption for church plans from its insurance laws—making my State the fourth state to so act. I commend the Director of Insurance, Darla Lyon, the State Legislature and the Governor for working hard to protect the health care benefits of church workers and to assist them in accessing discounted providers. South Dakota has now joined Texas, Florida and Minnesota in clarifying that church benefit plans are not insurance companies. It makes little sense to suggest that church benefit programs spend their resources to enact 46 more state exemptions. The pending bill will provide these programs the legal certainty they need in every state.

More than one million clergy, lay workers, and their families are presently being denied access to discounted service providers because of the ambiguous position of church plans under state law. S. 1309 corrects this problem.

I urge adoption of the pending bill.