

of violence against Christians, Sikhs, Muslims, Dalits, Assamese, Bodos, Tamils, Manipuris, and other minorities. This is unacceptable and the hardworking taxpayers of our country should not be called upon to support it.

Another measure that we can take is to declare our strong support for freedom through a free and fair plebiscite on independence where it is sought. India is a multinational state and history shows that such states do not survive. By helping to ensure that democracy is allowed to work for the cause of freedom and self-determination, we can make sure that whatever changes occur in the subcontinent happen peacefully.

Mr. Speaker, I don't mean to be long-winded, so I will stop here and place the Council of Khalistan's excellent open letter into the RECORD.

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN,
Washington, DC, February 11, 2004.

Open Letter to Sikh Organizations and Institutions:

AN APPEAL TO THE KHALSA PANTH
ONLY IN A FREE KHALISTAN CAN SIKHS PROSPER—EVERY SIKH MUST WORK TO LIBERATE KHALISTAN

DEAR KHALSA PANTH: Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

Recently, France passed a law banning the wearing of turbans and other religious symbols such as yarmulkes, Muslim head scarves, and "conspicuous crosses" in schools. This is a major violation of religious rights. Belgium is considering a similar law. Sikhs must do whatever we can to protest this unfair, discriminatory action.

Because Sikhs are slaves in India, there is nobody to defend the Sikh interests internationally. Recently, an issue came up of the French banning the wearing of turbans in school. If Khalistan were free, the Sikh Nation could call the French Ambassador and tell him to stop this harassment of Sikhs. Our Ambassador to France would tell the French government the same thing: the turban is part of the Sikh religion and Sikhs should not be harassed.

When Khalistan is free, we will be in a much stronger position to fight such offenses against our religion. We will be able to exert influence that we cannot bring to bear now. This is just one more reason that the liberation of Khalistan is essential. Yet prominent Sikh organizations like the Sikh Council on Religion and Education (SCORE), SMART, the Sikh Coalition, and other organizations refuse to mention the oppression of the Sikhs by the Indian regime and the struggle to liberate Khalistan. They are more concerned about their positions than about the Sikh people. These organizations are heavily infiltrated and often controlled by operatives of the Indian government. We appreciate the British Sikh Federation, which continually promotes the cause of Sikh rights and freedom for Khalistan. These other organizations must promote the cause of Sikh freedom as well. Whenever they have the opportunity to communicate with the outside world, they should promote freedom and independence for Khalistan.

The Guru granted sovereignty to the Sikh Nation, saying "In Grieb Sikkhin Ko Deon Patshahi." The Sikh Nation must achieve its independence to fulfill the mandate of the Guru. We always remember it by reciting every morning and evening, "Raj Kare Ga Khalsa." Now is the time to act on it. Do we mean what we say every morning and evening? I urge Sikhs to unite and take action to liberate our homeland, Punjab, Khalistan. It is time to start a Shantmai Morcha to liberate Khalistan from Indian occupation.

Never forget that the Akal Takht Sahib and Darbar Sahib are under the control of the Indian government, the same Indian government that has murdered over a quarter of a million Sikhs in the past twenty years. The Jathedar of the Akal Takht and the head granthi of Darbar Sahib toe the line that the Indian government tells them. They are not appointed by the Khalsa Panth. The SGPC also is controlled by the Indian government that has brutally murdered our people. These institutions will remain under the control of the Indian regime until we free the Sikh homeland, Punjab, Khalistan, from Indian occupation and oppression and sever our relations with the New Delhi government.

The Indian government invaded and desecrated the Golden Temple and 125 other Sikh Gurdwaras throughout Punjab to murder Sant Bhindranwale and 20,000 other Sikhs during June 1984 in Punjab. If Sikhs will not even protect the sanctity of the Golden Temple, how can the Sikh Nation survive as a nation?

The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, according to figures compiled by the Punjab State Magistracy and human rights groups. These figures were published in Inderjit Singh Jaijee's excellent book, *The Politics of Genocide*. According to the Movement Against State Repression (MASR), the Indian regime admitted to holding 52,268 Sikhs as political prisoners. They are being held without charge or trial, some of them since 1984!

How can a democratic state hold political prisoners? The regime has made over 50,000 Sikhs "disappear" by picking them up, torturing and murdering them, and then secretly cremating them, declaring them "unidentified." Their bodies are not given to their families. The bodies of Jathedar Gurdev Singh Kaunke and Sardar Jaswant Singh Khaira, who were murdered by the police, were never given to their families.

Other minorities also feel the lash of Indian repression. India has killed over 300,000 Christians in Nagaland since 1947 and murdered priests, raped nuns, burned churches, and destroyed Christian schools and prayer halls. They expelled missionary Joseph Cooper from the country after militant Hindu nationalists beat him up so badly that he had to be in the hospital for a week. Missionary Graham Staines and his two young sons were burned to death while sleeping in their jeep by a mob of militant Hindus chanting "Victory to Hanuman," a Hindu god. Since they were allied with the pro-Fascist RSS, the parent organization of the ruling BJP, they were able to commit this atrocity with impunity. Muslims were massacred in Gujarat while the police were under orders to stand aside and let the massacre occur, a frightening parallel to the 1984 Delhi massacres of Sikhs. A policeman told an Indian newspaper that the Gujarat massacre was planned in advance by the government.

This kind of treatment of its minorities only confirms the kind of country that India is. It is a fundamentalist Hindu theocracy, not secular or democratic at all. Remember what Narinder Singh, a spokesman for the Golden Temple, told America's National Public Radio in 1997: "The Indian government, they are always boasting that they are democratic, that they are secular. They have nothing to do with a secularism, nothing to do with a democracy. They just kill Sikhs just to please the majority."

Remember the words of Professor Darshan Singh, former Jathedar of the Akal Takht: "If a Sikh is not a Khalistani, he is not a Sikh." The time to achieve our independence is now. India is not one country. It is a polyglot empire thrown together under one roof

for the administrative convenience of the British colonialists. It has 18 official languages. History shows that such countries are doomed to fall apart. India will collapse just like the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Soviet Union, and other multinational states.

Soon Kashmir will be free from Indian occupation. Now America is involved in it. As L.K. Advani predicted, "When Kashmir goes, India goes." We agree with him and we urge the Indian government to hold a free and fair plebiscite on the question of independence and to sit down with representatives of the Sikh Nation to negotiate the boundaries of a sovereign, independent Khalistan. We want to make sure that India's collapse happens peacefully like that of Czechoslovakia, not violently like the breakup of Yugoslavia. The essence of democracy is self-determination. It is time for India to act like the democracy it claims to be.

When I met President Bush on December 5, he personally told me, "I am aware of the Sikh and Kashmiri problem and we stopped India and Pakistan from going to nuclear war." The Sikh diaspora has a moral responsibility to help the Sikh Nation to achieve its sovereignty by freeing Khalistan from Indian occupation.

The time has come to liberate our homeland. Sikhs must claim their birthright by liberating Khalistan. Only by freeing Khalistan will we put an end to this corruption and restore control of Punjab and its assets to the people, to whom it rightfully belongs. A free Khalistan is a must for the survival of the Sikh nation and will provide an optimal environment for the Sikh Nation to progress to its optimum potential politically, religiously, and economically.

Panth Da Sewadar,

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

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES RICHARD BUTLER

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise before you to pay tribute to the life of a remarkable man from my district. Charles Richard Butler of Durango, Colorado passed away recently at the age of 80. Charles will always be remembered as a devoted family man and patriot, and I would like to ask my colleagues to please join me in recognizing his amazing life before this body of Congress and this Nation today.

Charles began his career serving his country in the Navy, and played an integral role in unloading landing craft tanks on Utah beach during the D-Day invasion. After his honorable discharge, he went on to graduate from the University of Colorado in Boulder with both his undergraduate and graduate degrees in geology. Throughout his 35-year career, Charles worked in a variety of geological capacities and was highly respected as an expert in his field. Charles will also be remembered for leading an adventurous life, having both mined the wilds of Alaska, and searched for gold in Mexico. He is survived by his daughter, Ann, his niece Sarah Sumner and her daughters Laura, Julia and Meredith; his brothers William, Howard, and David along with numerous nieces, nephews, grand nieces and grand nephews.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to rise before this body of Congress and this Nation to pay tribute to the inspiring life of Charles Richard Butler. He was a beloved family man who made a tremendous impact in the field of geology. The Durango community, and the State of Colorado will truly miss Charles, and my thoughts go out to his family during this difficult time of bereavement.

THE NECESSITY OF AN ENERGY BILL

HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member commends to his colleagues the following editorial from February 6, 2004, Omaha World-Herald.

While the energy bill conference report is obviously not perfect—it contains excesses and too much parochial pork-barrel—the legislation would provide many important improvements over the current situation. Among its beneficial provisions, the measure is designed to improve the nation's electricity transmission capacity and reliability. It also supports alternative power sources and promotes a cleaner environment. As the editorial indicates, the conference report can be improved in certain ways while retaining its beneficial provisions.

It is imperative for Congress to pass a sensible long-term energy policy which will help assure Americans of development of diverse, reliable, affordable energy sources with an emphasis on energy conservation. After years of inaction, this Member believes that it is absolutely essential to enact comprehensive energy legislation. It is overdue.

[From the Omaha World-Herald, Feb. 6, 2004]

THAWING ENERGY POLICY

Signs of movement are appearing in Congress' deadlock over a comprehensive energy bill.

The \$31 billion bill passed the House but fell two votes shy of breaking a filibuster in the Senate last November. The bill was a mixed bag, containing needed electrical-grid improvements and tax breaks and incentives for alternative energy sources, including a doubling of the nation's ethanol production. But it also would have rolled back some air and water pollution standards and was bloated with more than \$11 billion in tax breaks and favors to gain votes.

Among the objectionable provisions was liability protection for makers of the gasoline additive MTBE. That would shift to state and local governments the estimated \$29 billion cost of cleaning groundwater contaminated by MTBE.

Pete Domenici, chairman of the Senate Energy Committee, said he'll drop that provision. Good. It's an outrageous provision, but killing it will need the agreement of the House, where it still has strong backing from Majority Leader Tom DeLay.

Also likely to be cut in negotiations is the bill's exorbitant cost—more than half of which was targeted to existing oil, gas, coal and nuclear power production.

The electric-grid and ethanol proposals, fortunately, appear likely to emerge in either a slimmed-down energy bill or as separate proposals.

But the energy bill had many other provisions aimed at making a start (a small one, but a start nonetheless) on setting a new

course for the nation's energy policies: tax breaks for alternative-fuel vehicles; tax credits for consumer-level energy-efficiency measures; tax credits for power plant investments in clean coal technology.

These are the important provisions for Congress to safeguard as compromises are sought to pass this vital legislation. (The fact that compromises are finally being openly discussed, after a Republican-only conference committee cooked up the current bill behind closed doors, is a victory all its own for political debate.)

The chance to plot such a course change for the nation's energy policy is an opportunity not to be missed. We're glad to see it's now open to reasonable compromise.

RECOGNIZING DAVID RYAN CLOUSE

HON. ED WHITFIELD

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize David Ryan Clouse of Hopkinsville, KY, for his selection as a student delegate to represent Kentucky at the 42nd Annual United States Senate Youth Program. Ryan was one of two students chosen to participate from the State of Kentucky for this prestigious honor. Selection as a delegate is an honor few receive. Students are required to be involved in student organizations, community activities and achieve academically.

Ryan has excelled in academics. He has served as an officer and member in the various organizations in his school. He participated in the Governor's Cup Program. He has been a valuable member of his schools soccer team, basketball team and tennis team. Ryan has been involved in his church and community.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent David Ryan Clouse in my District. I extend my congratulations to him for his achievements, and I am proud to bring his accomplishments to the attention of this House.

TRIBUTE TO TOM O'KEEFE FOR 30 YEARS OF PROTECTING CALIFORNIANS FROM WILDFIRES

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I want to pay tribute today to a dedicated public servant who for the past 30 years has devoted his life to protecting southern Californians from the danger of wildfires. I can say sincerely that many of my constituents owe their lives and homes to the hard work and leadership of Thomas O'Keefe, who is retiring as chief of the San Bernardino Unit of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Tom O'Keefe began his career in public service in 1968 as a member of the United States Coast Guard, where he served aboard the ice breaker Storis in Alaska.

After his 4 years in the Coast Guard, chief O'Keefe began his work for CDF on October 1, 1974 as a Fire Control Assistant in the Orange Ranger Unit. In 3 years, he was pro-

moted to a Fire Apparatus Engineer and was assigned to the El Cerrito Forest Fire Station (FFS) in the Riverside Ranger Unit. He moved up to Fire Captain in August of 1981 and was assigned to Indian Wells and later to a Training Fire Captain position in the Riverside Ranger Unit Headquarters.

In April of 1986, Tom O'Keefe became Battalion Chief in the Riverside Training Section and three years later was made a field Battalion Chief in San Jacinto. Moving up quickly in the ranks, he was named a Division Chief in 1989, in charge of the Staff Services Division and later headed the Emergency Services Division for Riverside County. In October 1996, he was promoted to Deputy Chief of the Riverside Ranger Unit and was finally named Chief of the San Bernardino Ranger Unit in July 1999.

Mr. Speaker, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection is our statewide firefighting agency, and Chief O'Keefe has played an active role in many historic events, ranging from the Los Angeles riots to the Northridge earthquake. The agency is also charged with forestry management and fire prevention, and I am most grateful for Chief O'Keefe's efforts to deal with the terrible tree dieoff in the San Bernardino mountains.

On October 21, 2003 wildfires erupted throughout southern California. These fires were some of the most costly and devastating wildfires in the State's history. Two of these fires were located in San Bernardino County, and the Old Fire in my district destroyed more than 1,000 homes. Chief O'Keefe led the CDF in playing a central role as firefighters evacuated tens of thousands of residents, saved thousands of structures and protected and held the fire back from destroying the entire forest. Chief O'Keefe had already been selected to receive the Director's Leadership Award, but the recognition was especially deserved in light of his leadership and professionalism in the fires of 2003.

Thanks greatly to the efforts of Chief O'Keefe and the CDF, most of our mountain residents were able to return home after the fires. They have expressed their gratitude in many ways, and I thank him personally as we wish him well on his retirement.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my colleagues join me in saluting this public servant, and sending him and his wife Nancy our best wishes.

RECOGNIZING DEREK SCOTT KING FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Derek Scott King, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 167, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Derek has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the years Derek has been involved with scouting, he has earned 33 merit badges and is a Firebuilder in the Tribe of Mic-O-Say. Derek