

INTRODUCTION OF THE UNIVERSAL PRE-KINDERGARTEN AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ACT OF 2007

**HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 31, 2007*

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I am introducing today the Universal Pre-kindergarten and Early Childhood Education Act of 2007 (Universal Pre-K) to begin the process of providing universal, public school pre-kindergarten education for every child, regardless of income.

The bill is meant to fill the gaping hole in the President's No Child Left Behind law, which requires elementary and secondary school children to meet more rigorous standards while ignoring the preschool years which can best prepare them to do so. My bill would provide a breakthrough in elementary school education by taking a step at the Federal level to encourage school districts themselves to add a grade to elementary schooling at ages three and four as an option for every child.

We cannot afford to continue to blithely let the most fertile years for reading go by while we wonder why we can't teach Johnny to read. As the President presses No Child Left Behind into high schools, my bill asks him to begin at the beginning when children should begin their education.

The Universal Pre-K Act responds both to the huge and growing needs of parents for educational childcare and to the new science showing that a child's brain development, which sets the stage for lifelong learning, begins much earlier than previously believed. However, parents who need childcare for their pre-K aged children are rarely able to afford the stimulating educational environment necessary to ensure optimal brain development. Universal pre-K education would be a part of school systems, adding a new grade for three- and four-year-olds similar to five-year-old kindergarten programs now routinely available in the United States. The bill would eliminate some of the major shortcomings of the uneven commercial daycare now available and would assure the qualified teachers and safe facilities of public schools.

This bill's introduction is particularly timely here in the District of Columbia, where more extensive integration of early childhood education is planned as part of a larger effort to improve D.C. public schools. A recent report highlighted the economic benefits of early childhood education, generating \$221 million each year in the District while starting early to expand job, career, income, and academic prospects of children, decreasing the amount spent on social programs to address teen pregnancy, crime, and the like.

Compare the cost of daycare, most of it offered today with an inadequate educational emphasis, at an average cost of \$6,171 per year, to the cost of in-state tuition at the University of Virginia, which costs \$6,785 per year. Yet, more than 60 percent of mothers with children under age six work. That proportion is rapidly increasing as more mothers enter the labor force, including mothers leaving welfare, who also have no long term access to child care.

Because of decades of refusal by Congress to approve the large sums necessary for universal health coverage, the Universal Pre-K Act encourages school districts across the United States to apply to the Department of Education for grants to establish three and four-year-old kindergartens. Grants funded under Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, ESEA, would be available to school systems which agree in turn to use the experience acquired with the Federal funding provided by my bill to then move forward, where possible, to phase in three and four-year-old kindergartens for all children in the school district in regular classrooms with teachers equivalent to those in other grades as part of their annual school district budgets.

The success of high quality Head Start and other pre-kindergarten programs combined with new scientific evidence concerning the importance of brain development in the early years virtually mandate the expansion of early childhood education to all of our children. Traditionally, early learning programs have been available only to the affluent and to lower income families in programs such as Head Start. My bill provides a practiced way to gradually move to universal pre-school education. The goal of the Universal Pre-K Act is to bring the benefits of educational pre-K within reach of the great majority of American working poor, lower middle class, and middle class families, most of whom have been left out.

Considering the staggering cost of daycare, the inaccessibility of early education, and the opportunity earlier education offers to improve a child's chances in life, three and four-year-old kindergarten is overdue. The absence of viable options for working families demands our immediate attention.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN L. PUGH

**HON. DALE E. KILDEE**

OF MICHIGAN  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 31, 2007*

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of John L. Pugh as he retires from Delta College after 36 years of service. John will be honored at a party of Friday, August 3, in Saginaw, MI.

John Pugh was born in Shubuta, MS, where he attended public school through eighth grade. He completed his secondary education in Newton, MS. He received his B.A. degree, cum laude, in economics from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, Tallahassee, FL, and his master degree from the University of Toledo in 1971. He also attended Tougaloo College, Tougaloo, MS, and spent 4 years in the U.S. Air Force before entering Florida A and M University.

John Pugh became involved in politics, economic empowerment, and civil rights efforts as a freshman at Tougaloo College, where he worked with Medgar Evers on a successful public boycott that encouraged businesses in Jackson, MS, to hire African-American employees. He continued his community involvement during his 3 years as a student at Florida A and M University as he worked on local campaigns for Black mayoral candidates and helped develop a student magazine.

He has managed several successful local and State political campaigns. Mr. Pugh served as chair of the Saginaw County Reverend Jesse Jackson for President Committee in 1984 and 1988. Rev. Jesse Jackson won in Saginaw County in 1984. In 1988, again under Mr. Pugh's leadership, Jackson won the Saginaw district. Mr. Pugh served as a delegate to the National Democratic Convention in 1988 and 1992.

His community involvement includes: founding board member of the Ruben Daniels Educational Foundation, member of Saginaw County Mental Health Authority, chair of the Saginaw Branch NAACP ACT-SO Program, member of Zion Missionary Baptist Church Deacon Board, chair of New You Design Men's Apparel Store, managed local campaign efforts for Rev. Jesse Jackson, President Bill Clinton and Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry.

During his 36 years at Delta College, he developed a wide range of programs and initiatives to assist students and the Saginaw urban community. Delta College's faculty and staff recognized Mr. Pugh in 1980 and 1995 for his extensive service to the college and community when he was presented the American Association of University Professor, AAUP, Award, the highest honor bestowed upon college administrators.

Mr. Pugh is married to Carolyn. They have three daughters, Yvette, Pamela, and Canika, and three grandchildren, Andrea, Delyn, and Kevin John.

Madam Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating John Pugh on his retirement from Delta College. He has devoted his life to nurturing the next generation of our country's leaders and has made the world a better place.

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN WRITES TO CHIEF MINISTER TO DEMAND WITHDRAWAL OF WARRANT AGAINST DR. UDHOKE AND RELEASE OF MANN

**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 31, 2007*

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, as I have discussed recently, the Punjab Government has issued an arrest warrant against Dr. Sukhpreet Singh Udhoke for the crime of writing about Sikh freedom and criticizing the chief minister. Mr. Mann's crime was placing a picture at the statue of the brutal late chief minister, Beant Singh.

The Council of Khalistan has recently written to Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal to demand the withdrawal of the warrant against Dr. Udhoke and the release of Mr. Mann. We should join in that demand, Madam Speaker. We should stop aid and trade with India to support rights for everyone and we should demand a free and fair vote on freedom for Khalistan, the Sikh homeland, for Nagalim, for Kashmir, and for the other nations seeking their freedom.

I would like to add that letter to the RECORD, Madam Speaker.

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN,  
Washington, DC, June 28, 2007.

Hon. PARKASH SINGH BADAL,  
Chief Minister of Punjab,  
Chandigarh, Punjab, India.

DEAR CHIEF MINISTER BADAL: I am writing to you regarding the recent arrest warrant for Dr. Sukhpreet Singh Udhoke and the arrests of Sardar Simranjit Singh Mann and his associates. As you know, both were involved in peaceful political action, which is protected under the Indian constitution, at the time the warrants for their arrests were issued by your government. Dr. Udhoke's offense was publishing articles critical of you. Sardar Mann's was protesting and placing a picture of a Sikh martyr at the statue of the brutal, genocidal Beant Singh, who presided over the murders of over 50,000 Sikhs. Mann had previously been arrested for the dangerous crimes of making a speech and raising a flag.

You have been in opposition. You have engaged in political activities while in opposition. What would you think if you were arrested for those activities? That is exactly what your government is doing to S.S. Mann and proposes to do to Dr. Udhoke as soon as you can find him.

When did the right to protest peacefully disappear in Punjab, Khalistan? Are you determined to prove the late General Narinder Singh right that "Punjab is a police state"?

On behalf of the 25 million strong Sikh Nation in Punjab, in India, and around the world, I am writing to demand the withdrawal of the arrest order against Dr. Udhoke and his associates and the immediate release of Simranjit Singh Mann and his associates. I do not do this for political reasons; Mann has been a vocal critic of this office and has cooperated with the Indian government. But if you truly believe in democracy—the system that put you back in power earlier this year—then you cannot in good conscience arrest people for dissent.

Indeed, Mann's arrest shows what can happen to a Sikh even if he cooperates with the Indian government, as you have done throughout your political career to the detriment of the Sikh Nation. One day, your utility to them will be exhausted and they may then have you thrown in jail for a peaceful political activity—simply because you are a Sikh. Who will you turn to defend you then? To this office?

Yet while you seem intent on prosecuting peaceful dissent, you are unwilling to take action against those who commit murder and other serious crimes. Is that because of your alliance with the BJP, which is the political arm of the pro-Fascist, militant Hindu nationalist, anti-Sikh RSS?

When you were elected in 1997, you promised the Sikhs of Punjab that you would appoint a commission to inquire into the atrocities in Punjab and prosecute the police officers who murdered Sikhs. Instead, you protected SSP Swaran Singh Ghotna, who murdered Akal Takht Jathedar Gurdev Singh Kaunke.

Just recently, Gurmit Ram Rahim Singh was fraudulently dressing as Guru Gobind Singh, performing baptisms that are reserved for the Panj Piaras, and advertising it in the newspaper. This was a desecration of the Sikh religion and a fraud. Yet you met with Ram Rahim to ask for his political support. But you couldn't even succeed in persuading this corrupt baba to support you! Yet when he perpetrated this fraud, you protected him until the political pressure to prosecute him got too intense. He still has not been arrested, nor has an arrest warrant been issued. I guess the jails are too crowded from holding the likes of Dr. Sukhbir Singh Udhoke and Simranjit Singh Mann.

In 1978, during your Chief Ministership, the Nirankari cult had a meeting and desecrated

the Guru Granth Sahib. Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his supporters peacefully protested outside. Your police fired on the protestors, killing 13 of them, then your police escorted the Nirankari leader, Gurbachan Singh, safely out of Punjab.

Apparently, you were not through trying to destroy Sant Bhindranwale. According to letters reprinted in the book Chakravayuh: Web of Indian Secularism, you, along with Harcharan Singh Longowal and the late Gurcharan Singh Tohra, invited the Indian government to attack the Golden Temple in June 1984 to kill Sant Bhindranwale. 37 other Gurdwaras were attacked simultaneously. Over 20,000 Sikhs were killed in those attacks. Their blood is on your hands, Mr. Chief Minister.

Furthermore, your government in your previous term was the most corrupt in Punjab's history. You creatively invented a new term for bribery: "fee for service." No fee, no service. The sale of government offices was standard operating procedure. Your wife even developed the handy skill of being able to tell how much money was in a bag just picking it up.

Furthermore, your operatives are calling this office repeatedly and harassing me about my website because it exposes you. You may be able to suppress the freedom of Sikhs in Punjab, but you cannot stop the Sikh diaspora from exposing your brutal and corrupt acts. Remember that Sikhs have a long memory of those who are traitors and murderers and who cooperate with the oppressors of the Sikh Nation. K.P.S. Gill's turban is still preserved in Belgium. When Khalistan is free, it will be on display so that the Sikh Nation will never forget those who committed atrocities against us.

Punjab's water is being taken away by non-riparian states without compensation. At least your predecessor, who is from the Congress Party, the enemy of all Sikhs, tried to do something about it. He cancelled the water agreements. The bill passed by the Legislative Assembly expressly affirmed the sovereignty of Punjab.

Under your rule, the economy of Punjab is deteriorating. Sikh farmers are committing suicide because they cannot make a living, due to the fact that your friends in Delhi force them to pay exorbitant prices for fertilizer and seeds, but forces them to sell their crop at substandard prices. And you, who as Chief Minister and head of the Akali Dal are supposed to protect the interests of the Sikhs, sit there and kowtow to these criminals.

Even though the government of Pakistan said it would build a road to Kartapur, where Guru Nanak went to his heavenly abode, with no visas, your government has refused to build the Punjab side of the road so that Sikhs can go freely to this sacred site.

From these actions, it is clear where your loyalties lie, and they are not with the Sikh Nation or with the Sikh religion or with the people of Punjab, but with the violent, pro-Fascist, murderous Hinducrat thugs from Delhi who sponsor you and your career. But remember the warning I gave you earlier; when they are through with you, when you no longer have any usefulness to them, they will dispense with you as they have dispensed with so many other Sikhs who have served them.

That is why it is incumbent on every Sikh to engage in the "long struggle" to free Khalistan. Only then will Sikhs such as Dr. Udhoke, Sardar Mann, and even the likes of you be protected from the violent and brutal whims of the oppressive Hindustani regime. It is crucial to protect the Sikh religion and the Sikh Nation from this oppression by liberating Khalistan today, in accord with our declaration of October 7, 1987. For your good,

Mr. Badal, I urge you to get on the right side of history today. Or would you rather be remembered as an enemy of the Sikh Nation?

Sincerely,

GURMIT SINGH AULAKH,  
President, Council of Khalistan.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 31, 2007

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Madam Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from this Chamber yesterday. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 758, 759, 760, 761, and 762.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE "POVERTY MEASUREMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT"

**HON. JERRY WELLER**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 31, 2007

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the "Poverty Measurement Improvement Act." This legislation is designed to improve the way our Nation counts various antipoverty benefits we currently provide low-income families—to better understand both who is poor and how effective those antipoverty efforts are.

The Ways and Means Committee and its Income Security and Family Support Subcommittee, on which I serve as ranking member, has recently held a series of hearings on poverty, reviewing the cost of poverty, how U.S. poverty measurement differs from other countries, and possible solutions to poverty.

As several Members noted in those hearings, one of the first failings of our current poverty measure is the fact it does not count tens of billions of dollars in taxpayer funded assistance provided to reduce poverty for literally millions of families each year.

This omission limits the usefulness of today's poverty measure. It also devalues the sacrifices of taxpayers who pay for those benefits with their hard-earned tax dollars. And it increases the apparent number of families in poverty.

On August 1 the Income Security Subcommittee will hold another hearing on how poverty is measured in the U.S. Several witnesses will suggest counting the value of more antipoverty benefits to determine whether families are poor or not. That is exactly what the "Poverty Measurement Improvement Act" would do. Major assistance not counted today includes food stamps, public housing, earned income tax credits, and health coverage. These also constitute the fastest growing portions of our Nation's safety net designed to help low-income families escape poverty. So unless we act, more and more of our effort to alleviate poverty will be ignored each passing year.

Consider what this means for families.

Let's say the Jones family of four has an annual income of \$30,000—all from wages. Current rules count wages as income for purposes of judging whether a family is poor.