

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor Angela Berg for her efforts to educate the public regarding the importance of childhood immunization. Her work has greatly contributed to the overall welfare of the children in the state of Nevada. I wish her the best in her future endeavors.

CONGRATULATING NORM SIELING

HON. GIL GUTKNECHT

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Norm Sieling of Lake Crystal, Minnesota, on his induction into the Minnesota Future Farmers of America Hall of Fame.

The Minnesota Future Farmers of America strives to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. By maintaining the ideals of the past and incorporating the ideas of the future, the Minnesota Future Farmers of America continually seeks new, innovative ways to join agriculture and education with today's world of technology. The Hall of Fame is an honor reserved for those alumni who are a living example of this mission.

For his commitment to these ideals, Mr. Norm Sieling was inducted into Minnesota FFA Hall of Fame. As an agriculture teacher for 39 years in Lake Crystal, Minnesota, and a mentor for new agriculture teachers at the University of Minnesota, Mr. Sieling has demonstrated his dedication to the future of agriculture. He has helped students to achieve their goals, while encouraging the expansion of the agricultural industry.

I extend my sincere congratulations to Mr. Sieling on receiving this achievement. His dedicated service to the young farmers of Minnesota and the agricultural community is greatly appreciated.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO FRANCES WRIGHT

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Frances Wright, a resident of Henderson Nevada, who died at the age of 101.

Born Fanny Schneider on Feb. 14, 1905, in Poland, she was the third of four children of Louis and Molly Schneider. Her family came to the United States when she was 6 months old. Her father was a tailor for an upscale men's clothier on Temple Street in Los Angeles. By the time she was 10, Frances was an aspiring child actress who took the stage name of Fanny Snyder. She claimed to have had a big part in the classic and controversial 1915 silent film "The Birth of a Nation" and often told friends that she enjoyed working on the film, which paid 50 cents a day and included a box lunch.

Fanny attended Los Angeles Polytechnic High School where she lettered in volleyball,

swimming and softball and was captain of those teams. She also was senior class president. Her yearbook listed her as most likely to become the "first woman president of the United States." After graduating in 1921, Fanny became a part of the flapper scene while attending business school. In 1927 she married car salesman David Wright. They were married for 71 years. He died in 1998.

Adept at poker, mah-jongg, canasta and pan, Fanny was a longtime regular in Southern California card rooms. From the early 1950s until the late 1990s, she would alternate residences between Los Angeles and Las Vegas. She worked at Bains and Sloats, a women's clothing store on the Las Vegas strip, but Fanny's real love was hanging around Strip resorts, getting a deep tan at the poolside and hobnobbing with celebrities. She was a frequent patron at the Sahara's Casbah Lounge when Louis Prima and the Mary Kaye Trio performed there.

Unconventional to the end, Fanny took her doctors' advice last month to start using medical marijuana so she would get "the munchies" and eat to bulk up her thin frame. Fanny credited her longevity to being a good athlete in her youth, maintaining a good diet and taking a shot of bourbon at 4 p.m. every day.

In addition to her daughter, Wright is survived by a son, Ronald Wright of Los Angeles; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; and one great-great-granddaughter.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the life of Frances Wright on the floor of the House.

SIKH ACTIVIST ARRESTED FOR MAKING SPEECH—BETRAYAL OF DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLE OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I was distressed to note that on April 20, Sikh activist Daljit Singh Bittu was arrested after making a speech. He was charged with sedition and "making inflammatory speeches." Mr. Bittu spoke out against the acquisition of the land of poor farmers by Punjab on behalf of private business firms. We have had cases in this country where the government has taken land by eminent domain for private usage, Mr. Speaker, and no one ever gets arrested for speaking out against it. Radio and television commentators across the spectrum have opposed this and they are still on the air. Yet in India, speaking out against this can now get you arrested.

Mr. Bittu is a proponent of freedom for Khalistan, the Sikh homeland that declared its independence from India on October 7, 1987. Recently, Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan, another Sikh activist, was arrested for predicting on television that Khalistan will be free by 2007. All he did was make a prediction. Is that a crime? If that is a crime, then the jails will overflow with sportscasters, weather reporters, psychics, and others who predict things routinely.

In addition, leaders of Dal Khalsa have been arrested for holding marches, making speech-

es, and raising a flag. A former member of Parliament was also arrested. It looks like the late General Narinder Singh was right when he said that "Punjab is a police state."

This is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker, especially as the United States and India move towards greater cooperation in numerous endeavors. We must insist on the full expression of democracy and basic human rights there if we are going to do business with India as a normal member of the family of free nations. And the essence of democracy is the right to self-determination.

The time has come to stop our aid and trade with India until it stops arresting people for making speeches, raising flags, and holding marches. The time has come for the U.S. Congress to put itself on record in support of freedom and self-determination for all the nations of South Asia. In 1948, India promised a free and fair plebiscite on the status of Kashmir. No such vote has ever been held in "the world's largest democracy." Why don't we insist on a simple democratic vote, with monitors, in Kashmir, in Punjab, Khalistan, in predominantly Christian Nagalim, and wherever people seek their freedom from India? As long as we turn a blind eye to the repression, the repression will continue. We must be the ones to strike a blow for freedom. Only when all people in the subcontinent enjoy freedom fully will there be stability and peace there.

Mr. Speaker, the Council of Khalistan recently published a press release on the arrest of Daljit Singh Bittu. I would like to place it in the RECORD at this time.

DALJIT SINGH BITTU ARRESTED FOR MAKING SPEECH—WHERE IS FREEDOM OF SPEECH IN INDIA?

WASHINGTON, DC., April 26, 2006.—Indian police arrested Daljit Singh Bittu, leader of the Shiromani Khalsa Dal, on charges of sedition and "delivering inflammatory speeches" at Fatehgarh Channa. Sardar Bittu was arrested on April 21 from his home in Ludhiana. He was held by the police, who sought "foreign currency" and a CD of his speeches.

"Where is the freedom of speech in India?" asked Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan. "How can a democratic state arrest people for making speeches? This shows us again that there is no place for Sikhs in India."

India proudly bills itself as "the world's largest democracy" and its constitution guarantees freedom of speech. But the arrest of Sardar Bittu is the latest incident in which people have been arrested for making speeches, holding marches, or raising a flag. "The drive for freedom is alive and strong in Punjab," he said. "What kind of democracy arrests people for demanding freedom?" asked Dr. Aulakh.

Leaders of Dal Khalsa have been arrested for sponsoring marches in Punjab in support of a free Khalistan, the Sikh homeland that declared its independence from India on October 7, 1987. In addition, Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan was arrested for making a statement in which he made the prediction that Khalistan will be free by 2007. "Since when is making a prediction a crime in India?" Dr. Aulakh asked. "Will the weathermen in Delhi now be arrested for predicting rain?"

"The time is now to begin a Shantmai Morcha to liberate Khalistan," said Dr. Aulakh. "India is showing its weakness with these arrests," he said. "As Professor Darshan Singh, a former Jathedar of the Akal Takht Sahib, said, 'If a Sikh is not for Khalistan, he is not a Sikh.'" Every day in prayer Sikhs recite "Raj Kare Ga Khalsa," which means "The khalsa shall rule."

The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians since 1948 as well as tens of thousands of Christians throughout the country, over 90,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988, 2,000 to 5,000 Muslims in Gujarat, tens of thousands of Muslims elsewhere in India, and tens of thousands of Assamese, Bodos, Dalits, Manipuris, Tamils, and others. An Indian newspaper reported that the police in Gujarat were ordered to stand aside in that massacre and not to get involved, a frightening parallel to the Delhi massacre of Sikhs in 1984. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide."

Indian police arrested human-rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalsa after he exposed their policy of mass cremation of Sikhs, in which over 50,000 Sikhs have been arrested, tortured, and murdered, then their bodies were declared unidentified and secretly cremated. He was murdered in police custody. His body was not given to his family. The police never released the body of former Jathedar of the Akal Takht S. Gurdev Singh Kaunke after SSP Swaran Singh Ghotna murdered him. No one has been brought to justice for the Khalsa kidnapping and murder or for the murder of Jathedar Kaunke. Yet 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 since 1984!

Recently, a new wave of violence has erupted against Christian churches. States are enacting laws prohibiting Hindus from converting to any other religion. Missionary Graham Staines was murdered along with his two sons, ages 8 and 10, by a mob of militant, fundamentalist Hindu nationalists who set fire to the jeep, surrounded it, and chanted "Victory to Hanuman," a Hindu god. None of the people involved has been tried. The persons who have murdered priests, raped nuns, and burned Christian churches have not been charged or tried. The murderers of 2,000 to 5,000 Muslims in Gujarat have never been brought to trial.

"Only in a free Khalistan will the Sikh Nation prosper and get justice," said Dr. Aulakh. "India's illegal occupation of our homeland, Khalistan, must end," he said: "India should act like a democracy and allow a free and fair plebiscite on independence for all the nations of South Asia," Dr. Aulakh said. "We must free Khalistan now."

SIKHS CELEBRATING 307TH ANNIVERSARY OF REVELATION OF KHALSA NATION BY GURU GOBIND SINGH SAHIB

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 26, 2006.—Sikhs all over the world have been celebrating Vaisakhi Day, the anniversary of the revelation of the Khalsa Panth by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. There have been parades in Washington, D.C., Vancouver, Stockton, Seattle, London, and many other cities. There will be an annual Sikh Day parade in New York on April 29. Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, will be speaking at the New York parade. In previous years, Dr. Aulakh's speeches have been punctuated by chants of "Khalistan Zindabad."

Vaisakhi Day is one of the most joyous days in the Sikh calendar, celebrating the emergence of the Khalsa Panth as a distinct people. Sikhs have been celebrating with devotion and reverence. Guru Gobind Singh proclaimed the sovereignty of the Sikh Nation: "In grieb Sikhin ko deon patshahi." Every morning and evening Sikhs recite "Raj Kare Ga Khalsa," meaning "the Khalsa shall rule," and "Khalsa Bagi Yan Badshah," meaning "either the Khalsa is in rebellion or

the ruler." Sovereignty is the birthright of all people, and it is the heritage of the Sikh nation. As former Akal Takht Jathedar Professor Darshan Singh has said, "If a Sikh is not a Khalistani, he is not a Sikh."

"We must remind ourselves of our heritage by raising slogans of 'Khalistan Zindabad' and beginning a Shantmai Morcha to liberate our homeland, Khalistan," said Dr. Aulakh. "Whoever is honest and dedicated in leading that Shantmai Morcha deserves our support."

India is stepping up its efforts to repress the Sikh Nation's demand for freedom. Recently, Sardar Daljit Singh Bittu, leader of the Shiromani Khalsa Dal, was arrested for making a speech. Sikh activist Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan was arrested after he said on India's Zee TV that Khalistan will be free by 2007. Leaders of Dal Khalsa have been arrested for leading marches, making speeches, and raising the Khalistani flag. In January, Sikh farmers were expelled from Uttaranchal Pradesh and their land was seized. They were beaten up by the police. Their homes were bulldozed by paratroopers. Their homes in many cases were built using their life savings and by their own hands.

"It is evident that the Indian government is scared of the increasing amount of peaceful activism in Punjab in support of Khalistan," said Dr. Aulakh. "The Ume of Khalistan's liberation is near. India will fall apart soon," he said. "This office has worked unwaveringly for a sovereign Khalistan for over 20 years," he noted.

History shows that multinational states such as India are doomed to failure. Countries like Austria-Hungary, India's longtime friend the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and others prove this point. India is not one country; it is a polyglot like those countries, thrown together for the convenience of the British colonialists. It is doomed to break up as they did. "We only hope that the breakup will be peaceful like that of Czechoslovakia and not violent like that of Yugoslavia," said Dr. Aulakh.

The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians in Nagaland, over 90,000 Muslims in Kashmir, tens of thousands of Christians and Muslims throughout the country, and tens of thousands of Tamils, Assamese, Manipuris, and others. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide."

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A TRIBUTE TO MAYOR ROBERTA COOPER

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mayor Roberta Cooper for her 26 years of dedicated service to the City of Hayward, California. On June 15, 2006, the City of Hayward will host a farewell dinner to honor her as she retires from office at the end of her term on June 6, 2006.

The Mayor has been instrumental in the initiation and development of many projects in Hayward including a new City Hall, B Street Marketplace and Parking Structure, Albertson's Shopping Center, Atherton Place Condominiums, City Walk Condominiums, Fire Station 1 at C and Main, and the Theater Complex at Foothill & B coming in 2007. All of the mentioned projects were related to Hayward's downtown redevelopment.

Other areas of Hayward have also benefited from her exemplary leadership including the development of Fire Station 9, Oliver Sports Park of Hayward, Eden Shores Development, Harder Road Railroad Under-crossing, the Twin Bridges neighborhood and the accompanying Mission Foothills of Hayward Golf Course and the Route 238 Corridor Improvement Project.

Mayor Cooper is a longtime resident of Hayward. Prior to assuming the helm of the city's leadership as Mayor, she was an educator. She taught in the Hayward Unified School District from 1968 until her retirement in 1994.

She was elected to the Hayward City Council in 1988 and re-elected to the Council in 1992. She was elected Mayor in April 1994, re-elected in 1998 and reelected again in March 2002.

Mayor Cooper serves on many public agencies focused on economic development, capital improvement, transportation, the environment and city governance. She involves herself in community service with equal interest and dedication. A host of non-profit organizations have benefited from her leadership, such as The Kids Breakfast Club, Literacy Plus Project, Hayward's Human Services Commission and the Eden Youth Center.

She lists among her personal pet projects the Hayward New Start, a Tattoo Removal Program, the Hayward Honor Band, and cHime-In.

I join Mayor Cooper's constituents, friends and admirers in congratulating her on a job well done. She plans to use her time to garden, read, learn to use her home computer and travel. I hope she accomplishes all this and much more as she embarks on a well-deserved retirement.

Thank you to my friend, Bertie Cooper, for all you have done to make a difference in our community.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT MARK A. PLEASANTS

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sergeant Mark A. Pleasants, currently