

THE EMPLOYMENT NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT

HON. RICHARD A. GEPHARDT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 31, 2001

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) which is being reintroduced today. This bill will make sure that individuals have protections against workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Today, there is no federal law to fight discrimination of this kind. This is unacceptable. Under current law, law-abiding, hard-working Americans can be denied a job, fired or discriminated against in other ways simply because they are or are perceived to be gay or lesbian.

ENDA will extend the promise of equal opportunity and civil rights to more Americans. Twelve states have such laws on the books. The private sector realizes the need and value of these workplace protections; in fact, more than 50 percent of Fortune 500 companies have nondiscrimination policies which include sexual orientation. And an overwhelming number of Americans support equal workplace rights for gay and lesbian Americans.

This legislation says simply that discrimination in employment because of sexual orientation is illegal, and will not be tolerated. This is strong, badly-needed legislation for countless Americans who have suffered, or who are vulnerable to discrimination because they do not have protections similar to those afforded millions of their fellow citizens. I strongly hope that we will debate and pass this bill this year.

TREASURY AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT WEXLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 25, 2001

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2590) making appropriations for the Treasury Department, the United States Postal Service, the Executive Office of the President, and certain Independent Agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes:

Mr. WEXLER. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the Hastings amendment to the bill, and I commend my neighbor and colleague for bringing this issue to the Floor of the House.

America is the freest and most prosperous nation on earth. We are the strongest and most resilient democracy on the planet. Yet last November, we failed our citizens in the most fundamental way.

The right to vote cuts to the very bone of our democracy. When tens of thousands of Americans cast their ballots—only to have them thrown out—whether you like the results of the Presidential election or not—it is undeniable that something is wrong in America. If we fail to learn from this tragic experience then shame on us.

What happened in Palm Beach County, Florida on election day is personal to me. I

saw it with my own eyes. I experienced it myself. I stood in front of voting precincts and witnessed a horrible state of confusion.

I rise today representing the citizens of my district who went to vote on election day only to be confronted with a puzzle rather than a ballot. I watched the dismay and felt the anger of patriotic Americans, many of whom fought in World War II and Korea, and haven't missed an election in over 50 years, as their votes were rendered meaningless.

I support the Hastings electoral reform amendment to give a voice to those Floridians whose votes were callously discarded due to a ballot that was so confusing intelligent men and women unknowingly cast two votes for President, or one vote for the wrong man.

I support the Hastings electoral reform amendment because the collapse of the election system in Florida was not color-blind. The facts speak for themselves. Fifty-four percent of Florida's discarded ballots were cast by African-Americans, even though African-Americans only comprise eleven percent of Florida's voters.

Think about that. African-American voters were ten times more likely than white voters to have their ballots rejected in Florida. This reality is indefensible and we must act now to repair our citizens' faith in the system.

Have no doubt about it, this is not just a Florida problem. It stretches coast to coast. Many of the problems that confronted Florida on election day occurred in other states. In fact, more votes were thrown out in Illinois than in Florida. This is a federal problem that demands federal attention.

What happened in Florida on election day highlighted for the entire world that in America, even for a Presidential election, we have no national standards for the design of ballots—we have no national standards for the counting of ballots—we have no national standards for voting machinery—we have no national standards to prevent thousands of Americans from being purged from voter roles—and we have no reliable way to count the overseas ballots of the men and women in the military.

The good news is—this problem can be solved, but we must commit the necessary resources. I strongly support the amendment sponsored by Representative HASTINGS which makes a substantial down payment on our obligation to help state and local governments modernize their election equipment and renew the integrity of our democracy. Electoral reform must not be a partisan cause. It is our national obligation.

Election 2000 was a wake-up call to all Americans that we must not take our democracy for granted. We must commit the money, the resources and the energy to fix our election process once and for all. To do anything less is unforgivable.

I urge you to support the amendment.

RECOGNIZING THE ESCORT CARRIER SAILORS AND AIRMEN ASSOCIATION

HON. JOE BARTON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 31, 2001

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today, I am honored to rise and speak in recognition

of the Escort Aircraft Carrier Sailors and Airmen Association. Members of the ECSAA served our country in both World War II and the Korean Conflict aboard the CVE Aircraft Carriers, better known as "Baby Flattops." Through their acts of bravery, these Veterans helped to bring World War II to an early conclusion and saved numerous lives. Until now, they have gone unrecognized for their invaluable contributions to the military successes of our nation. It is time for our Government to make its appreciation evident to these brave Veterans and recognize them, as a whole, for their valor and dedication to the preservation of our great country and its people.

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

SPEECH OF

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2001

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2620) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of the amendment being offered by my colleague, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, to prohibit any funds from being used to implement the veterans equity resource allocation system.

VERA was created to correct a perceived inequity in the manner in which veterans health care dollars were being distributed across the country.

While a noble effort, VERA was fundamentally flawed in that it did not look at the type of care being delivered to veterans in a given region. Furthermore, it also failed to consider the effect of regional costs of providing health care in its calculations.

Under VERA, the watchword was efficiency. Deliver the most care at the least cost. While ideal for outpatient care, VERA has unfairly penalized those VISNs that provide vital services such as substance abuse treatment, services for homeless veterans, mental health services, and spinal cord injury treatments. Under VERA, these services are all deemed too expensive and "inefficient."

VERA was also implemented at a time when the VA budget was essentially flat-lined. Thus, VISN directors were not provided additional funds to offset the costs of annual pay raises for VA staff, and annual medical inflation costs. This was not a problem for those directors of VISNs that received money under VERA. However, for those directors in VISNs, that were losing money under VERA, it was a double hit that crowded out additional funds needed for other vital services.

It is commendable that the subcommittee was able to find an additional \$1.2 billion for veterans medical care. Yet, thanks to VERA, very little of that money will find its way to the

Northeast, where it is vitally needed. Instead, it will be sent to those VISNs that have already seen increases in funding due to VERA.

Mr. Chairman, this is simply wrong. The veterans of the Northeast, who are older, sicker and less mobile than their counterparts in the sun belt should not be unfairly penalized for where they choose to live. This amendment starts to correct this problem by terminating VERA, a well-intentioned, but poorly executed system that blatantly discriminates against those veterans who reside in the Northeast.

HONORING THE GRAND OPENING OF THE EMERY-WEINER SCHOOL

HON. KEN BENTSEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 31, 2001

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of the new Emery-Weiner School in southwest Houston. This \$14 million educational facility combines the 23-year-old I. Weiner Jewish Secondary School and the brand new Emery High School to form the Emery-Weiner School. This expansion combines the quality education offered at the I. Weiner Jewish Secondary School with the cutting edge facility of the new campus.

This fall as classrooms fill for the first time at the Emery-Weiner School students will benefit from the formation of these two institutions. The state-of-the-art facilities at the new campus will include art and music rooms, as well as a theater, emphasizing the important role the arts play in education. The campus also houses a multi-court gymnasium, cultural arts facility, computer and science labs. The twelve acres in southwest Houston on which the campus sits is surrounded by several more acres of accessible playing fields. The campus will provide tremendous opportunities to students.

On Thursday, September 20, 2001, the Emery-Weiner School will celebrate the opening of this new campus with a special event honoring two of its many benefactors, Mr. Joe Kaplan and Mr. Joe Kornfeld. The proceeds from this celebration will benefit the "Joe Fund," a fund appropriately named for these two founding fathers. Mr. Kaplan and Mr. Kornfeld contributed countless hours to seeing this project come to fruition. Their selfless offerings make them role models for the students who will benefit from their efforts.

The "Joe Fund" was created to bolster teacher enhancement programs and projects. It will be used to purchase materials to provide teachers the necessary means to incorporate creativity and ingenuity into their everyday classroom. I applaud the leadership of the countless teachers and volunteers who contributed to the erection of this new campus and recognize the commitment of these individuals to providing opportunities through education to our young people.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the many people who contributed to the construction of the Emery-Weiner School, and I look forward to seeing the many ways in which the innovative voice of this institution will help to educate and shape the minds of Houstonians. There is no doubt, this school will soon serve as a model for other schools across the nation.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE THAT WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM PRESENTS UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO AD- DRESS GLOBAL DISCRIMINATION

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 30, 2001

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 212, sponsored by myself and my good friend from California, the Ranking Member of the House International Relations Committee, Mr. LANTOS.

It is easy to believe that in the twenty-first century, racism, like a rabbit under a magician's hat, has simply disappeared with the abracadabra of superficial legislation and the convenience of turning a blind eye. But for those of us who prefer to see the truth rather than a prefabricated illusion, we must recognize the need for international cooperation to address racism at the U.N. World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa.

Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." It is wrong, however, to combat racism with provisions that are racist themselves. Without a doubt, it is unacceptable for anti-Semitic language to be used in the conference's Program of Action to address the Arab-Israeli conflict. The notion of equating Zionism with racism is one that we rejected over twenty years ago when we spoke out vehemently against a U.N. resolution that made such an insidious claim. Thus, it is critical that we carefully consider the consequences of attending a conference that promotes a tenet we simply cannot accept. At the same time, we must reaffirm our commitment to working together with the international community to eradicate global discrimination and establish ourselves as a leader in this cause. We cannot let our silence speak for us now.

This legislation, Mr. Speaker, promotes U.S. support of the World Conference Against Racism and encourages us to take action in a manner consistent with our American values of racial and religious tolerance. It is essential that we support such legislation and not allow our global fight against racism to vanish into thin air or be diminished by language that exacerbates the problem rather than fixing it. I urge my colleagues to support this unique opportunity to address global discrimination and to support House Resolution 212.

IN HONOR OF GARY KRUPP OF LONG BEACH, NEW YORK

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 31, 2001

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Mr. Gary Krupp of Long Beach, New York.

On July 29, 2000, Pope John Paul II named Gary a Knight Commander of the Order of Saint Gregory the Great, in recognition of his work with Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza, a health care facility in Italy. Through Mr.

Krupp's generosity and commitment, the hospital acquired highly advanced medical equipment, benefitting countless men, women and children.

The Order of Saint Gregory was founded by Pope Gregory XVI in 1831, who named it after his predecessor, Pope Saint Gregory the Great. The Order frequently honors those who have distinguished themselves through service to the Catholic Church and accomplishments benefitting society. Gary is the seventh Jewish person since 1831 to be awarded this honor.

It is not every day that an honor such as this is given to one of our neighbors. I congratulate Gary for receiving this outstanding and unique honor. I believe he is an exemplary Long Islander and American, and I have no doubt Gary will continue his work on behalf of Long Island, the Catholic Church, and Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza.

MAGEE RIETER HONORED

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 31, 2001

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call the attention of the House of Representatives to the outstanding achievement of the employees of Magee Rieter Automotive Systems of Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, which has won General Motors' prestigious "Supplier of the Year Award" for the ninth consecutive year. Of GM's 30,000 suppliers, Magee Rieter Automotive Systems is the only nine-time winner in North America and one of only six suppliers globally to be honored every year since the award was established.

Magee Rieter, the leading supplier of carpets to General Motors in America, will celebrate this accomplishment on August 28, 2001. The company has been in business in Bloomsburg since 1889 and has been supplying General Motors for more than 90 years, first with hand-draped tapestries or Fisher Body carriages, through today's production of fully molded carpet floors and integrated acoustical systems.

Through the past 112 years, the company has endured and overcome numerous challenges, including floods, fires and the rapidly changing business environment. The company received the Army/Navy "E" Award for Excellence after World War II in recognition of its production of high-quality materials for the war effort. As demonstrated by the more recent awards, the current employees have carried on the tradition of pride and success handed down by their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents who worked at Magee Rieter. Under the leadership of President and Chief Executive Officer Mike Katerman, Magee Rieter continues to be a cornerstone of the Bloomsburg community.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to call to the attention of the House of Representatives the hard work and impressive achievement of the people of Magee Rieter, and I wish them all the best.