

PERMANENT RESIDENCY FOR LIBERIANS

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise tonight to express my deep disappointment that this final package does not include a provision that allows Liberian nationals living in this country to adjust to permanent residency.

As I have told this body many times, approximately 10,000 Liberians fled to the United States beginning in 1989 when their country became engulfed in a civil war. In 1991, Attorney General Barr granted Liberians Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and renewed it in 1992. Under the Clinton administration, Attorney General Reno continued to renew TPS for Liberians on an annual basis until last year when she granted Deferred Enforced Departure. DED was renewed again this year.

While Liberians can now legally live in the United States for another year, it does not change the fact that they have lived in limbo for almost a decade. The Liberians have lived in a "protected status" longer than any other group in the history of this country. These individuals have played by the rules. From the beginning, they have always lived in this country legally. They have established careers, opened businesses, bought homes, had American-born children, and contributed to our communities. Yet, they are unable to enjoy the basic rights and privileges of U.S. citizenship. These people deserve better.

For several years I have been working to see that the Liberians receive the justice they deserve. In March 1999, I introduced S. 656, the Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act which would allow Liberian nationals who had received TPS to adjust to permanent residency. For almost two years I have been unable to convince my colleagues to hold a hearing, debate this issue on the floor, or pass the bill. I did everything I believed was necessary to garner support for this legislation. I spoke on the floor, I wrote "Dear Colleagues", I gathered cosponsors on both sides of the aisle, I spoke personally with the leadership of both parties and the White House. Despite these efforts, the plight of the Liberians has not been recognized and their status has not been resolved.

The situation facing the Liberians is not a novel issue for Congress. In the time that the Liberians have lived in this country, several other immigrant groups, including 52,000 Chinese, 4,996 Poles, 200,000 El Salvadorans, 50,000 Guatemalans and 150,000 Nicaraguans, who lived in the U.S. under temporary protective status for far less time have been allowed to adjust to permanent status. Just last month we passed a bill adjusting the status of 4,000 Syrian Jews. There are those who have argued that it is time to stop passing "nation specific" immigration fixes and to implement a system that is comprehensive and fair. I fully agree. But until we reach that point and are ready to pass such legislation, I do not believe that

we can, in good conscious, arbitrarily deny certain groups a remedy for the unintended and unjust consequences of our immigration law.

I would also like to state that I believe that we have a special obligation to the Liberians because of the special ties the U.S. has with that country. Congress should honor the special relationship that has always existed between the United States and Liberia. In 1822, groups of freed slaves from the U.S. began to settle on the coast of Western Africa with the assistance of private American philanthropic organizations at the behest of the U.S. government. In 1847, these settlers established the republic of Liberia, the first independent country in Africa. Liberians modeled their constitution after the U.S. and named their capital Monrovia after President James Monroe. Mr. President, many of the Liberian nationals in this country can trace their ancestry to American slaves. We owe them more than we are giving them tonight.

When Liberians arrived in this country, they expected to stay only a short time and to return home once it was safe. But one year turned into many and they moved on with their lives. They are now part of our community. They deserve the same benefits that we have given so many others—the rights of citizenship. It is my hope that we can address this grievous situation early in the 107th Congress. We need to right a wrong.

RONALD McDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES' NEW CHILD HEALTH PROGRAM

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise to recognize the Houston arrival of a Ronald McDonald Care Mobile—a state-of-the-art pediatric mobile healthcare unit. It is one of the first in an innovative initiative of the Ronald McDonald House Charities, known and respected worldwide for its dedication to improving children's health.

In cooperation with its local affiliates and local hospitals or health systems, RMHC has begun rolling out these Ronald McDonald Care Mobiles to bring free medical and dental services to children in underserved communities. The Houston Ronald McDonald Care Mobile will be operated and staffed by the Harris County Hospital District. It will travel, on a regular schedule, to schools, churches, apartment complexes and other neighborhood sites where need is great. This RMHC partnership will significantly strengthen the District's capacity to serve the county's disadvantaged children and their families.

The Ronald McDonald Care Mobiles are a far cry from the usual converted vans and school buses. They are specially-designed pediatricians' offices on wheels, with two patient examination rooms, a laboratory, reception and medical records areas and, in some cases, a hearing screening booth and

dental hygiene room. The units are also staffed to deliver first-rate care. Staffing will vary according to local needs but is likely to include a pediatrician, a pediatric nurse, and a manager. There may also be a social worker, a dental hygienist, an asthma specialist and/or medical residents, nursing students, and interns in training.

The Ronald McDonald Care Mobiles will go directly into underserved communities. They will provide primary care, including immunizations and medical screenings; diagnosis, treatment, referral, and followup for serious medical and dental conditions; and health education for children and their families. Staff will also help eligible families obtain government-assisted health insurance and will partner with communities to address critical local childhood health needs.

Our children are our nation's most precious resource. We are all beholden to the Ronald McDonald House Charities for bringing vital health care to the underserved so that they may learn and play and grow up strong. This truly is giving back to the community at its finest.

PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF IMMIGRANT WORKERS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, fourteen years ago, Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, IRCA. That Act has had undeniably profound effects on the nation—both positive and negative. IRCA set into motion the current legalization program, which has brought millions of individuals out of the shadows of illegal immigrant status and onto a path of temporary status, permanent status and, ultimately, United States citizenship. At the same time, IRCA authorized employer sanctions which, in addition to not deterring illegal immigration, have led to a false document industry and caused discrimination against Latino, Asian, other immigrant workers, and even United States citizens, who by their accent or appearance are wrongly perceived as being here illegally.

Many of us supported the provision in IRCA which created an office to address cases of discrimination resulting from employer sanctions. Since then, the Department of Justice Office of Special Counsel for Immigration Related Unfair Employment Practices, OSC, has enforced the anti-discrimination provisions and provided relief to workers who have faced immigration-related job discrimination.

One of the innovative accomplishments of OSC has been to develop effective partnerships with state and local government civil rights agencies. A Memoranda of Understanding enables the civil rights agencies who are supposed to work together to do just that. As a result, all agencies are better equipped to prevent and eradicate discrimination.

Recently, the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination joined

with the OSC to educate employers, workers and the general public in the state and to work together to address discrimination. The Boston Globe praised the work of the Office of Special Counsel and urged increases in its staff and budget in order for it to keep up with the growing number of newcomers and employers. In the words of the editorial, "This would help immigrants and the economy—a winning move for the United States."

I ask unanimous consent for the Boston Globe editorial, "Protecting Immigrants," to be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Boston Sunday Globe, Oct. 19, 2000]

PROTECTING IMMIGRANTS

Working immigrants are like high-octane fuel for the economy. Given the nation's shortage of workers, hiring immigrants is a great way to fill jobs, whether in high-tech or in restaurants.

But immigrants can face serious job discrimination. Some don't know their rights. Others are afraid to complain. That's why federal and state governments must improve enforcement of fair work practices.

One tool is in place, but it needs to grow. In 1986, eager to crack down on illegal immigration, Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act. The law threatened employers with fines unless they verified that new hires were legally eligible to work.

Congress knew that turning employers into immigration cops could lead to more discrimination. So the act also created the Office of Special Counsel for Immigration Related Unfair Employment Practices.

Today, the Office for the Special Counsel fights discrimination based on national origin and citizenship status. It cracks down on "document discrimination"—asking for more proof of work status than is legally required—and on rarer cases of employer retaliation. The office also mediates disputes and trains employers and human service providers.

This work goes on in states with large immigrant populations, like New York and California, but also in Arkansas, Oregon, and Nebraska, where immigrant populations are growing. In the last two years, the office has reached settlements with SmithKline Beecham, the pharmaceutical company, the Atlanta Journal Constitution newspaper, and Iowa Beef Packers, a meat packing and processing company in South Dakota.

Last year, the special counsel's office awarded \$45,000 to the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, a grant used statewide to educate immigrants, train community agency staff, and hold forums. The office recently formed a valuable alliance with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination. Since the office has no local branches, it is building a nationwide web of local contacts whom immigrants can turn to for federal help.

Unfortunately as national immigration rates soar, the Office for the Special Counsel is having trouble keeping up. Its activities are limited by a small staff and a budget of just under \$6 million. Doubling the budget would spread the office's reach more evenly across the country. It could take more preventative measures, helping employers before laws are violated, instead of punishing them once the harm is done.

This would help immigrants and the economy—a winning move for the United States.

FEDERAL JUDGESHIP

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, today this Congress has expanded accessibility to justice for hundreds of thousands of residents of northern Wisconsin by creating a Federal judgeship to sit in Green Bay, WI. Let me explain how this judgeship will alleviate the stress that the current system places on business, law enforcement agents, witnesses, victims and individual litigants in northeastern Wisconsin.

First, while the four full-time district court judges for the Eastern District of Wisconsin currently preside in Milwaukee, for most litigants and witnesses in northeastern Wisconsin. Milwaukee is well over 100 miles away. In fact, as the courts are currently arranged, the northern portion of the Eastern District is more remote from a Federal court than any other major population center, commercial or industrial, in the United States. Thus, litigants and witnesses must incur substantial costs in traveling from northern Wisconsin to Milwaukee—costs in terms of time, money, resources, and effort. Indeed, driving from Green Bay to Milwaukee takes nearly two hours each way. Add inclement weather or a departure point north of Green Bay—such as Oconto or Marinette—and often the driving time alone actually exceeds the amount of time witnesses spend testifying.

Second, Wisconsin's Federal judges serve a disproportionately large population. I commissioned a study by the General Accounting Office which revealed that Wisconsin Federal judges serve the largest population among all Federal judges. Each sitting Federal judge in Wisconsin serves an average population of 859,966, while the remaining Federal judges across the country—more than 650—serve less than half that number, with an average of 417,000 per judge. For example, while Louisiana has fewer residents than Wisconsin, it has 22 Federal judges, nearly four times as many as our State.

Third, the Federal Government is required to prosecute all felonies committed by Native Americans that occur on the Menominee Reservation. The Reservation's distance from the Federal prosecutors and courts—more than 150 miles—makes these prosecutions problematic, and because the Justice Department compensates attorneys, investigators and sometimes witnesses for travel expenses, the existing system costs all of us. Without an additional judge in Green Bay, the administration of justice, as well as the public's pocketbook, will suffer enormously.

Fourth, many manufacturing and retail companies are located in northeastern Wisconsin. These companies often require a Federal court to litigate complex price-fixing, contract, and liability disputes with out-of-State businesses. But the sad truth is that many of these legitimate cases are never even filed—precisely because the northern part of the State lacks a Federal court. This hurts businesses not

only in Wisconsin, but across the Nation.

In conclusion, having a Federal judge in Green Bay will reduce costs and inconvenience while increasing judicial efficiency. But most important, it will help ensure that justice is more available and more affordable to the people of northeastern Wisconsin.

ILO CONVENTION 182 RATIFICATION

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the first anniversary of U.S. ratification of the ILO's newest core human rights convention: ILO Convention #182—the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

Last Friday was not just the first anniversary of ILO Convention #182. It was also the date on which Convention #182 came into effect in the United States. That means the first report on U.S. compliance with the terms of this treaty is due in Geneva by next September.

I have long been deeply involved in the struggle to end abusive child labor. Ten years ago, the scourge of abusive child labor was spreading in the U.S. and throughout the world with little notice or concern from our government.

That is why I supported the first-ever, day-long Capitol Hill forum on the Commercial Exploitation of Children. I had two primary goals in mind back then.

First, I wanted to sound an alarm about the increase in abusive child labor in the U.S. and overseas. Second, I wanted to elevate this human rights and worker rights challenge to a global priority.

I am heartened to report that significant progress has been made in the past decade, even though much remains to be done.

In June of 1999, ILO Convention #182 was adopted unanimously—the first time ever that an ILO convention was approved without one dissenting vote. Just one year ago, the Senate, in record time, ratified ILO Convention #182 with a bipartisan, 96-0 vote.

And today, 41 countries have ratified ILO Convention #182—countries from every region of the world. 12 African nations, 12 European nations, 10 American Caribbean nations, 5 from the Middle East, and 2 from Asia. Since the ILO was established in 1919, never has one of its treaties been ratified so quickly by so many national governments.

In May of 2000, we enacted the Trade and Development Act of 2000. This Act included a provision I authored that requires more than 100 nations that enjoy duty-free access to the American marketplace to implement their legal commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in order to keep these trade privileges.

Since May, the State Department has demanded thorough review of the efforts of over 130 nations to eliminate