

great nation, offering songs that spring from the fabric of America. Country lyrics espouse our history, our faith in God, our love of family, and our appreciation for the value of freedom and hard work. With these melodies and themes, country music appeals to listeners of all ages and from all walks of life.

To honor and highlight the significance of country music, in 1990, I sponsored and passed legislation designating October as Country Music Month. Now Country Music Month and Country Music Week are nationally recognized events each year, celebrated by millions of individuals.

The Opry has inspired a country music fan fair phenomenon; been the focus of a theme park, hotel complex, television networks, magazines, and movies; infused the tourism industry in Tennessee; and given us an incredible amount of memorable music. Yet, the Opry's beginnings were humble.

In 1925, the "solemn old judge" George D. Hay moved from Chicago's WLS Barn Dance to Nashville, where he began broadcasting and hosting the show that would later become the Grand Ole Opry. Hay eventually would coin the phrase, "Grand Ole Opry" about the program, instantly giving it a name that would endure forever. With WSM's strong 100,000-watt clear channel signal, the Opry could be heard for hundreds of miles across the United States by thousands of people. As the show brought performers of traditional music to the stage, a new genre of music was officially born—country music.

Those early 1920s Opry performers included mainly instrumental talents such as banjo player Uncle Dave Macon and harmonica player Deford Bailey. In the 1930s and 40s, vocalists such as the "King of Country Music" Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb, Hank Williams, and Bill Monroe all took the stage, as did comedienne Minnie Pearl.

As the years passed, the talent pool grew and the NBC Network picked up the show. Such big names as Patsy Cline, Flatt and Scruggs, Hank Snow, Hawkshaw Hawkins, Jim Reeves, Red Foley, Marty Robbins, Martha Carson, Kitty Wells, Johnny Wright, Bill Anderson, Connie Smith, Dolly Parton, Poper Wagoner, Garth Brooks, Pam Tillis, Trisha Yearwood, and Alison Krauss all have called the Opry stage home. These artists represent just a fraction of the bright and talented performers to grace the stage since its inception, whether at the War Memorial Auditorium, the Ryman Auditorium, or the Grand Ole Opry House of today.

My family has enjoyed an ongoing relationship with the Grand Ole Opry over the years. In fact my father, Governor Frank Clement, enjoyed strong friendships with many Opry members, often enlisting their talents for political rallies across the state. In addition, Governor Clement traveled to Washington and testified on behalf of country music when its lyrics were under fire by Congress in the 1950s.

Like any sacred institution, the Opry has endured sorrow, grief, and loss. It has faced adversity and strain. There have been joyous times and laughter. But the Opry has endured throughout each season. In the 1980s, George Jones touched our hearts as he sang, "Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes" about the legacy of country music and its legendary artists. Jones singled out performers such as Lefty Frizzell, Merle Haggard, Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins,

Willie Nelson, and Roy Acuff in the tune. He also mentioned the Opry in the song lyrics, inspiring a new generation of country artists to carry the torch. I'd particularly like to recognize the contributions of Ricky Skaggs, Marty Stuart, and WSM announcer Eddie Stubbs for promoting the cause of traditional music and educating the next generation about our rich heritage in this new millennium.

Throughout the years the Opry and its cast of performers, announcers, advertisers, and musicians have inspired and entertained us each Friday and Saturday night. For these valued contributions and cherished memories we are forever grateful to the Opry and those who have called it "home." We salute the Grand Ole Opry for 75 wonderful years and offer our sincerest wishes for continuous success in the years to come.

Thank you and God bless you.

#### HONORING OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL WINNER STACY DRAGILA

**HON. JOHN T. DOOLITTLE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 5, 2000*

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize a native of my congressional district who has brought glory and honor to herself, her family, and her fellow Americans. I wish to congratulate Stacy Dragila on recently winning the gold medal in the first-ever Olympic Women's Pole Vault Competition.

Dragila grew up in Auburn, California, where she competed in goat roping as a child. As a heptathlete during her years on Placer High School's track and field team, she had little idea that she would one day stand atop the Olympic medals podium as a pole vault champion. You see, when she was in high school, the pole vault was an event in which only male competitors took part.

As the women's pole vault has finally taken root in the United States, Stacy has quickly established herself as the premier athlete in her field. Each time she reaches a new personal best mark, she rewrites the world record. In fact, while competing on her home turf at this summer's U.S. Olympic Trials in Sacramento, she set the current world record 15'2¼". By continually raising the bar, Stacy has forced her competitors to push their own limits as well. This resulted in an exciting duel at this month's Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia. In the end, Dragila brought home the gold with a vault of 15'1".

At the age of 29, Stacy Dragila stands as an Olympic champion and as an American hero. Furthermore, as a pioneer in a new sport, she stands as a role model for those young women who will strive to match her achievements on the field. Perhaps most importantly, however, she is, by all accounts, a world-class person as well as a world-class athlete. Today, I proudly join with Americans everywhere in saluting gold medalist Stacy Dragila.

#### INDIAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD STOP ITS STATE TERRORISM

**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 5, 2000*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, on September 27, a letter from the Council of Khalistan was published in the Washington Times. It details the propaganda spread by the Indian government to discredit its opponents.

That propaganda is necessary for the Indian government to cover up the atrocities and state terrorism against Christians, Sikhs, and other minorities. Former Indian cabinet minister R.L. Bhatia admitted in 1995 that the Indian government is spending "large sums of money" to spread this propaganda and influence affairs in the United States.

Earlier this month, militant Hindu fundamentalists attacked the home of a priest. They beat him and his servant. The servant was beaten so badly that he died. Unfortunately, this kind of thing is not unusual. It is just the latest in a series of atrocities carried out by organizations under the umbrella of the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), the parent organization of the ruling BJP. While Prime Minister Vajpayee was in New York during his recent visit to the U.S., he said, "I will always be a Swayamsewak."

Last week, former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar said that there is no difference between the ruling BJP and the supposedly secular Congress Party. Unfortunately, from the point of view of the minorities in India, it is true. There is no difference. Whoever is in power, the repression continues. India has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, over 200,000 Christians in Nagaland since 1947, over 70,000 Kashmiri Muslims since 1988, and tens of thousands of Dalit "untouchables" and other minorities. Thousands of Sikhs and other minorities are in illegal detention without charge or trial simply because they are opposed to the government, or because they are members of a minority.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for India to stop its state terrorism against the minorities within its borders. We must stop American aid to India and declare our support for self-determination for the people of Khalistan, Kashmir, Nagalim, and the other nations seeking their freedom, in the form of a free and fair democratic plebiscite. These measures are the only ones we can take that will help to bring real freedom and democracy to the people of South Asia. I submit the following article into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

[From the Washington Times, Sept. 27, 2000]

NO MILITANTS IN THE COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN

Manpreet Singh Nibber's Sept. 16 letter, "India human rights criticism from unreliable source?" is so full of disinformation that he must be fronting for the Indian Embassy in its effort to confuse the American people.

Mr. Nibber, who is a member of the Punjab Welfare Council of the USA, does not address any of the facts we brought up in our last letter. Instead, he spreads Indian disinformation about the Council of Khalistan and its origins. He knows there are no "militants" involved in the council. We consistently support the liberation of Khalistan, the Sikh homeland that declared its independence from India on Oct. 7, 1987,

by democratic, nonviolent means, through the Sikh tradition of "Shantmai morcha," or peaceful agitation.

The Indian Embassy has interfered in American elections, calling for the re-election of former Sen. Larry Pressler and attempting to damage the re-election campaign of Sen. Robert Torricelli. A few years ago, the Indian Embassy was caught giving illegal campaign donations to members of Congress through an immigration lawyer named Lalit Gadhia, who pleaded guilty to the scheme in federal court.

There are many other Gadhias throughout this country. Former Indian cabinet minister R.L. Bhatia admitted in a 1995 news conference that the Indian government is spending "large sums of money" through the embassy to influence American politics. But what is that money defending?

On Sept. 8, militant Hindus attacked the home of a priest and beat the priest and his servant. The servant was so severely beaten that he died of the injuries. On Aug. 25, News stories reported that militant Hindu nationalists kidnapped and tortured a priest in Gujarat, then paraded him naked through town. This attack was part of a wave of terror against Christians since Christmas 1998.

Incidents have included the murder of priests, the rape of nuns and the burning to death of nuns and the burning to death of a missionary and his two sons in their van by members of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sang (RSS), the parent organization of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. Schools and prayer halls have been attacked and destroyed. The individuals who raped the nuns were described by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, a militant organization within the RSS, as "patriotic youth." The RSS was founded in support of fascism.

In March, 35 Sikhs were murdered in the village of Chithi Singh-pora in Kashmir. Two extensive independent investigations, one conducted by the Movement Against State Repression and the Punjab Human Rights Organization and another conducted by the Ludhiana-based International Human Rights Organization, proved that the Indian government was responsible for this massacre.

The Indian government has murdered more than 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, according to figures published in Inderjit Singh Jaijee's "The Politics of Genocide." India also has killed more than 200,000 Christians in Nagaland since 1947, more than 70,000 Kashmiri Muslims since 1988 and tens of thousands of other minorities. Amnesty International reports that thousands of political prisoners are being held without charge or trial in "the world's largest democracy."

India is hostile to the United States. It votes against America at the United Nations more often than any country except Cuba.

In May 1999, the Indian Express reported that Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes led a meeting with Cuba, China, Iraq, Serbia, Russia and Libya to construct a security alliance "to stop the U.S."

India openly supported the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. Its nuclear weapons test started the nuclear arms race in South Asia. It refuses to allow the Sikhs, Kashmiris, Christians and other minority nations seeking their freedom to decide their political future in a free and fair vote, the democratic way.

America must not accept this kind of brutality and tyranny from a government that claims to be democratic. We must cut off aid and trade to India and support a free and fair plebiscite to ensure human rights and self-determination for Khalistan, Christian Nagalim, Kashmir and all the minority nations and peoples living under Indian rule.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. FLOYD SPENCE

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 5, 2000

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 503, 504 and 505, I was not present as I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on all three.

## A LETTER TO MY SONS

### HON. MARSHALL "MARK" SANFORD

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 5, 2000

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, in the final days of the 106th Congress and my time here in the House, I rise today to pass these words on to my sons.

October 5, 2000.

DEAR MARSHALL, LANDON, BOLTON AND BLAKE: I wanted to write this letter so that maybe in twenty years or maybe after I have died you could look it up and think about how much your Dad loves you. I write this letter as much as anything because I feel the need to pause and praise each of you and to say how proud I am of you and how much, again, I love you.

That's needed because over the last seven years all you have known is a world tied to politics. For each of the words I spoke into the record on the House floor, or in Committee, I couldn't expand time and also fill those minutes and hours with words to each of you. Each of the days I spent in Washington were days I couldn't spend with you. Each of the evenings I spent at political events were evenings I couldn't spend with you. I apologize for our time apart. Each of you as young men will one day discover your calling—why God put you here—and in turn have to struggle in balancing the different responsibilities each of you will embrace.

I have felt that my job over these last seven years was getting to—and being in—Congress. Since I came here I have tried as best I could do what I thought was right, but in all that doing I always thought of each one of you. Here in Washington I never went to bed once without saying prayers with each of you in them.

In the early years it was just Marshall and Landon, and you guys, as little guys, put in far more than your share of parades and political events.

As if yesterday I remember the Hell hole swamp parade and pulling the wagon with Marshall and Landon. In the Summerville parade in the first campaign, to this day I remember Marshall's wild white curls and his little light blue V-neck sweater. I am amazed to look at pictures and see how small Landon was at the start of this process.

I think the last parade with just Marshall and Landon was at the Loris Bog-off. It was cool and I remember your mom and I buying you both swords at a booth alongside the railroad track afterward. I doubt I was that big on the swords, but I am sure your mom well made the point that you earned them, and in case you don't remember the spot—there were men and women in bright blue clothes dancing to country music on a flat-bed trailer just to the left.

Marshall, you have always been great help with your younger brothers, thank you. The way you have carried yourself also makes me proud. Do you remember going with then

Governor Beasley and several security men in a Department of Natural Resources speedboat out to a Navy destroyer in Charleston Harbor? During the commissioning ceremony it was hot and you were not wild about being there, but you put up with it and behaved well. In the same vein do you remember sitting under my chair at the Hwy 61 connector opening. It was hardly a grand event, but you found shade and stayed still and quiet which was no small feat given your age. In these and many other events like them, you showed a maturity well beyond your years. It will carry you far in life.

In the political context of my note, Landon made me proud most recently at the St. Patrick's day parade in North Myrtle Beach. I was pulling a wagon along side you while you walked straight up the yellow line in the middle of the street. In your young man's march you were waving at the several thousand people who lined both sides of the road. In most waves your arm was held at a forty-five degree angle and your palm and hand were straight up as if the tip of a small spear. The whole thing was not easy for you. In fact it was incredibly brave. Blake was in my arms and your two brothers were riding in the wagon and there you were, a reserved boy by nature walking up a street surrounded by strangers—waving to both sides. On the long drive home you started singing some silly song and next thing you know three boys are laughing hysterically in the back of the Suburban. You have the ability to defuse things with laughter.

Bolton—you are a natural born performer. Of all the family members you are the most gifted in surprising people, and not infrequently, making them laugh. You were doing just that winter before last at the Conway parade when you rode in the wagon and chose to throw bags of candy—not the candies! In the same light I remember the words Mary Crixmas, Mary Crixmas, Happy Santa Claus. Last winter I was the Grand Marshall of the Mount Pleasant Christmas parade. Marshall sat to my left, Landon on my right, you were on my lap and with outstretched arms you yelled these words with such enthusiasm that half-way through the parade you couldn't say another word. John McCain asks regularly about you and still talks about your enthusiasm for fishing. I think you are the only four year old to have given the President of the United States a froggy kiss. These days you are into catching butterflies with your hands, but thank you for wearing politics as well as you have.

Blake—you haven't said a whole lot in parades yet, but you haven't had to because with your blonde curls and cute smiles everyone adores you! You are specific in what you want thought, you like to be carried—not to ride on my shoulders like some of your brothers.

The point in these memories, and a thousand others like them, is that we have been through some interesting times together. Your peers have not had to go through what you have. At your young ages you have been exposed to a wide range of people and settings—medicare nursing home visits, trips to the White House, the House that Congress built with Habitat for Humanity, watching the sun rise from a boat moored feet from where the Hunley would rise hours later, feeding special Olympic kids at the Citadel, getting up hours earlier than you would have to go to an event in Myrtle Beach, beach sweeps, and more. In the end I think you will be better for having seen a wide swath of life, but since it involved wear and tear on your bodies this note is here simply to say thank you. Thank you for behaving well, and thank you for putting with it. I am proud of you. You are each unique young men. I love you