

Bel Air Mall in 1967, Goldstein's was the first of Mobile's jewelry stores to "move west." In 1974, Goldstein's built a second location in the mall, where it stayed until moving to its current location on Hillcrest Road in 2002.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Goldstein's Jewelry for being recognized as an Alabama Centennial Retailer by the Alabama Retail Association. I know Richard Frank Jr., along with the company employees, their friends, families, and members of the community also join with me in praising Goldstein's Jewelry for their many accomplishments and for extending thanks for their continued service to the Alabama business community and the First Congressional District.

RECOGNIZING THE PONTIFICAL VISIT OF HIS HOLINESS KAREKIN II TO MICHIGAN

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 1, 2007

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Madam Speaker, I want to recognize his Holiness Karekin II, the supreme patriarch and catholicos of all Armenians, as he visits St. John Armenian Church in Southfield, MI, during his second tour of the United States.

Catholicos Karekin II was born Ktrich Nersessian in Voskehat, Armenia on August 21, 1951. He graduated from the seminary of Holy Echmiadzin with honors in 1971, and was ordained a deacon in 1970 and a monk in 1972. It was then that he received the priestly name "Karekin." In the late 1970s, His Holiness Vasken I encouraged Karekin to continue his theological studies abroad, where he spent time in Vienna, Austria and Zagorsk, Russia; eventually returning to Armenia.

On October 23, 1983, Karekin was consecrated as a bishop in Echmiadzin. After the Spitak Earthquake in 1988, Karekin took an active role in helping the victims overcome the devastation. His leadership is evidenced by the many schools and churches erected after the tragedy. In addition, after the fall of the Soviet Union, Karekin nurtured the usage of modern technology and telecommunications to help bring new life to his churches as well as dealing with the legacies of the Soviet era.

In 1999, Karekin was elected catholicos of Armenia and of all Armenians at Echmiadzin, succeeding His Holiness Karekin I. Since his election, his holiness has fostered relations with religious leaders around the world including Pope John Paul II and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I. Furthermore, on October 10, 2007, he courageously stood on the floor of the House of Representatives and prayed for the victims of the Armenian genocide.

Today his holiness visits Michigan and its over 100,000 citizens of Armenian descent. His message of "bringing faith home" is exemplified by Michigan's involvement and contributions to Habitat for Humanity here and abroad. Their willingness to support one another during difficult and troubling times is truly an inspiration to us all.

Madam Speaker, I commend His Holiness Karekin II for all of his work for his faith, followers, and people of Armenia. I am proud of the many accomplishments of those he has inspired in Michigan and around the world.

TRIBUTE TO THE 302ND AIRLIFT WING OF PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE

HON. DOUG LAMBORN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 1, 2007

Mr. LAMBORN. Madam Speaker I rise today to honor the elite airmen and women of the 302nd Airlift Wing, who are stationed at Peterson Air Force Base. These experienced reservists have again answered the call to duty by entering harm's way to support their fellow Americans in battling the raging fires in Southern California.

The 302nd launched two C-130 Hercules aircraft equipped with the sophisticated Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems to support massive emergency response efforts.

Maneuvering their C-130s dangerously close to the flames to help contain these violent fires, the battle-tested firefighting planes are led by aviators from the Forest Service.

The 302nd trains tirelessly in preparation for any situation and recruits only the finest, most experienced aircrews so as to ensure the best possible protection against loss of life to these fierce fires.

I recently accompanied the 302nd on a test run, and can honestly say that these men and women risk their lives each and every time they go up against a deadly fire.

I would like to thank the members of the 302nd Airlift Wing MAFFS crew, who helped save lives and property during these historic fires in Southern California: LTC David Condit, team leader; LTC Edward Strickland, director of operations; LTC Corey Steinbrink; LTC Harold Treffiesen; LTC Ronald Wilt; MAJ Robert Fairbanks; LTC Brian Thomas; SMSgt Kenneth Kunkel; MSgt Daniel Landers; TSgt Scott Agenbroad; MSgt Thomas Freeman; MSgt Darrell Biggs; TSgt Lamont Wood; SMSgt James Crain; TSgt Jimmy Felts; TSgt Steven Blaskowsky; SSgt Mark Shykes; SrA Allen Clutter; SSgt Michael McDonald; TSgt Brian McAmis; TSgt Steven Cisneros; SMSgt Glen Blackmann; MSgt Kenneth Lohle; TSgt Herbert Lehr; SSgt Yvonda Lefebvre; TSgt Kenneth Maness; MSgt Gerald Tuttle; MSgt Jose Gonzalez; MSgt Pamela Ammon.

These men and women are true heroes, who deserve to be recognized for their courage and bravery. It is my great honor to acknowledge their service to our Nation.

HONORING THE LITTLE RIVER DRAINAGE DISTRICT'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JO ANN EMERSON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 1, 2007

Mrs. EMERSON. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Little River Drainage District on its 100th anniversary. This district oversees and maintains critical drainage facilities which keep low-lying Southeast Missouri free from flooding and swamp-like conditions. It is the largest drainage district in the United States, covering 540,000 acres, which protects 1.2 million acres from unwanted water. This complicated system of drainage outlets, lev-

ees, and water detention basins is crucial to the safety and livability of communities along the Mississippi River, the St. Francois River and their tributaries.

Before this land was cleared and construction commenced, less than 10 percent of Missouri's Bootheel was clear of water. Today, 96 percent of the land is free from water year-round. This enormous change has enabled Southeast Missouri to grow and to expand. Agricultural and industrial businesses that predominate the region's economy are possible today because of the work of the Little River Drainage District over the past 100 years. Even more important, the Little River Drainage District is committed to the future protection of this beautiful region of the country and the people who live there.

If not for the Little River Drainage District, children would go to school on tractor trailers, homes would fill with water after every heavy rain, and a surge in the Mississippi River would be a devastating event to whole communities. Without the men and women who work through the Little River Drainage District to advocate and maintain flood protection measures, life in Southeast Missouri would be very different.

The individuals of the Little River Drainage District are responsible for keeping the ground dry beneath countless businesses, farms, factories and families. They do an outstanding job as advocates for every citizen of Southeast Missouri. I commend them for their work and congratulate them on 100 years of service to our district, State and Nation.

THE PRIVATE SECTOR WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION STREAMLINING ACT

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 1, 2007

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, employees who expose illegal practices benefit us all. But when they blow the whistle, they are often retaliated against. They are demoted, lose their jobs, and are blacklisted. Congress has established broad protections for Federal government employees and contractors who speak out. But when it comes to the private sector, there are large gaps in coverage.

Last spring, the Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, which I chair, held a hearing on private sector whistleblowers. What we heard at the hearing made it clear that these brave employees who put their jobs and lives on the line by coming forward to report violations of the law need more protection.

The Private Sector Whistleblower Streamlining Act of 2007 is designed to fill the gaps for private sector whistleblowers. First, it establishes whistleblower protections for workers who report violations of Federal law related to health and health care, environmental protection, food and drug safety, consumer protection, transportation safety, working conditions and benefits, energy, homeland and community security, building and construction-related requirements and financial transactions.

Second, it provides for reinstatement, compensatory damages, and in egregious cases, punitive damages for workers who have been retaliated against. In addition, the bill requires

that the same well-tested principles used in determining whether or not a complaint is valid for Federal employees and contractors (and some private sector employees) who blow the whistle is used for private sector workers.

Third, the Act establishes a new office within the Department of Labor, which will be dedicated solely to administering whistleblower complaints. Following an investigation by this office, the Act provides an opportunity for hearings before a Department of Labor administrative law judge and final review by the Office of the Secretary. Complainants would also have the right to take their cases to court.

Since the substantive whistleblower protections under OSHA and MSHA are well-established, the Act takes a different approach for those who blow the whistle on safety and health violations. Procedurally, the Miner Act functions at an acceptable level, but the procedures of the OSHA Act badly need an overhaul. So the Streamlining Act would provide complainants under the OSHA Act with the same hearing, final review, and court opportunities as for others. For practical reasons, it would leave the initial investigations to OSHA.

Finally, the bill requires the National Academies to study why some persons or communities are reluctant to step forward and report illegal violations.

We want to encourage workers to come forward and report violations of law. The Private Sector Whistleblower Streamlining Act of 2007 will make it easier for them to do so.

RECOGNIZING ANNIVERSARIES OF MASS MOVEMENT FOR SOVIET JEWISH FREEDOM AND FREEDOM SUNDAY RALLY FOR SOVIET JEWRY

SPEECH OF

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in support of H. Res. 759, which recognizes two of the most important events in the area of human rights in the twentieth century: Recognizing the 40th Anniversary of the Mass Movement for Soviet Jewish Freedom and the 20th Anniversary of the Freedom Sunday Rally on the Mall in Washington, DC.

I would like to specifically touch on one of the most important aspects of the Jewish struggle for freedom—the right to emigrate.

A few months ago, the travel plans of many Americans were disrupted when they were unable to acquire within a reasonable period of time U.S. passports that would allow them to travel abroad to certain regions. It was an inconvenience, but fortunately, the State Department with great effort cleared up the backlog and the waiting period is now back to around two months.

Now imagine waiting five, ten, or even fifteen years for a passport allowing you to leave the country.

Imagine not filling out an application and dropping it into the mail, but instead trudging from office to educational institution to police station seeking signatures from employers and various officials, without which the emigration office would not even consider the application to emigrate.

Imagine being told you can't leave, but not given any rational reason as to why not. Or being told that you cannot emigrate because of military service—in a construction unit!

Imagine taking to the streets with a sign demanding the right to reunify with one's family and loved ones abroad, as stipulated in the U.N. Convention on Civil and Political Rights, and being set upon by police and perhaps winding up in a forced labor camp or in internal exile in some tiny village in Siberia.

It may be hard to imagine, but this is what thousands of Soviet Jews faced when they wanted to emigrate to Israel from the former Soviet Union.

And why did Soviet Jews want to emigrate? Many of them were tired of the government anti-semitism that permeated the Soviet system, including a quota system for educational institutions. Understandably, they did not want their children to face these obstacles.

Many wished to practice their Jewish faith, to be able to attend a synagogue—if they could find one that hadn't been closed by the Communists—without having to worry that some Communist Party hack would see them and report them to their employers or teachers. Others were tired of the constant stream of anti-Semitic articles in the Soviet press parading as opposition to Zionism.

In 1967, with the Soviet press spewing tirades against Israel and alleged Zionist misdeeds in the wake of Israel's victory in the Six Day War, the Jewish emigration movement in the Soviet Union began in earnest. Many applicants, to be sure, were allowed to leave, but others were refused time and time again. The word "refusenik" was coined. Members of the Jewish community in the United States and throughout the world took up their cause. Others who cherished basic human rights, including Members of this body, joined in solidarity. Activists took part in demonstrations, wrote letters to Soviet officials, visited refuseniks in the Soviet Union, sent packages to imprisoned refuseniks, and never quit working on their behalf. It was an impressive demonstration of determination and unity.

And as this resolution notes, almost twenty years ago, on December 6, 1987, an estimated 250,000 persons demonstrated on the National Mall here in Washington on behalf of Soviet Jewish emigration as President Reagan prepared for a summit meeting with General Secretary Gorbachev. African Americans joined the rally in large numbers due in part to the active Jewish participation in the civil rights movement in the United States. One of these African American leaders eloquently expressed why so many non-Jews were there. He said, "As long as one Jew is kept against his will in the Soviet Union, we are all Jews."

A few years later, as the Soviet Union was collapsing and perestroika and glasnost became the watchwords, the barriers to Soviet Jewish emigration were lifted. Justice had at last prevailed.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution recognizes both the brave individuals who stood up to tyranny and demanded their right to freedom of movement, and those who vigorously campaigned on their behalf.

As Chairman of the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, I am honored to stand with my colleague and good friend, HENRY WAXMAN, in support of this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

HURRICANES KATRINA AND RITA RECOVERY FACILITATION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 29, 2007

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3247, the Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Recovery Facilitation Act of 2007. This bill directs the President to increase to 90 percent the amount of Federal contributions for replacing any State or local government property damaged by the hurricanes. Enactment of this bill is critical if we are going to finally rebuild the historic and vital infrastructure in Mississippi and Louisiana.

This bill also addresses a variety of other issues of importance toward rebuilding communities in Mississippi and Louisiana including temporary housing for volunteers, debris removal program eligibility for Mississippi and Louisiana, providing for respectful care and interment of human remains damaged during the hurricanes, restoring certain public facilities and providing incentives for certain hazard mitigation projects. All of these are important steps toward rebuilding our vibrant Gulf Coast communities.

Madam Speaker, this bill is welcomed, as both Louisiana and Mississippi are still rebuilding from the damages caused by the storms. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported in August that some communities are still without basic needs—such as schools, hospitals, and other infrastructure. In addition to these basic community needs, many are still without jobs because the doors of many businesses remain closed. Estimates from the Congressional Budget Office put, capital losses resulting from both hurricanes in the range of \$70 to \$130 billion. The GAO report further found that a substantial portion of the billions of dollars in assistance to the Gulf Coast was directed to short-term needs, leaving a smaller portion for long-term rebuilding. To date, the Federal government has provided most long-term rebuilding assistance to the Gulf Coast states through two key programs: FEMA's Public Assistance Program and the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG). Both States allocated a bulk of their CDBG funds to homeowner assistance, thus, creating a need for supplemental public assistance funds to focus on rebuilding and restoring critical infrastructure, such as government facilities, which funding this bill provides.

The increased assistance from the Federal government to Louisiana and Mississippi to rebuild their infrastructure through FEMA's public assistance program will help with the financial burden they face and will allow the process, which has thus far been daunting, to proceed more rapidly. This legislation is a step forward because it increases Federal assistance toward the rebuilding process and provides needed changes to the Stafford Act.

And, as we focus on rebuilding infrastructure in Louisiana and Mississippi, we must not forget that many of the child care facilities were damaged and even destroyed, while parents struggled to find a safe place to leave