

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN RECOGNITION OF SABINO CICI WHO RETIRES AFTER 25 YEARS OF DEDICATED AND DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AS CITY COUNCIL MEMBER FOR THE CITY OF SAN GABRIEL

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2003

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Sabino Cici who will retire from the San Gabriel City Council after 25 years of service to the city and community. Sabino was elected to the San Gabriel City Council in 1978, and appointed Mayor four times.

Sabino Cici has been a business owner in the San Gabriel community for 32 years. Throughout his professional and public service career, Councilman Sabino Cici has been an enthusiastic, committed leader and participant on numerous community and regional boards. He currently serves as Director of the Los Angeles County Sanitation District, Director of the San Gabriel Valley Animal Control Authority, and Delegate to the League District Attorney's Community Advisory Council. Sabino has also been actively involved with the San Gabriel Chamber of Commerce, Community Hospital Founders Trek, United States Air Force Association, San Gabriel Kiwanis, Italian Catholic Federation, and the Peace Officers Association.

Sabino's distinguished list of accomplishments while on the city council include building municipal economic reserves, creation of an Economic Redevelopment Agency, revitalization of the historic San Gabriel Mission District, implementation of the \$5 million Millennium Miles Program to rehabilitate San Gabriel's streets, seismic and ADA retrofitting of City Hall, and restoration of the legendary San Gabriel Civic Auditorium.

An active member of the San Gabriel community, he has supported and participated in the creation of exciting, fun-filled programs and events to educate and communicate the unique story that is San Gabriel and celebrate San Gabriel's diversity such as the Alhambra-San Gabriel Lunar New Year Parade and Festival, Christmas in April, Three-day San Gabriel Birthday & Festival, California History Day, Mission District Mercado, National Night Out, and Kids Day.

Councilman Cici celebrates 12 years of marriage to Kathleen "Cookie" Cici. Together the Cici's have six children and four grandchildren.

I ask all Members of Congress to join me today in congratulating Sabino Cici on an impressive and long spanning career as city councilman and for his invaluable commitment and involvement in the City of San Gabriel.

THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2003

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, the right to self-determination is the essence of democracy. The lack of it is one reason that many of us here in Congress believe India falls short of a full-fledged democracy.

In January 1949, India promised the United Nations that it would allow self-determination in Kashmir through a free and fair vote. It is now 2003 and this plebiscite has still not been held. India refuses to allow the Sikhs of Punjab, Khalistan, predominantly Christian Nagaland, Muslim Kashmir, and the other nations seeking their freedom from India to exercise their right to self-determination through a free and fair vote, the democratic way, despite their claim that there is no support for independence. If not, why not just hold a vote and get the issue behind you?

Instead of following the democratic principle of self-determination, India has tried to continue the subjugation of the Sikhs, Christians, Muslims, and other minorities through force. They have murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, over 200,000 Christians in Nagaland since 1947, over 85,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988, and tens of thousands of other minorities, including Assamese, Bodos, Dalits, Manipuris, and Tamils. A report from the Movement Against State Repression showed that India admitted to holding 52,268 Sikhs as political prisoners under the expired TADA law, one of the most repressive laws I know of. TADA expired in 1995. Some of these political prisoners have been held in illegal detention since 1984. According to Amnesty International, tens of thousands of other minorities, such as Christians, Muslims, and others, are also being held as political prisoners. How can a democratic country hold political prisoners? The State Department reported in 1994 that over 41,000 cash bounties were paid to police officers for killing Sikhs. They picked up human-rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra after he exposed their practice of secret cremations and Mr. Khalra was killed in police custody. Independent investigations showed that the Indian government's forces carried out the massacre of 35 Sikhs in March 2000.

Recently, the All India Christian Council reported that the government is sending out agents to seek intrusive information about Christians, such as whether they are first-generation Christians and how long they have been in India. This is happening in a country where American missionary Joseph Cooper was severely beaten and had to spend a week in the hospital, then was thrown out of the country for the crime of preaching. Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two sons were burned to death while they slept in their jeep by militant Hindu nationalists chanting

"Victory to Hannuman," a Hindu god. Priests have been murdered, nuns have been raped, churches have been burned, and schools and prayer halls have been violently attacked. A Christian festival was ended by police gunfire. Now two states, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, have enacted laws prohibiting conversions to any religion except Hinduism. The survey of Christians is also occurring in Gujarat.

Gujarat is the state where at least 2,000 and up to 5,000 Muslims were murdered last year, according to Indian newspapers. The press also reported that the government planned the attacks in advance.

Mr. Speaker, the Council of Khalistan recently issued an open letter detailing these and other Indian government atrocities, repression, and violations of human rights. I urge everyone to read it. India has 18 official languages and it is not one nation. India must stop violating the human rights of minorities and instead follow democratic principles by allowing self-determination for all the minority nations that seek it. That is the only way to bring real freedom, peace, and stability to the region. Until then, the United States should stop its aid with India and Congress should put this country on record in support of self-determination.

I would like to place the Council of Khalistan's open letter into the RECORD at this time, Mr. Speaker. It will be very informative to my colleagues and the people of this country.

MARCH 19, 2003.

OPEN LETTER TO THE SIKH NATION: KHALSA PANCHAYAT REPRESENTS SIKH NATION AND DESERVES OUR SUPPORT

AKALI LEADERSHIP AND JATHEDARS ARE UNDER INDIAN GOVERNMENT CONTROL

We must liberate Khalistan now. This is the only way for the Sikh Nation to prosper, progress, and project the Sikh religion and the interest of the Sikh Nation. Nations and religions without political power disappear.

Our experience since 1947 has been very disappointing and repressive. Colonial rule was better for everyone in India except the Brahmins than Indian rule is. We have been victimized by repression, tyranny, discrimination, and other abuses of our basic, god-given rights. India has used genocide, murder, torture, rape, and everything in its arsenal to destroy the Sikh Nation. It has even blown up its own airliner to blame it on the Sikhs, as the book *Soft Target*, written by two Canadian journalists, proves beyond a doubt. They paid former Punjab governor Surendra Nath \$1.5 billion to foment and support terrorism in Punjab and Kashmir.

The present Sikh leadership is dishonest, corrupt, and completely under Indian control. They are complicit in the crimes of the Indian regime. The book *Chakravayuh: Web of Indian Secularism* by Professor Gurtej Singh shows their complicity. What a shame that they connived with the Indian government before the Golden Temple invasion to murder Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, General Shabeg Singh, and thousands of other good Sikhs who were working for Sikh freedom. Over 20,000 Sikhs were murdered in the attack on the Golden Temple and 38 other Sikh Gurdwaras throughout Punjab, Khalistan in June 1984. Another 20,000 were

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

killed in the November 1984 massacres in Delhi and other cities. Overall, the Indian government, which boasts about being "the world's largest democracy," has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984. The death sentence given to Professor Devinder Pal Singh Bhullar based on a false confession is the latest example of India's effort to eliminate the Sikh religion and intimidate the Sikh Nation.

Indian police arrested human-rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra after he exposed their policy of mass cremation of Sikhs, in which over 50,000 Sikhs have been picked up, tortured, and killed, then their bodies are declared unidentified and secretly cremated. Then Mr. Khalra was murdered in police custody. His body was not given to his family. Rajiv Singh Randhawa, the only witness to the Khalra kidnapping tried to give a petition to Jack Straw, then the British Home Minister and now its Foreign Minister, outside the Golden Temple in Amritsar. For this, he was arrested and tortured.

Similarly, the police murdered former Jathedar of the Akal Takht Gurdev Singh Kaunke. His body was not handed over to his family. No one has been brought to justice for the Khalra kidnapping and murder. The murderer of Akal Takht Jathedar Gurdev Singh Kaunke, SSP Swaran Ghotna, has never been brought to trial. Nor have those who carried out the massacre of 35 Sikhs in Chithisinghpura three years ago this month.

According to a report by the Movement Against State Repression (MASR), 52,268 Sikhs are being held as political prisoners in India without charge or trial. Some have been in illegal custody since 1984! Yet Chief Minister Amarinder Singh denies that there are any political prisoners at all. Have they murdered them all? Most of these political prisoners were taken into illegal custody under the Beant Singh regime, a Congress government. Can't Amarinder Singh find these records? Amarinder Singh should be commended for prosecuting corrupt government officials. Now he should keep his promise to prosecute Parkash Singh Badal and his family for their corruption during his tenure as Chief Minister. He sold government jobs for money. Services were only delivered after they received bribes. His wife Surinder Kaur is so experienced at this corrupt practice that she could tell the amount of money in a paper bag just by lifting it. What a shame for the Akali government! The Badal family has tarnished the pious Akali name of the first half of the last century. That Sikh leadership gave sacrifices for the glory of the Khalsa Panth.

The Indian regime paid over 41,000 cash bounties to police officers for killing Sikhs, according to a 1994 report from the U.S. State Department. One of these bounties was paid to a policeman who killed a three-year-old boy! In another case, a man brought suit because he had been listed as having been killed in one of these incidents but was actually alive. Who was murdered in his place?

The legs of the driver for Baba Charan Singh were tied to two jeeps which drove off in opposite directions and he was torn in half. An attorney in Ropar who defended Sikh youth was picked up along with his wife and his two-year-old son. They were made to "disappear" just like 50,000 other Sikhs. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide." On October 7, 1987, the Sikh Nation declared the independence of its homeland, Punjab, Khalistan. No Sikh representative has ever signed the Indian constitution.

The Sikh nation has awakened. I call on all Sikhs to support the Khalsa Panchayat. These good Sikhs forced Jathedar Manjit Singh of Kesgarh to resign. Now Jathedar

Vedanti must resign along with him. Please help the Khalsa Panchayat in these efforts. And work to build a party that will lead a Shantmai Morcha to liberate our homeland, Khalistan, from Indian occupation. Just as the Akalis took control from the Mahants of the last century, we must take control of our future from the new Mahants, the present Akali leadership and Indian-controlled Jathedars.

India is on the verge of disintegration. Khalistan will soon be free. Home Minister L.K. Advani said that if Kashmir goes, India goes. The Kashmir problem has been internationalized. The only way to solve the Kashmir problem is to have a referendum where the Kashmiri people can decide their own future. With self-determination, the Kashmiri people will either be independent or go with Pakistan. Either way, Kashmir is going to go. As soon as Kashmir goes, Khalistan will be independent within a year. We can achieve freedom much earlier if our leadership is not under Indian control and they are sincere and honest.

Only in a free Khalistan will the Sikh Nation prosper. Only then will the Sikh Nation get justice. India must start acting like a democracy and allow self-determination in the form of a free and fair plebiscite on independence for Punjab, Khalistan and the other nations seeking their freedom from India. Let us join hands to secure our freedom, for ourselves and future generations.

Sincerely,

DR. GURMIT SINGH AULAKH,
President, Council of Khalistan.

HELP EFFICIENT, ACCESSIBLE,
LOW-COST, TIMELY HEALTHCARE
(HEALTH) ACT OF 2003

SPEECH OF

HON. TED STRICKLAND

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 13, 2003

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I speak on the floor today in opposition to H.R. 5 and in opposition to the closed rule under which we are debating the bill.

I have heard from doctors and hospitals throughout my district that they are struggling with high malpractice rates. I think we all recognize that this is a big problem in many regions of the country, and I believe we must take action to ensure patients can continue to access quality and timely health care. In my rural Ohio district, access to care is a constant problem for many of my constituents. I hear the voices of the family practice physicians who tell me they no longer may be able to afford to deliver babies. In some cases in Ohio, pregnant women must travel long distances for prenatal care and delivery services because there is only one doctor providing these services throughout a county. Something must be done, but I do not think HR 5 gets it done.

These are the reasons I have cosponsored H.R. 1124, which has been introduced by Rep. Dingell. H.R. 1124 would address high malpractice rates through moderate tort reforms, requiring attorneys to submit a certificate of merit declaring a case to be meritorious, and requiring medical malpractice insurance companies to dedicate at least 50% of the savings from these tort reforms to reducing the insurance premiums paid by physicians and other health professionals. In addition, H.R. 1124 attempts to look at the broad

issues that may have contributed to the high malpractice rates doctors across the country are facing by establishing an independent advisory commission on medical malpractice insurance. I wish Congress had acted quickly and in a bipartisan fashion last year—had we done so, we may already have more answers about why rates are now as high as they are. And finally, H.R. 1124 would create a grants program through the Department of Health and Human Services to ensure that areas affected by high malpractice rates do not suffer a shortage of providers. However, we will not even hear debate about these provisions or others because the Leadership passed a closed rule that limits debate to the base bill. This does a disservice to the American people, to the House, and to the health care providers we want to help.

I believe H.R. 5 will not address the high malpractice rates our doctors are confronting. H.R. 5 fails to address or even acknowledge the complicated nature of this problem: my colleagues who have introduced H.R. 5 haven't considered how the insurance industry may have contributed to the high rates or considered how individual states' systems have affected malpractice rates.

Throughout the Energy and Commerce Committee's consideration of H.R. 5, I spoke about two provisions in, H.R. 5 that I strongly oppose.

First, H.R. 5 would limit the liability of HMO'S, drug companies, and nursing homes. These companies have never come to me to explain why their liability should be limited; in fact, I strongly believe consumers should have the right to use every tool possible to collect damages if they are injured by a drug or device company whose product is defective. My constituents have access to prescription drugs—the drugs are there in the pharmacy, ready to be purchased, and the drug companies aren't going out of business. Unfortunately, many of my constituents, especially seniors, can't afford to pay the prices these companies are charging. Since the drug companies are doing quite well, I think it's safe to say that they don't need the further protections H.R. 5 would afford them.

Second, I cannot support H.R. 5 because of its \$250,000 limit on noneconomic damages. Noneconomic damages are awarded by a jury to compensate a victim for intangible pain and suffering. These damages are often very important to low income adults, women, and children who often would not recover a large economic damage award when they are injured. In addition, someone whose injury is purely cosmetic may not have economic damages because the injury doesn't directly affect his or her ability to work. For example, the facial disfigurement 17-year-old Heather Lewinski has had to live with for the past 9 years because when she was 8 years old a plastic surgeon committed clear malpractice and scarred her for life. The years of pain and suffering Heather has lived with and testified to before the Energy and Commerce Committee two weeks ago are real. Heather's lawsuit against the plastic surgeon who injured her resulted in zero economic damages, but she did receive compensation in the form of noneconomic damages. H.R. 5 would have limited her award to \$250,000. I cannot vote for legislation that would arbitrarily limit the damages that might be so important to the average American who finds themselves injured